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THE Freethinker

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I do not merely BELIEVE there is such a place as hell. I KNOW there is such a place; and I know also that when men have got to the point of believing virtue impossible but through dread of it, they have got INTO it.—JOHN RUSKIN.

The Labor Congress.

IMMENSE progress has been made during the past hundred years. At the beginning of that period the clergy were trying to suppress Paine's *Age of Reason*, and the politicians were trying to suppress his *Rights of Man*; but it was a true and not a false dawn of the age of reason that was brightening the intellectual sky, and it could not be arrested by all the arts of priestcraft; nor was it possible, as the light of knowledge grew upon the darkness of ignorance, to prevent the gradual realisation of these rights of man which had been heralded by the thunders and lightnings of the great French Revolution. All that the people—that is, the working classes—had to do with the laws, was declared by a Bishop in the House of Lords to be to obey them. Education, according to that same Bishop, was to be deprecated as a great unsettlement; and society would come to an end if the lower orders were so instructed and refined as to refuse to work for their betters. But what a change has come over the scene since this pernicious nonsense was talked from the episcopal bench in the Gilded Chamber! The working classes now have votes, and are often flattered and caressed, instead of insulted, particularly at election times. The class war against their interests goes on all the while, but it is no longer an open war; it is waged by social rather than political agencies, the combination of capital meeting the combination of labor in an arena where certain fighting rules are enforced by the law upon both parties; though whether these laws are always fair to both parties is quite another question, which it is no part of our present object to discuss. The point we wish to note is that Labor has definitely won the right of free and open organisation. And this fact is of the highest value and importance, for means are thus provided whereby the elevation of the masses can be achieved on the lines of evolution, without an appeal to the revolutionary spirit, which has lost its utility in the complex conditions of modern civilisation.

Unfortunately few people read history. Most men and women, whose only reading, after the newspapers, is the fiction of the day or hour, have an impression that the human race has been living for a long time on this planet; but, for all practical purposes, history begins for them with the time when they commenced to take their own little share in the mundane movement. A man of sixty has a forty years' history, a man of forty has a twenty years' history, and a man of twenty has no history at all—except the recollections of his own personal experience. It is not astonishing, therefore, that the generality, even of the working classes, are ignorant of the part played by Freethinkers in the early days of storm and stress when Trade Unionism was fighting tooth and nail for its bare right of existence. John Stuart Mill, who had the ear of the liberal-minded public, was

one of its warmest champions. Mr. John Morley gave it a hearing and support in the *Fortnightly Review*, when he accepted the editorship in succession to George Henry Lewes, and (as the clericals groaned) took to spelling God with a small "g." Mr. Frederic Harrison and Professor Beesly, both Positivists, and therefore practically Atheists, did yeoman service to the Trade Union cause. Charles Bradlaugh stood up for it manfully, and often gave it the aid of his legal knowledge and acumen. George Odger, the first real working-class leader, was just as much an Atheist as the terrible "Iconoclast"; and a close inquiry into the religious opinions of his most intimate colleagues in the Labor movement would disclose the truth that, in this direction as well as in others, the pioneers belonged to the ranks of the "infidels."

There is nothing new in this truth to the students of the history of progress. Christians, however, who perceive it for the first time are apt to be greatly disconcerted. For instance, at the last Philadelphia Peace Congress, Anna Braithwaite Thomas spoke as follows:—

"The Church has failed; I have seen so many proofs of it. I have almost wept to see the representatives of the peace societies of the Continent of Europe stand up one after another, as they did a short time ago at the Peace Congress in Glasgow, and say, 'I am an unbeliever; I am a Freethinker; I have no use for the Gospel of Christ.'"

The lady admitted this tearfully. She hoped the reproach would soon be wiped out. She called upon the Christian Church (including all denominations, of course) to rouse itself and champion the cause of Peace. In other words, it is necessary to take the cause out of the hands of the "infidels." And we dare say the thing will be done. The same game has been played so often before. The Christian Church opposes every progressive cause at first. It lets the "infidels" take the cause up and work it for the little it is worth. But when the cause makes headway, and begins to command respect and wield votes, the Christian Church also begins to lurch into it, and finally controls it, and swears that the "infidels" never had anything to do with it. But it will not be so easy for the Christian Church to play this game in connection with the Labor movement. It was only a handful of persons who owned slaves, for instance, and they mostly lived a long way off; so that, when the cause of emancipation was triumphing, it was not difficult for the clergy to throw themselves decisively on the winning side. But the present case is very different. How is the Christian Church to patronise the Labor movement without disgusting its own best supporters? And who are they? Why, the wealthy classes. Whether the aristocracy, the landlords, the capitalists, and the big tradesmen really believe in Christianity is more or less doubtful. What is pretty certain is that they are agreed that it should be taught to "the people." Accordingly they subsidise the Christian Church—actually on grounds of self-interest, though ostensibly on grounds of principle. And the Christian Church is perfectly well aware of its own position in this arrangement. Consequently it cannot patronise the Labor movement without committing suicide. And whoever expects it to do that is quite too verdant for this grey old world. For, as a matter of fact,

nature has endowed all species of animals—including priests—with a liberal supply of the instinct of self-preservation.

Over in America the view of the capitalist class has just been clearly stated by Mr. Baer, the President of the Philadelphia and Reading Railway. This gentleman wrote as follows to a correspondent who appealed to him as a Christian to try to end the Pennsylvania Coal Strike:—

"The rights and interests of the laboring man will be protected and cared for—not by the labor agitators, but by the Christian men to whom God in His infinite wisdom has given the control of the property interests of the nation."

Of course it sounds very odd that God Almighty has given a special mission to Mr. Pierpont Morgan, and appointed Mr. Baer to the presidency of the Philadelphia and Reading Railway. Still, it is a fact if there be any truth in religion. The Christian religion plainly tells us that "not a sparrow falls to the ground" except by divine permission, and that "the hairs of our head are all numbered"—Absalom's as well as Elisha's. There is either a particular Providence or no Providence at all. For a general Providence as contradistinguished from a particular, on the admission of John Wesley, is "only a decent, well-sounding word, which means just nothing." God has, therefore—if he has done *anything*—appointed everything where and what it is; and not only every thing, but every *person*. Which is a most admirable doctrine for the "haves," and one which they naturally pay to be taught to the "have nots."

Even the three Bishops of London, Rochester, and St. Albans, who sent a letter to the Trade Union Congress—being away like other Bishops at this time of the year, holidaying in France, Italy, Germany, or the Scotch Highlands—referred to it as meeting under "the blessing and providence of Almighty God." No doubt they will be able to see Almighty God's blessing and providence. Men with palaces to live in, and princely incomes to spend, ought to have no difficulty in that respect. But it is not so easy to see God's blessing and providence when you are working hard to earn from twenty to forty shillings a week. The three Bishops did not think of this. They were foolish to write such a letter, and the Trade Union Congress showed a want of dignity in giving it a moment's consideration.

These three Bishops are three representatives of the great clerical interest for which the Government has designed the Education Bill. A discussion on this Bill took place at the Trade Union Congress. The resolution against it was moved by Mr. W. Appleton, who represented the Lace Makers of Nottingham. In the course of his speech he said:—

He had reluctantly come to the conclusion that it would be wiser not to teach religion in the schools—(loud cheers)—than to waste their strength and time in disputing as to the particular religion to be taught.

Evidently the "loud cheers" came at the wrong place—for Mr. Appleton. Yet it is gratifying, to us at least, that a number of Trade Union representatives are ready to applaud the policy of "secular education." And perhaps Mr. Appleton himself, if he studies the question more thoroughly, will come to share their opinion. The truth is that you *cannot* teach religion in the schools without disputing as to the particular religion to be taught. While religious instruction is included in the curriculum the schools inevitably become the battleground of Church and Dissent. This one item is the cause of all the quarrel. "Secular education" would be oil upon the troubled waters. Nothing would be left for the sects to fight about, the schools would fall entirely in the hands of citizens, and the thorough organization of our educational system would be simply a matter of business. Here again it is religion that blocks the way.

Mr. Appleton and the other delegates talked about "unsectarian" education; that is, unsectarian *religious* education. But from the very nature of the case there can be no such thing. Christianity itself is sectarian with respect to Buddhism, Brahmanism,

and Mohammedanism; and every denomination of Christians is sectarian with respect to every other denomination. Pure and simple "Christians" do not exist, neither does any mere "Christian" Church. There are Roman Catholics, Churchmen, Wesleyans, Presbyterians, Baptists, Congregationalists, Independents, etc., etc.,—right to the end of the long list in *Whitaker's Almanack*. But where are the "Christians"? There is no such name in the catalogue.

It is a pity that the working classes do not see more clearly how superstition—the prevalent form of which is always called religion—is the great enemy of *all* progress, including *their own*. The English working classes are behind those of the Continent in this respect. Nevertheless there are welcome signs that the younger generation are opening their eyes to the real secret of popular oppression and exploitation. That secret is popular deception; its instrument is religious education, and its agents are the priests of all denominations. Several delegates at the Trade Union Congress protested against the references to the King and the Coronation in the Parliamentary Committee's report, and we have noted the "loud cheers" which greeted Mr. Appleton's reference to the unwisdom of teaching religion in the schools. The truth is that the Age of Reason must precede the Rights of Man. Thomas Paine did not see this at first, but he soon discovered that he had begun the work of progress at the wrong end. Man is always under the dominion of his ideas. They may be few or many, true or false; but, such as they are, they rule him with sovereign authority. All institutions, social as well as political, rest upon them. And the ideas of the masses of mankind are chiefly inherited, being instilled into them by parents and teachers in their childhood. This fact is never lost sight of by the clergy; it is the key to their ardent interest in schools and education. Nor should it be lost sight of by the friends of the people, and least of all in Trade Union Congresses.

G. W. FOOTE.

On the Origin of Parsons.

THE present is what is known in the newspaper world as the "silly season." Parliament is up, the war is over, people are holiday-making, or wish they were, and the trouble is for editors of newspapers to fill up their columns in a suitable manner. One newspaper accordingly starts the topic of "Should Women Work?" another asks, "Is True Love Played Out?" One of the staff begins the correspondence, and there is always enough people afflicted with scribbleomania to keep the ball rolling. Now, I venture to suggest to editors in want of a subject, one that has long perplexed me, and one that I think would prove quite as interesting as whether men and women love as ardently as in the days of old, when knights and nobles clad in what Mark Twain called "bob-tailed iron petticoats" scoured the land—instead of their bodies—swearing devotion—to somebody else's wife, or whether a man can afford two clean collars weekly on the beggarly income of £500 a year.

Now, I have never been worried as to whether women ought to labor to keep men or not. I have never found one that would keep *me*, and so, as far as I am concerned, the question is removed beyond "the region of practical politics." Nor have I ever worked out the interesting conundrum as to how many penny 'bus fares my none too colossal income would permit without my robbing prospective grandchildren of the wherewithal to make *their* old age comfortable. I have casually noticed that when I did economise on a penny tram fare and walked, I spent three times as much on sweets (excuse the infantile weakness) during the journey, and so that question never bulked largely with me. But there is one question that has weighed upon my mind in the past, and does vex me greatly in the present. This is, *Are parsons born or are they*

made? I use the term parson in a generic sense as embracing all varieties—low, high, or broad church, dissenting or established, and would even extend the term so as to cover all classes of local preachers, who are, so to speak, parsons in embryo, and so probably form a kind of missing link that may help us to bridge the gulf between a parson and an ordinary human being.

I propound this question in all seriousness. It is one that has perplexed me, and may probably have perplexed others of an observant and reflective nature. When I was very young I regarded all parsons with a curious wonder, and identified them with the class of people who came round and collected gas accounts. When I grew older I discovered my error in this speculation, although it might reasonably be argued in its support that parsons *do* collect accounts, and these, too, are for the supply of gas. So far there are points of resemblance, but there is also an important difference. The gas supplied by the gas company illuminates. So I abandoned, or rather grew out of, this theory.

But the question as to how parsons came to be still worried me. A little light came to me when I first met the maxim that poets are born, not made. The saying was suggestive. The only apparent connection between poets and parsons is an alliterative one, but as it was an apple that suggested to Newton the theory of celestial gravitation, so the reading of that chestnut concerning poets cast a flood of light upon my knotty anthropological problem. If poets are what they are because of certain congenital peculiarities, why may not there be parsons for a similar reason? The idea haunted me. I turned to books of natural history but found nothing on the subject. The study of a whole genera seemed to have been overlooked. Literature afforded me little or no enlightenment, although, as I found Montaigne dealing with certain items of religious belief under the head of "On Cripples," I seemed to derive a little support in favor of the congenital theory. But then, again, I found Oliver Wendell Holmes suggesting that there was a religious microbe, which would be some evidence against the congenital theory; and so once more *pro* and *con* seemed about balanced.

The writings of anthropologists seemed for a time to settle the question. These gentlemen derived all the existing civilised varieties of parsons from a wild species, still in existence, which had its origin in a perfectly natural manner, and developed under conditions that are rapidly disappearing among civilised races. There has been all along what is known as a persistence of type; for, in spite of the many changes undergone by the genus parson during the course of human history, anthropologists still profess to discover among the civilised kind indubitable evidence of their affinity with savage medicine men, witch doctors, and the like. This view would, of course, tell in favor of parsons being *born*, and not made, since this would mean that the parsonic qualities are inherited, much as certain pigeons inherit the capacity for tumbling or bees for building cells and storing honey. But here it is only fair to let the parsons themselves speak; and they indignantly protest against any such description of their ancestry. Indeed, their desire seems to be to prove that they are without any ancestry, but suddenly began to be—called into being by a mysterious power of which we know absolutely nothing. And so, once again, the question remained unanswered.

In truth, whether we hold that parsons are born or that they are made, some very cogent reasons may be advanced on either side. Consider all that may be said on behalf of their being born. In the first place, their function in this world (or should we say out of this world?) is unique. A parson not here to impart any sort of useful information; he does not traffic in a commodity of which people feel the need, until they are persuaded that they do; the possession of knowledge is not essential to his office—no one dreams of consulting him on any subject on which positive information is obtainable. The sole *raison d'être* of his being is the presumed existence of

some other world than this, about which nothing is known, about which nothing apparently can be known, about which there is probably nothing to know, and about which he, at all events, knows no more than anyone else. This is the only organism known to science whose functions are, so to speak, related to a non-existent environment.

Then, again, consider the qualities he manifests—qualities so peculiar that a prominent member of the order divided the human race into men, women, and clergymen; thus putting parsons into a distinct category. A parson believes that he is called by the special grace of God to fill the post he occupies. He *knows* that his career has been selected for him, just as that of a doctor or a lawyer or a carpenter might be selected for others; he knows that influence has, in all probability, gained him the post he holds—that he would not hold it if the salary were stopped, or that he would take another were a higher salary offered. Yet, in spite of all, he *believes*—for we are bound to credit him with sincerity—that a mysterious power has selected him for the position! Again, he professes to believe a number of stories of miracles, of virgin births, of resurrections from the dead, and the like, which, for sheer improbability, outrival anything that is recorded of the famous Munchausen; and it is argued that the fact of believing these things, in the full light of twentieth-century science, argues for the existence of a capacity not possessed by human beings in general.

Nor is this all. A few weeks since, the whole of this Order were offering up prayers for the recovery of the King from appendicitis, and the Bishop of London looked over the metropolis and saw men and women bowed with grief and shaking with tears at the news of the King's illness, where the unconsecrated onlooker saw people grumbling at being disappointed of their sight-seeing, and speculators in seats swearing at their bad luck—which would, again, argue a different kind of sight, physical and mental, to that enjoyed by ordinary people. But the whole of the Order prayed for the recovery of the King; he recovered, and, with a unanimity seldom displayed they agreed that their prayers had been the cause of his recovery. They that knew some of the cleverest surgeons and physicians in Britain were in attendance on the King, that *they* ruled the sick room, that the King followed their advice, and not that of the parsons, yet they believed that it was their own supplications that had brought the King through the ordeal. An inability to recognise the logic of the plainest facts must surely count as a strong argument in favor of the parsonic qualities being congenital and not acquired. Nor must it be overlooked that, by the possession of the holy spirit, which descends to them on their ordination, the clergy themselves may be said to claim to form a distinct type.*

On the other hand, those who believe that the parson is made, and not born, admit all the facts stated above, but put upon them an entirely different interpretation. These are content to rest their case upon the effects of habit and training. Sydney Smith's classification of three sexes is set on one side by them as a mere piece of pleasantry, not to be entertained as a scientific generalisation. They admit that parsons are somewhat different to ordinary human beings *now*, their views of truth, of national development, of the treatment due to those

* In a scientific inquiry all facts and reflections may have a value, and I give the following for what it is worth. Anyone who has spent a little time watching penguins may have noticed how suggestive they are of a parson of the Established Church. Their coloring is suggestive of a surplice, and the gravity with which they sit contemplating nothing in particular, their activity when feeding time comes, the struggles of the poor eel, and the fight among them as to which shall have it, reminding one strongly of the present contest of the church and chapel as to which shall dominate public education. May not the whole thing be a case of one of those "archetypes" that used to be so popular with parsons? There is, again, a curious suggestiveness about the description of a penguin as "body elliptical, head small, bill moderately long, tail short." Modesty would cause one to describe the parsonic bill as "moderately long," the *tale* is nowadays certainly short, albeit frequent, the head—intelligence, is certainly small, and if we take "body" as the equivalent of parsonic reasoning, there is no denying its elliptical character.

who fail to agree with them, are all different; but these differences may all be explained as the result of the two factors named above. Their arguments may be summarised somewhat as follows. If we take two children of the same parents, and subject them to a widely different course of training, our results will be widely different also. If we train the one to take nothing for granted, to reject wherever there is insufficient evidence, to observe, to analyse, to classify, and to compare, we shall succeed in evolving a scientific type of individual. He may not be a Newton or a Darwin, but he will have something of the scientific cast of mind. But if we take the other and—in all probability the least mentally endowed of the two—cram him with doctrines and dogmas that have no conceivable relation to present-day knowledge, teach him that rational inquiry is the greatest of crimes and blind credulity the noblest of virtues, teach him to regard those who differ with him as little better than criminals, train him on history specially written to conceal the truth, and on science with special interpretations to disguise its meaning, and afterwards keep him during a large part of his life repeating formulas that are without meaning to himself or his hearers, we are bound to evolve qualities of a parsonic kind.

Then in addition we have to consider and allow for the power of self-deception, and of deception of another kind. So long as men of mediocre intellect find a living waiting for them in the various churches, so long we may be sure there will be no lack of applicants. Five hundred a year for preaching a doctrine is, to a great many, five hundred reasons in favor of believing it. So that there is no reason for believing that parsons are, from a natural history point of view, different to other people; they are simply acting on the maxim, "Prove all things, but hold fast to that which pays."

And, finally, there is the psychological law that one has only to say that they believe a thing a sufficient number of times, and keep all disturbing elements at arm's length, and a species of belief is inevitable. Many parsons may be in this condition—not exactly hypocrites, but believing their own stories from the fact of sheer repetition. A man who commences by deluding others thus ends by deluding himself. And so, while on the one hand we have one class explaining the existence of parsons as due to some inherited quality slowly evolved during ages of growth, on the other side we have a class who point to self-interest and unconscious deception, training and habit, as supplying all the explanation necessary.

The arguments on both sides are strong, and I must admit to a feeling of indecision in the matter. It is doubtful if the editor of the *Freethinker* would care to open his columns to a discussion of this subject. In all probability he would think *Science Gossip* or the *Anthropological Review* the fitter channel. But if only a paper like the *Times* would open its pages to the discussion, it could hardly fail to awaken universal interest. The questions for discussion are simple ones. Are the qualities that go to make up a parson congenital, or are they inherited? If the former, can they be eliminated? If the latter, are they inherited? These are the questions at issue, and their determination is fraught with much importance to anthropological and economic science.

C. COHEN.

The pastor called at a Columbus home the other day, where little Freddie, a bright youngster, is a great pet. Freddie had previously heard his mother say that the pastor was very successful in saving souls. During a pause in the conversation, Freddie, who was sitting on the pastor's knee, asked: "Do you save souls?" "Yes, Freddie," replied the man of the cloth. "Will you tell me," went on Freddie, seriously, "how many souls you got saved up?"—*Ohio State Journal*.

"Put not your trust in riches," said the clerical-looking man in the rusty coat. "I don't," replied the prosperous-looking individual. "I put my riches in trusts."—*Chicago News*.

Scribes and Pharisees.

The Bishop of Worcester, by invitation, addressed the members of the Institute of Journalists, who held their annual Conference a few days ago at Birmingham. He preached a sermon in St. Philip's Church, and his text was "Now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did your rulers."

This text was not very complimentary to his journalistic hearers, though he did not intend to apply it to them. But the selection was unfortunate, because it was so applicable. They—i.e., the members of this so-called Institute of Journalists—do many things "through ignorance," and the reason is, they are required to do them by their "rulers," the proprietors and managers of the press who know no better, or, if knowing, do not care, being mostly bent on scooping in the shekels.

The Scribes and Pharisees who conduct and supply our newspaper and periodical press, will stand a great deal of preaching at, especially from such mild censors as Dr. Gore. They deserve it; though why they should invite it and patiently endure it, is somewhat in the nature of a problem. There is not any excess of sympathy with the pulpit on the part of the press. They both pose as public teachers, but the influence in real practical life of the one as compared with the other is vastly different. While the pulpit, decade after decade, has gone down, the influence of the press in these modern days has increased with a rapidity and extensiveness which may be said to be little less than startling.

Even on the "Lord's day" the Sunday newspaper is a mightier factor than the sermon. There are, of course, people who will go to sleep over both. We cannot blame them in regard to many, and, indeed, most sermons, for they are poor stuff at best. But less people go to sleep over the Sunday newspaper; certainly they start upon it with greater avidity, and generally consume the greater portion of its contents before dropping off into the Land of Nod. There is more matter of real vital interest, more thought-inspiring narratives of every-day facts, more common sense deductions and ethical lessons, a more intimate union with the life and heart and aspirations of the nation, than is usually to be found in sermons. There is journalistic cant, no doubt, but it is not quite so much in evidence and so nauseating as the cant of the clerics and ministers of various denominations. At any rate, it is a great deal cleverer; the humbug is not quite so transparent; there is the gloss that genius can give to the meanest and barest ideas, the attractiveness which may be imparted to repugnant notions, the importance with which the most trivial incidents may be invested; the ingeniously specious, but still fallacious conclusions which may be drawn from great Imperial or national events. But through all there is, at any rate, the manifestation of striking ability as compared with the deadly dull stupidity of the average pulpit.

The press is open—much too open—to the imputation of misleading by exaggeration—by amplification with imaginary details, by the eternal striving after sensationalism instead of the purveying of sober truth. Still, there is not so much ground for serious complaint even on that score, when the whole matter is fairly investigated. Dr. Gore admitted that newspapers, in communicating what was going on in the world, did so "with astonishing efficiency." The Rev. Jowett, who also preached to the journalists, paid his tribute to "the amazing resources, the broad outlook, the sagacity and skill, of the daily press." It seems ungracious not to return the compliment; but possibly there are few journalists, outside the small minority who belong to particular sects, who would be inclined to speak in similar terms of pulpit efforts.

However, through the tenacious orthodoxy of its Council, the Institute of Journalists is condemned at every Conference to sit, as it were, at the feet of the men of God. Therefore it is rather refreshing that the Bishop of Worcester could find no other or better

text to preach from than: "Now, brethren, I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did your rulers." He had nothing to say which was particularly edifying or striking. He said the press served one great office—that of representing average opinion, political, social, municipal, commercial, religious. This is true; but it is only half the truth. For the press not only represents opinion, but creates it—and that, too, in a much wider and more effective fashion than the pulpit. The fact is, the pulpit is not even reflective of present-day opinion. It is admittedly far behind it. It does not lead; it lags with dilatory dulness in the rear. It has to be dragged to points long previously reached by the world at large; and, when at length it does arrive, it seems to be dazed, and is practically good for nothing as an influencing factor.

Let us imagine for a moment the bulk of present-day clerics being transferred to newspaper offices, and set to work on daily up-to-date journals. Where would they be? Their weekly dose of platitudes, raked up in many instances from old-fashioned sermons, would be of no avail. They would be forced to make some intellectual effort, and would immediately begin to complain of their lot as being that of the most overworked class in the kingdom. Many, perhaps most of them, would break down under the exacting requirements and strain, especially in regard to rapidity of work. Though the Church offers more tempting baits in the way of fat stipends and social status, it commands far fewer men of real capability than the press has constantly secured. Nor is it likely to enlist the higher and keener kind of intellect until it exhibits in itself a more progressive spirit and a closer adaptation to the needs of the times.

Dr. Gore, in his sermon, gave a sketch of the religious and political state of Palestine at the time when Christ is said to have appeared, and indicated the lines that would have been taken by the editors of journals representing the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and popular Jewish interests. It is rather like venturing on dangerous ground to begin conjecturing what would have happened in regard to the relations between Christ and the Press—especially the Press as run on modern lines. To begin with we should have had something like a picture of Christ as he really was, if he ever existed at all. We should know with something like exactness, the incidents of his life and work. There would be a number of descriptions and biographies in which we should have the whole man and his surroundings portrayed. Instead of the skimpy, meagre narratives of the Gospels, there would be columns of detailed information covering minutely his whole career. What would be of still more importance, there would be verbatim reports of his utterances, such as there are of Mr. Gladstone's, to which reference could be made, and from which it would be possible to obtain a clear, comprehensive, accurate idea of his teaching. What a lot of controversy—what heaps of doubts and difficulties might have been saved if we had had full and accurate and authentic reports of his sermons, addresses, and incidental observations. We have tons of twaddle uttered by Talmage and Spurgeon and others of that ilk; yet only short, fragmentary reports of a portion of the utterances of Christ, their Lord and Master. Divine Omniscience and Omnipotence might have been expected to arrange things better than that. As it is, either Christ seems to have come too soon or present-day journalism too late. It would be productive of some amusing features if we let the imagination run loose on what might happen if Christ turned up in our midst for the first time, and the Press—with its verbatims, pictorial sketches, interviews, pen and ink descriptions, etc.—had to deal with him after its modern methods. Would he be anything like the Christ of the Gospels? Would he appear greater or less?

FRANCIS NEALE.

Despotism is the punishment of the bad conduct of men. If a community is mastered by one man or by several, it is plainly because it has not the courage and ability necessary for self-government.—*Voltaire*.

The Veiled Woman.

THE picture haunted me. At night, it passed and re-passed before my eyes. Never was a more awful monster. It was more ghastly than the figure of death.

Yet the four words under the picture were simple enough. They were these: "Persian female outdoor costume."

One could see nothing at all of the woman, unless it was her insteps, which peeped above the pointed sandals. A black cap fitted closely to the head. A white veil fell from the cap to the chest, a perforated linen band permitting the eyes to look out upon the world. An immense cloak, puffed out in heavy and ugly folds, invested the figure from the neck almost to the ankles, the wide sleeves and the lower border being slightly trimmed with white frilling. The Oriental trousers appeared like two melons, round and striped. The hands were tucked in. It was a woman, and yet almost a corpse. The living creature—if such it was—was hidden in a tomb. Persia has decreed that woman shall have a body without a mind, and give birth to babes, but never to ideas.

This concealment of womanhood under a veil of contempt and barbarism has suggested to me the enslavement of the human mind.

The enslavement is of three chief kinds— theological, political, and economic. (1) Theological. The God of the soul of civilisation is an old doctrine that sits enthroned in a chair of wormwood and robed in mildew. Ideas that should have received honorable interment centuries ago still dominate the imagination of the West. I went into a village church the other Sunday. Under a canopy sat a nobleman and his family. A few feet distant were placed the more genteel members of the village community. Behind were grouped the commoners, including me. So here we were—all castes and orders, social and intellectual, gathered for the exercises of religion. And we opened our prayer-books; and what did we chant? With the organ to assist us, we sang the psalms of the Jews; we sang of Zion, Babylon, the horns of the altar, the house of David, and the blessedness of Abraham's seed. These subjects had not the most slender connection with our farming, poultry-yards, arts, crafts, professions, and social progress. Our experiences were in Yorkshire, and our talk was of Jerusalem. And thus it is all through the religious life of the day. The world's work and interests lie on one plane, its theological conceptions on another, and the dreams of a by-gone age dominate our intellect and our heart. (2) Political. Whether under a monarchy or a republic, the modern mind still prefers subjection to freedom. We bow to royalty, presidents, aristocracies, money-lords, arrogant cliques. This man passes—we fear; that man passes—we suppress the utterance of our thought. Society is a mansion, with the gentry in the hall, and the servants humbly dwelling in the kitchen and sculleries. Immense armies of men and women in towns and villages live a narrow and besotted life because they dare not face their governors and demand more wholesome conditions. (3) Economic. On the one side we see spangled indolence; on the other, smutted toil. Indolence drinks from the crystal cup, and toil from the tin pot. The castle of indolence smiles across flower-beds and parks, the house of toil makes a horrid shadow over the foul alley. An intelligent, organised resistance to these incongruities would end them in ten years. But the slavery will go on. For the present, its rule is as safe as that of the King, of the insincere politician, and of God.

Well, the people love to have it so. Cynical observers sometimes shrug their shoulders and declare that things had better be let alone, and the masses must bear the consequences of their ignorance. But the shrug is a poor way of meeting the world's problems, and only inhuman natures are satisfied

with it. The rich cannot remove the slavery even if they would, and their vested interests are bound up with the maintenance of the present system of submission. When passing through a Yorkshire village the other day, I heard that the local landowner was very charitable to the poor on his estate. Yes, but he paid very low wages, and his charity was but a wretched supplement to his stunted wage-list. And this case is a type of our industrial condition at its best. Poverty complains; it continues to work; it sleeps; it complains again, but it does not rise in a passion of protest. It cannot. It is held down by an invisible bond; and the invisible bonds are the most difficult to get rid of. The rich themselves are victims of a bad order. They have not now half the manly joy in life which they would realise if they stood on a fraternal level with their fellows. They do not know the beauty of art, literature, music, and festival as they would know it in a commonwealth of peers. They have a slum-life of their own, only it is a moral and intellectual slum. These words may seem harsh, but I believe there is no vice in human experience so deep and fatal as luxurious living next door to the house of poverty. It is anarchy of the most ghastly type; and, if the Devil were a real personage, he would incarnate himself, not as a repulsive Caliban, but as a rich man sitting at ease in sight of the weeping and the starving.

The root-evil of slavery is ignorance (that is, want of trained wit and feeling), and the best friend of modern ignorance is theology. I say "modern," because I consider that theology has had distinct and profound uses in periods now past. But theology is committing the stupid sin of staying where it is not wanted. It pretends to govern a people whom it does not understand, and to administer a world of which it possesses only antiquated maps and directories. It is a complete political failure; it cannot manage our work-a-day business, or control and coordinate our immense activities. And yet we allow it to remain as the Lord-Rector of our philosophy and religion. We allow it to obtrude its solemn fussiness into the most sacred apartments, and chatter its meaningless dogmas while we try to frame a rational conception of human history, duty, and prospects. Our true being, with its pulsing loves and hopes, its brave faculties and abundant powers, is cribbed within an old-world casing. Like the Persian woman, we are swathed in the garments of the slave.

To release the human spirit from its bondage is now the prime mission of the valiant. This mission may involve martyrdom, but it calls for higher gifts than those of the martyr. A martyr displays self-devotion; and that is good. But the task of the emancipation of the human mind demands qualities of a yet finer tone. We need the educational patience which will be content to build up ideas, to repeat, to illustrate. We need the alertness which will seize upon opportunities in speech, the press, the meeting, and the local government bodies, for the propaganda of a more rational method of thinking. We need the pertinacity which follows the ideal through mire, thicket, wilderness, or hostile camp.

Look at the difficulties. Look at the obstinate creeds, the prejudices of caste and party, the jealousies of capital and labor, the sullenness or vulgarity of large masses of the people whom we desire to redeem. But does not the very sight of these difficulties inflame the heart of the man who knows that the world's salvation depends on the rationalising of its life and institutions? To the brave man every error is an invitation to attack. When he catches sight of the bulwarks of reaction, when he sees the ramparts of dead formulæ, the towers of stupidity and serfdom, the conservative schools, colleges, churches, universities that rise, tier on tier, in defence of established fallacy, he takes inspiration from the menace of the fortress, and, without waiting for the sound of the bugle, he proudly eyes the opposing force and advances.

F. J. GOULD.

Acid Drops.

EMPEROR WILLIAM soon rushed off his telegram to President Roosevelt. It was a clear case of providential interposition. The Kaiser says so, and that ought to settle it. Far be it from us to dispute it. What we wish to say is, that if Providence saved the President, it (or he or she) just as certainly killed or injured the rest of the party on the motor-car.

There are some few military men in France who are not carried away by the "Church and Army" craze. General André, for instance, the War Minister, spoke not long ago at the unveiling of the memorial to Auguste Comte, and spoke in praise of the founder of Positivism. General Saussier, once Governor of Paris, and looked upon as the necessary man in case the Socialists had to be put down, is now living in retirement. He wished before dying to revisit the Eastern scenes of his early military life, and his wish has just been gratified. "My poor old eyes," he says, "were drowned in tears as I reflected on the vanity of that Crimean war in the different places where tumuli might be made with the bones of French soldiers. My one consolation was to see how well the tombs are looked after. Fresh flowers lay on some of them. I came away reflecting that the world would be much happier but for statesmen and their plans, and that it is a great pity that France and Russia shake hands across the graves of a multitude of brave soldiers."

The French are ahead of us in naming public thoroughfares after great men; also in the matter of statues to commemorate the illustrious sons of the fatherland. Renan is to have his statue at Trégier, his birthplace, in Brittany; and the municipality has also decided to have a Renan-street in the town. But this has not been allowed to pass without a protest. The Catholic parish priest has written an indignant letter to the Mayor. "Do you not think," he says, "that a street bearing the name of the apostate will become odious and nobody will want to live in it. For my part I can assure you that as long as I live no procession shall pass through it, nor shall the Holy Sacrament ever be carried near the square upon which its insult will stand." How the great Renan would smile at this letter if he could read it! That parish priest is devoid of humor, or he would never play the fool so publicly. It does not occur to him that neither Renan, who is dead, nor anyone else who is living will be a single *sous* the worse for this ridiculous threat concerning the Holy Sacrament.

Freemasons are a very harmless lot of persons in England, but they are terrible persons in the Catholic parts of Europe. A German Catholic paper, the *Marienboten*, relates a wonderful story of a certain convent. Unseen hands filled glasses with water, scattered flowers about the rooms, and caused much other disturbance. The lady superior said her prayers and counted her beads, but the demons went on with their larks. At length it was discovered that a daughter of a Freemason was among the pupils. She was expelled, and the demons ceased to trouble the establishment. So goes the story, and it is too silly for anything. Surely, if the demons knew their business, they would have kept quiet, and allowed that Freemason's daughter to go on doing the work of Satan, instead of getting her turned out, and thus upsetting their own and their master's interests.

A remarkable scene of religious folly took place the other day at a Clapton Church. The conventicle is called the Church of the Ark of the Covenant, and is the home of the Agapemmonites, of whom some description has appeared in these columns. The sect was founded about forty years ago by Brother Prince, who gathered round him a number of wealthy spinsters and established what he called the "Abode of Love," a luxuriously furnished and secluded residence at Spaxton, near Bridgewater, Somersetshire. Here some scandals arose, and subsequently the "Abode" was closed and the handsome edifice at Clapton was erected at a cost of £1,600. Brother Prince died in 1899, and his successor is the Rev. J. H. Smyth Pigott. This gentleman on Sunday last solemnly declared himself to be the Messiah—the veritable Lord Jesus Christ once more upon earth.

Such a declaration from a tall, cadaverous man with "eyes of fire" and the prosaic name of Piggott, might have been supposed to be received as the delirious utterance of a religious fanatic. But it seems that one after another of his congregation—men and women—rose up and recognised him as the Lord Jesus Christ, whose advent they had been awaiting. They fell down and worshipped him. His strange declaration is said to have been uttered "in a soft musical voice," and when he had concluded he slowly walked back to his "throne," where he sat for a time with his head buried in his hands. After this there was silence until a well-

dressed woman got up in the centre of the congregation. „Every word he has spoken,” she said, “God has spoken. God is here. I can see him on the altar.” An old grey-bearded man got up and said, “Behold, that is Christ.” One man fell down convulsively on his knees, his eyes full of tears, and dragging his wife on to her knees with him, said, “God, Annie, that is Jesus.” After other testimonies, the Lord Jesus in the person of Mr. Piggott, rose from his throne and in majestic tones said, “Peace! Peace be with you.”

One of the lady supporters of the Clapton “Ark of the Covenant”—Brother Prince and his successor seem to have exercised a wonderful influence over wealthy ladies—declares that she had observed a change coming over Mr. Piggott for some time past. The change is described as a gradual melting away of Piggott, and the absorption of his physical frame by the returned Savior. The church was closed some time ago, as we mentioned in these columns, without any reason being vouchsafed to the outside world. Apparently during the recess the incarnation has been at work. We are not surprised to hear that the transformation has been accompanied by considerable physical suffering on the part of Mr. Piggott. This, no doubt, was the reason Mr. Piggott, who occupies a handsome house on Clapton Common, was not “at home” to callers on the following day.

Except for one fact, it might be supposed that the transformation of Piggott is but an imitation of Old Dowie's pretence that he is the Prophet Elijah. This one fact is found in the veiled assurances, years ago, of Mr. Piggott's predecessor, Brother Prince, that the advent of Christ was imminent, and that he (Brother Prince) had been chosen as the physical form in which the Messiah would reappear on earth. Prince was, indeed, regarded as the Messiah, and was supposed to be immortal until a common sort of complaint ended in his death. Now Mr. Piggott has stepped into his shoes.

The most surprising thing about these religious impostures is not that men can be found to attempt them, but that educated and otherwise rational people can be found to support them, and to exhibit every evidence of being firmly convinced.

The Pope—representative of Peter, the poor fisherman—has been made the recipient of a magnificent gift. Count Adami has presented him with a villa near Chicti and a number of valuable works of art. The money value of this superb present is estimated at £200,000.

Canon Patteson, who was eighty-eight years of age, dropped down dead while addressing the members of a Bible class from the steps of his house at Norwich. It is easy to understand why the exertion should have killed him; but Providence, who watches the sparrows that fall, might have arranged for the poor old gentleman to die comfortably in his bed.

Mrs. Bridges-Adams is reported to have said, in a recent lecture at Newcastle, that the Government had an understanding with the National Union of Teachers as to its Education Bill. She stated that she knew this as a fact. Money, she added, was the sole and simple aim of the Teachers' Union, and the Government had taken this into account in aiming a blow at popular control. We should be sorry to believe that this is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth; though we do not desire to cast a doubt upon Mrs. Bridges-Adams' veracity. She may think she is telling the simple truth, and yet be mistaken. If, however, she is nearer the truth than we should like to believe, the fact would be another proof of the danger that may lie in large and widespread combinations of public servants. By acting all, and always, together, they can produce results out of all proportion to their real strength and importance. Very often their votes, and the votes they directly influence, are sufficient to turn the scale at elections.

Mr. W. E. Garrett Fisher, who writes “Hours in a Library” in the *Daily News*, has made the discovery that “it is ‘dreadful true,’ that there is no hymn ever written in English or German which can be placed on the same poetic level as the finest love-songs of Burns, Shelley, or Heine.” Of course not. Whoever thought otherwise? Has not religion been called the poetry of unpoetical minds? To expect a hymn to have as much poetical merit as a love-song is to expect an absurd impossibility. Anyone who goes through Palgrave's two “Golden Treasuries,” the secular and the sacred, will be struck by the comparatively mediocre poetry of the latter collection.

Klopstock, the German Milton (“Yes,” said Coleridge, “a very German Milton”), was once asked by some devotees to

explain the meaning of a certain stanza. He read it over and over again, and then admitted that he couldn't make head or tail of it. Jacob Boehme, the shoemaker and mystic, was asked on his deathbed to expound a difficult passage in his writings. “My dear children,” he replied, “when I wrote this I understood its meaning, and no doubt the omniscient God did. He may still remember its meaning, but I have forgotten.” This is as good as the *ben trovato* story of the dying Hegel, who exclaimed: “There is only one man living who understands my system—and he doesn't.”

Cracks are said to have appeared in the southern portico of St. Paul's Cathedral. There have been perceptible cracks in the creed preached there for some time past. Is it generally known that the cathedral, like Christianity itself, is built on a quicksand? A Christian paper, a little time ago, averred that such was the real basis of the structure.

Mr. Hall Caine, out of the stores of his profound and extensive knowledge, assures us that the Church and dramatists have almost always been on very good terms. The Church—meaning thereby the Roman Catholic Church—has been the friend of the drama in nearly all ages and centuries. This is rather a rash assertion. It may at one time have patronised mysteries and miracle-plays, but it certainly has not in later times been any friend of the drama. Cardinal Manning's *Le Sacerdoce Eternel* (Paris, 1891) sets forth a decree of the Council of Westminster, which absolutely prohibits ecclesiastics attending scenic representations in public theatres on pain of suspension. Cardinal Manning describes this prohibition as “wise and salutary,” and hopes it will be adhered to. It has been further pointed out that speeches of the late Pope Pius IX. (French authorised edition, vol. i., pp. 53, 97, and 337) condemned the Italian drama.

A writer quoted by the *Christian Age* gives a pretty fair account of the so-called conversions of Chinese to Christianity. He says that while staying at Peking some few months ago, he had a long chat with an educated, official Chinaman. Here is a part of the conversation:—“Is Christianity making much progress in this section?” I next asked. “No, and it ought not to.” “Why?” I ventured to inquire. “Oh, you have nothing to teach us in the matter of religion. Our own religion is much better than yours.” “But,” I persisted, “some of your natives do become Christians.” “Always from ulterior motives,” he rejoined. “If I could get a sufficiently better paying position than I now have, I might become a Christian. If by becoming a Christian I could marry a wealthy foreigner, I might do it. There would have to be a good inducement.”

Poor China! The Lord is plaguing her with cholera, and the Lord's friends are plaguing her with all sorts of things. The very missionaries are on the rampage again. They insist on having their own way, and when they pay the natural penalty of their folly a cry is raised for “retribution.” Messrs. Lewis and Bruce, the two missionaries who were killed recently in Chen-Chan, seem to have courted massacre. The Prefect asked them to come to the Yamen for protection, but they refused to leave the mission. This kind of insolent fanaticism has wrought untold evil in China.

According to a paragraph in the *Morning Leader*, “an Atheist lecturer” of Connecticut, has offered a piece of land worth 500 dollars to the local Methodist Church for the use of the Church pulpit for ten hours (not at a stretch) to lecture on Atheism. The lecturer is convinced that he will make converts. Probably he would, but who is this Atheist lecturer, and why does he help the Methodist Church when he might just as well have hired a hall? He is not sure that the Methodist congregation will more readily attend his lectures at their Church than if they were delivered elsewhere.

Christians have a good deal to learn from Jews in many things. Infant mortality, for instance, is much lower amongst the Chosen People than it is amongst the Nazarenes. In Manchester the death-rate among children up to one year is 198 per thousand, but in the district of Cheetham, which is largely occupied by Jews, the rate is but 124—less than two-thirds of the average. The vital statistics of New York tell a similar story. The average death-rate there is 18.53, but the death-rate is only 15.92 in the densely-populated wards which are largely inhabited by Russian Jews; while in two wards where the population is almost exclusively Jewish the figures sink to 14.52 and 14.23. One factor in the case is the superiority of the Jews in the matter of temperance.

The Church Missionary Society has received another anonymous gift—this time one of £2,000. Pious people certainly do seem to “shell out.” Perhaps it is with the expectation that their offerings to the Lord will be returned

a hundredfold hereafter. The C.M.S., like other missionary organisations, mourns a falling-off in the number of suitable candidates for the foreign field. But the C.M.S. will probably survive this lack of embryonic missionaries as long as handsome bequests and donations continue to roll in.

A remarkable case of superstition is reported from the Greek province of Elis, where, the *Asty*, of Athens, states, the grave of a peasant at Retention, who had been dead two years, but was fabled to emerge nightly in the form of a serpent, to devour the flocks, was smashed open recently in the dead of the night by the populace, with many rites and exorcisms. His bones were scattered all over the countryside, and the coffin and grave destroyed. Such cases are said to be far from uncommon in Greece.

Rev. C. H. Kelly, who has had some experience of chaplaincy work among prisoners, says that the most beautiful specimens of human innocence to be found out of Paradise are confined in gaols—if you are to believe the personal testimony of convicted scoundrels and of astute hypocrites. He suggests to novices at the work that they need not preach always to prisoners on the Prodigal Son. They have heard of him before. Probably the Rev. Kelly thinks, though he does not say so, some lurid pictures of perdition might prove more salutary. But really prison chaplains are mostly regarded by prisoners as pious "mugs," to be fooled and made use of—and many of them are only too ready to be so deluded.

Apparently there is a fair number of Methodist prisoners in Wandsworth Gaol, where the Rev. Kelly has recently undertaken duty. He says: "It was very touching to see the pleasure of some when they found that they were face to face with 'one of our own ministers.' I had a talk with them all. In age they ranged from twenty-five to fifty-three. It was curious that I had preached in every chapel from which they came, and knew somebody whose name I could mention, known to them in their various circuits." The Rev. Kelly, according to this rather naive statement, does not seem to have preached to much purpose.

The beautiful state of easy-going obfuscation in which many rural clerics are content to live may be realised from a letter signed "A Country Rector" and published in the *Rock*. This rector has heard of the Higher Criticism, and writes to thank the editor of the *Rock* for drawing attention to a shilling book which purports to be a reply. He says it is "one of the cheapest shillingsworth's I know of." Evidently he appreciates it. "It has," he says, "greatly relieved my mind, for after what I had heard recently from a friend of the condition of Oxford, as one of the most honored of our cradles of learning, I confess to having been considerably perturbed." What a shame to disturb such a placid soul! Really the information might have been withheld. He adds: "I have been too busy with men and things now for some time to permit of my devoting much attention to the Higher Criticism as it is designated." Probably so; a country rector often finds some occupation more congenial than that which concerns his own calling. Pigs, poultry, or bees are profitable when you give your attention to them. As for the Higher Criticism—a shilling book in reply is sufficient, especially when you confess you practically know nothing about the subject except what you have casually heard from a friend.

Gateshead Town Council—to their credit—have declined to stop the performances of music in Saltwell Park on Sunday evenings, against which deputations from the local Free Church Council protested. Have the Free Church Council nothing better to do?

In the eyes of the Sabbatarians the downfall of Scotland has begun. What with cycling, boating, steamer and brake excursions, and other Sunday recreations that take people away from the holy kirk, it is clear that the old Caledonian landmarks are being shifted or submerged. Even the pious city of Dumfries has been invaded by the spirit of Sabbath desecration. The Volunteers' band is actually playing in the Park by permission of the Parks Committee. The local *Standard* is certain that it will interfere with Church attendance. Very likely! But that only means that some Dumfries folk have been going to kirk for the want of something better.

The front page article of the *British Weekly*, as usual, contains some very frank admissions. Take the following in last week's issue: "At the present moment, one of the great causes, real or alleged, of being 'offended in Christ,' is the uncertainty which seems to many to hang around the whole story of his life. Who wrote the Gospels? It is not certain. When were they written? It is not certain. How close do

they bring us in point of time to the events which they purport to record? It is not possible to give a precise answer. How far do they represent the mind of Christ as it was in itself, giving us the very words that he spoke, and how far the mind of Christ as it had come to be in the mind of his disciples, inflected, modified, adapted by and to new circumstances and experiences—interpreted by his Spirit perhaps, but really interpreted, and therefore not in the strict and literal sense historical? Once more it is impossible to draw a clear line. There are hundreds of such problems."

No doubt there are; and these "problems" are quite sufficient to account for people becoming, as the writer says, "impatient and irritable when the Gospels are spoken of as religious authorities."

Lord Halsbury's retirement from the Woolsack has been rumored so frequently that it has become like a cry of "Fire!" in a street where it is often heard without anything happening. A man does not leave £10,000 a year in a hurry, and there never was any hurry about our Lord Chancellor. He worked hard in a way to get the Chancellorship, and it must be allowed that he has made the most of it, for himself and all his relatives. Some of his work was rather dirty in its way. He carried on the legal baiting of Bradlaugh, and conducted the prosecution of the *Freethinker*. We do not know of any other striking achievement to be placed to his credit.

"Remember," said a parson, "our communion service next Sunday. The Lord is with us in the forenoon and the bishop in the evening." It was not the same man of God, but another, who wound up his prayer as follows:—"And now, O Lord, bless the lambs of this fold and make them meet for the Kingdom of Heaven."

A latitudinarian Dean whose thirst for information makes him the dread of the society in which he moves, recently catechised one of the Siamese Princes about the religion of Siam. The Prince replied that it was Buddhist. "Yes," replied the Dean, "I know that Buddhism is the religion of the common people. But what is the religion of the upper and educated classes?" "Ah!" replied the Prince, with an engaging smile, "we are what you call Broad Church. We profess to believe and do not." The catechism was brought to an abrupt conclusion.—*Manchester Guardian*.

A London evening newspaper reports that "A pittite at the Savoy last night was seen diligently reading during the period between the acts a copy of the *Methodist Times*." Mr. Price Hughes, the editor of that journal, would probably say that the Savoy reader was taking the bane and the antidote together.

How these Christians love one another! Such is the *St. James's Gazette's* heading of a report from Tientsin. It appears that the French have been trying to include within their Settlement the properties of the London Missionary Society, the Methodist New Connexion, the American Board of Commissioners, and the Methodist Episcopal Mission. The French Consul actually stopped the construction of buildings inside the compound of the last-named body. Thereupon the American Consul hoisted the United States flag on the buildings, and the French Consul threatened to hoist his flag above the American colors. Altogether it was a very pretty object lesson in Christian brotherly love to the Heathen Chinese, who doubtless enjoyed it immensely.

The Rev. Algernon Stafford O'Brien, rector of Semer, Ipswich, took a suicidal holiday at Ilfracombe, where he alcoholised and nicotised himself to death. The coroner's jury brought in a verdict accordingly. There is no moral to this story, of course; but there would have been one if the person involved had been a Freethought lecturer instead of a Church parson.

Christianity is still going strong in Australia, in spite of the gallant efforts of our old friend and colleague, Mr. Joseph Symes, in the *Liberator*. We read that last Sunday was observed as a day of humiliation and prayer for rain in all the Australian churches. The Colonies boast of their intelligence, but when it comes to religion they are just as silly as the Mother Country. Fancy, at this time of day, trying to stop the drought by incantations!

Nonconformists are apeing the follies of older Churches. They are starting a special order of friars at Westminster, to be called the "Brothers of the Common Life." The rule of St. Francis of Assisi will be taken as a model, and the distinctive dress will consist of a black gown and cape. The leader of this superstitious effort is the Rev. Richard Westrope.

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

Sunday, September 14, Athenæum Hall, 73 Tottenham Court-road, London, W.: "Marie Corelli's Miraculous Masterpiece."

September 21, Liverpool; 28, Birmingham. October 5, Glasgow; 12 and 19, Athenæum Hall; 26, Manchester; November 9, Camberwell.

To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—September 14, a., Victoria Park.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.
- A. WALLER.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops." We are always glad to receive cuttings that may serve as the occasion for a paragraph.
- W. P. BALL.—Your batches of cuttings are always very welcome.
- J. H. WATERS.—Pleased to hear from you again. We reciprocate your good wishes.
- W. C. INGLIS.—The matter has already been the subject of a paragraph in our columns. The alleged Atheist's name, however, comes to us now with the force of novelty. We have not noticed the name of Thaddeus Peck as that of an Atheist lecturer in our American exchanges. If we see a reference to the matter in any of them, it shall have attention in "Acid Drops" or elsewhere.
- THOMAS MARTIN.—Glad to see that the Glasgow magistrate has dismissed the case against Mr. O'Shaughnessy for causing "obstruction" by lecturing in Bath-street. Actual obstruction can always be proved by evidence, but theoretical obstruction is a mere fancy of the police. What they mean, generally speaking, is that they don't personally like what is going on. A Freethought meeting of fifty people obstructs; a Christian meeting of five hundred doesn't. It all depends on the "slop."
- CONSTANT READER.—Sorry we cannot tell you the private facts you ask for respecting the late Bishop Fraser. There is a Life of him in existence, we believe, but we haven't the leisure or the interest to hunt it up.
- TOM PACEY.—See paragraph. Glad to hear that Mr. Ward's visit to Liverpool was so successful.
- H. THOMPSON.—Much obliged. See paragraph.
- W. A. HILL.—Another copy has been posted to you. Papers will sometimes go astray in the Post Office.
- W. HUNT.—Rather beyond our scope in this journal.
- H. W. R. ELSLEY.—(1) That Christian Evidence lecturer's statement as to the Hospital Sunday Fund is romantic. (2) We are not aware that Secular Societies, as such, do anything towards "reclaiming drunkards." As a rule, that is not a very profitable occupation. Sensible people think prevention is better than cure. Drunkenness is a form of sensuality, and the only real remedy for sensuality is thought. The more a man thinks the less sensual he will be. This is a physical and mental necessity. Secular Societies, therefore, help to prevent intemperance by giving people something to think about. (3) Thanks for your good wishes.
- JOHN SMITH.—We agree with you as to the importance of the "soul" or "spirit" question. It is the beginning and end of all religion. And it has not been neglected in the *Freethinker*. Mr. Cohen has been writing upon it recently. Other contributors have dealt with it from time to time.
- H. HETCHER and OLD SUBSCRIBER.—In our next.
- R. JOHNSON (Manchester) sends a subscription to the Camberwell Fund, and says: "I should be very sorry if this Branch failed for the sake of £50. It has done good work for the cause, and it would be a disgrace to the London Freethinkers if the £50 were not raised."
- M. E. PEGG.—See paragraph. You will see the date is booked in our list.
- THE CAMBERWELL FUND.—W. W. Pearse, 5s.; R. Johnson, £1; J. T. Embleton, 10s.; T. Shore, 5s.
- PAPERS RECEIVED.—Newtownards Chronicle—Freidenker—Two Worlds—Truthseeker (New York)—Torch of Reason—Leeds Daily News—Dumfries Standard—Crescent—Blue Grass Blade—St. James's Gazette—Zoophilist—Public Opinion—Yorkshire Evening Post—Sun.
- 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.
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Sugar Plums.

SUMMER came on out of due season on Sunday, and the Sunday League started its Concerts at the Alhambra and elsewhere. Still, there was a good audience at the Athenæum Hall, and Mr. Foote's lecture was much enjoyed and warmly applauded. This evening (Sept. 14) he lectures again from the same platform. His subject will be "Marie Corelli's Miraculous Masterpiece." Freethinkers should tell their friends and acquaintances of this lecture. It would be likely to interest them.

The holiday season is always a bad time for financial appeals; still, there ought to be a better response to our appeal on behalf of the Camberwell Branch. The sum of £50 is wanted to enable this Branch, which has kept open a Secular Hall for twenty years without outside help, to clear off a debt contracted during the depression caused by the South African War, and to face the winter's work with something in hand. Only a small part of the £50 has reached us yet. The remainder should be forthcoming immediately.

The British Association for the Advancement of Science is now meeting for the second time at Belfast. The first time it met there was in 1874, when Professor Tyndall delivered that magnificent Address, summing up the history and teaching of Evolution, and flinging a challenge into the ranks of Orthodoxy. Science has made great progress since then, but (in this country at least) it no longer produces splendid fighters for philosophic truth. It lies too much under the taint of "respectability." There may be a change, however, before long; and a man, or a few men, may arise to renew the iconoclastic work of Tyndall, Huxley, and Clifford.

Once more we beg to draw attention to the Freethought Publishing Company's advertisement of the Dresden Edition of the Works of the late Colonel Ingersoll. This beautiful edition, in twelve volumes, of the greatest of modern Freethought orators, can be purchased on the instalment system. The whole set is sent along to the purchaser, carriage free, on receipt of the first payment of ten shillings. Subsequent payments of ten shillings per month have to be made until the bill is settled. But there is no waiting for the volumes. The purchaser holds them, and enjoys the use of them, all the time that he is paying for them, as well as afterwards.

Freethinkers who care to call at our publishing office can see and handle these Ingersoll volumes, and decide for themselves whether we are exaggerating their appearance and value. We invite the "saints" to pay the place a visit for this object. Even if they find at the sticking point that they cannot afford the purchase there will be no harm done on either side.

Mr. H. Percy Ward has been conducting a Freethought Mission at Liverpool. It lasted for eight days, during which he delivered eleven lectures—three indoors, and the rest at the Wellington Monument. These outdoor meetings were a great success, the audiences being attentive and orderly, in marked contrast to the meetings held by Christians in various parts of the city. One result of Mr. Ward's work is an accession of new members to the Liverpool Branch.

Mr. H. Percy Ward opens the lecture season at the Manchester Secular Hall next Sunday (Sept. 21). The improved train service ought to help the assembly of good audiences on this occasion. Better meetings than usual would be an excellent encouragement to the committee at the beginning of their winter's work.

The Young Men's Handbook and Diary, published at Southport for the Young Men's Christian Association, devotes a page to the "return visit" of the Rev. W. T. Lee, of Cardiff, which is to take place in November. There is one testimonial to Mr. Lee's merit as a speaker and debater—and one testimonial only; and that one is by "Mr. G. W. Foote, Editor of the *Freethinker*." They appear to think a good deal of Mr. Foote and the *Freethinker* at Southport.

Mr. W. Heaford is off to Geneva, where he is representing the National Secular Society at the International Freethought Congress. We hope to be able to publish some report of the proceedings.

"It may be truly said of Rudolf Virchow that he was no respecter of things or persons. He never hesitated to speak his mind on any subject that came before him, and when an opportunity to relieve his feelings was not supplied by circumstances, he deliberately created it, availing himself of his position as Professor of Physiology and Director of the Pathological Institute of Berlin to lecture on subjects with

which physiology and pathology had no connection whatever. Thus he publicly delivered addresses in which he declared himself an Atheist and Materialist, and laid himself out to prove the non-existence of hell and the Devil, saying on one occasion with reference to the so-called Prince of Darkness, that 'only a benighted Mecklenburg pastor could be so foolish as to believe in him.'—*Westminster Gazette*.

Here and there a Christian missionary tells the truth. The Rev. Thomas Protherhoe, of China, who returns to his mission sphere next month, has had twenty years' service there, during which time he has seen many changes. He speaks well of the Chinese with whom he has had to deal, and has cause for thankfulness for the large sleeves worn by them. Ten years ago, while he and his colleague were away from home, a riot took place, and his station was burned. In the confusion, his wife and children and others fled to a place of safety; but one little girl of his became separated from the others. She was discovered by one of his native servants, who put her inside his tunic, with her head resting in one sleeve and her legs in the other, and thus her life was saved.

Philip James Bailey, the author of *Festus*, has just died in his native city of Nottingham at the ripe old age of eighty-six. There is nothing here for tears or regret, for all men are mortal. This much, at any rate, should be said of the deceased. If he was not exactly a great poet, he had a lot of poetry in his composition; and it was something to be a Universalist in 1839, the date of the first edition of *Festus*. In spite of the orthodox ideas of everlasting hell which were then almost universal, he held that finite man could not justly be made to suffer infinite penalties. Like Tennyson and Browning afterwards, he taught that God would ultimately bring every sinner home to heaven, saved and perfected. This may be just as much conjecture as any other idea in the fertile field of religious belief; but, conjecture for conjecture, it is preferable to the shocking doctrine of general and eternal damnation. So far then it must be admitted that Philip James Bailey co-operated with the progressive and humanitarian spirit of the age.

Milton said that poetry should be "simple, sensuous, passionate." Mr. Bailey forgot this when he wrote such lines as the following:—

Initiate, mystic, perfected, epopt,
Illuminate, adept, transcendent, he
Ivy-like, lived, and died, and again lived,
Resuscitant.

That "epopt" is positively grotesque. But it was not always in this style that Mr. Bailey wrote; otherwise he would never have won such high praise from Tennyson and other good judges. There are some capital things in his *The Age: a Satire*, some of which we have given from time to time in former numbers of this journal. The following is well expressed:—

Men will be sued and wooed ere won to good.
And he who would to virtue force mankind,
By storming truth at them, may hope to unbind
The streams of dark ice by the northern wind.
Earth only yields her beauties and her flowers
To suns of softening, winds of loosening powers.

The volume from which we quote has long been rare, and probably will never be reprinted, but it will always possess a certain value for those who like ideas and power, even when the language is apt to run into uncouthness.

Scepticism and the French Revolution.—III.

BUT who were the rulers of revolutionary France during the Terror? Each successive historian of the Revolution has assigned the responsibility to different sets of men. Carlyle points to Robespierre and Marat, to the latter of whom he applies the names of "dog-leech" and "obscene spectrum." Michelet styles him the "personification of murder."

Now, although Marat is accused of being the cause of most of the bloodshed of the Revolution, it is certain that he never possessed enough influence in the government to enforce his views, for he never rose to speak in the Convention without his voice being drowned by yells and hisses, yet through his paper, *The People's Friend*, he possessed the greatest influence over the lower classes, and it was owing to the constant goading of Marat that the rabble at last burst open the prisons of Paris, and executed the Royalists imprisoned there, the most terrible incident of the Revolution. He was publicly accused in the

Convention of instigating this crime, and far from repudiating the accusation, justified the massacre as "the only means of safety." Vergniaud, the next speaker, declaring "It is painful to me to follow in this Tribune a man dropping with calumny, with gall, and blood" (Bell, pp. 220-222). But Marat was no Atheist. Lamartine says:—

Marat had, like Robespierre and Rousseau, supernatural belief in his principles, and respected himself as the instrument of God. He had written a work in favor of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. His library consisted of some fifty volumes of philosophical works placed on a plank nailed against the wall of his chamber. Montesquieu and Raynal were amongst those he consulted most frequently. The Gospel was constantly open on his table, and when this was noticed, "The Revolution," returned he, "is in the Gospel. Nowhere is the cause of the people more energetically pleaded or more maledictions heaped on the head of the rich and powerful people of this world. Jesus Christ," continued he, bowing reverentially when he uttered the name, "Jesus Christ is our Master" (Lamartine. *Hist. of the Girondists*, vol. ii., p. 444).

So much for Marat upon whose name more obloquy has been heaped than on any other man in the Revolution.

Danton has also been accused of complicity in the prison murders.

Of Danton it may be said that, although he had done much to institute the reign of terror, he saw that it was being carried too far, it was devouring its own children, that the morning star of the Revolution was in danger of being quenched in blood, and with the same titanic energy with which he upheld the Revolution, when others cowered before the advance of the foreign armies on Paris, who fashioned the ragged sans-culotte into the revolutionary army which sent the best trained soldiers which Europe could produce, flying, crushed, and humiliated, across the frontier; Danton set himself to staunch the bloodshed of the Revolution. "The word *clemency*," he declared, "is quite as republican as the word *terror*." For this he fell under the suspicion of Robespierre and St. Just. When his friends warned him of his danger, "Danton shrugged his shoulders. 'Nothing can be done,' he said, 'Resist? Shed blood? Enough has been shed; I would rather shed my own; I prefer being guillotined to guillotining.'" (*Camille Desmoulins*, by Jules Claretie, p. 298).

He was arrested, and on being committed to his dungeon, he observed: "At a crisis like the present, I was the means of instituting the revolutionary tribunal. I beg pardon of God and man; but it was not instituted that it might be the scourge of humanity." (Bell, *Hist. French Revolution*, p. 375). Bell adds: "The fall of Danton and his party removed the only check to the bloody despotism of Robespierre and his supporters."

Danton is generally described as an Atheist, but it is certain that his religion was a vague Theism. He would be more accurately described as a Voltairean, and, like Voltaire, admitted a First Cause as a philosophical necessity, and carefully excluded him from any interference in the affairs of the universe after having obtained the first creative fiat. The phrase, "I beg pardon of God and man," is not the speech of an Atheist; neither would he accuse Brissot of being the "leader of an impious sect," or have declared that the Republic did not intend to "annihilate the reign of superstition in order to establish the reign of Atheism." (See *Speeches French Revolution*. Morse Stephen; p. 244-270). These sentiments are the outcome of a Theistic bias. On the other hand, he does not appear to have believed in a future life, for when questioned at his trial before the Revolutionary Tribunal as to his abode, he declared that it would "soon be annihilated."

It should be borne in mind that the "Reign of Terror" commenced with the fall of the Girondins in May, 1793, and ended with the revolution of Thermidor (July, 1794). During this time a triumvirate, consisting of Robespierre, Couthon, and St.

Just, held the whole power in their hands, uniting in their persons the influence of the Jacobin Club, the Convention, and the Committee of Public Safety, and declaring "terror the order of the day." It has been estimated that 4,000 perished on the guillotine during this time. In June and July, 1794, no fewer than fifteen hundred and seven were executed.

Of this triumvirate Robespierre was by far the most powerful, and we propose to consider his opinions first. It is well known that Robespierre took his ideas from Rousseau, and Rousseau was fanatically religious. Mr. John Morley, in his valuable monograph on Rousseau, says:—

"In a word, he was religious. In being so, he separated himself from Voltaire and his school, who did passably well without religion.....It was Rousseau, and not the feeble controversialists put up from time to time by the Jesuits and other ecclesiastical bodies, who proved the effective champion of religion, and the only power who could make head against the triumphant onslaught of the Voltaireans. He gave up Christian dogmas and mysteries, and, throwing himself with irresistible ardor upon the emotions in which all religions have their root and their power, he breathed new life into them, he quickened in men a strong desire to have them satisfied, and he beat back the army of emancipators with the loud and incessantly repeated cry that they were not come to deliver the human mind, but to root out all its most glorious and consolatory attributes. This immense achievement accomplished—the great framework of a faith in God and immortality and providential government of the world thus preserved—it was an easy thing by-and-bye for the Churchmen to come back, and once more unpack and restore to their old places the temporarily discredited paraphernalia of dogma and mystery" (*Rousseau*, p. 206).

"The Social Contract was the gospel of the Jacobins, and much of the action of the supreme party in France during the first months of the year 1794 is only fully intelligible when we look upon it as the result and practical application of Rousseau's teaching. The conception of the situation entertained by Robespierre and Saint Just was entirely moulded on all this talk about the legislators of Greece and Geneva" (*Ibid.*, p. 314).

Mr. Morley goes on to point out that, in the winter of 1793, two parties in Paris stood face to face—the Voltairian party of the Commune, led by Hébert and Chaumette, who set up the public worship of the Goddess of Reason.

"Robespierre retaliated with the mummeries of the Festival of the Supreme Being, and protested against Atheism as the crime of aristocrats. Presently the Atheistic party succumbed. Chaumette was not directly implicated in the proceedings which led to their fall; but he was by-and-bye accused of conspiring with Hébert, Cloutz, and the rest, 'to destroy all notion of Divinity, and base the government of France on Atheism.' 'They attack the immortality of the soul,' cried Saint Just, 'the thought which consoled Socrates in his dying moments; and their dream is to raise Atheism into a worship.' And this was the offence, technically and officially described, for which Chaumette and Cloutz were sent to the guillotine (April, 1794), strictly on the principle which had been laid down in the Social Contract, and accepted by Robespierre.....Rousseau said that a man was dangerous to the city who did not believe in God, a future state, and divine reward and retribution" (*Rousseau*, p. 345).

As Robespierre was the most important character, and wielded the greatest influence during the greater part of the Revolution, and more particularly during the Reign of Terror, we may be excused for dealing with his religious views at some length.

In a speech to the Jacobins, Robespierre declared that—

"It is not in vain that it (the National Convention) has proclaimed the declaration of the Rights of Man in presence of the Supreme Being! Atheism is aristocratic. The idea of a great Being which watches over oppressed innocence and punishes triumphant crime is everywhere acknowledged."

"I have not for one day ceased to be attached from my infancy to the moral and political ideas I have just laid before you. If God had not existed, it would have been necessary to invent him" (*Lamartine. Hist. of the Girondists*, p. 434).

WALTER MANN.

(To be concluded.)

God and "Old Gooseberry"; or, the Ignorant Geodesists.

TUNE:

"The noble Duke of York
Had twice five hundred men;
He marched them up to the top of a hill,
And marched them down again."

"The devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world."—MATTHEW iv. 8.

The noble Duke of Hell
Enticed the God of men;
He marched him up to the top of a hill,
And marched him down again.

"And when they were up they were up,
And when they were down they were down,
And when they were but half way up,
They were neither up nor down."

He marched his God up hill
The whole of earth to see,
Which showed that optics they ne'er understood,
Nor ev'n ge-om-e-trec.

But when they were up they were "done,"
For, little of earth they could see,
As Science had not yet begun
To displace Di-vin-i-tee.

Although a few square miles
Were all that they could see,
Said Nick to God, "I will give you the lot
If you will worship me!"

God answered—with plural of rat!—
"Lie down! go to heel, and to hell!
I, now, 'hae doots' if earth is flat;
But I'll keep them to 'mysel'!"

When God got back to town
He never, it appears,
Expressed his "doots," so we wallowed in faith
For fifteen hundred years.

But now we have facts, and we know—
What devils and gods never knew—
That only fools up mountains go
For a pan-terrestrial view.

Despite the Church of God,
We now know earth to be
A ball, and know that they never knew much
Away in old Judee.

Now God and his clerical chums
Admit that the earth isn't flat;
Theodolites and pend-u-lums
Have completely altered that.

DOXOLOGY.

Praise Euclid, Faith's effective foe;
Praise him, surveyors here below;
Geodesy, through him, we boast,
In spite of ev'ry god and ghost!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

Deacon Jones's Non-Arrival.

THE editor of a rural newspaper was in Philadelphia during the week following the shooting of President McKinley, and noted with surprise the promptness of the newspapers here to bulletin-board the hourly reports of the President's condition. He determined to adopt the idea on all important events when he should return home. Soon afterwards he was told one morning by the local physician that Deacon Jones was seriously ill. The deacon was a man of some distinction in the community; so the editor posted a series of bulletin as follows:—

"10 a.m.—Deacon Jones no better.
"11 a.m.—Deacon Jones has a relapse.
"12.30 p.m.—Deacon Jones weaker. Pulse failing.
"1 p.m.—Deacon Jones has slight rally.
"2.15 p.m.—Deacon Jones's family has been summoned.
"3.10 p.m.—Deacon Jones has died and gone to heaven."

Later in the afternoon a travelling salesman happened by, stopped to read the bulletin, and, going to the bulletin-board, made another report concerning the deceased. It was:—

"4.10 p.m.—Great excitement in heaven. Deacon Jones has not yet arrived."
—*Philadelphia Times*.

Lewes.

THE title suggests the author of the *History of Philosophy*, and recalls the memory of one whose union with that writer brought supreme happiness, tinged, perhaps, with a melancholy which, not unnaturally, accompanied voluntary seclusion from the former world of Marian Evans. Yet it is not to either of these great characters that attention, for the moment, is sought to be directed, but rather to the county town of Sussex, and to a character still dearer to Freethinkers—that of Thomas Paine.

To be sure, George Eliot knew of Paine; and, strangely enough, he has the honor of being the first real personage alluded to in Miss Evans's fiction, as may be noticed in the second chapter of the *Scenes of Clerical Life*, where he of the *Age of Reason* figures somewhat contemptuously—possibly advisedly, since the author of *Amos Barton* here essayed an appeal from the Richmond lodgings to the reading religious fraternity, of which, but a few years ago, she had been so devout a member; and, in these circumstances, a little toadying, if such it was, may be pardoned. Besides, it had been the fashion for big writers to decry Paine, even Macaulay going so far as to supplement the load of opprobrious epithets launched on Boswell, by reproaching him with the shocking curiosity of obtaining, by hook or by crook, an introduction to America's honored citizen. But in this respect we honor "Bozzy"; and his critic, in reproving him, merely touched the characteristic which enabled the writer of the *Life of Johnson* to become immortal.

Paine, it appears, for some six years, at Lewes, combined the duties of gauger with that of tobacconist; his shop stood in the chief street, which forms part of a main road from London to Brighton, a stone let into the wall almost opposite the tenement announcing "nine miles to Brighthelmstone." For all we know, Johnson and Boswell, with the Thrales (the founders of Barclay and Perkins), may have patronised the shop, and anticipated the introduction which excited the contempt of Macaulay, as they journeyed to Brighthelmstone to take in the waters, which, after a dip or two, Johnson renounced. However, White, of *Selborne*, constantly visited the locality, and possibly may have inspired Paine with a love of nature, which afterwards appeared in some of the beautiful passages in the *Age of Reason*. Gilbert White, though he had then "travelled the Sussex downs for upwards of thirty years, yet still investigated the chain of majestic mountains with fresh admiration year by year"; and a protracted sojourn in the charming scene may well have imbued our hero with reverential love of what he conceived to be the Creator, coupled with detestation at the Biblical libel on his goodness.

In relation to other houses in the street, Paine's stands indented, that is, set back exceptionally from the pavement; and it seems to form part of a place of worship on which a tablet reads: "Westgate Unitarian Chapel; opened for Nonconformist worship, 1687." Unoccupied, the old reformer's habitation possesses rather a mournful front, with windows obscured and the old-fashioned latches of the doors becoming rusty. A curious carved figure, Atlas-like, supports the projecting first floor, under which, on the front wall, is inscribed:—

"THOMAS PAINE,
B. 1737. D. 1809.
AUTHOR OF COMMON SENSE
RIGHTS OF MAN AND THE AGE OF REASON.
A FOUNDER OF AMERICAN
INDEPENDENCE WITH PEN AND SWORD.
LIVED IN THIS HOUSE
AS EXCISEMAN AND TOBACCONIST
1768—1774."

The banks of the Ouse, which winds its course from Lewes to the Port of Newhaven, formed the favorite walk of him who, later on, became a deputy in the National Assembly of France; and the charms of the quiet valley, with its placid stream, seem to be enhanced by this circumstance. Quitting Lewes,

the American Independence accomplished, Paine voted for the banishment, but not for the death, of Louis the Sixteenth; the Republic, the Consulate, and the Empire followed, and Elba restored the throne of St. Louis. Thirty-four years elapsed, and in the vale of the same Sussex Ouse the last of the Kings of France, Louis Philippe, found a refuge, borne hither from the inhospitable shores of his forefathers by the Newhaven packet; while, three thousand miles away, the outlawed Englishman and sometime *habitué* of this Sussex valley, reposed, in splendid isolation, beneath the greensward of the farm of New Rochelle, bequeathed him by the Empire-State of the Union his genius had helped to found.

W. B.

Man's Last Pilgrimage.

Man comes at length to Time's wide pantheon hall
And nought but endless shadow—wand'ring far
'Mid incense-wreathed solitude—dare fall,
Save through night's crystal cupola—pierced by the
northern star
Limned shapes—the pallid gods—enthroned seem
Along the stones of their cold gallery
To glut and flex—as vapors in a dream
Till reason nods at last—rolling in awful sympathy.
Voices that cry from out the mighty past:
"Choose now O man thy god that is to be!"
Rush mingling in the stain each god has cast
Where his priest sits—*flagram* in hand, and book
appoint on knee.
Beneath the transient gods of time and place
The priests change not—bound in a death-like spell—
The sad eternal sameness of their race—
In snakish lip—and slumbrous eye reflecting some far
hell.
Man gazes on them shuddering—for alone
Where he would turn smiles welcome sweet as heaven
While mould'ring fetish waves to Egypt's stone
Or vap'rous deity sways in the breath his priest has
given.
He fears the gods—less than the priests' false smile
Shrunken in anger as he looks no more.
Because he cannot choose where all are vile
Their curse lifts black as Leth's wave rolled from a
languid shore.
But on him now there streams that starry light
His arm is lift—he shouts "O Liberty!
Weeps then thy silvern beam through this long night?
O Star, sing o'er thine untrod paths—sing Freedom's
song for me."
That song shall fire the mists that foully loll,
Shiv'ring along the stones, and crumbling fast;
Into the night of nights shall gods down-roll;
Into the day man shall stride free 'neath that sweet light
at last.

GEORGE WOODWARD.

Exorcising the Devil.

THE old Flemish city of Bruges is much excited over the case of an hysterical girl who lives in Stork-street. It appears that every night at midnight she is tossed out of bed by a mysterious force, which she and her parents believe to be the Devil himself. The poor girl sees the Devil everywhere. If she casts her eyes up towards the ceiling there he is frowning upon her terrifically. If she looks down towards the floor her eye meets him again in the shape of a serpent. The other day, in an unusually violent fit, the girl tried to jump out of the window, and she cried out that the Evil One was pushing her from behind. Five hundred persons witnessed the scene from the street. Several passing priests declared that the girl was possessed of an unclean spirit, and advised the parents to send for a Capuchin Father who has settled down at Bruges as an exorciser of devils. This monk did not require to be told a second time. He went through the form of exorcising the girl, and tried to drive the Devil out of her by shaking her. The girl, however, according to the latest news, is as mad as ever.

—Daily News.

The Man in the Moon.

AN ESSAY IN FOLK LORE.

"Truly, the moon shines with a good grace."—SHAKESPEARE

"THE lesser light which rules the night" has always been a favorite object of contemplation. The more glorious sun had also, and has still, his worshippers; but, apparently, the moon has the greater importance assigned to her in the popular mind. The superstitions to which her supposed influence has given rise are almost inexhaustible. She not only determines weather and affects madness, but influences a multitude of other things. Our own immortal Zerkel seems to think that there are few things, from pitch-and-toss to marriage and manslaughter, in which Phœbe has not a finger. Like Sidrophel, he—

With the moon was more familiar
Than e'er was almanac well-willer;
Her secrets understood so clear
That some believed he had been there.

It cannot, however, be said of him, as of the Rosicrucian in *Hudibras*, that, with all his knowledge, he is aware—

Who first found out the man i' th' moon,
That to the ancients was unknown.

The "Heathen Chinees" have a legend that a rabbit exists in the moon, and makes those shadows on its face which have so often attracted the attention of the curious and the amorous. This legend is transformed by the creed of the pious Buddhist into an equally pious hare, which met Gotama one day when he had wandered astray in a forest. The polite hare offered assistance, and Gotama replied that he was very poor and very hungry, and could give no reward for his kindness. The legendary hare responded in a manner worthy of a courtier of Le Grand Monarque: "If you are hungry I am at your service; make a fire, kill me, roast me, eat me." Buddha tested the animal's devotion by kindling a fire, into which the hare jumped—not, however, to be sacrificed; for the Teacher pitied it, plucked it from the flames, and hurled it to the moon, where it remains for ever, an awful warning of the danger of politeness in a sinful world.

The fancy of the American Indian shapes the marks on the moon into human form:—

At the door on summer evenings
Sat the little Hiawatha.
Saw the moon rise from the water,
Rippling, rounding from the water.
Saw the flecks and shadows on it;
Whispered, "What is that, Nokamis?"
And the good Nokamis answered:
"Once a warrior, very angry,
Seized his grandmother, and threw her
Up into the sky at midnight;
Right against the moon he threw her.
'Tis her body that you see her."

Some of the Pacific Islanders likewise believe in a woman in the moon. To the Scandinavian the shadows appear to be made by two children, whom the moon kidnapped as they were returning from the well with a bucket of water slung on a stick between them. The Poles call the man in the moon Pan Twardowski, and have a long legend to account for his whereabouts.

The majority of civilised nations have delighted in sending Biblical characters to the lunar asylum. The Jews have placed Jacob there. Others have seen Isaac bearing the faggots for the sacrifice on Horeb. Italian "imagination bodies forth the forms" of Cain and a load of thorns, said to be "the fruits of the ground," mentioned in Genesis. One wonders what freak of human fancy procured Cain his admission to the moon and transformed his fruit offering into thorns. It is certain that the legend was current before the time of Dante, who, in his *Inferno* says:—

Onward now
For now doth Cain, with fork of thorns, confine
On either hemisphere, touching the wave,
Beneath the tower of Seville.

When the poet and Beatrice enter the moon (*Paridiso* canto 2) he asks anxiously:—

Tell, I pray thee, whence the gloomy spots
Upon this body, which below on earth,
Give rise to talk of Cain in fabling quaint.

Milton makes the celestial Raphael the sponsor of his views on the subject. The spots, he thought, were neither measles nor pimples, but:—

Unpurged
Vapors not yet into her substance turned.
—*Paradise Lost* B. v.

Neither the gifted Florentine of the fourteenth century, nor the educated Englishman of the seventeenth knew aught of the mountains of the moon. Mediæval writers refer to the man in the moon as carrying a burden of stolen sticks, with his dog going on before him. Chaucer supports the same tradition in his *Testament of Creseid* when he says the moon had—

On her brest a chorde painted full even,
Bearing a bush of thorns on his backe,
Which, for his theft, might clime no ner the heaven.

The man in the moon is sometimes used as a synonym for Mr. Nobody. Stephano mystifies the monster Caliban in *The Tempest* on their first meeting:—

C. "Hast thou not dropped from heaven?"
S. "Out of the moon I do assure thee; I was the man
in the moon when time was."
C. "I have seem thee in her, and I do adore thee.
My mistress showed me thee, and thy dog and thy
bush."

Quince's idea in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* of sending an actor with a bush of thorns and a lantern to say that he came—

To disfigure or present the person of Moonshine,
is full of interest.

We cannot help regretting that Thescus and his companions interrupted the rustic, and irritated him into changing the blank verse in which he was about to explain himself, for:—

"All that I have to say is to tell you that the
lanthorn is the moon; I, the man in the moon; this
thorn bush my thorn bush; and this dog my dog."

If the universality of any belief be a test of its truth, there is much to be said for the moon and her lodger.

MIMNERMUS.

Ora Pro Nobis.

(Prayer is the burden of a sigh, etc.)

There is a strange device of man
In joy; but more in care;
A kind of mental safety valve,
By clerics known as "prayer."
When he is sad through present pain
Or thought of future ill,
He talks to some imagined ear,
Invokes some fancied will!
He counts his wrongs, he counts his fears,
He craves a bliss to be,
And blindly seeks to influence
His native Deity!
No justice animates his hopes,
No gen'rous care redeems,
No contradictions trouble him
As we know none in dreams!
As through unmeasured fields of space
This earth pursues her way,
A constant murmur floats around,
Behold the people "pray"!
But though they cry for countless years,
Their cries no answer bear;
While the great silent Heavens proclaim
The foolishness of "prayer"!
And still men hate, and still men fight,
And other evils dare;
They shut their eyes and feel absolved
When they engage in "prayer."

P.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.**LONDON.**

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

THE ATHENÆUM HALL (73 Tottenham Court-road, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote: "Marie Corelli's Miraculous Masterpiece."

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, Mr. Simmons.

BROCKWELL PARK: 3.15, A. B. Moss; 6, C. Cohen.

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

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, A lecture.

STRATFORD (The Grove): 7 p.m., F. A. Davies.

STATION ROAD (Camberwell): 11.30, A. B. Moss.

VICTORIA PARK (Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.): 3.15, C. Cohen.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall): 11.15, Gustav Spiller, "Wealth and Happiness."

COUNTRY.

BELFAST ETHICAL SOCIETY (69 York-street): 3.45, A lecture.

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 7, E. Pack; "The Protestant Reformation."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): J. Hammond, "Christianity and Evolution."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Mr. Robert Law, F.G.S.; 3, "How Ironstone and Coal were Formed"; 7, "Pre-historic Graves." Tea at 5.

LECTURER'S ENGAGEMENTS.

H. PERCY WARD, 51 Longside-lane, Bradford.—September 28, Sheffield.

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