

# THE Freethinker

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*He who thinks, and thinks for himself, will always have a claim to thanks; it is no matter whether it be right or wrong, so as it be explicit. If it is right, it will serve as a guide to direct; if wrong, as a beacon to warn.*

—BENTHAM.

## A Notable Effort.

A HUNDRED years ago, at least, the "Old School" at Failsworth was in existence. For a considerable time it appears to have been the only day-school in the place. Ben Brierley, the well-known Lancashire poet, received his early education there; and in the ground-floor room for boys, or in the upstairs room for girls, many a weaver's children acquired the rudiments of an education that was then as scarce as were good conditions of work and wages. About forty years ago there was a struggle as to whether the School should be under the control of Christians or Freethinkers. Fortunately the victory fell to the latter, and in the course of time the institution came to be generally known as the Secular School. A regular trust was drawn up; the property, which is freehold, being vested in twenty trustees, whose number must never fall below seven. The Secular Sunday School, as it is now called, is managed by a committee of twelve, who are elected every six months in a rather unusual manner. There is no precise membership, but the teachers and scholars assemble and elect the committee. Formerly the building was taxed, and as this was an exception to the rule applying to such cases the committee opposed it. They did not go to law, but they made the matter a test question locally, and by securing the appointment of overseers favorable to their claim they carried their point in spite of the most bigoted opposition.

In 1880 the Sunday School opened an important chapter of its history. Funds were raised for the building of a new schoolroom of more ambitious proportions, and Mr. Josiah Gimson, Leicester, laid the foundation stone. It was the year of Charles Bradlaugh's election to the House of Commons. Feeling was stirred deeply and hope soared high. This enterprise, however, was no flash in the pan. It did not depend on moving incidents and popular fluctuations. It rested on a basis of earnest conviction and steady resolve. Twenty years later the trustees were making further extensions. A fine stage was built at the rear of the school-room, flanked by ladies' and gentlemen's retiring rooms, with kitchen and other accommodation underneath. Mr. Sydney Gimson, the youngest son of Mr. Josiah Gimson, who had long been in his grave, came down from Leicester to take a first place in the opening ceremony, and his name is mentioned with the greatest respect at Failsworth.

The total cost of these extensions was about £1,000. Of this sum about £400 has been raised by a bazaar, by various forms of entertainment, and by regular small accumulations. The remaining £600, for which the trustees are jointly and severally liable, will undoubtedly be raised in due course. For these Failsworth folk are not to be turned aside from

their course by anything. They plod on with unbreakable tenacity. What cannot be done this year will be done next year, or the year after, or sometime; and whoever comes or goes, the School always moves forward.

Failsworth Secular Sunday School has at present about 180 scholars, who meet every morning and afternoon on "the Lord's Day." In the evenings, during the winter, there are lectures, chiefly by local speakers, and vocal and instrumental music. Dramatic entertainments and tea-parties take place on Saturday evenings. A public party and a dramatic entertainment take place always on Christmas Day. Every Whit-Friday the School joins the general Sunday School procession in Failsworth, and always cuts a commendable figure. It has just expended £17 10s. on two new banners for this annual occasion, and is prepared to beat that figure sooner than be left behind by orthodox parties.

The School has its own book of "Secular Hymns, an excellent compilation extending to nearly three hundred pages; special attention, as the preface says, having been paid to the selection of hymns "which inculcate a love for humanity, which tend to promote social harmony, encourage a love of the beautiful, and promote that regard for truth and goodness on which the well-being of society depends."

I had an opportunity of being present at the Annual Services of the Failsworth Secular School on Sunday, when I was advertised to deliver two addresses. The scholars were massed on the stage, and very nice they looked, the girls especially in their light summer dresses, which they had donned in spite of the scandalous weather. Right in front of the stage was the Failsworth String Band, which discoursed most excellent music. The rest of the auditorium was reserved for the audience, and the spectacle was a very cheerful one in the evening, when the place was crowded to the doors. The hymns were specially selected and printed on the day's program. Most of the audience joined in singing them, but over all rose the fresh pure young voices of the School choir, whose efforts (if I am any judge) were in the highest degree creditable to themselves and their trainers.

One part of the Service might be called religious. I refer to the collections. They were extremely good considering the unfavorable circumstances, but of course they will go but a small way towards clearing off that £600. According to Sunday's program "donations from absent friends will be thankfully acknowledged." Well, there must be many "absent friends" of such a notable effort, and I beg to inform them that the honorary secretary, Mr. James Pollitt, resides at 3 Robert-street, Failsworth, where he will be always happy to receive their communications.

The Failsworth Secular Sunday School must have done a great deal of good during its history. All those young people, rescued from superstitious influences on Sunday, and socialised and humanised without the doubtful aid of what usually passes for religion, are surely leavening the general life of the district. I wish to pay my tribute of respect and gratitude to the men and women who have carried on this noble enterprise for so many years.

G. W. FOOTE.



## The Shadow of the Cross.—II.

VERY soon after the country had been completely reconquered by the forces of the Christian monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella, steps were taken to bring about the wholesale conversion of the Moors. The leader in this movement was the famous Ximenes, Archbishop of Toledo, whose policy appeared to be that of driving the Moors into open acts of rebellion and then making their conversion to Christianity the condition of pardon. Large numbers of Moors were brought into the fold by these means; the method of conversion being occasionally that of bringing hundreds together into an open space, and then baptising the lot by sprinkling a few drops of holy water over the crowd. Ferdinand also stimulated the process by promising a free pardon to "convertos" for all crimes committed prior to baptism, as well as remitting the special taxes to which the Moors were subject.

In these attempts at conversion the promises solemnly made were easily brushed on one side. The conduct of Ximenes having driven the Moors to resort to self defence, their doing so afforded a pretext for the issuing of a decree in September, 1501, forbidding them to bear arms, either publicly or secretly, under penalty of imprisonment for a first offence, and death for a second. In an age of violence, when all carried arms and used them more or less, this was not only a humiliating regulation, but practically placed the lives of the Moors at the mercy of their Christian fellow subjects. An edict, issued a few months earlier forbade all Moors to enter the kingdom of Granada, and as this was found impossible of enforcement owing to Granada being dependent upon the Moors for supplies, a more radical step was decided upon by Isabella for the kingdom of Castile. This was no less than the enforced conversion of the whole Moorish population. All Moors were ordered to quit the kingdoms of Castile and Leon by the end of April, 1502—all males, that is, over fourteen and all females over the age of twelve, the children being retained to be brought up as Christians. The alternative of exile was, however, purely illusionary, so many regulations being made, that to leave the country became a practical impossibility, even had parents been willing to go and leave their children behind them. Again we read of droves being converted, although there does not appear to have been any illusions as to the nature of the conversions, for when some attempted to reach other parts of Spain where more religious liberty might have been enjoyed, they were promptly forbidden to leave Castile for Aragon, Valencia, or Portugal, except by land, and even then they must furnish security to return as soon as they had concluded their business.

At Valencia political troubles and the activity of the officers of the Inquisition led to the Moors taking up arms in self-defence. In the suppression of this revolt there were numbers of petty massacres as well as of forced conversions of batches of Moors. "At Oliva the soldiers drove the Moors in batches to the church for baptism, striking and robbing them..... At Gundia.....the Agermanados celebrated their victory by killing some Moors and dragging the rest to the church, shouting 'Death to the Moors,' and 'Dogs be baptised.'" These enforced baptisms had their value to the Inquisition, as it gave the needed pretext for later persecutions on the grounds that their baptism had brought the Moors under the jurisdiction of the Church, and the Church was therefore justified in punishing them for erroneous teaching or lax observance of their new religion. But hitherto the efforts to convert the Moors to Christianity had been more or less spasmodic, partial in their nature, and, in many instances, surreptitious. The solemn obligations entered into by Ferdinand and Isabella, in the names of themselves and their successors, acted as a drag upon the zeal of the Inquisition and the desire of the reigning monarch—to bring about a uniformity of faith within his dominions. The way

out of this difficulty was found by the Emperor Charles V. This bigot had used his best endeavors to suppress Lutheranism in Germany; he was busily engaged torturing and burning Protestants in Holland; and it was hardly to be expected that he would easily tolerate Mohammedanism in Spain itself. The only obstacle facing him was the oath taken to allow the Moors to continue the practice of their own religion in Aragon, and which Charles himself had repeated at his coronation.

An appeal was made to the Pope, Clement VII., to annul the obligation. All good Catholics believed that the power to do this rested with the head of the Church; and, after some little delay, the fatal brief was issued on May 12, 1524. This brief recites the Papal sorrow at hearing that there are still large numbers of Charles's subjects who are not of the true faith. It exhorts Charles to order the Inquisitors to preach the Gospel to them, that if they continue obstinate slavery or exile awaits them. It gave a formal release to Charles from his coronation oath, and endowed the Inquisitors with ample powers for suppressing all opposition.

For political reasons Charles did not make this brief public for some eighteen months after its issue, contenting himself meanwhile with the issuing of various regulations, all threatening the welfare of the Moors to a greater or smaller degree. At the expiration of this period Charles sent the Papal brief to the Inquisitor-General, with orders to put it into execution as speedily as possible. This was followed by a general decree of expulsion. "All the Moors of Valencia were to be out of Spain by December 31, 1525, and those of Aragon and Catalonia by January 31, 1526." This was also backed up by another Papal brief, ordering all Christians, under pain of excommunication, to assist in carrying out the decrees, which was tantamount to inviting the whole Christian population to assist in a general persecution of the Moors.

But the industry of the country rested, as I have said, practically with its Moorish population, and their expulsion meant heavy loss, if not ruin, to many of the nobles as well as others. Even the churches depended for large portions of their revenues on the Moors. Expulsion was, therefore, protested against. It was explained to Charles that their departure would mean ruin to the country, and that, even if they were converted first, and then allowed to go abroad, this would mean increasing the number of Spain's enemies out of the country. The immediate reply was a proclamation forbidding any Moor leaving the kingdom, and ordering absentees to return within a month.

The result of these, and other regulations was, as might be expected, the "conversion" of large numbers of the Moorish people. One priest boasted that in Valencia alone, 27,000 families were baptised by him. The Moors explained the process of baptism as consisting in their being driven into coralls like cattle, and a priest sprinkling them with holy water. A much sterner feature was that of the armed resistance offered by the Moors. Feeling that they were fighting in defence of their homes, their religion, and their lives, regular campaigns were organised, and for some years, first in one part of the country, then in another, the Moors succeeded in bidding defiance to the Spanish forces. But such resistance was foredoomed to failure, and in the end the whole Moorish population—or Moriscoes as they were called after their conversion—became nominally Christian, and the Inquisition, backed by the power of the State, was supreme.

The whole Moorish population was now completely at the mercy of the Inquisition. Their enforced conversion had brought them under the discipline of the Church, and the discipline enforced was anything but light. As Mr. Lea pithily puts the whole case, "they were defenceless, and every one, cleric and layman, pillaged them systematically." In Granada in 1566 an edict was published ordering the Moriscoes to learn Castilian within three years, after which no one was to read, write, or speak Arabic.



All books in Arabic were to be destroyed, and no garments were to be worn in the Moorish style. Moorish names and surnames were also abolished, and all baths, both public and private, to be destroyed. Cleanliness thus became a crime against the Church, and one is reminded of Professor Clifford's saying that the chief difference between a Spanish Christian of the sixteenth century, and an Egyptian of 2,000 years ago, was that the Egyptian washed himself more regularly. Many of the regulations seemed framed with the object of driving the Moors to rebellion and then exterminating them. The race had been threatened, imprisoned, tortured, into avowing a nominal adherence to Christianity, and now doubts began to arise as to the genuineness of their conversion. Mr. Lea's pages supply accounts of heresy charges against the Moriscos for the better portion of a century, into which there is no need to go at present. The most trivial reasons formed the groundwork of many of these trials. They were accused of singing a Moorish song, of having, while in a temper, wished all Christians at the devil, putting clean linen on a corpse; even cleanliness was one of the charges frequently brought against them. And as confiscation to the Church accompanied conviction there was a very solid reason for the activity of the Inquisition. In one case, an old woman of ninety narrowly escaped being tortured, but, in consideration of her age, was let off with imprisonment.

But none of these efforts seemed able to bring about that uniformity of religious belief at which Church and Government were both aiming. It was evident to all that the profession of faith by the Moriscos was a profession only, and it was more than suspected that within their homes the Moriscos still carried on the practice of their old religion. Gradually there were formed two parties for dealing with the Morisco trouble. The one advocated extermination, the other expulsion. The courses advocated by the party of extermination were so monstrous, that I prefer to outline the suggestions in Mr. Lea's own words:—

"In 1581, when Philip II. was in Lisbon, a junta of his chief counsellors.....concluded to send the Moriscos to sea and scuttle the vessels.....It was resolved that when the fleet returned from the Azores the matter should be executed by Alonso de Layva, but it was abandoned, because when the fleet arrived it had to be sent to Flanders.....A variant of this was the proposition, in 1590, that the Inquisition should proceed against all the Moriscos of the Crown of Castile, without sparing the life of a single one—either inflicting natural or civil death, or perpetual exile, or the galleys for life. Not much more humane was the suggestion of Archbishop Ribera to enslave all the males of proper age and send them to the mines or galleys. Ferocious and inhuman as were all these projects, they evoked no scruples of conscience. Theologians there were in plenty to prove that they were in accord with the canons. By baptism the Moriscos had become Christians; as such they were subject to the laws of the Church, and as heretics and apostates they had incurred the death penalty..... A common sentence involving them all would be a service to God. So reasoned Archbishop Ribera.....Even more outspoken was Fray Bleda, who proved by irrefragable authorities that the Moriscos could all be massacred in a single day.....He urged massacre in preference to expulsion, arguing that it would be a work of great piety and edification to the faithful and a wholesome warning to heretics."

It must be remembered that the people against whom these suggestions were made were neither turbulent nor criminal. They were the most desirable of subjects—industrious, peaceful, and the foundation of all that was really worth preserving in the Spain of their day. The Christians themselves used the maxim, "The more Moors the more profit." Their whole offence was that they were not Christians, and the study of their expulsion and extermination is all the more instructive as we are able to trace therein the influence of the Christian religion on a country which, under Mohammedan rule, had stood for centuries an oasis of learning amidst a desert of Christian ignorance and barbarism. C. COHEN.

(To be concluded.)

## Cobden and Bradlaugh.

IN the weald, between the breezy Hindhead and the South Downs range, not far, as the cycle goes, from Shobbermill, the literary home of "George Eliot," lies the sleepy old town of Midhurst, hard by the meandering Rother, whose confluence with the Arun at Pulborough delights the angling fraternity, of which Bradlaugh was no mean an amateur, as Finlay M'Nab, of Loch Long, could testify. Slightly south of Midhurst, sheltered by the downs immortalised in the *Natural History of Selborne* of Gilbert White, the earliest inspirer of Darwin, nestles the hamlet of Heyshott, the birthplace of Cobden, who here, or rather at his second home, close by, as a youngster, tended his father's flocks, which yielded the mutton famous to this day as "Southdown." Just off the main road to Chichester, between Midhurst and Cocking, stands Dunford, the metamorphosed home of Cobden's parents; while contiguous, but abutting on the same highway, may be found the cottage—one of a cluster—of the sturdy old Freethinker, Abraham Hooper, the earlier and later friend, admirer, and father-in-law of Charles Bradlaugh.

It is not, perhaps, recorded that the two distinguished men under notice ever met, at any rate, in cordial friendship; but their lives, in many respects, offer a striking parallel; each in his day fought in an unpopular cause, and each became loaded with obloquy, but both emerged into a popularity falling to the lot of few public men. Both were of poor parentage; and, as boys, both led miserable lives; had to shift for themselves, and by their own efforts acquired the education and knowledge which exploded the received doctrines in the realms of economics and theology. Cobden, the shepherd boy, by his own industry, gained a fortune in the cotton spinning and calico business around Manchester, and this dribbled away as he stumped the country in the endeavor to convince his fellows upon the question of free trade in corn; and it can scarcely be doubted that his unceasing labors in this direction paved the way for the freer platform and press from which Bradlaugh, later on, attacked vested interests of another order. Financially, however, both were ruined in the fight, but an appreciative public spontaneously rehabilitated Cobden, as it afterwards did Bradlaugh, though in a less degree. The great Free Trader excelled as a speaker of the reasoning, conversational type, never rising to the fiery eloquence of "Iconoclast"; yet, what the former lacked as an orator, was counterbalanced by literary power, for the one was not more decidedly the first of platform speakers than the other was decidedly the foremost of political writers. Mr. Morley regards as a masterpiece of English prose the penultimate paragraph of the pamphlet *1793 and 1853* but Bradlaugh's description of the Inniscarra eviction incidents, in the speech delivered in New York in 1873, appeals to the imagination in much the same way; and it is curious, too, that Ireland formed the subject of the writer and the speaker.

Of Cobden's writings and speeches on Free Trade little need be said, his arguments having long since become truisms; at the same time, the present generation should not overlook them, as throwing a flood of light on the recondite reasonings in Political Economy. It is the less well-known writings, such as *How Wars are Got Up in India* and *1793 and 1853*, that exhibit the all-round ability of the author, the Indian pamphlet being a scathing exposure of the methods employed in 1852 to steal Burma, which was finally accomplished in 1886, Bradlaugh protesting, and twitting Churchill with his telegraphic instruction to the military, "Advance on Burma." In analysis Cobden's methods strikingly resembled Paine's; for, as the latter convicted the Christians out of their own book and its internal evidence, so the former arraigned the Government upon its own documents and its servants' despatches; and this plan tells with extraordinary force in the brochure entitled *1793 and*



1853, the occasion being the patriotic laudations incidental to the demise of Wellington, "the savior of our liberties." Burke's *Reflections on the French Revolution* should, it has been said, be bound with its best answer, Paine's *Rights of Man*; but many will think that the volume would be complete with 1793 and 1853, a work perhaps the most remarkable in the literature of the revolutionary and Napoleonic period, written by a noble Englishman in sorrow at the conduct of his country. In this he showed, on the clearest possible evidence, that the English Government were the aggressors in the strife, long and bloody, which terminated in Waterloo only by the accident of Moscow. Connecting historical details, as now we may, we can discern the relation between the atrocious Coblenz declaration of the Duke of Brunswick and the subsequent Reign of Terror in Paris—that the one occasioned the other; but a perusal of the pamphlet in question inspires doubt as to whether the British Government was not the cause of both. Nor, having regard to the Cabinet details disentombed by the pamphleteer, can we wonder at the inveterate hate of Napoleon for this country; and it should seem but the poetical fitness of things that from the slighted and insulted France arose a genius whose achievements wreaked vengeance on the would-be repressers of struggling liberty, though liberty itself became strangled in the wars of unparalleled grandeur that followed.

As an essayist, therefore, Cobden hesitated not to strike for truth, even at the expense of his countrymen; and that, too, when the restored Empire, in the person of Napoleon the Third, revived all the popularly-received notions associated with the mighty spirit which Europe broke, but did not bend, on the rock of St. Helena. At the time, however, a high Parliamentary position had been won, and the writer could afford to ignore criticism reflecting on his patriotism or purity of motive—an attitude which Bradlaugh could hardly adopt twenty-four years later, when, seeking the suffrages of the electors, he purposely published and defended the publication of the celebrated Population essay—thereby risking, and almost missing, the goal of his ambition; because there can be little doubt that the advocacy of the Malthusian principles aroused an antipathy and accentuated a prejudice the effects of which had no small share in hounding the lion-hearted champion to a premature grave. Still, truth survives; and, as no economic library may be judged complete without Cobden's works, so neither is it without the *Trial, Queen v. Bradlaugh and Besant*, monumental to Bradlaugh's genius. But it is not to be supposed that the Anti-Corn Law agitation monopolised the youthful energies of Cobden, since so early as 1835, in his pamphlet, *Ireland*, he ascribed to the Catholic religion pretty well all the ills under which the Irish labored; and it may be observed that his opinions arose from personal contact with the people, as he traversed the country in the capacity of a "packman," just as Bradlaugh, when a private soldier, mixed with the inhabitants on Irish soil, and caught views similar to Cobden's, with a strong bias towards national aspirations, which he maintained to the end, notwithstanding the ingratitude of those who might have benefited politically by his vote.

A generation separated the lives of these two great Englishmen; and it may perhaps be conceded that from some points of view a prototype of the one can be distinguished in the other; and both, as has been hinted, were associated with Midhurst. Here it was that Cobden, broken-hearted, rushed to his distracted wife with the message of the death of their only son; and from hence sped the tidings summoning Charles Bradlaugh from a Lancashire platform to the death-bed of his joy, his hope, his little Charlie. A pretty lane leads from Midhurst to the churchyard of West Lavington, where the tomb of the "Manchester Manufacturer," though raised, distinguishes itself from others by simplicity with just "Richard Cobden. Born 3 June, 1804; died 2 April, 1865," inscribed. His son reposes beside. Some little distance from the church, by the cross-cut through Pendeen Farm,

on the way to Abraham Hooper's cottage, and almost hidden by a plantation, a substantial obelisk perpetuates the memory of Midhurst's famous son. And not far off, in the same valley of Heyshott, the churchyard of Cocking contains the buried joy of Charles Bradlaugh.

W. B.

## Voces Populi.

### CASUAL CHAT ON PAUPER PARSONS.

A.—Wot gets over me is this: why should they 'ave let 'im go into the workhus. Of course, there's a many parsons as are 'abitually there. But they are paid, and it's a matter of dooty. They dror the thick 'uns, and say it's done for love—Christian love.

B.—But you don't ketch 'em eatin' the grub, nor putting on the togs, or doing the graft. Not they; trust them for that. I s'pose this pore chap went in because he'd got the fair 'ump. Right down on his luck. P'raps he thought he'd do the Amateur Casual, and shime the bosses of the Church—show into lendin' a friendly 'and.

A.—Well, it was a disgrace to let 'im go in—a fair showin' up of the Church. I ain't no 'eretic myself, neither am I a Ethical—if anythin' I'm more of a Plymouth Brethren, at least, my missis is—but I don't hold with the big pots of the Church allowin' such a scandal.

B.—Still, it won't 'ave done him no 'arm. He's 'ad a tiste of wot many a man, perhaps as good as hisself, 'as 'ad to go through, and nobody to 'elp 'im out.

A.—Wot knocks me is 'ow these big pots—arch-bishops and bishops—should dror such lots o' tin, and leave their pals, who're in the same line of business but a bit low down the ladder, to not much more than the price of a sossidge and mash and a fourpenny doss. That's 'ow I read it.

B.—Don't you believe nothing of the sort—it ain't orl as bad as that. There's a good deal of bogey about such talk. Most of 'em do very well, even them as are curates; still they don't all do as well as they orter. Why, there's many a coster as could make a better show than them, on the road to the Derby—turn out in better style, and not 'ave to put anythin' away to do it, either. 'Cause why? The bosses cop more than their fair whack. 'Ere's old Temple drorin' £15,000 a year and the Bishop of London £10,000 a year and the other bishops accordin'. When I go anywhere I go to the Methodys, but they don't pay their men anything like that, and I will say they look after the pore amongst those you might call the "pros." I never 'eard of any complaint. Mind yer, there's a lot about the Methodys I don't like, but I ain't 'eard of 'em lettin' one of their mouthpieces go into the workhus.

A.—I should think not, indeed, when they can afford to buy up the Westminster Aquarium. (*Sotto voce*). Ever bin there in the old days?

B. (*chuckles*).—Yes, many's the time. Fancy it's been turned into a Gospel-shop, and Mrs. Langtry's next door.

A.—That's bought up, too, and I s'pose will be closed. But I think—I may be wrong—that there's a good many lessons taught by the drahmer. Now look at the *Grip of Iron* and—and *Hamlet* for instance. Ain't there 'igh morill tone in them? Or in *In the Ranks* and *Richard III*. Plenty of "go" and a morill to take 'ome with you and ponder over with your supper of stoo'ed eel. That's my choice. Give me the drahmer in its elevatedist form. That I'm ready to back at any time for 'arf-a-dollar.

B.—But just suppose this parson could be got to go on the stage after 'is experience! Wouldn't he dror a bigger crowd than he 'ad ever drawn before? S'pose he got the Rev. Carlile of the Church Army to show 'im as the "Pauper Parson" with limelight views.

A.—Or call him the "Coronation Curate." He could easily look the part. He could get some duds like those he wore in the Union. Lor', our old pal, Carlile, could do a make-up for him that would



fetch down the 'ouse of itself. Not a better showman in the world for a job like that.

B.—And then the "Coronation Curate" could preach a sermon in 'em. Pile it on thick about the woes of the pore.

A.—He'd 'ave to 'ave a text. What sort of a one should he weigh in with? The only text I can think of is "Blessed are the poor." But that wouldn't do—would it? Seems to go against the show.

B. (*tentatively*).—There's "Pity the sorrows of a poor old man"——

A.—Garn; that ain't in the Bible.

B.—Ain't it? Where is it, then? Blessed if I know wot is there and wot isn't.

A.—Don't worry, mate. You're not the only one by many a thousand that's in that boat.

B.—But "Blessed are ye poor" doesn't sound right somehow. If it is so, wot 'as he to complain about?

A.—'Ow would it be for the "Coronation Curate" to preach on "Woe unto ye rich"?

B.—That would be more to the pint, though the Archbishops and others might cut up rough over it.

B.—What it amounts to is this. Are these big pots true Christians? Do they follow the example of their Master? As far as I can make out, he was a sort of mumper. Went about doin' the talkee-talkee, and livin on wot he could pick up. I'll back he slep' many a time in one of the Jerusalem parks, and the Roman copper came along every now and then and woke 'im up on the bench. And very like he cursed back. I suppose they had parks and coppers in those days or their equivalent. There was no Rowton 'Ouses then, or 'im and 'is disciples might have 'ad a good time together, instead of wanderin' about. There wasn't any casual wards then, or I daresay 'im and his pals might 'ave bin glad to 'ave ad a doss there, free, gratis, and for nothin'. But what strikes *my* fancy is the chaps who pretend to represent 'im on earth in the present day, deckin' theirselves out in lawn and fine linen, livin' in palaces, ridin' in kerridges, and drorin' thousands a year which they lay up for themselves as "treasures on earth"—not caring a damn about eternal damnation. At the same time, they allow poor pals in the same perfeshun to go into the workhus. Is that jannock?

A.—No; no it ain't honest Injun. My idear is the same as 'Amlet's: "There's something tommy-rotten in the state of Denmark."

B.—I think so, too.

FRANCIS NEALE.

### Is Pleasure the End?

EPICURUS taught that all sentient beings desire pleasure, and seek to attain it; and he accordingly advocated the pursuit of pleasure as the natural and proper object of mankind. The Greek philosopher, however, was somewhat of a humorist, for he so defined "pleasure" as to exclude everything that is associated with the word in the popular mind. He professed to find gastronomical enjoyment in a diet of beans and water, to be sumptuously arrayed in a ragged robe, and to be palatially lodged in a garden hut. Such pleasures naturally did not appeal to the multitude. But in modern times the doctrine of Epicurus has been revived and extended by the various "Hedonistic" schools of philosophy. These various schools differ somewhat in detail; but they are all agreed upon the one fundamental dogma that the attainment of pleasure is the sole aim or object, or end, of all human action.

The usual objection to this dogma is that there are many cases in which people do *not* seek pleasure as their object, but deliberately choose a painful course in preference. A young laboring man, for example, will work to maintain his aged parents. He will deny himself all relaxation, he will give up the idea of marriage, and will injure his prospects in life by remaining near his home, instead of travelling to

another place where he could command better wages. And, in return for all this self-denial, he will have to put up with the ill-temper of his father and mother (for, unfortunately, peevish ingratitude is one of the chief failings of old age), and his friends and associates will look upon him as a simpleton because he does not rid himself of this responsibility by placing his parents in the workhouse, and making some trifling contribution to their support. If the young man were asked why he took this course he would probably reply that he preferred the path of duty to the path of pleasure. But the Hedonist philosopher would tell him he was wrong, and that all the time he was acting from the motive of seeking pleasure, because the support of his father and mother was a greater pleasure to him than the pursuit of his own comfort and convenience. According to the Hedonistic doctrine, therefore, the dutiful son, who sacrifices health, comfort, and prospects for the sake of his parents, is neither better nor worse than the unfilial voluptuary who has no thought outside his own personal enjoyment.

Some five centuries ago, upon the occasion of a dispute between the Franciscans and Dominicans, a monk volunteered to carry the Host through a lane of fire, in order to prove the superiority of his Order over the other. He went through the ordeal, and died of his injuries the next day. Now, the ordinary man would say that this monk adopted the painful course instead of the pleasant one. He might have remained in the monastery, gorging and swilling like his fellow-monastics; instead of which he exposed himself to bodily torture and an agonising death. But here, again, the Hedonist would maintain that the monk was really following the path of pleasure, and that it was more pleasurable for him to endure the burning fire for the good of his Order than to feast idly in the monastery. Such a contention, however, is equivalent to denying the existence of pain and pleasure; for, if idle ease is a pain and scorching heat a pleasure, then pain and pleasure can be interchanged by a mere operation of the mind. Whereas, in the present instance, we have the obvious proof that the monk did really suffer excruciating pain, for it actually caused his death within a few hours. If he had been experiencing pleasure all the time, he should have survived. But the Hedonist would say that this was a misstatement of the case. It was the good of his Order which gave the monk the pleasure. While he was passing through the fire he was filled with the most ecstatic pleasure at the thought of the credit he was conferring upon his Order, and this pleasure was so intense that it overwhelmed the sense of physical pain. But we may legitimately inquire if it is correct to say that mere thought can overcome pain.

Who can hold a fire in his hand  
By *thinking* on the frosty Caucasus?  
Or cloy the hungry edge of appetite  
By bare *imagination* of a feast?  
Or wallow naked in December snow  
By *thinking* on fantastic summer's heat?

It is true that men in a state of frenzy become insensible to physical injuries. The Oriental Dervishes will eat fire and glass, and cut themselves with knives, while in a state of excitement, without appearing to experience the slightest pain. The same thing occurs in cases of somnambulism and hypnotism. Such states of frenzy, somnambulism, and hypnotism, however, are abnormal, or indicate mental disease; consequently they are hardly analagous to the actions of a normal healthy human being.

But to return to our original point. The Hedonistic doctrine is that the *object* of all human action is the attainment of pleasure. It should not be forgotten, however, that pleasure is a thing that is not so easily attained. There is the staring fact that it is *not* attained when deliberately sought for. A pleasure that is looked forward to, and dwelt upon beforehand, is never so enjoyable when it does come as it was imagined to be. A party of friends, meeting accidentally together, receive joy in one another's



society, but a formal meeting, arranged and anticipated, will frequently feel dull and strange. People are at great trouble and expense to go and see the Pyramids, or the Falls of Niagara; but when they do arrive at these objects, instead of experiencing the expect feelings of admiration and delight, they are distinctly disappointed, and the Pyramids, or the Falls, seem paltry and over-rated. Contrast with this the joy felt at some more trifling, but unexpected pleasure, and then see if the avowed object of attaining a pleasure ever brings it so intensely. It is a common observation that the *first* experience of a pleasure is usually the greatest. A person who has never witnessed a theatrical representation, and sees a good play for the first time, feels a thrill of enjoyment which is never repeated in such intensity, and is quite unattainable by the habitual playgoer. Therefore, we see that when we cannot previously conceive the nature of a pleasure, then it yields the greatest enjoyment. This is called the "Hedonistic paradox," and a philosophy that only leads to a paradox must be a wrong philosophy.

We started by instancing the case of the filial son, and it will be well to reconsider this case from a slightly different point of view. When the filial son realised the necessity of maintaining his father and mother, he had two thoughts or ideas presented to him. In the one he contemplated himself as the dutiful son, caring for his aged parents; in the other he contemplated himself as the comfortable, successful artisan. The idea of himself as the dutiful son gave him the greater pleasure of the two; and, although he realised the pains and disadvantages before him, yet, because that course gave him the greatest pleasure to contemplate, he adopted it. His choice marks him out as a virtuous man; for it was the *right* course that gave him the greatest pleasure to contemplate. If he had not been a virtuous man, then the *wrong* course would have been presented to his mind most strongly, and he would consequently have adopted it.

In like manner, the monk had two ideas before him. In the one, he benefitted his Order; in the other, he sought his own ease. The *idea* of furthering the good of the Order filled him with the greater pleasure than the *idea* of slothful ease; and, although he recognised that he must endure pain, and face death, yet he chose the harder course, because the contemplation of it gave him the greatest pleasure. Having determined on the course, he had to exhibit fortitude to carry it out, otherwise the determination was useless. The soldier who volunteers for a difficult service, and then, when brought face to face with it, runs away, is a useless servant; it is the man with sufficient courage to carry out his intention, that makes the hero.

Therefore, when we come to analyse our cases, we see that pleasure is *not* the end; it is the beginning. When the mind has to choose which of two actions is to be done, that one is chosen which gives the greatest pleasure to contemplate, even though it leads to pain. If the Hedonist says that pleasure is the *source* of human action, he is probably correct; but to maintain that it is always the *aim* is to involve us in paradox.

CHILPERIC.

No man of intelligence, no one whose brain has not been poisoned by superstition, paralysed by fear, can read the Old Testament without being forced to the conclusion that our God was a wild beast. If we must have a God, let him be merciful. Let us remember that when the sword of justice becomes a staff to support the weak, it bursts into blossom, and the perfume of that flower is the only incense, the only sacrifice, that mercy will accept.—*R. G. Ingersoll.*

The faith which is born of knowledge, finds its object in an eternal order, bringing forth ceaseless change, through endless time, in endless space; the manifestations of the cosmic energy alternating between phases of potentiality and phases of explication.—*Thomas H. Hurley.*

Men will be more moral when they learn that morality does not rest for its authority upon arbitrary edicts thundered from the skies, but that its foundation is the experience of mankind as to what is best for man.—*Robert C. Adams.*

## Acid Drops.

Our National Palaver, as Carlyle used to call the House of Commons, is not as important a body as it fancies itself; for the seat of popular power is really outside it nowadays, on the public platform and in the public press. What really goes on in the House of Commons is *talkee-talkee*. This was always its foible, and is now its sole occupation. Queen Elizabeth once inquired of Mr. Speaker what had passed in the House since she previously saw him, and he answered "Please your Majesty, six weeks." What he said wittily may now be said seriously. Still the talk goes on, and divisions are taken, though everybody knows that all the speeches do not affect a single vote. Mr. A. E. Pease, who is resigning his seat on account of ill-health, says that, in his opinion, no man is fitted to be a member of Parliament who has not the constitution of an elephant or an ox, the digestion of an ostrich, and the jawbone of an ass.

The crowd that gathered outside Buckingham Palace to watch the arrival of Ministers attending the first Privy Council after the Coronation were not quite as piously-inclined as either the King or the clergy. Sir Frederick Treves drove up, and someone cried, "There's the man who saved the King." The crowd responded with a hearty cheer. They knew who really saved the King. The talk about "Providence" was all nonsense.

The Coronation Bible had a history. It was to have been supplied by the British and Foreign Bible Society, which undertook to print it splendidly, bind it sumptuously, and make it a fit present for a king. But the old Archbishop of Canterbury had his suspicions, and paid the B. and F. B. S. a visit of inspection. After looking at the volume that was meant for the King, he said, "Do you call *that* a Bible? Where is the Apocrypha?" The officials told him that they never printed Bibles containing the "apocryphal" books of the Jews, but only what all Protestants regard as the real Old Testament. That would not do, however, for old Dr. Temple; and, as the Society would not print a Bible *with* the Apocrypha, and the Archbishop would not sanction a Bible for the Coronation *without* it, poor King Edward had to be appealed to in the matter. No doubt he felt inclined to say, "A plague on both your houses." But he had to humor the Archbishop, and the Bible Society was obliged to take a back seat.

A Coronation Bible was then got ready according to the Archbishop's prescription, and was presented to King Edward in Westminster Abbey. What has become of it is beyond the scope of our information. We suggest that it should be sent to the Tower and exhibited with the other antiquities.

Archbishop Temple, in taking this Coronation Bible off the altar and presenting it to the King, made a lengthy speech telling His Majesty what the volume was. The substance of his oration was as follows: "Our Gracious King; we present you with this Book, the most valuable thing that this world affords. Here is wisdom: this is the Royal Law; these are the lively Oracles of God." What the old fellow meant was that the Bible was the Church's fetish, that a belief in its supernatural virtues was the foundation of the Church's business, and that the Church expected the King to uphold this fetish by calling it a lot of fine names, at least in public, and never speaking disrespectfully of it except in private.

Really it is only as a fetish that the Bible now survives. The Higher Criticism—which is merely Freethought adopted by wide-awake theologians—has done its work. It is generally allowed that the Bible contains bad science, false history, legendary tales and fables, together with brutalities, indecencies, and nonsense that had far better be omitted. Nevertheless it is just as much "inspired" as ever—which we most devoutly believe. It is still the Word of God. It is still preached from in churches, sworn on in courts of law, and placed in the hands of children in the public schools. In brief, it still does the trick; and while it does that the clergy can afford to grin at all the criticism in the world.

Westminster Abbey has been turned into a public show. People who could not witness the Coronation crowded in their thousands to see the place where it was transacted, and the furniture and fittings were left intact for their gratification. The first two days of the show were five-shilling days, then came a half-crown day, and four sixpenny days. Nearly a hundred thousand visitors have been rushed through the building on these terms. The whole proceeding



smacks of sacrilege. Our "national Valhalla" is being used as a side show of the Imperial Exhibition.

Dr. Clifford still beards the Government in the *Daily News* and elsewhere in regard to the Education Bill, but for our part we can only laugh at his heroics. The Nonconformists have themselves to thank for their being dished by the Church party. Had they kept true to their old principles that the State should have absolutely nothing to do with religion, and upheld "Secular Education" in the public schools, they would never have been overtaken by their present troubles. Dr. Clifford does not see, or pretends not to see, that religious instruction in the schools is the secret of all the bother. Had it not been there, the Church party would have had nothing to fight about. They want to capture the schools in the interest of religious education. Simply this and nothing more. And the fact that religious instruction is already in the schools is the starting-point of their campaign.

It is idle for Dr. Clifford to declare that the Free Churches stand in this matter "on the pure ground of citizenship." Whom does he think he is deceiving? What he is defending is Nonconformist religion established in the State schools. It suits Nonconformists and it suits nobody else—except, perhaps, a few Evangelicals in the Church of England. Jews and Freethinkers don't want it, Churchmen don't want it, Catholics don't want it. Only the Nonconformists do want it, and they want it simply because it serves their purpose.

If men like Dr. Clifford told the truth they would speak as follows. "We want *some* religion taught in the public schools," they would say, "but we must be very careful what it is. If religion is taught *as* religion—that is to say, if it is taught dogmatically—the specific doctrines must be settled, and Churchmen and Catholics will outvote us in that little arrangement. Our policy, therefore, is to confine the religious instruction to Bible reading with 'non-denominational' explanations. By this means the raw material will be created for all denominations to work upon. We shall have the same chance as others in the competition. It will be a fair field and no favor for all *Christians*, and non-Christian bodies may go to Jericho." This is short, sweet, and honest. All the rest is humbug.

Bishop Taylor Smith, Chaplain-General, has issued a form of prayer for soldiers. We have read it, and we fancy it is enough to turn Tommy Atkins sick. "Help them," the prayer says, "to think wisely, to speak rightly, to resolve bravely, to act kindly, and to live purely." Surely this is more like praying *at* Tommy Atkins than praying *for* him. No doubt he might easily think more wisely, speak more rightly, and live more purely than he does. But why should he be twitted with the fact in this pharisaic manner? There is, indeed, something peculiarly hypocritical in that clause about "living purely." Soldiers are herded together in barracks, and the only female society that is open to them is of the worst possible description. The consequent evils are only too obvious. They are also only too natural. It is therefore the vilest canting to bring men in the vigor of life into the midst of these unnatural conditions, and then to pray the Lord to enable them to "live purely." For the rest, however, we venture to think that Tommy Atkins is quite as sound-hearted as the persons who undertake to pray for his improvement.

The Vicar of Christ Church, Crewe, has resigned the living. We suppose he is going up higher. In his Parish Magazine he gives the congregation he is leaving some financial advice. He tells them that they ought to give first attention to the Clergy Fund. Too little is given to that, and too much to the Relief Fund. "We need the souls of the people," he says, "more than a few poor old souls need half-a-crown a week." In other words, it is better to spend your money on professional soul-savers than to spend it in relieving the distress of poor old men and women. We are glad to see that the Rev. R. W. Wilberforce does not find it easy to corrupt the good instincts of his parishioners. He wants them to give all to the clergy; they prefer giving to the aged poor.

According to the *War Cry*, the Connswater corps of the Salvation Army boasts of a "converted Atheist," a young man, and an engineer by profession. He was well known, we are told, for his "avowedly infidel views," and for five years he "openly advocated his iley theories and boomed free-thinking literature." But the Lord was waiting for him. One day he entered the barracks, and heard the song, "There is a gate that stands ajar." It took hold of him and made him "awfully miserable." "God so thoroughly upset him" that he had to seek salvation, and he is now "working hard

to redeem the past." We hope he is also putting in some work at engineering. May we add that we should like to have his name and address? Not that we doubt the veracity of the *War Cry* or the Connswater corps of the Salvation Army. Perish the thought! But we should like to have his own version of the matter.

Theological disputations in Russia seem to be carried to a rather high pitch if we may judge by a recent occurrence. Father Kiguranse, the parish priest of Osurgetsk, South Russia, had a discussion on a theological point with another priest, Father Dshaschi. The dispute became so heated that at length Kiguranse struck Dshaschi a blow which caused his death. The assailant—who appears to have been such a violent stielder over the difference between Tweedledum and Tweedledee, for no dispute amongst theologians ever rises much higher—has been sentenced to penal servitude for life in Siberia.

"Mind the Paint" is the text of a sermonette in the *Christian* by Mr. Chas. Cooke, an American writer. Some of his observations are sensible enough, but we must take exception to the following illustration which he introduces: "Standing on the piazza at Northfield, a lady said to me, 'The influence of that bad man's book clings to me to this day.' She had as a girl read 'The Age of Reason.'" Both the lady and Mr. Cooke would find some difficulty in proving that Thomas Paine was a "bad man" in any sense of the term. As to his book, this very illustration is a testimony to the fact that there must be something exceptionally striking and powerful about its contents. A thoroughly bad book, or a stupid and obviously misleading book, would never have left such a lasting impression. Some of Paine's arrows must have hit the mark with a sureness of aim that the lady is disinclined to admit.

Mr. Reader Harris, K.C., has been accorded the high honor of a portrait and biographical notice in the *Christian Herald*. Of the portrait it is sufficient to say that Mr. Reader Harris has no occasion to go about distributing many copies of it amongst his friends. Unless his vanity is of the blindest sort imaginable, we should think he would wish to suppress that "block," and consign both it and the artist to everlasting perdition. The biography of the founder of the Pentecostal League—which is called an "interdenominational" league of prayer (what a name!)—is not in reality much more flattering than the portrait. It begins with the interesting fact that Mr. Reader Harris was born at Worcester in 1847, and says "he had a meagre education." This latter fact, of course, is not to his discredit, but rather otherwise, if it appears that he has in later years supplied the deficiency. Such disclosures, however, are best avoided in friendly biographies, because unfriendly critics are apt to seize upon them and exclaim triumphantly, "That accounts for the milk in the cocoa-nut."

He commenced his working life, it seems, as an engine-builder, but ultimately thought he would turn his attention to the law. He was called to the Bar, and was afterwards made Q.C., a distinction which is open to almost any barrister after a certain number of years' practice. He claims to have been an Agnostic at one period of his life; but the sort of Agnosticism he held may be judged by the manner in which he was converted to faith. Being about to make a journey home from abroad, he missed a certain steamer, which was subsequently wrecked and the passengers drowned. He was greatly impressed by this event. He considered himself Providentially saved—that is to say, Providence did not care a cent about the passengers who were drowned, but was anxious to save the precious life of Mr. Reader Harris, which he did by causing him to miss the boat.

Arriving home, Mr. Harris "came under conviction of sin, and sought the way of salvation." That was only a proper acknowledgment of his miraculous escape. Providence had preserved him, and therefore he would believe in Providence, on the principle that one good turn deserves another. No Agnosticism could stand against such a display of Divine goodness and grace. While reading a little book, *Union with Christ*, in a railway carriage, he saw "the truth of identification of the soul with the Savior"—whatever that may mean. There, in the railway train, he prayed for the Holy Spirit by faith. We presume he was alone, or prayed silently, though one would not be surprised to hear that he plumped down on his marrow-bones amidst a carriageful of people. However that may be, we learn that "some hours afterwards, when giving his testimony, he received the witness of the Spirit that he was born of God." Impelled by the Spirit, he established the Pentecostal League and the paper called the *Tongues of Fire*, which have found enough support to show that a lot of fools there are upon this planet. The story of Reader Harris's conversion thus outlined does not rise quite



to the dignity and interest of Newman's *Apologia*; but Mr. Harris is proud of it, and no doubt the readers of the *Christian Herald* will be duly impressed.

Another "house of God" has been struck by lightning and partially destroyed. This time it is the historic church of Swanscombe, near Gravesend. Only a part of the chancel was saved. The magnificent oak ceiling and furniture have been consumed. The church was one of the oldest in Kent, having been built in the thirteenth century. But the Lord, apparently, cares nothing about the antiquity or historic interest of even the temples dedicated to his worship. They have to take their chance with theatres, music-halls, taverns, and other edifices dedicated to secular purposes.

The rector was away at the time. Personally, he has no reason to raise a jubilant voice over the watchful care of the One Above, for it was only a little time ago that the Lord allowed him to offer thanks for his son's safety before the news came that his son had been shot, after peace had been declared, by someone who was ignorant of that fact.

The Cathedral of Gottenburg, built on piles in 1815, is threatened with the danger of collapse, and has, in consequence, been closed. Now here is a fair opportunity of testing the efficacy of prayer in averting the danger. Surely the Lord should take care of his own conventicles.

Even the *Rock* perceives the gross anomaly of the preachers of the Gospel of Christ, who taught the blessings of poverty, parading themselves in costly vestments, as they did at the Coronation. That paper says: "Thoughtful Christian men, who saw the Archbishop in his splendid and superfluous cope, must have contrasted him with his clerical brother in a pauper's dress at Tiverton Workhouse."

Dr. Taylor, a magisterial medico at Cardiff, is opposed to the practice of "Kissing the Book." A policeman was about to give evidence before him, and commenced examining, after the fashion of other careful constables, the New Testament (which, like the usual police-court Testament, had lost much of its "newness") for a clean place to kiss when sworn. "Why don't you raise your arm and declare?" observed the Doctor, "or you can open the book and kiss it; but it is much cleaner to declare." (*To Dr. Buist*) "Isn't it, Doctor?" Dr. Buist: I always swear in the ordinary way. Dr. Taylor: With the book? Dr. Buist: Yes. Dr. Taylor: I am surprised.

Inconsistency and elasticity of conscience may be said to be quite the distinguishing characteristics of the Anglican clergy. We all remember the recent pious denunciation of gambling, betting, and horse-racing. Several clerics, including the Bishop of Hereford, gave condemnatory evidence before the Royal Commission. Yet—will it be believed?—several Yarmouth churches have just received financial benefit from the profits made out of the last local race meeting. Some four churches have had the sum of £81 distributed amongst them. A number of religious and charitable institutions received assistance to the extent of £120. The treasurer has in this way distributed many hundreds of pounds in recent years.

We do not say that it is any worse for clergymen to take money from the promoters of race meetings than from shady Stock Exchange speculators, some of whom seem to be fond of compounding for their sins by building churches or chapels. But horse-racing and its concomitant betting have been specially singled out for clerical attack, and yet there are churches which cannot resist the temptation of accepting what has been denounced as ill-gotten gains.

The Bishop of London must be pleased with a paragraph which has recently gone the rounds. It represents him as having been selected by the King for the metropolitan see mainly because he never preached long sermons. Then we are told the King relates that he was so filled up with long sermons when a boy at Balmoral that ever since he has always had a kindly feeling towards preachers of short ones. He once told a Scottish divine that the sermons were so long at Balmoral Church that dogs used to walk in, ascend the pulpit stairs, and yawn in the preacher's face.

It may have been noticed that in the original arrangements for the Coronation service, before the King fell ill, the sermon was limited to ten minutes—some said five. Eventually it was dispensed with altogether. So that this Bishop, who was elevated because he preached short sermons, was not allowed to preach at all on the biggest occasion that, for him, could occur in Westminster Abbey.

Rev. E. G. Thomas, of Penarth, has been addressing a conference of Christian workers at Cardiff on Sunday observance. He deprecated the opening of museums, picture galleries, pleasure gardens, etc., all of which tended to sentimentalise the Britisher's Day of Rest. Poor Mr. Thomas, of Penarth; he has lived too long in a wicked world which is rushing recklessly into the maelstrom of knowledge combined with pleasure. He would close our museums and picture galleries, but we wouldn't close his little chapel, for if he is given to talk like this it must be a home for idiots who mightn't be safe outside.

The Church Missionary and the Zenana Missionary Societies report what is described as a "startling falling off" in the number of candidates for the mission field. An application for two hundred workers for Uganda has met with a response of two only! We can imagine the Lord biting his lips with sheer vexation at this insulting indifference to his work. And these are the people for whom he sacrificed his only Son! Perhaps he wishes now that he hadn't. He was given to "repenting" in the old days.

A weekly contributor to the *Methodist Times* has been trying to diagnose the mental attitude of Roman Catholics to the Coronation service. He thinks the ceremony *must* have been to them "frankly blasphemous." He says: "It must be remembered that a Roman Catholic always regards Protestantism as a half-way house to Atheism. He looks on the King much as the average Methodist regarded the late Mr. Bradlaugh, and he thinks of the Archbishop of Canterbury, part author of *Essays and Reviews*, much as the average Methodist of a generation ago thought of Charles Darwin. A religious ceremonial in which Mr. Darwin and Mr. Bradlaugh were the chief actors would appear to the average Methodist a very parody of Christianity. That is the light in which the ceremony appeared as far as I can judge, to the deeply religious Catholic."

To mix up the King and Dr. Temple with Darwin and Bradlaugh in this ridiculous fashion may suit the "average Methodist" mind. It is indicative of a state of confusion not shared by the keen Catholic intellect, upon which it is a libel. If the Roman Catholic "looks upon the King much as the average Methodist regarded the late Mr. Bradlaugh," how was it that the whole ceremony was stage-managed by a Roman Catholic Earl Marshal? This "frankly blasphemous" ceremony was under the direction of the leading Roman Catholic layman, assisted in some degree by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Even in the *M. T.'s* involved method of presenting it—*i.e.*, K. is seen by C. as B. was seen by M.—the remote association of Bradlaugh with the King is enough to make the former turn in his grave. As for the "average Methodist" we give him up. He is represented by the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, and, as a sort of penance for the infatuation, he handsomely "shells out."

"Unpleasant Facts" is the heading of a leading article in the *Church Times*. The "recent growth of Materialism" is mentioned as one of these facts, and to its prevalence is ascribed the further fact that "the Church is being roughly shouldered out of the stream of national life." The writer goes on to ask: "What is the meaning of the practice—a growing practice we fear—of using religious forms on public occasions with little or no religious significance? The Coronation ceremony has not been free from the taint. An acute French observer, describing the scene to a Parisian journal, asked the shrewd question, 'How many of those four thousand persons assisting at the ceremony believe in what the ceremony signifies?' How many gave it a thought? We have had a surfeit lately of thanksgiving services and memorial services; how many of them have any religious significance whatever? There is an inclination to congratulate ourselves on evidence that the Church is in touch with the national life. What if the Church is following instead of leading? Here is cause enough in itself for waning influence."

*Apropos* of some recent remarks on clerical tomfoolery at Church bazaars, and the forgetfulness of some clerics of "the dignity of their office," a correspondent of a church weekly draws attention to the way in which some priests may be seen strutting about in the full uniform of an army officer, for which the captaincy of a Lads' Brigade is made the excuse. Also he points to the clergy who may be seen selling at jumble sales, "trying to empty the pockets of the credulous poor by old carpets, useless pots and pans." A short time ago, he says, an incumbent was looking for an "athletic" assistant priest for his parish. This sort of thing, he adds, is causing laymen to "look on and despise" such unclerical sky-pilots.



There seems to be a regular campaign carried on against the FREETHINKER. We do not know exactly in what quarter to look for our enemies, though they are probably bigoted Christians. What we do know is that a movement of some kind is going on in "the trade." Several newsagents, some of them important wholesale agents, have lately refused to supply the FREE-THINKER to their customers. Recently we have received many letters from persons in Edinburgh asking where they can obtain this journal there, now that Messrs. Menzies have struck it off their list. May we ask our friends to do all they can to counteract this insidious persecution? Small newsagents, whose wholesale agents will not supply them with this journal, are requested to communicate with the Manager at our publishing office, who will in every case make some arrangement whereby the FREETHINKER will reach them.

#### Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

September 7 and 14, Athenæum Hall, London; 21, Liverpool; 28, Birmingham.

#### To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—August 24, m., Kingsland; a., Victoria Park; 31, m., Kingsland.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.

W. V. REED.—You are mistaken. The oil was not medicinal; it was merely symbolic, like the water of baptism. It was not the oil, but the "prayer of faith," that was to "recover the sick." Read the text again, and you will see that you were mistaken. Where, by the way, did you read words of ours declaring that the medical profession was "a great fraud?" You seem to read very hurriedly.

OTTO ZOBLINSKY (Edinburgh) writes: "I duly received the Ingersoll volumes, and beg to express my pleasure and surprise at the beautiful get-up thereof. They will, I am sure, prove a veritable mine of information and argument, and you may be sure that the dust will not gather upon them. Nothing has ever given me greater satisfaction and pleasure than the fact that I am able to become the possessor of such an intellectual treasure in such an easy way."

THE CAMBERWELL FUND.—The following subscriptions are acknowledged:—E. A. Charlton, 5s.; V. Roger, 10s.; F. Wood, 10s.; Mrs. R. M. Foote, £1; Millicent Routledge, 5s.; G. B. H. McCluskey, 2s.; J. R. Webley, 2s. 6d.; E. V. (per V. Roger), £1; J. W. Griffiths, 5s.; James C. Banks, 5s.; M. Christopher, 5s.; J. Little, 2s.

R. B. MIDDLETON.—Thanks for the magazine. See "Acid Drops." In answer to your kind inquiry, we are happy to state that Mr. Foote's health has much improved.

E. A. CHARLTON.—Yes, it is "practical aid," as you call it, that the Camberwell Branch wants. Thanks for your share of the same. If the London Freethinkers do not subscribe the £50 speedily we shall have to tell them that they have shirked their duty. This is holiday time, we know, and not the best for raising funds of any kind; but the amount asked for in this case is not a great one, and should be forthcoming. If the wealthier Freethinkers are a bit slow on this occasion, the poorer "rank and file" might send in their shillings. One shilling each from a thousand readers would provide all that is wanted.

MILlicENT ROUTLEDGE.—Thanks for your subscription towards the Camberwell Fund. It is pleasant to see ladies taking a practical interest in such matters.

V. ROGER.—You and Mr. Wood have acted generously in subscribing to the Camberwell Branch Fund in addition to the work you have long been doing and the out-of-pocket expenses you must have incurred. Our "kindness" in this matter, as you are good enough to call it, is merely our plain duty. We are deeply sensible of the vast amount of quiet and fruitful work that is done by Branch officers who seldom mount platforms and rarely have their faces famed by the breath of popular applause. Owing to the "kindness" of a certain rich man, to say nothing of confederates, we are legally penniless, but we have managed to find a subscriber for this Fund, nevertheless, as you will see by the list of acknowledgments. We hope this will serve as a broad hint to other Freethinkers.

J. HAMMOND.—Your note to hand and date booked.

K. J. J. and W. TIPPER.—Subscriptions duly passed over by Miss Vance.

J. HERRINGTON.—(1) The belief in hell did not originate amongst the Jews. They were late in acquiring it. The Hindus and Egyptians were familiar with it thousands of years before. (2) Your criticism of Jesus is not based upon a sufficient body of information. The truth is that the Jesus of the Gospels is an ideal character, embodying the beliefs, fancies, sentiments, hopes, and aspirations of the early Christians. To argue about his views and characteristics, as you would argue about those (say) of Voltaire and Paine, is quite unscientific and a waste of time. And it is really puerile to pick and choose from the Gospel records, make up a new Jesus of your own arbitrarily, and repeat the old cry of "Ecce Homo!"

W. VILE.—"J. B." of the *Christian World* is hardly an authority on physiological psychology. The physical basis of mind—including thinking and feeling—is too well established to be overturned by mere "literary gents," seeking to support theological conclusions. Your own observations are, in our opinion, quite sound.

G. B. H. McCLUSKEY (Devenport) hopes our appeal for the Camberwell Branch will be widely and generously responded to. "If God doesn't help those who help themselves," he says, "Freethinkers ought to, and I earnestly hope they will." This correspondent wishes Mr. Foote renewed health and vigor for his winter campaign.

W. E. JENKINSON.—The prophecies are dealt with from a Freethought point of view in Evan Powell Meredith's *Prophet of Nazareth*. The book has long been out of print, but you might be able to obtain a copy by applying direct to the Freethought Publishing Company.

NEMO.—There is force in your suggestions, and they shall be borne in mind. The publication of a list of newsagents who supply the *Freethinker*, etc., is more immediately feasible. The difficulty lies in the preparation of such a list, as we come into direct contact with only a few retail newsvendors. We have more than once asked our readers to send us names and addresses, but the response was not satisfactory.

J. R. WEBLEY.—Thanks for subscription to the Camberwell Fund. The back numbers of the *Freethinker* would be more useful hereafter, as the outdoor lectures (at which they would be distributed) are now approaching their end for the present season.

L. E. STAINES.—Advice in such cases is nearly always useless. So much depends on the particular circumstances. A freethinking father is bound to do his best to prevent the poison of superstition from being instilled into his child's mind; but if the mother is a bigoted Christian, and stubborn to boot, she is very likely to have her own way; especially if she is a woman who cannot be crossed in anything she sets her mind upon without turning the home into a hell. Every man must find his own solution of such a problem. No one can really help him but himself.

E. PUCHIAS.—We are obliged to you for your letter. The contents shall have our early attention.

E. J. LARKIN.—Thanks for your letter. But you are mistaken on one point. Our present rule as to returns is six copies (not three) to the quire. Even this is not rigidly enforced, but approximated to; and special arrangements can be made for special cases, like your own.

J. W. GRIFFITHS hopes our appeal for the Camberwell Branch will be successful.

J. C. BANKS, in subscribing, says there "ought to be no difficulty in raising the amount required" for the Camberwell Branch.

M. CHRISTOPHER.—Glad to hear you "think it your duty" to assist the Camberwell Branch. That is the right spirit. It is not in the least a question of charity.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for the cuttings. We hope your health has improved.

J. H. HAINES.—Thanks for cuttings. See paragraph. We have the highest opinion of your own brave work against compulsory vaccination. It is a few men, like yourself, in every place that stand between the people and tyranny.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—The Liberator (Melbourne)—The Crescent—Two Worlds—Light of Reason—Public Opinion (New York)—Sydney Bulletin—Progressive Thinker (Chicago)—The Searchlight—South Wales Echo—Truthseeker (New York)—Bombay Kaiser-i-Hind—Newtownards Chronicle—Humanitarian—The Buddhist (Colombo)—Freidenker—Freethought Magazine.

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.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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## Sugar Plums.

THE Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London, W., will be re-opened for Sunday evening Freethought lectures on September 7. Mr. Foote will occupy the platform for two Sunday evenings. He will be followed by Mr. Cohen and other lecturers. London Freethinkers should please note.

"The rain it raineth every day," sang Shakespeare. It must have been a summer like the present in which the idea occurred to him. And he would have made the expression stronger were that possible, if he had lived in South Lancashire. It was lovely South Lancashire weather at Failsworth on Sunday. The sodden sky looked good for a thousand years' rain at a stretch. For a few minutes, now and then, the rain seemed tired of falling, and languished; but it soon gathered fresh strength and descended with renewed vehemence. It was very sad, of course, for the Anniversary Services of the Failsworth Secular Sunday School. Had the weather been decent, the function would probably have been a phenomenal success. Even as it was, in conditions that could hardly have been worse, the evening gathering was an exceptionally large one, and the day's collections were in excess of any taken up for a good many years. Mr. Foote delivered two addresses, and gave a dramatic reading from *Hamlet*. Hymns were sung by the "congregation" and glees by the School Choir, and the musical part of the day's program was completed by an excellent band of stringed and brass instruments. The Chairman in the afternoon was Mr. Shufflebottom, of Oldham, a well-known working-class representative, and formerly a member of the School Board. In the evening the chair was taken by Mr. Pegg, of the Manchester N. S. S. Branch. Friends attended in spite of the weather from places as distant as Macclesfield and Barnsley.

Colonel Ingersoll's "*Why am I an Agnostic?*" has been out of print for some time. It was originally published at the *Freethinker* office in two parts at twopence each. Both parts are now included in one twenty-four page pamphlet. This new edition is issued by the Freethought Publishing Company at the price of twopence complete. Freethinkers would do well to give it the widest possible circulation. It is one of the simplest, plainest, and best-reasoned statements imaginable. The Agnosticism of Ingersoll was not of the mamby-pamby order. It was robust. His position was that the supernatural should be absolutely rejected, and that the words Creator, Preserver, and Providence lose all meaning in the light of science. His Agnosticism, therefore, was practically the same as Atheism.

Ingersoll allowed that "the questions of origin and destiny seem to be beyond the powers of the human mind." At the same time he said: "My mind is so that it is forced to the conclusion that substance is eternal; that the universe was without beginning and will be without end; that it is the one eternal existence; that relations are transient and evanescent; that organisms are produced and vanish; that forms change—but that the substance of things is from eternity to eternity." This is identical with the Atheism of Büchner and Bradlaugh; it is also identical with the Atheism of Haeckel.

The Camberwell Branch has carried on a very successful out-door propaganda this season. The meetings in Brockwell Park have been particularly satisfactory, and the collections have been so good that a balance of £2 remains on the right side of the account. This was only possible, however, because of the large amount of work done (as usual) quite gratuitously by the president, the secretary, and various members of the committee.

The Camberwell Branch will resume indoor propaganda in the Secular Hall in October. Mr. Foote has promised a Sunday evening lecture early in that month, and also to lecture there again as often as possible during the winter. He recognises the importance of the Branch's work in South London, and the necessity of keeping the Secular Hall open in spite of all difficulties.

Our appeal for the Camberwell Branch ought to have elicited a readier response. We dare say a good many of the better-to-do Freethinkers are holidaying at this time of the year, but there must be some of them who would not find it inconvenient to render assistance. Those who reside in London, at any rate, should feel it incumbent upon them to do something for the only Secular meeting-place on the South side of the Thames. The matter is now approaching the urgent stage, and we trust that the requisite help will be immediately forthcoming.

The Birmingham Branch of the National Secular Society held its annual meeting last Sunday. There was a good muster of members. The balance-sheet showed that the Branch had during the year nearly cleared off a heavy deficit. Free of this, and with promise of good support, the new Committee start their term of office with every prospect of a successful season.

We are requested to invite all members of the East London Branch of the N.S.S., and all sympathisers with Secularism who live in the East-end, to attend a special meeting which will be held for the purpose of re-organising the Branch on Friday, August 29 at 8.30 p.m., at the Mile End Hayfield Hall, 160, Mile-end-road.

The Freethought Publishing Company is still offering the works of the late Colonel Ingersoll on the instalment system. For the sum of £5 10s., payable in eleven monthly instalments of 10s. each, subscribers obtain a beautiful edition, in twelve handsome volumes, of the collected lectures, speeches, essays, etc., of perhaps the finest Freethought orator of the whole world. The entire set is delivered on payment of the first instalment. Subscribers thus get the books at once and pay for them at leisure afterwards.

The *East London Observer* reports an auction to dispose of some furniture seized at the residence of Mr. R. W. Palmer, of Scyssel-street, Cubitt Town, who refused to pay a fine imposed upon him under the Vaccination Act. Everybody seems to have been ashamed to be mixed up in such a case, and so much sympathy was evoked for Mr. Palmer that a considerable accession has accrued to the ranks of the local anti-vaccinators. When will the lesson be learnt that force is no remedy? When will it be recognised that the human conscience is higher than any dogma—whether of priestcraft or doctorcraft?

Mr. John Morley hopes to pass his Biography of the late Mr. Gladstone through the press in December, and the work will be published in three volumes by Messrs. Macmillan & Co. early in 1903. It is to be hoped that Mr. Morley's pen will be available for really progressive work soon afterwards.

## Help for the Self-Helping.

THE Camberwell Branch of the National Secular Society has a long and honorable history. For nearly twenty years it has provided regularly Sunday lectures, and occasional week-night lectures, in the Secular Hall, New Church-road. During the summer months it has carried on open-air propaganda in Brockwell Park, at Station-road, and on Peckham Rye. A vast amount of work has been cheerfully performed by its officers and committee. They have also often taxed themselves financially to meet the Society's expenses.

During the period covered by the South African war, which has been so injurious to all advanced movements, the Branch has naturally suffered from a diminished income. One result is that rent is owing to the Secular Hall Company, the non-payment of which would create serious difficulties.

Knowing all the facts of the case, and being confident that this Society deserves hearty support, I have undertaken to raise for it (if possible) the sum of £50. This would enable it to face the next season's work in September, free from debt and sanguine of greater prosperity in the immediate future. A breathing time would also be gained for arrangements whereby the Secular Hall—the only place of the kind at present owned by Freethinkers in London—might be secured in perpetuity to the Freethought movement.

It should not be difficult to raise this £50. London Freethinkers alone could provide it. But the appeal is not confined to them. Freethinkers throughout the country should be interested in maintaining one of the few halls belonging to the Secular party.

Cheques or Postal Orders should be sent to me *crossed*, and will be acknowledged in the *Freethinker*. I hope the response to this appeal will be prompt as well as generous, so that the Fund may be closed at the end of August.

G. W. FOOTE.

(President, National Secular Society.)

2, Newcastle-street,  
Farringdon-street, London, E.C.



## The Irreligion of the Poets.

"The world would be astonished if it knew how great a proportion of its brightest ornaments are complete sceptics in religion."—JOHN STUART MILL.

A WRITER in a leading literary journal, more remarkable for his piety than his accuracy, has recently made the claim that all poets are religious. This claim is so preposterous as to be almost amusing, were it not for the underlying jesuitry which does not hesitate to make any religious capital by assertions of the most impudent character. The method of attack is fairly obvious. Freethought has wrested so many positions from religion that, in order to present an appearance of having some weight of authority to support the tottering edifice of superstition, priests will hesitate at nothing to drag in some really great men with whose names and influence they hope to buttress the wavering allegiance of their lukewarm supporters.

How untrue the assertion is may be seen by rapidly glancing over the names of some of the great poets of the past century, who were never more conspicuous than in their interpretation of Freethought.

Shelley, for example, wrote not merely for artistic, but for propagandist ends. He did not originate the philosophy in his poetry, he merely adopted it, borrowing it indirectly from Godwin, and directly from the great French Freethinkers of the eighteenth century. The evangel of liberty found its finest expression in Shelley's magnificent writings. His infidelity was never disputed during his unpopular days, when men and women suffered imprisonment for selling his atheistic *Queen Mab*. But when it was discerned that the star of a great poet had arisen he was falsely and impudently dubbed a Christian.

There is no doubt about Byron's scepticism. It peeps out everywhere in his writings. His dramatic poem, *Cain*, is a forcible and eloquent protest against the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. *The Vision of Judgement* is startling in its blasphemy. *Childe Harold*, his noblest, if not his ablest, utterance is full of nature-worship, akin to that of Rousseau, whose books were solemnly condemned by an Archbishop of the Great Lying Catholic Church. *Don Juan*, his best work, is full of the spirit of the French Revolution.

Walter Savage Landor, that "unsubduable old Roman," as Carlyle finely calls him, was a Freethinker. His sympathies were most certainly Secular rather than Christian. The eternal arrogance of priests always aroused his opposition. He was never happier than when pointing the barbed arrows of his scorn at the Church of Christ.

The single stanza, in his best manner, prefixed to one of his last books, epitomises Landor's life and aims in four lines:—

I strove with none, for none was worth my strife.  
Nature I loved; and next to Nature, Art;  
I warmed both hands before the fire of life;  
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

Keats was pagan to the core. If there is an English poet entirely uninfluenced by religion it is Keats. With a mind aflame with impassioned love-liness, he turned his back on the gibbeted god and ensanguined cross of the Christian superstition. To him it was something disgusting, and he ignored it as he would the horrors of a slaughter-house.

Leigh Hunt, the friend of Keats and of so many poets, was a Freethinker. Always one of the daintiest and most delightful writers, he shows an unexpected depth in such moments as when he is writing against orthodoxy. Like his own *Abou Ben Adhem*, he could truly say:—

Write me as one who loves his fellow man.

Matthew Arnold had too great an admiration for the great classical writers to ever have been enamored of the Christian religion. The Greek writers of his favorite epoch breathed a spirit more in accordance with his own instincts and aspirations than could have done the narrow otherworldliness of

the Christian Faith. How essentially Arnold's imagination had become saturated with Secularism is seen in his language about death, particularly in his monody on his friend Clough and his poem, *Geist's Grave*. Despite his Oxford manner, he was a Freethinker. He was a man of this life and this world. Human loves, joys, sorrows, earthly things interest him:—

The help in strife,  
The thousand sweet still joys of such,  
As hand-in-hand face earthly life.

"George Eliot," whose fame as a poet is only overshadowed by her greatness as a novelist, was one of the freest of thinkers on all subjects. "The still, sad, music of humanity," which had fired the imagination of Auguste Comte, was to her a well of exhaustless inspiration. The greatest woman among her contemporaries, maybe the greatest of all women, she did magnificent work in her day and generation for liberty. She counts among the social pioneers of the age. She was one of the first to attempt to free the life of the nation from the alien rule of ecclesiastical authority, as she had, indeed, freed herself.

Edward Fitzgerald, a great poet who has at length won recognition, was as much an Epicurean as Omar Khayyam himself. We need not emphasise the blasphemies of the famous quatrains. Fitzgerald's version of Omar's poem is unquestionably finer than the original. "A planet larger than the sun which cast it," as Tennyson happily expressed it. Fitzgerald deepened the old Persian's profanities. Where Omar is merely heterodox, Fitzgerald is often outrageously blasphemous. He added venom to the old-world poet's epigrams:—

Oh, threats of Hell and hopes of Paradise!  
One thing, at least, is certain—This life flies;  
One thing is certain, and the rest is lies;  
The flower that once has blown for ever dies.

Arthur Hugh Clough was a sceptic, and his scepticism pervades all his verse. Although he never became bitter against the church of his childhood, he regarded its dogmas as imperfect and untenable.

William Morris's freethought permeated his poetry. He was contented with an earthly paradise. His sole business in life was to bring culture to those of his fellow men who were contented with lesser recollections and baser desires:—

What good is like to this—  
To do worthy the writing, and to write  
Worthy the reading and the world's delight?

James Thomson, the author of *The City of Dreadful Night*, the finest pessimistic poem in the English language, was a pronounced Atheist. In fact, it is the dominant note of his writings:—

And now at last authentic word I bring,  
Witnessed by every dead and living thing:  
There is no God; no fiend Divine  
Made us and tortures us! If we pine,  
It is to satiate no being's gall.  
It was the blind delusion of a dream,  
That living person, conscious and supreme.

Dante Gabriel Rossetti, John Addington Symonds, and Robert Buchanan were all Freethinkers. Rationalism pervades George Meredith's poems, no less than his novels. Thomas Hardy's rare excursions into verse are as sceptical as his world-famous stories. Swinburne, who wears the imperial purple of the great poets, is a militant Freethinker. He never sings more loftily, or with stronger passion, or with finer thought, than when he arraigns "the lie at the lips of the priest."

William Watson is at the head of the young school of poets, and he is a notorious heretic. He has never concealed his heresy. In *The Eloping Angels*, he has carried his views to the verge of audacity. Looking beyond our own country into the great world, we find the greatest German poets, Goethe, Schiller, and Heine were Freethinkers.

In France, Victor Hugo, the supreme poet, and a host of lesser poets, from De Musset and Baudelaire to Leconte de Lisle command our attention.

In Italy, Freethought is in evidence in the works of Leopardi, Carducci, and Guerrini. In priest-ridden Spain we have Espronceda, Bartrina, and Curros.



In Hungary, Imre Madach, and in Sweden, Snoilsky, attuned their lyres to the inspirations of freedom.

America has produced in Walt Whitman, the poet of the New Democracy. Whitman was as unconventional in his views on religion, as he was unlike other poets in his verse. His non-Christian attitude is nowhere so apparent as in his treatment of death. He has treated this eternal theme with a new power and significance. The awful dreams that may come in that sleep of death have no terrors for the tan-faced poet of the West. The dead are made one with nature. Throughout his poetry death is presented as a friend, is "lovely and soothing," is the "mother gliding near with soft feet"; and the body, weary with life, turns like a tired child to her bosom. Edgar Allen Poe, one of the most original of the American poets, was also a Freethinker.

Emerson, although trained as a Unitarian minister, became too rationalistic to remain even in that latitudinarian church. His poetry, no less than his prose, tends towards transcendentalism, but it is without systematic philosophy. He is one of the most suggestive of writers, and he is always the champion of mental freedom, self-reliance, and the free pursuit of science. Certainly, during the past century, the Soldiers of the Army of Human Liberation have always marched to battle accompanied by the glorious music of the great poets.

Need we go further. The attitude of our pious contemporary is illustrative of an old device of the Great Lying Church, which has made body-snatching a fine art. She put the holy wafer into the mouth of the dying Freethinker, Sir Richard Burton. She smuggled Prince Jerome Napoleon into the Church when the death agony was upon him. She buried Charles Darwin "in the sure and certain hope of a glorious resurrection," and with equal effrontery and impudence mumbled her mythological nonsense over the coffin of doubting Thomas Huxley, as stalwart a soldier as ever drew sword in the service of Liberty:—

To what damned deeds religion urges men.

The weapon used by the priests is a double-edged one. When the Freethinker is alive, they pour out upon him all the vituperation which their venomous tongues know so well how to use. If, in spite of their abuse, he gains fame, then they claim him as one of their own. Shelley has gone through both processes. Swinburne has been through the first, and will, when the verdict of time indubitably verifies his greatness, go through the second. Like to the foul vultures which feed only on corpses, so does the Great Lying Church fatten her waning reputation on the defenceless memories of the dead soldiers of the Army of Progress.

MIMNERMUS.

### The Unsketchable Hitch.

We set out to fish  
Near a place where they burn people after they're dead,  
Not very far from Woking,  
But a long way off from that place of dread  
Where Lord Henry does the stoking,  
A pure ozone as of paradise blends  
With the wonderful quiet of the place;  
A mystical contrast the stillness lends  
'To the town from whence we have set our face:  
There's a calm uncanny that seems to grow  
With a strange subjective glow,  
In the sentience real of things that live;  
Such a magical motion they take and give.  
Both root and twig in a poem fine  
Curve and curl and intertwine,  
And yet unheard; but the reason may be  
Because of their perfect harmony.

Say, shall we angle above the mill,  
Or fix a rod by the flowing mead?  
"The mead," you say. Then so we will.  
Right blithely we whistle, and follow the lead.

We fish and smoke until morning is done.

Not a bite can we get, so we swallow our dinner;  
When that is over we fish in the sun,  
And Alf starts talking—the tough old sinner.

"You know the old sexton?"—a clang from yon steeple—  
"I caught him one day digging a grave,  
And, as the parish holds very few people,  
I asked him which one of the few was dead."

Now, everyone's heard of that sexton grey,  
With his cast-iron humor. The story goes  
That, put him a question however you may,  
It always comes top—like a dead man's toes.

"Dead! nobody's dead," said the grim old boor;  
"I reckon he'll die about three weeks' time.  
I always spots 'em some weeks before.  
'Tis the very davvle to dig this lime."

Alf is watching his float; it gives a lurch—  
The bells clang out from some village kirk—  
But just too late to spoil his work,  
For he very soon lands a two pound perch.

I fancy I hear a distant band,  
God wakens the godless Sunday sleeper;  
Though Alf lies deeply the fish lie deeper,  
And wont bite at all, as you'll well understand.

"One day," says he, as his pipe he sucks,  
"The old codger got out the mowing machine.  
And trundled it down by the churchyard rucks.  
So I asked why, as no grass could be seen.

'No grass,' he echoed with ghastly mirth;  
"But dead men's whiskers want shaving square;  
They grow so fast through the plaguery earth—  
This lime is the davvle for growing hair."

Alf has a bite, but before he can strike,  
That far Army band gives a very close snort,  
With a bang on the drum that would frighten a pike;  
And the fish gets away as it jolly-well ought.  
So we sit the day out by that smiling brook,  
Both wearing a most unsatisfied look.

G. GUARDIABOSCO.

### Correspondence.

#### INEFFECTUAL USE OF THE "CAT."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In my pamphlet, *Facts about Flogging*, I have answered the *Globe* and other advocates of the lash (who assert that the man who has once been subjected to this punishment never comes up again for a second dose) by quoting a number of cases of men who have been flogged more than once—two or three times, many of them. Since the publication of my pamphlet I have come across the following additional cases in a cursory reading of the newspapers:—

"At the Kent Assizes two Rotherhithe stevedores, William Thomas and Thomas Bennett, were charged with robbery with violence from James Ovencell. The prisoners were found guilty. Mr. Justice Lawrance said that Thomas had already been imprisoned and received twelve strokes with the 'cat' for a similar offence. The prisoner: Yes, my lord, the 'cat' has made me fight shy of this sort of thing. His Lordship: It does not seem to have done so. Bennett was sentenced to six months' imprisonment, and Thomas to three years' penal servitude."—*Daily News*, December 3, 1901.

"At the Mansion House Henry Marsh was charged on remand with stealing a gold watch. Warder Cooke, of Holloway Prison, stated that in 1899 prisoner was convicted at the Central Criminal Court of robbery with violence, and received three years' penal servitude and twenty lashes with the 'cat.' Marsh was committed for trial at the next sessions of the Central Criminal Court."—*Times*, January 7, 1902.

"A carter named John Dalton, who had previously received the lash, and was called by Mr. Justice Ridley, at the Leeds Assizes on Tuesday, a "violent brute," was sentenced to five years' penal servitude for throwing a bottle at Samuel Clarke on January 10, the blow causing Clarke to lose an eye."—*Weekly Times and Echo*, March 17, 1902.

"William Higgins, at the Central Criminal Court, was convicted of highway robbery with violence at the East End. Five convictions, including a sentence of twenty lashes, were proved against Higgins, who had only recently come out of prison."—*Morning Advertiser*, May 7, 1902.



"William Wilkinson and Joseph Smith were indicted at the Middlesex Sessions for wounding four men at Wood Green. A wild scene ensued, in which knives, belts, and other weapons were freely used. The police quelled the disturbance and said the men looked as if they had been in a slaughter-house. It was stated that Wilkinson had been flogged, receiving twenty lashes, for robbery with violence."—*Daily Telegraph*, July 7, 1902.

"Albert Johnson, for stealing a watch, was committed for trial at the North London Police Court. Prisoner had been flogged for robbery with violence, and Mr. d'Eyncourt said he could not deal with a man with such a record."—*Morning Leader*, July 11, 1902.

JOSEPH COLLINSON,  
Hon. Sec. Prison Reform Committee.

Humanitarian League, 53, Chancery-  
lane, W.C.

### MILITARISM AND ITS CAUSES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The letter of Mr. J. G. Fisher is interesting, though the raising of the Anarchist question tends to obscure the case, nor do I quite follow the argument as to Custom Houses. The question of tariffs, for instance, had little or nothing to do with the Transvaal war. Anarchism as a political philosophy, if I may say so, always seems to me to ignore some plain facts. The mere living together in the same country, or in the same circumstances, of so many millions of people generates a force—a communal force—whether we like it or not, and to complain of which is as idle as to protest against Niagara. We may waste the force, or we may utilise it, but it is there. So the political problem is not to attempt to destroy or waste the communal or national force, but to direct it and use it wisely. In reality there is no such thing as non-interference, *laissez-faire* being in itself a form of interference just as the Catholic's determination to surrender his private judgment to the Pope is itself an exercise of private judgment. If A, whilst going along the street, see B on the other side in the act of murdering C, and if A is powerful enough to stop the murder by interfering, then, from the moment the facts enter A's consciousness he cannot divest himself of responsibility. He may decide, for some reason or other, that B is justified, or that his own interference would be the cause of more evils than it would cure; but such decisions are in themselves "interferences" in the philosophical meaning of the term, and they ought to be capable of justification by political argument. In short, the final problem is not between interference and non-interference, but between ignorance and unjust interference and interference which is scientific and directed to the realisation of the highest happiness for all.

At the same time, I think, Mr. Fisher is right in recognising that the remedy for militarism lies deeper than merely checking the militant impulse on the surface. If our sociology is to be sound at all, we must examine what generates this impulse. Some part of the warlike spirit no doubt is due to that wave of action and reaction that seems to undulate through all human things, and even things not human. It would now seem fairly established that, at least under a *régime* of competitive capitalism, we may look for a war-burst every twenty-five or thirty years. After that period a feeling gets abroad that it is time for a change and that the "evils of peace" require to be corrected by the elevating and noble exercise of cutting throats. After the course of blood-letting there comes another reaction, and the mob that howled at the enemy as banditti and blackguards begins to bespatter the generals of the enemy with praise. When, however, the warlike mood is on, it is taken advantage of, or rather it is primarily worked up, by wealthy men with axes to grind. Take three recent cases—the South African war, the American-Spanish war, and the friction between France and Turkey the other day, and let us look at them.

Let us examine the first case. A number of Englishmen—many of them British patriots with foreign names—went to the Transvaal to make money, as a purely private enterprise. As a matter of fact, we know that many of them, like Barnato, emigrated as penniless adventurers, and amassed fortunes. But they did not amass fortunes quickly enough, and certain laws, especially relating to labor, stood in their way. So they bought up newspapers in Africa and England and subsidised an agitation designed to cause the British Government to fight their battle. Now, had these men made 1,000 per cent. profit they would never have dreamt of handing over a fraction of it to the British Exchequer. But on the other hand they use their wealth to befoul the British people to pour out blood and treasure for their benefit. It is manifestly a one-sided bargain, and one

lesson at least the people ought to learn is that when a subject of one country emigrates to another for his own private advantage or profit he ought to be made to take the risks.

In the American-Spanish war an explosion, admittedly accidental, on board an American war-ship, provided the necessary stimulus, and war-contractors and concession-mongers, together with a blackguard press, did the rest. America had been at peace for a long time, and the specialised capitalist forces which make for war had their chance. And so the United States, which went to war nominally in order to liberate Cuba, ended by committing atrocities against the Filipinos several degrees worse than anything charged on the Spaniards by the Cubans.

In the Franco-Turkish affair, some French financiers, having some difficulty in their private dealings with the Turkish Government, got the French Government to use its armed forces to help them, and accordingly a French squadron seized a Turkish port. The Frenchmen would never have seen the equity of sharing their profits with their country, but they were quite prepared to share the risks.

The plain lesson of these happenings is that the military establishments of the various nations are maintained primarily, and in fact exclusively, in the interests of the wealth-owning class. To rescue a mine-owner's property, or save a bond-holder's credit, they will be used readily enough, and they can be thus used in the interests of the capitalist class, because that class dominates the politics of each country. The capitalist governments will make war on behalf of capitalists. And the foreign politics of to-day therefore consist of the squabbles and negotiations of rival sets of wealthy men. In all this the working-class or propertyless have no place—except to supply the blood. So much the greater therefore is their folly in supporting the iniquity. That workers themselves, sweated and cheated, should join their tyrants in helping to take away the liberty of others, is a spectacle of degradation the lowest that can be conceived.

But what should be always borne in mind is that war is simply a phase of the process by which one class lives on the labor of others. And Custom-houses or no Custom-houses, as long as the process continues we will have wealthy men at home pledging the nation's forces for their own interests abroad.

FREDERICK RYAN.

### MR. W. WARRY EXPLAINS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I would like to inform your readers that the matter you noticed in connection with myself happened in 1901, and if I had really repudiated money I should have accepted it ere this. You say I seem annoyed now that the offer has been withdrawn. Your old members know as well as you do that I frequently paid to enter the Hall of Science for the sake of opposing yourself and others, and when I ceased to appear there it was because I was refused admittance, although I always behaved myself, and call upon Mr. R. O. Smith to substantiate that fact.

Ever since I spoke on Christian Evidences no one can say I have asked for money. Since then I have received payment for two lectures; while, on the other hand, I have spent all my pocket-money on the work, and think I have as much Freethought literature as any ordinary Secularist. Knowing both sides of the question so well, I could, if I felt so disposed, earn money by lecturing. No, Sir, my efforts are not for gain; indeed, if I had wanted money I could have earned it as a playwright. The first play I wrote was played by the late G. H. Maedermott all over the world. Had I continued writing I might have been wealthy, but I chose rather to seek for truth, and am contented with what I gain by an ordinary mode of living.

WILLIAM WARRY.

How so many absurd rules of conduct, as well as so many absurd religious beliefs, have originated, we do not know; nor how it is they have become, in all quarters of the world, so deeply impressed on the mind of man; but it is worthy of remark that a belief constantly inculcated during the early years of life, whilst the brain is impressible, appears to acquire almost the nature of an instinct; and the very essence of an instinct is that it is followed independently of reason.—*Darwin*.

Our thoughts are shaping unmade spears,  
And life a blessing or a curse,  
They thunder down the formless years,  
And sing throughout the universe.

—Ella Wheeler Wilcox.



**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.): Closed during August.

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, Mr. A. B. Moss.

BROCKWELL PARK: 3.15, Mr. F. A. Davies; 6.30, Mr. F. A. Davies.

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

HAMMERSMITH BROADWAY (West London Branch N. S. S.): 7.30, A Lecture.

HYDE PARK, near Marble Arch (West London Branch N. S. S.): Freethought literature on sale at all meetings. 11.30, A Lecture.

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

STRATFORD (The Grove): 7 p.m., Mr. W. J. Ramsey.

STATION ROAD (Camberwell): 11.30, Mr. E. Paek.

VICTORIA PARK (Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.): 3.15, Mr. C. Cohen; 6.15, Mr. W. Heaford.

## COUNTRY.

BRADFORD (Vacant Ground, Morley-road): Mr. Ward will lecture on Monday and Thursday at 7.

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

## LECTURER'S ENGAGEMENTS.

H. PERCY WARD, 51 Longside-lane, Bradford.—August 25 and 26, Debate (Bradford Labor Church); 31 to September 7, Freethought Mission at Liverpool. September 28, Sheffield.

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