

THE Freethinker

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*Give me the liberty to know, to utter, and to argue
freely according to conscience, above all liberties.*—JOHN
MILTON.

Burns and Ingersoll.

A PRESBYTERIAN minister, named P. Robertson, left Scotland we know not how long ago. Probably it was for his own good; possibly it was for his country's. Where he is located in the United States does not appear from the letter he contributes to the *Ayrshire Post* of October 3. Perhaps he thought that his name, like that of Cæsar or Napoleon, was sufficient. His letter is a complaint. He protests against Ingersoll's tribute to Burns being framed, with portraits of the orator and the poet, and exhibited at the Burns National Monument. He denounces Ingersoll with all the vehemence of a Bible student. We need not repeat his epithets. When he says that Ingersoll's death was hailed "with a great sigh of relief," we can quite believe him. Prayers for his conversion were such a hopeless waste of energy. Nothing but death could silence him. And when it did silence him the Christians naturally rejoiced. Especially the ministers. Their task was so much easier in the absence of that colossal antagonist. Even the Sunday school teachers began to look up and breathe more freely. But why should they worry over Ingersoll's portrait appearing in association with the portrait of Robert Burns? Mr. Robertson says it is an offence to the American Christians who visit the Burns Monument. And the editor of the *Ayrshire Post* seems to agree with him. He hopes the object of complaint will be removed. "There was nothing in common," he says, "between these two." "Burns," he continues, "came out of an ideal Christian home, and was full of the beliefs and principles inculcated there: Bob Ingersoll owned no God, but put himself out of joint to go through the country ridiculing the Creator, the Bible, and everything sacred."

Begging this editor's pardon, Burns and Ingersoll had a good deal in common. They were both *men*, to begin with; sound, wholesome, brave, genial, and large-hearted. Both were good to look at. Both were deeply loved. Both were eloquent. Both hated falsehood and hypocrisy. And both earned the hatred of those who follow falsehood for interest and hypocrisy by inclination.

Burns indulged in ridicule as much as Ingersoll did. His lash was keener because verse is always keener than prose. Cut out Burns's satires, especially the incomparable "Holy Willy," and you make a big gash in his genius. It is nonsense to talk of him merely as the poet of love. He was that, it is true; but he was something more. He hated scoundrels and despised humbugs; and he put both feelings into verse that stung like a serpent.

This *Ayrshire* editor talks about "Covenanting Scotland." What real sympathy had Burns with it when he grew to mature manhood? The valor displayed by the Covenanters was all right, but their religious ideals were all wrong. Burns may have thought otherwise in his father's home, but not when he thought for himself. The Christian "beliefs

and principles" he inherited were cast aside in after years. He spoke of "a great Unknown Being," in terms very different from the familiar personalities of the orthodox faith; and, in opposition to all Christian creeds, he said that this being would look kindly on "a man conscious of having acted an honest part among his fellow creatures." Glib talk about a future life found no echo in him. "It becomes a man of sense," he said, "to think for himself, particularly in a case where all men are equally interested, and where, indeed, all men are equally in the dark." He saw that religion was a very doubtful friend of morality. "Why has a religious turn of mind," he asked, "always a tendency to narrow and harden the heart?" "Away," he cried "with old-wife prejudices and tales." Lastly, he uttered these pregnant words: "All my fears and cares are for this world." In keeping with this sentiment were the well-known lines:—

To make a happy fireside clime
For weans and wife,
That's the true pathos and sublime
Of human life.

Thus spoke the real Robert Burns. He had got to the bedrock truth, far down in the depths of nature, a long way under the rubbish of Scotch theology, and a long way under its reaction—Scotch drink and fornication.

Ingersoll is reported to have said that he would rather stand up drunk before God at the day of judgment, and be able to say he had written "A man's a man for a' that," than stand up sober and be able to say he was a Presbyterian elder. Burns would have gripped the hand of the man who said that. It was something after his own heart. The great poet and the great orator—both men of the people—would have understood each other. They would soon have been a pair of fine companions.

Let any man read Burns, and read Ingersoll; and then read the Rev. P. Robertson and the editor of the *Ayrshire Post*; and finally ask himself which of the three Burns would pick out for a foregathering. It would be a million to one on the two Robertsons.

What a poor couple are this Presbyterian minister and this Presbyterian editor as lovers of Robert Burns! They prate of "Scotland's bard" and "Christian beliefs and principles," and other platitudinous stuff. Let us hear Ingersoll:—

"The house in which his spirit lived was not large. It enclosed only space enough for common needs, built near the barren land of want; but through the open door the sunlight streamed, and from its window all the stars were seen, while in the garden grew the common flowers—the flowers that all the ages through have been the messengers of honest love; and in the fields were heard the rustling corn and reaper's songs, telling of well-requited toil; and there were trees whose branches rose and fell and swayed while birds filled all the air with music born of joy. He read with tear-filled eyes the human page, and found within his breast the history of hearts."

Thou art not an "infidel," O Presbyterian minister; and thou art not a "blasphemer," O Presbyterian editor; but canst thou, O minister, or thou, O editor, pay a tribute to Robert Burns equal to that of the man who had brains enough to be an "infidel" and courage enough to be a "blasphemer"?

G. W. FOOTE.

The Churches and Unbelief.

THE problem of how to attach the rising generation to those opinions we believe to be the truest and the best, is an important one for all classes. The task of moulding opinion, herculean at all times, is made infinitely greater when there is no effort made to develop in the young mental habits that we have reason to believe will lead them along the most profitable road. But important as it is to all classes in general, the *capture of the mind while it is young* is vital to Christianity. Converts to religion are seldom made in the maturity of life, and never unless the foundation has been laid during extreme youth. I do not believe there is a single instance on record of any well-educated man or woman having reached maturity without Christianity, and then adopting it as the result of pure conviction. There are plenty of examples in the reverse direction, but one can safely say that, as a general rule, keep a human being away from Christianity until he or she is able to understand it, giving meanwhile the best education possible, and they are no more likely to become a Christian than a dancing Dervish.

Christians are either made young or not at all. The task of capturing the young, of leading the mind in a specific direction is therefore vital to the perpetuation of Christianity as a religion. It is the recognition of this fact that led the Churches to protest against secular instruction while they could do so with profit, and, when this was no longer possible, strive by all means, legitimate and illegitimate, to secure its control.

It may be said that, in seeking to direct the mind of the child, religious leaders are doing no more than other people, and no more than they are properly entitled to do. With one qualification the justice of the plea is admitted. The qualification is that there is a legitimate and an illegitimate method of training the developing intellect of children. To train the child *how* to think, to teach it to use its brain, as a teacher of physical health would teach it to exercise its muscles, is the legitimate method; to teach it *what* to think, to cram it with dogmatic statements, to carefully shield it from any kind of information that would tend to weaken its faith in sectarian religious opinions, is the illegitimate method, and it is the method adopted by all religionists. A really sound education would do for the mind what a good physical training does for the body—it would educate it to exercise itself properly and profitably upon all subjects that require discrimination and judgment. In this way the elder generation would acquit itself honorably of the duty it owes to the younger, and the younger, in turn, develop with a growing recognition of the debt it owes to its predecessor.

But the dual fact that a child belongs to the future more than to the past, and that religions are in their essence speculations based upon the less exact knowledge of the past, quite preclude the possibility that, minus artificial influences, the educated mind would be attracted to the current theology. The modern mind is confronted by problems that did not exist to the people of a few generations back. Modern criticism, modern science, modern life, have all combined to create an atmosphere fatal to the perpetuation of a theology that in the main is an attempt to chain the present down to the past, to regulate life as it is by standards that were evolved during some of the most distressful periods in European history.

An address delivered at the recent meeting of the Congregational Union, held at Glasgow, on "Difficulties in the Way of Belief which Beset the Young," illustrates very forcibly the feeling of insecurity the Churches have as regards their hold over the rising generation. Indeed, Mr. Selbie's address applies not only to the young, but to adults likewise, although it is possible that a perception of the hopelessness of trying to convert the mature mind decided the speaker on the selection of the title given.

Mr. Selbie opened his address with the remark

that "in these days we are very little troubled by an active and mordant scepticism..... [although] among the more intelligent artisans it is still no doubt possible to find a reasoned and active unbelief." The first portion of this remark smacks very strongly of an ostrich policy, although, so far as it is true, it contains small comfort for the religious believer. The activity of scepticism and the bitterness of its attack will always be proportionate to the strength of the conviction it has to overcome; and if religious people evinced more sincerity than they do in the matter of their opinions it is highly probable that they would have little to complain of the inactivity of scepticism. One cannot get a good blow at an empty eggshell, and a savage assault on the wishy-washy bundle of prejudices that so often passes for religious belief nowadays is just a little bit ridiculous. A great deal of the acerbity of the Freethought attack has disappeared for the reason that, during the last fifty years, some of the more repulsive features of Christian doctrine have practically disappeared. Christians have protected themselves from attack by surrendering the fortress.

But so far as the general prevalence of Freethought is concerned, it is probable that in no other period of our history has it been so much in evidence as at present. Unbelief is no longer professed as a novelty—as something that gives one the air of an eccentric; it is expressed and taken as a matter of fact, and, although the social boycott still exists, the days have long since passed when Christians could talk lightly of destroying unbelief. Why, the very titles of a large number of novels that are now published, and bought in enormous numbers, would have excluded them from all "respectable" houses and bookstalls a few years ago.

So far as the specific causes are concerned that keep the young from believing in Christian doctrines, Mr. Selbie finds them to be of four kinds—the influence of Biblical criticism, the character of the ministry, the nature of Christian doctrines, and an inadequate apologetic. It is sad (from the Christian point of view) to learn that "the main general conclusions to which scholars have come in regard to the origin and authorship of the books of the Bible, and especially of the Old Testament, are now very widely known"; and although Mr. Selbie believes that "the results of Biblical criticism, intelligently used, to be a real aid to faith," yet, as a matter of fact, Biblical criticism is shattering people's faith in the Christian religion. Well, what else could anyone expect? Christianity erected itself upon the Old and New Testament. It fought for their accuracy and authenticity for centuries, and sent to the stake or to prison scores of men and women for questioning either point. And now if people learn that, on the verdict of leading *Christian* scholars, these books are of unknown origin, full of errors in chronology, in science, in morals, in history—in short, of no greater extrinsic value than any other of the world's books—is it to be wondered that they begin to feel that those who were right as regards the character of the Bible may be right also in their other conclusions concerning the general nature of Christianity itself? It has taken the Christian Churches over a century and a half to realise the truth of what Freethinkers have always told them concerning the nature of the Bible. How long will it take them to appreciate what Freethinkers are now telling them concerning the nature of the Christian religion? It is, after all, only a question of time.

Mr. Selbie believes that, "intelligently used," criticism would prove an aid to faith. What he understands by the phrase is seen in his method of dealing with the last of the causes he cites as responsible for unbelief. He illustrates what he considers a sound apologetic by the question of miracles. Belief in the supernatural, he says, is a great stumbling-block, and to insist that people must believe in this *before* believing in Christ is to drive them into unbelief. But get them to believe in Jesus first, and then it will be possible to get them to believe in miracles afterwards. Doubtless! A greater man

than Mr. Selbie—Voltaire—said of the story of the saint who walked forty paces with his head under his arm that he found no difficulty in believing thirty-nine of the steps; it was the *first one* that he couldn't get over. If you begin by believing in the Christian conception of Jesus, the particular miracles he performed are easy of credence; they are, in fact, contained in the conception. Mr. Selbie's method is really a very old one, and its essence is contained in the rule never to exercise your reason on religious questions until you are certain that you have developed prejudices that will leave you without any independent judgment whatever.

Christian ministers are further informed that when anyone comes to them with religious difficulties, the best question to ask them is, "Have you tried it?" and to recommend to them as proofs the lives of men and women who are doing good in Christ's name. Perhaps Mr. Selbie would inform us how on earth a man or woman leading a useful life proves the miraculous birth of Jesus, his divinity, his resurrection, or the inspiration, in any sense, of the Bible? Men and women are no more infallible as to the causes that lead to conduct, than they are as to the conditions that give them a specific disorder. One individual's statement that he is leading a decent life because he believes in the divinity of Jesus is of no more evidential value than another's that he failed in a business transaction because he met a squint-eyed woman directly he left his home on a particular morning. Difficulties concerning matters of religious belief are intellectual difficulties, and should be settled one way or another by a process of sober reasoning, and not by a dual process of self-hypnotisation and mystification.

There is a note of plaintive veracity about Mr. Selbie's complaint that many young men and women are confirmed in their unbelief "by the low intellectual standard which prevails in many of our churches. It cannot be too often pointed out that the standard of education in the Christian ministry, in this country at least, has not advanced *pari passu* with that of most persons of the middle class." I do not think any competent student of present-day life, whether he be religious or the reverse, will seriously question this statement. The intellectual level of the clergy of all denominations has been sinking for some time, and it is hopeless to expect that it will ever rise proportionately to the general population. Let anyone seriously examine the leaders of religion, established and dissenting, and then ask whether it is even conceivable that men and women of genuine culture and real refinement could ever sit under any of them for guidance or instruction. They may be earnest, and they may be honest, but there is an intellectual element lacking in them, and without this it is impossible to maintain a real leadership. Extravagance, or rhetoric, or picturesque preaching may attract large congregations, but on the real and vital issues of life there is a growing feeling that genuine leadership has to be sought elsewhere than in the ranks of the clergy.

Mr. Selbie regrets that there is being admitted into the ministry men "whose claim to be teachers is of the smallest." Agreed, again; and if he had gone to the root of the question he would have discovered the cause of this to be the fact that religion no longer covers the whole of life, but, on the contrary, stands for only a dwindling area of human interests. Religious organisations do their best to capture capable men, but they have to deal with the strong disinclination of able men to enter the ministry. Literature, science, political life, nowadays claims and secures the intellects that once upon a time took up with religious preaching and teaching. Once upon a time men took up with religious teaching because it represented the principal avenue of intellectual employment. Nowadays, with our national life expanded in numerous directions, theology becomes in an increasing measure an old world interest, and the ministry a refuge for those whose abilities hold out little hopes of a marked success in other walks of life,

In an oblique manner Mr. Selbie recognises this much in the statement that "men find it hard to believe, not because they have any intellectual reasons to allege as the grounds of their unbelief, but simply because the whole bias and tendency of their nature is against the things of faith, and in favor of the things of sight." With due allowance for the kind of language used, Mr. Selbie here hits the nail on the head. The average individual is not possessed of an opinion, or prejudiced against it *because* of any specific reason that can be advanced. It is only one here and there that is self-observant to detect the causes that result in the formation of opinion. So far as the masses of the people are concerned they have an opinion, *pro* or *con*, because it is, so to speak, in the air. And this particular opinion is in the air because the whole trend of modern life is dead against theology in all its forms. By a process of apologetics and artificial aids religion can still maintain a semblance of life, but it is a semblance only, and although a number of devices may be adopted that will postpone the end for a time, the end is none the less certain.

It is this force that is far and away the most serious with which religion has to contend. An argument may be outreasoned, an individual may be destroyed, a society or book may be suppressed, but how is it possible to suppress an influence that operates in a myriad of ways, and which permeates the whole of the social structure? Theology to-day is fighting more than an individual, or a society of individuals, it is fighting the whole force of social evolution. And to this conflict there can be but one conclusion.

C. COHEN.

Animals in Heaven.

"There is another world
For all that live and move."

—ROBERT SOUTHEY.

"Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill—
That nothing walks with aimless feet,
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete."

—PENNYSON.

"To deny a life hereafter for a beast,
And affirm it for humanity,
Shows a lively lack of logic at the least,
And perhaps a lack of sanity."

—G. L. MACKENZIE.

ONE of the late Gustave Planché's cavils at the Dictionary of the French Academicians was directed against their definition of man as

"a reasonable being, composed of a soul and a body."

He charges them with denying that brutes have a soul. What, then, he asks them, becomes of the fidelity of the dog?

Descartes thought he solved this difficulty by regarding animals as pure machines. Father Bougeant, a Jesuit, believed them to serve as prison cells for those fallen spirits which, without taking a share in the revolt, refrained from "pronouncing for the Eternal." That ingenious father contends, in his *Philosophical Amusement on the Language of Beasts*, that each animal is inhabited by a devil. Not only was this the case with cats, which for centuries were known to be very favorite residences of evil spirits, but a devil swam with every turbot, grazed with every ox, soared with every lark, was roasted with every chicken, and, presumably, romped with every flea. Hartley Coleridge alludes to this in his *De Animabus Brutorum* :—

No doubt 'twere heresy or something worse
Than aught that priests call worthy of damnation,
Should I maintain, though in a sportive verse,
That bird or fish can e'er attain salvation;
Yet some have held that they are all possess'd,
And may be damn'd, although they can't be bless'd,

Such doctrine broached Antonio Margerita,
A learned Spaniard, mighty metaphysical.
To him the butterfly had seem'd a Lytta—
His wasp-stung wits had grown so quaint and phitiscal ;
To him the sweetest song of Philomel
Had talked of nothing in the world but hell.
Heaven save us all from such a horrid dream !
Nor let the love of heaven—of heaven, forsooth !—
Make hard our hearts, that we should so blaspheme
God for Christ's sake, and lie for love of truth.
Poor Tray ! art thou indeed a mere machine,
Whose vital power is a spirit unclean ?

Paradoxical or not, preposterous or otherwise, the hypothesis of an after-life for animals has been sometimes mooted by accredited apologists for the Christian religion. In fact, it is difficult to open any seventeenth-century philosophical work without finding a separate chapter on the souls of animals. Leland, in his strictures on Lord Bolingbroke, admits the supposition of brutes having "immaterial, sensitive souls, which are not annihilated by death." Bishop Butler pronounces an objection to one of his arguments, as implying, by inference, the "natural immortality of brutes" to be "no difficulty; since we know not what latent powers and capacities they may be endued with." This was undoubtedly a case when a serene reserve was the essence of wisdom. John Foster, the evangelical essayist, thus apostrophises a warbler of the woodlands:—

"Bird ! 'tis a pity such a delicious note should be silenced by winter, death, and, above all, annihilation. I do not, and I cannot, believe that all these little spirits of melody are but the snuff of the grand taper of life, and mere vapor of existence, to vanish for ever."

Theists, like Theodore Parker, who believe in a future life on the ground that it is necessary in order to make intelligible the benevolent purpose of Deity, consistently extend the belief to the immortality of brutes. The ultimate welfare must come to the ill-used beast, else, say they, the universe is not perfect and does not serve the natural purpose of these suffering creatures. Theistic logic seldom resists inquiry or stands cross examination. Dr. Johnson had a characteristic way of evading the difficulty, worthy of a Christian Evidence lecturer. Some one *apropos* of Drane's essay on the future life of animals, said, "But, really, sir, when we see a very sensible dog, we don't know what to think of him." Johnson quickly and venomously replied, "True, sir, and when we see a very foolish fellow, we don't know what to think of him."

In spite of bullies like Dr. Johnson there will always be Charles Bonnets in this world, who will in kindly and sentimental speculation make room for brutes in the other. Charles Bonnet the renowned Swiss naturalist, made himself benevolently busy about the future state of his humble clients. *Ce bon Bonnet !*

Leigh Hunt, again, from quite a different view, and on quite other grounds, satirises the pride that smiles in so sovereign a manner at the notion of "other animals going to heaven." He is sorry he cannot settle the question, and can conceive much less pleasant addition to the society than such a dog as Pope's "poor Indian" expects to see admitted to that equal sky.

Landon's estimate of the dragon-fly's future is not so fervent. This is his apostrophe to the "insect king" which interrupted him as he was writing verses by the river side:—

Believe me, most who read the line
Will read with hornier eyes than thine ;
And yet their souls shall live for ever,
And thine drop dead into the river.
God pardon them, O insect King,
Who fancy so unjust a thing.

Sydney Smith is impatient of the affirmative hypothesis. The comfortable canon, "with good capon lined," ignores the sufferings of the race he humorously consigns to dust.

Apropos of a "little Blenheim cocker," Carlyle waxes very transcendental and characteristically obscure:—

"We do the animals injustice; their body resembles our body, Buffon says; with its four limbs, with its

spinal marrow, main organ in the head, and so forth; but have they not a kind of soul, equally the rude draught and imperfect imitation of ours."

St. Francis called the swallows his sisters. Theophile Gautier contends he was right, "for are not the animals our humble brethren, friends of a lower grade, created by God as we are, and pursuing with affecting placidity the line marked out for them from the beginning of the world"? Dean Swift's admirers said that he could have written beautifully about a broomstick. Gautier was evidently equal to penning panegyrics about the "affecting placidity" of the flea, or the strict attention to duty of the tapeworm.

There were nations of antiquity, and those, as Montaigne phrases it, "some of the most ancient and noble," who "not only received brutes into their society, but gave them a rank infinitely above them, esteeming them familiars and favorites of the gods."

In one place the crocodile was revered, in another the ibis, and cats were worshipped in Egypt. The monkey was honored with a statue of gold, as was also the Israelitish calf. Here a fish and there a dog were objects of veneration. In Christendom a pigeon receives a third of the adoration accorded to the Holy Trinity. The prevalence of all this superstition is not to be wondered at. Comparative physiology is no older than Goethe, and comparative psychology is only now glimmering in the minds of men as a possibility. But these are matters for the scientist. Like Artemus Ward's statement concerning the glass eye of the aunt of the opposition editor, it is somewhat irrelevant to the issue. It is, however, another matter for religious belief. The Ever-Blessed Wielder of the Jack-Plane died to save all men, but if animals are to be included in the scheme of salvation, think, Christian friend, what it means for you:—

How will you face the ox you wronged on earth,
The murdered sheep upon whose chops you fed,
The lamb whose little leg increased your girth,
The pig without a head.

By hares you jugged your spirit will be wrung,
The injured steed to glare at you will haste—
He whom you relished once as potted tongue,
Tinned meat and bloater-paste.

The tabby that as sausage you consumed,
Will rise against you with his tail erect,
The turkeys for your Christmas dinners doomed,
Your face will recollect.

The partridge, grouse, the quail you had on toast,
The creatures you have eaten great and small,
Tough, tender, lean, and fat; the boiled and roast,
You'll have to face them all.

MIMNERMUS.

Two Great Men.—II.

MUCH of Franklin's childhood was passed in his father's shop at Boston, where he cut wicks, served customers with soap and candles, and performed other duties connected with the trade of tallow-chandler. Paine, at a similar age, was doomed to learn the monotonous trade of stay-making. In both lads there arose at one time a longing for a seafaring life—an epidemic from which most boys suffer for a shorter or longer period. Paine in after years was able to realise his boyhood's dream, and went to sea for a time. But Franklin's love for the ocean only served to develop in him a marvellous talent for swimming, a gift that he retained throughout his long life, and which was the origin of some curious adventures. Franklin's father, noticing the lad's growing fondness for sea life and sea adventures, began to fear that Benjamin might follow the example of a scapegrace brother, and run away from home. Franklin therefore was bound apprentice to another, and elder, brother, a Boston printer. The life of a printer's apprentice, though full of hardships, was more congenial to Franklin than that of a tallow-chandler's boy. He was now able to gratify his growing passion for reading, and during the long, peaceful night hours, whilst holding converse with

great minds through the medium of books, could forget for awhile the worries and disagreeables of the day. For there were disagreeables. Franklin the printer was a hard task-master, was jealous and bitter by reason of the superior talents of his boy-brother, and did much to render the lad's life a burden to him. There is little wonder that Benjamin made his escape from such tyranny, and, as the common phrase goes, "ran away." It was not in the Franklin blood to submit to tyranny. Many years before, Josiah Franklin, father of Benjamin, had escaped from religious persecution in England, and had crossed the Atlantic that he might in a vaster land enjoy a wider liberty.

Friendless, and almost penniless, the runaway lad wandered to New York, and thence to Philadelphia, these towns being at that time the only places in America besides Boston that could boast a printing office. Franklin was then eighteen years of age. Less than thirty years afterwards he had become a prosperous and thriving tradesman, and had won universal respect and affection from the citizens of Philadelphia. They could scarcely fail to love and reverence one who had come among them like a good spirit, to shower blessings upon them and their city.

Franklin, though by his own confession he graduated from orthodox Christianity to what he terms "scepticism," and thence to Deism, may be said to have held in real truth no meaner faith than what is sometimes styled nowadays "the Religion of Humanity." A profound and genuine love for his fellow-men inspired every action of his life, and he himself became the kind of hero for whom he openly professed most reverence—"a doer of good."

"It is incredible," he wrote, "the quantity of good that may be done in a country by a single man, who will *make a business* of it, and does not suffer himself to be diverted from that pursuit by different avocations, studies, or amusements." Certainly, the good effected by this one man in the city of Philadelphia is almost incredible. When he first went to live there the city was badly lighted, ill-paved, ill-drained, without schools, libraries, hospitals, or proper means of ventilation. Owing to his exertions a public library arose in Philadelphia, the first of its kind, and forerunner of thousands of similar institutions. Stimulated by his earnest persuasions, the citizens subscribed £5,000 towards the building of the high school that afterwards developed into the University of Pennsylvania. He established better systems of cleansing, lighting, paving, draining, and otherwise improved the city; invented the "Franklin Stove" for economising waste fuel, and devised a means for factory chimneys to consume their own smoke; organised a better and more rapid system of postal communication; set on foot, and was the genius of, the famous "Junto" Club, parent of our modern debating societies; and founded the "American Philosophical Society," the earliest scientific organisation in America. If to these manifold good works are added the result of his seven years' researches and discoveries in electricity, and also of his important political labors, we feel the amount of good contained in that one career to be something enormous. Such an existence puts to shame the ordinary life of man, perpetually turning upon the pivot of self.

But perhaps the most glorious hour of Franklin's noble life was that wherein he at length, after long years of patient thought, earnest study, and keen observation, solved the great problem which had long troubled his brain, and knew at last that lightning and electricity were, as he had boldly guessed them to be, forms of the same force. This discovery, like others of its kind, besides giving an impetus to scientific research throughout Europe, and inspiring Goethe and many a lesser student to set up batteries and make independent experiments, gave to superstition one of its severest death-blows. The crashing, booming thunder, the weird lightning-flash, once fraught with supernatural terrors, and held to be special manifestations of Divine wrath, were now known to be identical with the bright sparks that

man himself could generate at will by bringing together such seemingly simple materials as glass, silk, amber, sealing-wax, feathers. Henceforward thunder and lightning were robbed of more than half their terrors, for the scientist could now bring them down from the skies into his own study, play with them and experiment upon them at his will, and, like another Prospero, bind them to his service and compel them to do his bidding.

It was given to Franklin, in part at least, to realise that fulness and entirety of existence for which the "Faust" of Goethe's creation longed so ardently that he bartered his soul in exchange. It has been the lot of few men to enter as he did into the labors, perils, interests, joys of life, not by one, but by many avenues; to live, as it were, not one life, but many lives in one; to be by turns artisan, tradesman, author, publisher, philanthropist, scientist, discoverer, soldier, statesman, senator. It was not very long after he had, in a two-fold sense, electrified the world by his grand scientific discoveries, that we hear of him in London, striving earnestly, in conjunction with Pitt, to bring about a peace between two angry nations. He was one of the many witnesses examined before the Committee of the House of Commons regarding American opinion as to that monstrous iniquity known as the Stamp Act, and which he not inaptly styled "The Mother of Mischiefs." The scene, said Burke, reminded him of a master examined by a parcel of schoolboys. Franklin did not possess, like the great Burke, any extraordinary gift of eloquence, but his language was always forcible and to the point, his arguments luminous with strong common sense, sound judgment, and deeply-rooted love of justice and fair play, and he was so thoroughly conversant with all details, social, political, economical, of the nation he represented, that no question had power to puzzle him for a moment. Above all, he rendered important service to America by his indignant refutation of a falsehood much fostered by the Tories, the calumny, namely, that American hatred of the new tax was merely "a mean begrudging of the sixpence."

The Stamp Act, Franklin declared, answering a question put to him by a speech that lasted nearly an hour, was not hated for its own sake; the money payment required was but a slight affair. It was justly detested, he said, for the reason that its enforcement would tamper with a great and important principle, namely, that taxation and representation should go hand in hand—a principle affecting, not the destinies of America alone, but those of all and every nation in that and in future ages.

"The Stamp Act is repealed." So declared all newspapers of the time, both American and English. The American colonists were half mad with joy, and there were great rejoicings and festivities in consequence. In Boston the very debtors were let out of gaol, that there might at such a time be no unhappy creature in the town.

In Philadelphia there was a grand banquet and a monster procession, of which the chief feature was a huge barge, forty feet long, with "Franklin" painted on it in enormous letters. At night the city was illuminated, and for some days whoever would might go to the principal coffee-house and drink a full bowl of punch to the king's health. The king! What was the welfare of a great nation to George the Third! He was but trifling with and befooling a trusting people, as monarchs have done before, and since, his day. The Stamp Act had no sooner been removed than it was replaced by a similar exaction under another form; the storm that had been long gathering burst forth at last, and there was no longer any hope of peace. When Franklin had left America as envoy from Pennsylvania to England, he thought to return in a few months, or a year at the latest, but

The best laid schemes of mice and men
Gang aft agley.

It was full ten years before he set foot again on American soil, having failed in the great object of his mission to England. The peace for whose sake

he had through long years labored, argued, harangued, expostulated, negotiated, travelled, and hoped, was not to be, and the two nations, for whose reconciliation he had toiled and striven with an energy that never tired, a patience that nothing could exhaust, were already engaged in the fierce and desperate game of war.

Meanwhile, there had landed in America a young man of keen eyes, slender means, large heart, and liberal views on political, social, and religious questions, bearing letters of recommendation from Franklin, whose acquaintance he had lately made in London. Thomas Paine arrived in America with no loftier design than that of establishing a school, but he stayed to assist in founding one of the mightiest republics the world has known. The talisman of Franklin's friendship procured him introductions to all the great leaders of the American revolutionary party. As yet there had been among these men no open talk of an independent existence for America apart from England. No one of them had even dared give utterance to the sacred word "*Independence*," and it remained for the stranger who had lately come among them to suggest the great idea that was to become henceforward a watchword to all oppressed and suffering people. One day four notable men, John Adams, Benjamin Rush, George Washington, and Benjamin Franklin, were gathered in solemn conclave in a room in Philadelphia. The thunderclouds that had lately gathered over American fortunes seemed indeed black and ominous. Ten thousand English troops had lately landed in Boston, the American army was disheartened by the recent repulse at Bunker's Hill, money was scarce, and altogether the state of affairs was sufficient to account for the knit brows, the anxious, care-worn faces of these four patriots. It is Franklin, always practical and straightforward, who breaks a long and solemn silence. "What," he asks, "is the end of all this? Is it to obtain justice of Great Britain, to change the Ministry, to soften a tax? Or is it for ——" He pauses, and the sentence is finished by Paine, who has lately entered. "These states," he says, in firm, clear tones, "must be independent of England. That is the only solution of this question."

The older men are at first startled, almost shocked, at these bold words, giving shape and form to what with them had till now been but a vague idea. But as they listen, their spirits are hugely stirred by the eloquence of this young advocate of national liberty, whose words increase in power and fervency as he feels by the glowing eyes turned upon him that he is pouring out his full heart to kindred spirits. Before he has finished speaking his hands are pressed in warm sympathetic grasp; and even Washington, usually so calm and majestic, is praising Paine, pressing his hands in both his own, and entreating him to write down what he has just been saying. It was not long before Paine had embodied his opinions on American affairs in that wonderful little book called *Common Sense*. This pamphlet, true to its title, is luminous with that eighth sense possessed in no common degree by its author, and in which the ordinary human being is too often woefully deficient. Paine flashes his lantern of common sense upon monarchy, hereditary succession, and other ancient institutions, and, stripping them bare of all false halos of sentiment and prejudice, shows them to the world for what they are, mouldering ruins that may have been of some use to manhood in bygone ages, but at present only serve to deprive the nations of much of that life and light and liberty that is theirs by birthright. J. F. T.

(To be concluded).

Ben Parker, of Des Moines, owns thirty saloons in Iowa. The women a year ago began a systematic course of praying that he would be converted. Three times a week for a year they have met and prayed for the conversion of Ben Parker. The fact that Mr. Parker finds business particularly good is due to this advertising by these foolish women.—*Atchison Globe*.

Acid Drops.

THERE is a Dickens Society. It held its annual dinner the other evening at Anderton's Hotel. Charles Dickens was not present—for good reasons. Mr. Hall Caine was there instead. He told the company a number of surprising things. He said that in its highest expression the novel was the greatest achievement of the human intellect. And, of course, we all know who is the greatest novelist, and therefore the greatest of the human species. Mr. Caine also said that Dickens stood, above all, for the love of God. Had he stood for that alone, though, how many readers would he have had? Mr. Caine's everlasting preachee-preachee shows what a very small part of Dickens's mantle has fallen on his shoulders. Dickens could preach a bit, and could sometimes be maudlin. But these were his failings, in which he resembled a good many other writers. His genius was all his own. And it is *that* which keeps his work alive.

Mr. Hall Caine's play, called after his novel, *The Eternal City*, has a Pope in it, and the part has devolved upon Mr. Brandon Thomas. This gentleman confided his opinion of the part to Mr. Raymond Blathwayt, the well-known interviewer. "Why," he said, "I love it; I declare I feel it to my very soul, it is so intensely spiritual." What an age of cant we are in when actors talk in this way, and the stuff is gravely reported in a great daily newspaper! One recalls what President Loubet said when the actors and actresses at the Theatre Francais were in revolt against the management, and were giving themselves insufferable airs: "These mummies are taking themselves too seriously!"

Mr. Caine's *forte* is known to be modesty. "Before I write either book or play in its entirety," he told Mr. Blathwayt, "I travel to various countries and talk with all sorts and conditions of men and women, statesmen, priests, diplomatists, police authorities, Anarchists, and Nihilists." Does he now? We suppose the statesmen and diplomatists hold themselves in readiness to feed Mr. Caine's genius. Shakespeare did not enjoy such advantages. But this, by the way, is not the only point on which he does not resemble Mr. Caine.

Dr. Spence, the Dean of Gloucester, believes the Christian outlook to be "very encouraging," and states his conviction that "in no time has Christianity exercised anything like the power which it is now bringing to bear on the masses." This may be true enough without amounting to much; Christianity has only just begun to take the masses into account. No doubt it feels the necessity of capturing, or at least of conciliating, them if it can; but up to the present the masses have made no particular response to the Church's wooing. And perhaps they never will. On the whole, if Dean Spence really thinks the prospect is "very encouraging," he must be optimistic enough to be thankful for very small mercies.

One of the vilest papers in France is called *La Croix* ("The Cross"). It is a Catholic journal. Its object is the restoration of monarchy and priestcraft by the overthrow of the Republic and the schoolmaster; and its policy consists of envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. As it was one of Captain Dreyfus's bitterest traducers, it naturally spits venom over the dead body of Zola. And of course the priests rejoice at his death. "It is the just judgment of God," said one of them, after reading the evening paper, in the hearing of a correspondent of the London *Express*. These people always drag in their God to serve their own passions and prejudices. But what a being their God must be—if he exists at all! Fancy his having nothing better to do than to murder Zola, and half murder his wife, merely to gratify the malignity of a lot of bigoted Christians in Paris!

There is another aspect of the jubilation over Zola's death. Those who are glad that God (as they think) killed him, would have assassinated him themselves if they had dared. The evil intention was there; only the courage was lacking. Such is the influence of the Christian superstition upon the moral sentiments of its devotees!

Madame Zola begged Captain Dreyfus not to attend her husband's funeral, as she was anxious to prevent political animosities from raging round his coffin. Naturally her wishes would have been respected. But the enemies of Captain Dreyfus are devoid of common sense and common fairness. One of the foremost of them said that if Captain Dreyfus dared to be present he would be a despicable bravo, and if he dared to be absent he would be repudiating his benefactor. To reason with men in this temper is a sheer waste of time.

A Scarborough man was occupied in his own garden, when he was approached by a celestial messenger. "The Lord," this person said, "has sent me to tell you that the Devil is coming." Apparently the messenger himself was the Devil, for he added, "I have brought a six-barrelled revolver and will shoot you." Thereupon he fired three shots, but hit nothing except the world. But as he might come again from the Lord, and shoot straighter, the man in the garden went to the magistrates and got a summons against him. We hope it will be a case of "all's well that ends well."

Nature is full of ironies, which are something worse if there is a "Providence" behind them. Take the following instance. A lady named Nicholls, of Launceston, had been unable to walk from infancy; but a clever surgical mechanist at Chard, Somerset, contrived an apparatus by which she was able to move about; and her joy was so intense that she died upon the spot.

"Providence" has been on the rampage again in Sicily. Most of the houses have been unroofed in Catania. Floods are the order of the day, and ten thousand people at least are homeless, besides the hundreds who have perished. Still, He doeth all things well.

"Providence" has not forgotten Japan. A typhoon wave broke over the Odawara district, near Yokohama, destroyed many houses, and drowned five hundred people. Nor has Egypt been forgotten. The Lord's cholera microbes are busy there. Between three and four thousand victims are carried off weekly. For his tender mercies are over all his works.

The Lord's cholera microbes are also pretty active in the Philippines. The people in the Ilo-Ilo district are fleeing from the towns to the mountains, leaving the dead unburied and the dying uncared for.

The Christians say worse things about "Providence" than we do. Four little children were burnt to death at Treasury Farm, near Ickham. Their remains were all buried in one coffin, forty inches long by thirteen inches wide. The mother of the poor young victims was in custody on the charge of setting fire to the building. Yet the coffin bore the inscription: "God has called these four little ones to a far brighter home." God called them, did he? Then why arrest the mother?

The Earth—a sufficiently large title—is a "monthly magazine of Sense and Science." We have looked into it without finding much of either article. There is a report of an address by Lady Blount. She is apparently very sincere and clearly very innocent. "Of course," she is reported as saying, "there was such a thing as true science; yet anything which contradicted the Bible, whether it be labelled science, or whatever it may be called, must be false. The modern Scientist and the present-day Atheist both contradict the Word of the Living Father—God—when they deny the writing of God through Moses; for Moses was the mouth-piece of the Deity." It will be seen from this that the *Earth* keeps up the character of its title. It contains fossils.

"Why Don't Men Go To Church?" is being discussed at great length in the *Liverpool Daily Post*. It doesn't occur to anyone to return the simple answer, "Because they don't want to."

"Drink, Freethought, and Love" is the heading a Manchester paper gives to the report of a recent suicide in London. The heading is a ridiculous piece of impertinent bigotry in view of the evidence. Richard Adams was a youth of seventeen, who shot himself with a revolver. A letter was found on his body and was read at the inquest. "I was always opposed to Freethought," he said, "as my own sense tells me there must be a God." That one sentence is enough to show the animus of the "Freethought" in the Manchester paper's heading. But there is something else to be observed. The suicide's letter referred to a "habit" that had wrecked his "body and soul." That habit was not drink. "The Bible has made my habit stronger," he wrote, "because I know when I wanted seclusion I could always find it." One cannot help thinking of a certain part of the book of Genesis, of a woman called Tamar, and of a man who may be left nameless. The discerning reader will understand.

Devilries may occur in a country, and the nation may be sound enough as a whole. But if lynching goes on as a public entertainment in America the nation will go to the Devil. The latest report of the burning of a negro alive, with trains carrying spectators by the thousand, and reserved

seats for distinguished citizens, is inexpressibly shocking. The vices a man is ashamed of do not produce their worst effect upon his character; the vices he glories in pollute and degrade him irretrievably. It is just the same with a nation.

The Blood of Christ is now drunk in the form of coffee in Finland. A new sect has arisen in that country, which uses bread and coffee in the Communion Service. This would hardly be appreciated, it is to be feared, by the party who turned all those gallons of water into wine at a certain marriage feast; but even he could not well resist a concession to the temperance spirit of the present age.

Dr. Spence Watson, speaking at Hartlepool, denounced the Education Bill on this amongst other grounds, that "It made the public, including Nonconformists and unbelievers, pay for the teaching of that which they conscientiously differed from." Well now, we beg to remind Dr. Watson that while religious teaching is allowed at all in the public schools, "unbelievers" have to pay for the teaching of what they conscientiously differ from. Does he mean that "unbelievers'" rights are only important when they happen to coincide with those of Nonconformists? It really looks so.

Canon Malcolm MacColl, in a trenchant letter to the *Westminster Gazette*, points out the weakness of the Nonconformist attitude on the Education question. He particularly shows the absurdity of their talk about Undenominational religious teaching. "It is quite right," he says, in their view "that the religion of the Undenominationalists should be charged on the rates, but quite iniquitous that the religion of the Denominationalists should be similarly favored." Here is the whole case in a nutshell. The Nonconformists say it is right to teach just the quantity and quality of religion they approve in public schools, and wrong to teach any other quantity and quality of religion. There never was a more disgusting bigotry masquerading as the very ideal of religious freedom.

Cardinal Vaughan's letter on the Education Bill is one of some importance. He says that the Catholic Bishops in England are unanimous in desiring to see this Bill passed into law. The question at issue, he declares, is "whether or no dogmatic Christianity shall be finally banished from all the public elementary schools in this country." The Nonconformists are on one side, and Churchmen and Catholics are on the other. The latter side is defending Christianity—the former is betraying it. On this point the Cardinal speaks out with commendable plainness. "The battle being fought out in Parliament," he says, "is not merely for liberty; it is for Christianity itself. Do not for a moment suppose that the truths of Christianity can be handed down by teachers whose knowledge and fitness to teach religion may not be duly examined and tested; do not suppose that Christianity is a science that needs no training to teach it aright, but that any infidel or any fool, if he likes, can teach the Christian religion to children. And as to undenominationalism, which has been already imposed upon so large a number of schools, it is the most insidious dissolvent of dogmatic Christianity that has yet been invented, and is certain to end in universal doubt and indifference."

We have the honor to agree with Cardinal Vaughan for once. We have often said that the idea of putting up the mixed multitude of male and female teachers in elementary schools to "teach Christianity" is a monstrous absurdity. Nothing but the political and professional exigencies of the Nonconformists, one would think, could ever reconcile them to such a ridiculous arrangement.

The *Daily News* lectures Cardinal Vaughan in a very haughty fashion. "Cardinal Vaughan," it says, "frankly desires to make men of all beliefs pay for the 'Catholic education of Catholic children in the Catholic religion in their own Catholic schools.' Again, we do not blame him; he naturally tries to get all that is possible for his Church." Well, and what are the Nonconformists trying for? Do they not want to make men of all beliefs pay for such religious education as suits Nonconformists in the schools? What they want, substantially, is Nonconformist religion at the public expense. The difference between them and the Churchmen and Catholics, on this point, is the difference between tweedledum and tweedledee.

The Rev. C. Silvester Horne, of the Free Church Council, calls upon all the Progressive organisations in London to be up and doing, side by side with the Chapel party, to defeat the Education Bill. "If we really make a great effort now," he says, "we can settle this controversy for all time." Can you? We very much doubt it. The Chapel party thought they had settled the controversy for all time in 1870. But they were mistaken. And we believe they are mistaken

again. It is by no means certain that the Chapel party can beat the Church party (with the Catholics to help them) in a fight to a finish. Besides, there is a growing public outside all Churches, who may yet bring England into a line with France, for instance, and keep religious exhorters of all kinds out of the public school.

What a lot of two-legged asses get upon magistrates' benches in this country! A man at Highgate applied for "exemption" under the Vaccination Act. One of the magistrates, a reverend something or other, called Hennessey, asked the applicant, "Do you believe it is against God to have your child vaccinated?" That was what he understood by a conscientious objection! The other magistrate, a gentleman named Tubbs, was nearly as wise as the man of God who sat beside him. "You have got to satisfy us," he said, "that it would be injurious to this child." This was his notion of a conscientious objection! Pantomime isn't in it with the performances of such wiseacres.

General De Wet is a brave man. He is also "slim." But he is not "slim" enough to see through the nonsense of religion. "God willed," he has just said, "that we should lose our independence." Rubbish! Mr. Rhodes willed it, Mr. Chamberlain willed it, the Tory Government willed it. And a British army of some three hundred thousand men, backed by two hundred and fifty million pounds sterling, carried the thing through. It is not easy to see where God looks in.

In one respect, of course, this talk of "God" may be a source of consolation to the Boer Generals. It is flattering to think you submitted only to Omnipotence.

Mr. John Kensit, at the time we are writing, has taken a serious turn for the worse. Instead of leaving the Liverpool Royal Infirmary, as expected, he is now lying there in a very dangerous condition. Double pneumonia has set in, and his depositions have been taken. We are sorry to hear it. Without having any particular admiration for Mr. Kensit, we should regret to see him die by the hand of a religious assassin.

Andrew Lang, although an apostle of "haughty culture," can sometimes drive a straight furrow. Writing in the *Morning Post*, September 29, he writes: "Were I a Chinese subject, I should certainly look on Christian missionaries as most impertinent beings. We would not stand Buddhist or Confucian ministers in our midst, or mildly endure aggressive professors of the Shinto religion."

"Merlin" writes on Zola in last Sunday's *Referee*. He praises him as a Dreyfusite, but damns him as an artist. He says that the pathology of the sexes is not a matter to be freely treated by a popular writer. He would confine all that to the scientist, and not have it made known to the maidens of the world at large. Zola might have said that he did not write for schoolgirls; that he left that to the David Christie Murrays.

The insistence of the prominence of certain episodes in Zola's writings shows something wrong with the perception of the critics. It is as if one visited a farmyard, and saw—nothing but the dungheap.

If "Merlin" is so squeamish, why not let him attack the realism of the Bible, which unblushingly chronicles the immoralities of old-world Jewish savages? This book is thrust in the hands of every child, and is not confined to the leisure moments of novel-reading maidens.

"General" Booth has arrived in New York, and has had a "tremendous" reception. The evening after he landed he addressed a big meeting in the Carnegie Hall, with Mr. Low, the Mayor, presiding. So the world wags! If a man like Mr. Herbert Spencer were to go to New York a dozen persons might meet him on the wharf.

"General" Booth has addressed himself to the drunkards. Mr. Herbert Spencer has addressed himself to the sober people. There is the difference.

Mr. Lionel Johnson, the poet and critic, who was found by a policeman lying unconscious in Fleet-street, and has since died in St. Bartholomew's Hospital, is said to have once been the occupier of "haunted rooms." The doors were opened and closed by mysterious hands, and curious ghosts walked over the floors. Being covered with powdered chalk, they showed footprints of a bird-like claw. Perhaps it was the ghost of a favorite peacock, or of some unfortunate rooster, who had disturbed a gentleman's sleep, and had been lured into those "haunted rooms" and murderously done away

with. Seriously, though, is it not astonishing that such stuff as this should be gravely reported at this time of day, and as gravely commended to the investigation of the Society for Physical Research? Why not start a Ghost Society, a Spectre Association, or a Spook League, at once?

Messiahs are multiplying. Bristol has one now. His name is Edward Howe, his age is forty-five, and his principal earthly distinction is drunkenness and disorderly conduct. His last appearance in the Police Court was singular. He had destroyed all his clothing in the cells, and had to be brought into the dock in a sack, which was stitched round his neck, with apertures for his feet. The magistrates gave him fourteen days. They thought he was shamming insanity; and, perhaps, in the case of all Messiahs, there is some method in their madness.

The Latter-Day Saints, alias Mormons, have been gathering together, some four hundred strong, in Finsbury Town Hall. They have even got reported in the newspapers. We do not hear that anything was said about polygamy. That is a subject on which the Mormons have to keep quiet now. It is stated, however, that they still practise polygamy in Utah. The United States' law will not allow them to marry more than one wife, but they "seal" others as "spiritual wives," and so the old game goes on in spite of the Federal government.

A new departure has been made in a South London church. Provision has been made in many churches for cyclists, but provision is made in this one for mothers and babies. A room and a matron are ready for the reception and care of infants while their parents are worshipping. It is to be hoped that the said room is sufficiently remote from the house of God, or fenced off from it by the thickest of walls; otherwise the infants might be heard in chorus in the middle of a prayer, or even in the critical part of the sermon.

The Olympic Theatre, Wych-street, Strand, is coming down, we believe. At present it is being used as a Mission Hall. The advertisements of the Sunday evening performances—is that the right word?—take the form of a theatre handbill. It reflects much credit on the cleverness of the superintendent, Mr. W. M. Wheatley. He evidently knows a thing or two, and we suppose a good deal of artifice is necessary nowadays to induce people to come and be saved.

Dean Farrar appeals for St. John's parish church, Hoxton. Most of the 19,000 inhabitants are poor, and the majority live in single rooms. Very sad! But the Dean is not appealing on *their* behalf. Oh dear, no. It is the vicar who is in urgent need of £1,700, partly to restore the church, partly to build a mission room, and partly to pay off the debt on his schools. But when all this is accomplished, what particular advantage will it be to the poor people living in those single rooms? What they want is, not so much a splendid mansion in heaven, as a little more breathing-room in Hoxton.

The Church Congress is meeting this year at Northampton. For the first time the parsons foregather in the "Bradlaugh borough." The snobs of the town stuck to Bradlaugh like wax. A Parsons' Palaver was hardly to be thought of there in the old days. But times have changed. The great "Iconoclast" is in his grave. He has been there nearly twelve years, and the clergy presume he is fairly quiet by this time.

The Presbyterians are forming a "Standing Committee on Leakage." They lose so many members that the drain is becoming serious. Methodist churches are in the same trouble.

Successfully Worked.

A venerable, white-haired clergyman, says the *Worcester Diocesan Calendar*, had received several requests from young women for a lock of his hair. The clergyman, pleased at this expression of respect, granted the request. Soon, however, his wife received a note which put an end to her husband's delusion. It ran: "DEAR MRS. CONRAD,—Won't you please ask your husband to send me just a little lock of his hair? We have all been taking lessons in making hair flowers. So many of the other girls asked him that I thought I would rather ask you. Won't you please do this for me? It is so hard to get white hair for lilies of the valley!"

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

Sunday, October 12, Athenæum Hall, 73, Tottenham Court-road, London: "Zola the Atheist: His Life, Death, and Funeral."

October 19, Athenæum Hall; 26, Manchester; November 9, Camberwell; 30, South Shields. December 14, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—October 12, Glasgow; 19, a., Brockwell Park; e., Camberwell; 26, Athenæum. November 2, Athenæum; 9, Birmingham; 16, Leicester; 23, Liverpool.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.

E. CHAPMAN.—Subjects are being forwarded. Mr. Foote will, of course, be happy to spend an hour with the Branch members when he visits South Shields, and to talk over with them the affairs of the movement in their district.

J. B. (Manchester).—Will try to do something on it next week.

C. F. says he is a subscriber to the Dresden Edition of Colonel Ingersoll's works, and "thinks them magnificent books" which he will "always treasure." It is a pity, he says, that every Freethinker cannot become possessed of a set. This correspondent wants to know where he could get the edges gilded at a moderate figure. The top edges are gilded already, and it would spoil the volumes to cut the other edges level, unless it was intended to bind them again in calf or morocco.

B. STEVENS.—The argument *re* Josephus has been carried far enough for our pages—that is, for our readers.

G. JACOB.—Colonel Ingersoll knew, and admitted, that there was no real difference between Atheism and Agnosticism.

D. CURNIE.—Pleased to hear you were "more than repaid" by going from Dumfries to hear Mr. Foote lecture at Glasgow. You may like to know that one gentleman, with his wife, went all the way from the county of Durham. The slight hoarseness you refer to is the last relic of Mr. Foote's breakdown in the early part of the year. It is gradually disappearing. By the way, you should not have scrupled to introduce yourself on Sunday. Pray do so at the next opportunity. Never mind the "recent convert" and all that sort of thing. "A man's a man for a' that." We are unable to answer your question as to whether anything in the way of Freethought propaganda could be done at Dumfries.

W. LAMB.—Glad to know you would "like to send more." We wish all who could afford it would send as much.

J. HALLIWELL.—Cuttings are always welcome.

C. E. S.—Why not ask the lecturer himself? He is the proper person to indicate his own source of information.

W. CLARKSON hopes the Camberwell Branch will be able to wipe off all debt and have "a nest-egg for the future."

C. MASCALL.—Many thanks in the circumstances.

W. W. C. (Leicester).—Your copy of the *Freethinker* is forwarded regularly from our publishing office on Wednesday evening. Its late delivery on Friday, and sometimes not at all, is a matter we should like the Post Office to explain. But it is very little use making complaints to that institution.

J. E. LING.—Pleased to hear from you. We are as sorry as you can be to see Mrs. Besant serving the cause of superstition. She left the Secular camp many years ago, and there is no special reason for troubling overmuch about her present extravagances. Thanks for your good wishes.

D. CARTER.—About a year ago the New York *Truthseeker* referred to Mr. George Anderson as "the gentleman who finances the opposition to Mr. Foote." It was a stroke of sagacity amounting to genius, if it did not depend on private information.

THE CAMBERWELL BRANCH FUND.—F. S., £2; C. J. Pottage, £1; C. D. Stephens, 2s. 6d.; Peter, 2s. 6d.; Paul, 2s. 6d.; W. Lamb, 10s.; C. Davison, 10s. 6d.; W. Clarkson, £1; C. Mascal, 5s.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Churchman's Magazine—The Earth—Truthseeker (New York)—Leicester Reasoner—Freidenker—Newtownards Chronicle—Truthseeker (Bradford)—Animals' Friend—Star—Berkshire Chronicle—Railway Times (Bombay)—Boston Investigator—Blue Grass Blade—Public Opinion (New York)—Free Society—Progressive Thinker—Two Worlds—Liverpool Daily Post.

THE National Secular Society's office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., where all letters should be addressed to Miss Vance.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.

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

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

Sugar Plums.

MR. FOOTE is now lecturing for two Sundays at the Athenæum, 73 Tottenham-court-road, London. His subject this evening will be "Zola the Atheist: his Life, Death, and Funeral." Mr. Foote will be able to do more justice to this subject in a lecture than was possible in a brief *Freethinker* article last week. Freethinkers are requested to advertise this lecture amongst their friends and acquaintances—and to bring some of them along to the hall.

Mr. Foote paid a flying but highly successful visit to Glasgow on Sunday, delivering two lectures there, instead of three as heretofore. There never was such a morning audience in the Secular hall before; indeed, it was comfortably filled, and the crowded assembly in the evening was a fine and exhilarating sight. The Branch had delayed opening the winter session until Mr. Foote's visit, and the fresh start was of a most enthusiastic character. It was very pleasant to see so many ladies present at the evening lecture and thoroughly enjoying it. Another pleasant feature was the number of alert-looking young men. Evidently the Glasgow Branch is gaining a grip upon the future. Some of those young men will be carrying on the work by and by.

The chairman at Mr. Foote's morning lecture was that vigorous Freethinker, Mr. Donald Black. The evening chairman was one of the sons of the late Mr. Robert Turnbull, whose death we recorded in our last issue. His father died in his arms, and he was glad to be present when the end came. Not only did he see the last of one whom he loved as a father and admired as a man, but he was able to see for himself with what fortitude a convinced Atheist could bear suffering, and with what serenity he could meet death.

The Glasgow Branch favors us with a copy of its Annual Report and Balance Sheet. It is a very healthy document. This Branch is a miracle of a Branch for a poor movement. After spending liberally during the year it has actually a balance of over £84 in hand. Some of the English Branches will have to send deputations to Glasgow to see how the thing is done. We note that "more than one thousand copies of the *Age of Reason* have been sold during the past two years." This is capital for a single city, though a big one. Many lectures have been delivered, and good audiences have been the rule; out-door propaganda has been carried on in the Green during the summer—that is to say, during the time of year commonly known by that designation, for this is still 1902: a large quantity of literature has been distributed at these meetings; the social gatherings have been very successful in every respect, and so was the annual Children's Party; and last, but perhaps not least, the Young Men's Discussion Class has done excellent work in the way of intellectual stimulus and preparation for public speaking.

The closing paragraph of the Glasgow Branch's report will be read with general interest by the wider public it will reach through our pages. It runs as follows:—"The Committee cannot close their Report without expressing their deep regret at the death of an old subscriber to the Glasgow Secular Society. Mr. James Dick, who gave the beautiful Cathkin Park to the citizens of Glasgow, and who at his death set an example of princely generosity by dividing nearly a quarter of a million sterling amongst his work-people, infirmaries, etc., was for many years a subscriber to our society; and although latterly, on account of his many business duties, he lost touch with our local movement, he showed in the unique character of his benefactions that his early sympathies with the work and aims of Robert Owen and other Rationalists were active and unimpaired."

Mr. Cohen was at Birmingham on Sunday. In the afternoon he lectured for the N. S. S. Branch, and had an excellent audience in the Prince of Wales Assembly Room. The evening lecture was on behalf of the Labor Church in the Bristol-street Board school, which was crowded. Mr. Cohen lectures to-day (Oct. 12) in the Secular Hall, Brunswick-street, Glasgow. We hope he will have three good meetings.

Gratitude is not dead in the world. How the brave Zola, who risked so much to do an act of justice for a man he did not know and had never seen, would have appreciated the tears of Captain Dreyfus over his coffin—if he could only have felt them fall! The late Martyr of the Devil's Island was terribly affected by the death of the man to whom more than to anyone else he owes his liberty. He was the last to view the body on the Wednesday evening, and was with it at the time when Madame Zola arrived. At sight of her he broke down utterly and sobbed bitterly like a child as he tried to offer her the consolation of his sympathy.

Zola's funeral was a magnificent demonstration. There has been no such spectacle in Paris since the burial of Victor Hugo. Speeches were delivered by M. Chaumié, the Minister of Public Instruction, and M. Anatole France, the distinguished writer. M. Chaumié eulogised Zola as an author, but laid stress upon his not having hesitated to "brave anger, treachery, and hate in defence of the cause which seemed to him just." M. France's oration was a masterpiece, and was warmly applauded. Having recalled how Zola sacrificed himself for the love of justice and truth, and how, feeble and unarmed, he stood up before men who were thirsting for the ruin of an innocent man, M. France continued: "Can I pass over their lies, their crime, in silence? It would be to pass over his heroic rectitude. Can I be silent over their shame? It would be to be silent over his glory! Egoism and fear were seated at the councils of the Government. A sinister silence reigned. It was then that Zola wrote that restrained but terrible letter denouncing forgery and felony. You remember the howls of rage, the cries of death, from the combined parties of reaction. Never was his constancy shaken during those dark days. His courageous speech had awakened France. The consequences of his action are incalculable. They have brought about a movement for social equity which will not be arrested, and from which a new order of things, founded upon a higher justice and a profounder knowledge of the rights of all, will arise. There is only one country in the world where these great events could have happened. France is a land of reason, of philanthropic thought; a land of humane philosophers and just magistrates. Zola deserved well of his country in never despairing of justice in France. Let us not pity him because he suffered. Let us envy him. He was an honor to his country and to the world. At a certain time he was the embodiment of the conscience of mankind."

Zola was buried, of course, without any religious ceremony. It is not natural that this fact should be emphasised in the English newspapers.

Captain Dreyfus did attend Zola's funeral after all. He begged to be allowed to watch the coffin all night before the ceremony. The favor was granted, and in the morning Madame Zola shook hands with him and removed the interdict. He walked in the funeral procession quietly, with his eyes bent on the ground, so as to attract as little attention as possible. Madame Zola did the right thing. Perhaps she saw it to be so in the long night watches before her husband's dead body was borne from his home. It would have been a curious irony if the man Zola dared so much to save had not been allowed to follow his benefactor's coffin to the grave. Zola himself would have scorned such an idea.

Zola wrote replies in a lady's album to a number of questions. They were published in the *Revue Illustrée* six years ago. Against "the quality I prefer in a man" he wrote "*la bonté*"—which may be roughly rendered into English as "kind-heartedness." The characters he most despised were "traitors." His favorite occupation was "work." The way he would like to die was "suddenly." His wish was substantially realised.

We beg to call special attention to the "Notice to Parents" which appears in our advertisement columns. The gentleman who is responsible for it is an ardent Freethinker and a competent educationist. He is not a mere theoretician, but has had extensive and varied experience. Fortunately he is still comparatively young, and possesses the health and strength to grapple with this experiment. The question is, will he have the opportunity? For our part, we hope he will. It is high time that Freethinkers, who send their boys to collegiate schools, should make an effort to secure them a really rational training. This can only be done by the complete elimination of superstition and a constant appeal to common sense. We venture to trust that "Magister" will hear from many correspondents on this subject. It may even be advisable to open up a correspondence in our own columns. We are open to receive letters.

Mr. E. B. Rose, who left Camberwell for South Africa a good many years ago, and returned after the outbreak of the war, resided for some time at Johannesburg, and was connected with the Labor movement there. Having a first-hand knowledge of the situation, and some personal knowledge of the Boer leaders, he is in a position to say something useful on the South African problem. He has just published, through himself, at 8 John-street, Adelphi, London, W.C., a book entitled *The Truth About the Transvaal*. The price is five shillings net. Mr. Rose has evidently taken great pains with the book, and has certainly crammed it with figures and facts. He takes the Boer side rather than the British side, but his tone is impartial, and his language is never exaggerated. It is beyond our province to enter into a purely

political criticism. We must be content, therefore, with bringing Mr. Rose's interesting and instructive volume—for such it is, in any case—to the attention of our readers. A good many of them will have heard the author lecturing in London during the past year or so, and they will know that he is a man of information and capacity. Of course he is a Freethinker.

The Secular Society, Limited, through its Board of Directors, has voted a contribution of £10 towards the Fund we are raising for the Camberwell Branch. The Directors are of opinion that the Branch should be generously supported.

The Christian Absurdity.

CHRISTIANS claim for their religion that it alone is the true one among all the religions of the world. That their creed resembles in certain particulars the Jewish, the Mohammedan, and the so called heathen theologies matters not to them, for they consider these resemblances as so many imitations on the part of these other religions, which simply go to prove the genuineness of their own system of credulity. It is of no use to tell Christians that the Jewish and the heathen religions antedate theirs by many centuries; that Christianity itself is nothing more than a patchwork of the Jewish and the Pagan mythologies; that the Virgin and Child are simply a recrudescence of Isis and Horus. All such information seems to them only as wild assertion, and, to those deeply immersed in religious foolishness, it is a device of the Devil to disturb their peace of mind.

In the first place, the question of the personality of the reputed founder of their religion is a stumbling-block to the Christians.

Drapier, in his *Intellectual Development of Europe*, says:

"For several centuries it [the Church] was engrossed with disputes respecting the nature of Christ, and creed after creed arose therefrom; to the Ebionites he was a mere man; to the Docetes a phantasm; to the Jewish Gnostic, Cerinthus, possessed of a twofold nature."

This uncertainty with respect to the nature of Christ has come down to our own time, for the Christian sects give us different conceptions of him. One sect seems to look upon him as God, another regards him as the Son of God, another holds the view that he was simply a very good man. They used to discuss, with great solemnity, whether he was as old as his father; and so profound was Christian ignorance then that it was necessary for Arius to tell his co-religionists that of necessity the Father must be older than his Son. Thus ran the final clause of the original Nicene Creed:

"The Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes those who say that there was a time when the Son of God was not; and that before he was begotten he was not, and that he was made out of nothing, or out of another substance or essence, and is created, or changeable, or alterable" (Drapier).

It will be seen in the foregoing extract that Christian reasoning was as scientific then as it is now. Indeed, Christian facts seem to have been of two varieties; either they were the products of disordered Christian imaginations or were the results of borrowing from the already existing ideas of the Pagans. The Book of Revelations exemplifies the first; the celebration of Christmas is an example of the second.

And, despite what Christians may urge to the contrary, the fact remains that Christianity (and, for that matter, every other religion) has its roots in fetishism, the medicine-man of the savage being the prototype of the present-day priest or parson. In truth, the difference between the Christian and the savage is at times scarcely appreciable. The savage prays for rain or fine weather, protection from disease, for victory over his enemies, for a good harvest and a plentifulness of all he requires; the Christian has equivalent supplicatory prayers, which differ from those of the savage only in that they are set in more refined language.

Further resemblance between the Christian and the savage is exemplified in the notions of the mediæval Christians, who considered that the Scriptures contained all the knowledge permitted to man. As the savage sees life similar to his own in all that occurs daily around him, so the Christian of the Middle Ages ascribed to angels the production of natural effects. Angels moved the sun, moon, and stars; carried up water from the sea to form rain; caused the winds, and managed eclipses. The idea of the government of the world by law was utterly rejected; instead, it was asserted that there was a perpetual interference of an instant providence on all occasions, not excepting the most trifling.

Of course, Christianity is suited to a certain stage of civilisation; nevertheless, it still retains traces of the barbarous original from which it and the other religions have sprung. For instance, Christians are pleased to assert that the influence of their religion is very successful in eradicating the repulsive practice of eating human flesh which obtains among cannibalistic savages; yet their own rite of transubstantiation is nothing more than a commemoration of cannibalism; for the Christian partakes of the wafer and wine, which are said to be the very body and blood of Christ, in much the same spirit as the savage partakes of the flesh, heart, liver, brains, etc., of his enemy, in order that he may gain increased cunning, strength, and courage. And, if transubstantiation be a fact, then Christ must have been an enormous being, for many tons of his flesh have been eaten and many gallons of his blood have been imbibed.

But things have changed, and are still changing, for the better, in spite of Christianity and its comitant ignorance and superstition. History falsified for the glory of the Church finds now but very little credence; miracles are not of daily occurrence with us, but happen now at rare intervals, and only in the remotest of places. No longer is the earth a flat plain, nor is heaven situated a few miles up in the air, behind the blue. Devils are not now the cause of madness, epilepsy, plague, and other diseases, nor do they bring about disasters to mankind. Volcanoes are no longer considered the chimneys of the infernal regions, and hell itself has utterly disappeared from the bowels of the earth. Common sense is everywhere gaining ground, and is dealing very summarily with things of mere pretentiousness wherever it encounters them.

JAMES H. WATERS.

On the Ethics and Consequences of Vivisection.—II.

By Dy. Surgeon-General J. H. THORNTON, C.B., M.B., B.A., Fellow of King's College, London.

I regard the great increase of vivisection during the last twenty or thirty years as a very serious danger to the community, as it must lead—and has, indeed, already led—to cruel and unjustifiable experiments on living human beings. Human vivisection is no novelty, having been practised largely in former times. The Greek and Alexandrian physicians are known to have practised it extensively, using slaves for this purpose; and in the Middle Ages criminals were vivisected by certain Italian experimenters in Pisa and elsewhere. Only a few years ago an attempt was made in the Legislature of the State of Ohio, in America, to pass a measure legalising the vivisection of capitalily-sentenced criminals. It is noteworthy that the passage of this law was urgently demanded on the exact ground on which we oppose the vivisection of animals—that is, on the ground that experiments on animals are misleading, or at best useless; and that, if we desire any really useful knowledge, we must vivisect men and women, and not animals. The Bill was powerfully supported, and was very nearly carried. This incident reveals an unexpected danger impending over society, owing to its tolerance of vivisection: the danger that, sooner or later, human beings may be subjected to vivisection under

legal sanction. If that atrocity were once allowed, it would soon set at naught all limitations. The supply of capitalily-sentenced criminals would be utterly insufficient to meet the demand for living human "subjects"; and, accordingly, paupers, lunatics, and hospital patients would be extensively utilised. In a short time no poor and friendless person would be safe, and at length all classes would find themselves exposed to this terrible danger.

It is, perhaps, not generally known that experiments on hospital patients have been freely carried on in Europe and America during recent years. As this statement may be doubted by some persons, the following instances are detailed in proof of its truth. In the *Bulletin of the John Hopkins Hospital* for July, 1897, appears an article, entitled "Poisoning with Preparation of the Thyroid Gland," in which the author states that he made experiments with thyroid extract upon eight insane patients of the Baltimore City Asylum, one of whom died under this treatment. In the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal* for August 6 and 13, 1896, Dr. A. H. Wentworth, Senior Assistant Physician to the Infants' Hospital, Boston, describes what he calls "some experimental work" upon children by puncturing the spinal canal. There were no therapeutic indications for these operations, and death quickly followed in most of the cases. The *New York Medical Record*, in its issue of September 10, 1892, published an article by an American physician on the origin of leprosy, in which he stated that on November 14, 1883, he inoculated six leper girls with the virus of a loathsome disease, and did it again on December 14. In the *British Medical Journal* for July 3, 1897, there appeared an account of the experiments of Sanarelli, at Montevideo, with the virus of yellow fever upon "material" (*i.e.*, living human beings), obtained from a lazaretto on Flores Island, and from the hospital of St. Sebastien. In June, 1891, Professor Cornil, in a paper on cancer-grafting, read before the Academy of Medicine in Paris, stated that a surgeon, after removing a cancer of the breast, took occasion to engraft a portion of the cancer upon the other breast (then quite healthy), and that some months later the graft developed into a tumor which "presented every cancerous characteristic." The experiment was repeated upon another patient, with identical results. In 1899 the *Deutsche Volksblatt* made some startling charges against the Vienna hospitals, asserting that many patients had undergone needless operations, which were made solely as experiments. Eighty cases were cited of children being inoculated with disease germs, and it was alleged that the same thing was done in maternity cases, so that infants were born with loathsome diseases. The case of Dr. Neisser, of Breslau (who was merely censured by the German Government for having injected eight healthy persons with a serum which communicated a horrible disease to four of them), is so recent that it must be within the recollection of everyone. In Dr. Sydney Ringer's *Therapeutics* numerous instances are recorded of experiments with drugs on hospital patients, not for their benefit in any way, but simply to observe the consequences. I may also refer to the abominable experiments on women and children performed by Professor E. Finger, of Vienna; Professor Schrieber, of Konigsberg; Dr. Jansen, of Stockholm; Dr. Menge, of Leipzig; Dr. Epstein, of Prague; Dr. Stickles; Professor Ziemssen, of Munich; Dr. Wachsmuth, and Dr. Lund (who actually performed a series of experiments upon his own child!).

An attempt has been made by Dr. W. W. Keen, of Philadelphia, to palliate some of these cases on various grounds. But what must strike everyone who reads Dr. Keen's letter is that his flimsy excuses have nothing to do with the essential wickedness of the experiments, or the utter condemnation their perpetrators deserve. He seems to be quite unconscious of the enormity of the crime committed by medical men who experiment upon their patients for purposes of scientific research or mere curiosity.

Under the title of "Atrocities of Continental

Physicians," the *Medical Brief* for June, 1899, published an editorial article condemning in the strongest manner various phases of human vivisection, and ending as follows:—

"The mental attitude of medical men, who can coolly infect the helpless bodies of babes and women with virulent poisons, is horrible to contemplate. Such a man rivals the unspeakable Turk in his depravity, and puts a indelible stain upon the fair fame of medicine. If words can shock and sear and blister his mind into a consciousness of the awful nature of his crime, then it is the duty of Anglo-Saxon physicians to unceasingly speak those words."

More timely speech was never uttered. Let us hope that before long these words will be echoed throughout the medical press of the world.

Such are some of the terrible and disastrous consequences which have already ensued from the practise of experimenting on living animals. These cases furnish positive proof of the brutalising and demoralising effect of vivisection, which eventually destroys all moral sense and renders its votaries utterly callous and insensible to human, as well as animal, suffering. Such persons would be quite ready to vivisect human beings if they dared, and they are only prevented from doing so now, by fear of the law and public opinion. Well may the poor regard hospitals with suspicion and distrust, for there is absolutely no safeguard for poor patients, if once the sure ground of duty and principle be departed from—that no drug may be administered to, nor any experiment performed upon a patient, except for his or her own benefit. The preceding instances show only too plainly how frequently this sound and excellent principle is disregarded, and how necessary it is for the protection of the patients that hospitals should be placed under public superintendence and control.

I am bound to state here that my remarks apply chiefly to the professional experimenters, not to the medical profession as a body, for many medical men are against vivisection, and if the majority support it, that is mainly from professional feeling and *esprit-de-corps*.

Medical men, as a rule, are kindly, humane, sympathetic, and devoted; their valuable services are, in many cases, very inadequately remunerated; and not unfrequently they are rewarded only by the gratitude and affection of their patients. In short, there is no class of people more deserving of praise and commendation than the majority of the medical profession.

But the professional vivisectioners are, I consider, a very dangerous class of men, and it is truly astonishing that their proceedings in foreign hospitals have been tolerated so long by the Governments, and by the people of those countries. Such men are unfit to have anything to do with hospitals, and they are disqualified for the ordinary practice of the medical profession by the hard-heartedness and want of sympathy resulting inevitably from their habitual occupation. Their influence and example must produce a very bad effect on public morality, and must go far in neutralising the efforts of humanitarians, and in propagating a spirit of cruelty and callous indifference among the people. Like other evil passions, the desire to experiment upon living subjects grows with indulgence, until it becomes a veritable mania, and leads its votaries on to practices (such as those I have previously mentioned) which, as the *Medical Brief* has declared, can hardly be otherwise explained than by assuming the insanity of the perpetrators. If not insane, they must be regarded as very dangerous criminals, and the public safety requires that they should, in either case, be subjected to restraint.

This very serious danger to the public is entirely due to the public tolerance of vivisection, and constitutes an irrefutable argument for the suppression of that practice, no matter how useful it is asserted to be in medicine, surgery, and bacteriology. In my judgment we should lose nothing worth having by

the abolition of vivisection; but were it otherwise, I am convinced that the promotion of justice, mercy, and humanity among the human race would be well worth the sacrifice.

Tried by Death.

A REMARK was made to me, the other day, by a Christian friend with regard to my profession to him of Atheism. "Ah," said he, "it is all very well while you are strong and in health to reject God, and be guided only by reason, as you call it. But how will this belief, or no-belief, of yours stand to you in the hour of sorrow and sickness, or at that more solemn moment when you find yourself face to face with death?"

All Atheists are accustomed to challenges such as the above. The incident is trite, and I only mention it as an introduction to the relation of an experience of my own—one which enabled me not only to effectually answer my Christian friend and would-be admonisher, but solved for myself how "my belief or no-belief would stand to me when face to face with death."

It happened in this wise. One day, five years ago, I was travelling with companions in a wild country. After a weary march of some three or four hours through pouring rain, we arrived about midday at the bank of a river, broad, deep, rapid, swollen by recent rains. As is usual in all forest rivers, the bed of the stream was encumbered by sunken trees, the mighty boughs of some of which, once of gigantic growth, stemming the force of the waters, produced under-currents and miniature whirlpools sufficiently strong, when added to the swiftness of the main current, to render crossing the river by swimming a dangerous feat even to a strong man, much more to one who, like myself, had for weeks before been suffering from malarious fever.

However, there was no help for it; the river had to be crossed. There was no boat or raft, or means of crossing other than swimming. One or two of my companions, without any hesitation, stripped, and, holding their clothes above their heads, entered the water at once. It was not encouraging to see that they, strong swimmers, were swept down by the force of the stream, battling hard and making progress, but in an exceedingly oblique direction, whilst they finally landed on the opposite bank, many hundred yards lower down than the spot whence they had started on this. I had been in the habit of wading or swimming across streams daily, and did not feel nervous. I was already wet through to the skin, and I determined, rather foolishly, to swim across the river, clothes and all, even retaining my heavy shooting-boots. I reasoned that, swimming with both hands free, I should be able to work along better than if I had to carry my clothes and boots in one hand and swim on my side with the other.

Sitting here in a quiet room in a commonplace English house, with commonplace surroundings, I can still, reading over the record of that day's adventure as entered in my diary a day after it occurred, vividly recall the scene. I can see the wild, wooded banks of the river; the fierce, headlong rush of the swollen waters; my companions crossing one by one. I can see the dingy, leaden-colored sky, the falling of the misty rain, successor to the incessant downpour through which we had been marching, and on the horizon a huge black pile of clouds raising themselves slowly above a distant range of forest-covered mountains.

Looking for a favorable place to descend, I noticed that somewhat below the spot where I stood, a narrow but deep tributary stream rushed with great force into the main river, causing a diversion of the current of the latter in an oblique direction. I thought it possible that by entering just above the mouth of the tributary I might get the benefit of the cross-current, and be in a manner helped across. I did not, unfortunately, notice a peculiar, broken,

eddying look on the surface of the water a little distance out in the line I intended to take. No doubt some sunken tree, rock, or other impediment was there, but I was unaware of it. Entering the water as gently as possible, I started. For twenty or thirty yards it was all right, though even then I began to feel sorry I had not taken my boots off at any rate. Then I entered the cross-current and was whirled about a little, but was still swimming strongly, when suddenly I felt as if my legs had been seized and an irresistible force was dragging them forwards and downwards, and in a second I was pulled under water and turned over and over, striking against something solid. I felt confused, but still could think connectedly. My first idea was that a crocodile had got me; but there was no crushing or pain in my legs. Then I thought I was entangled among weeds. No; I was not stationary; I was being swept along. Making a strong effort, I struck for the surface, and at last found my head above water. Gasping, I glanced towards the bank I had left. It was not very far, but I was drifting fast down the river. I heard a shout, and saw two or three of my companions still on the near bank, running along the edge as if to come to my assistance, while one man who was already in the water was making for me. I tried to collect my thoughts, and make an attempt to throw myself on my back and float; but, weighted with my wet clothes and the heavy boots, my legs sank. I felt my strength giving way; then again I was pulled under and rolled over and over as before. Another desperate effort, and I came to the surface a second time, and made another feeble attempt to keep myself up. Death by drowning, I have always heard, is rather pleasant than otherwise. All I can say is, I did not find it so; I found it horribly unpleasant. The second time I went down, the water got into my nose and throat, and I came up choking, gasping, and utterly worn out, but still able to think, and think calmly, though thought succeeded thought with lightning-like rapidity. And first a whole review of my past life, with my sins and wrong-doings standing out especially black, did *not* pass before my eyes, as it ought to have done according to the orthodox opinions about drowning men. The prominent idea to my mind was almost ludicrous. It was a regret that it was not the beautiful blue sea in which I was drowning, but nasty, turbid, dirty water. I felt quite convinced death had come to me at last, but I felt no fear. I thought of the belief of my childhood that I had forsaken. I was not troubled. I felt I had done rightly in leaving it. I felt even at that supreme moment that the belief had been false, and then thought flashed forward, and I knew that I was going to eternal rest; to an annihilation of "I;" to a ceasing of the individual consciousness. From this my mind flew to thoughts of those dear to me at home, and again I made a struggle for life. I struck out towards the near shore. It was in vain; my exhausted strength was incapable of any further useful effort. I felt myself sinking, the horrid water rushing into my mouth as I gasped painfully. There was a singing in my ears, a terrible, agonising pain in my head and throat, a feeble lifting and clutching of my hands, a gurgling gasp, and I lost all consciousness.

When I came to again, with dawning sensation I awoke to agony. Gasping attempts to breathe, blood in my mouth, burning in my eyes, a lurid redness floating before me, with no distinct vision of anything. And then I became conscious of people round me, of being rolled from side to side, of sickness, of racking pain in head and chest. But, oh! the hopeless, helpless sinking back towards death; the struggling forward to life: the alternate ebb and flow of the waves of conscious existence. It seemed to last for an eternity.

For many hours I lay scarcely able to move even when life was re-established. Next day I was better, and could listen to the account of my rescue. One of my companions, the one I had seen swimming toward me, a powerful man and magnificent swimmer,

on seeing me sucked under the water the first time, had struck out towards me. He saw me come up; he saw me go down and come up for the second time. Rightly conjecturing that an eddy or whirlpool existed on the spot where he had seen me sink, he did not dare to cross there, but, swimming out into the middle of the stream, allowed himself to drift until below the place where, for the third time, he saw me sink; then he came round, and with wonderful pluck and strength dived for me; but in the muddy, darkened waters he could see nothing, and the current ran fiercely. Up again to the surface for a long breath, and then another dive, and his foot strikes something. He turns round and clutches it. It is my senseless body, which has drifted and is held arrested against the great branches of a sunken tree.

Holding my arm tightly, he places his feet against the tree, and using all his strength, shoots to the surface. And there there is help ready. Another man in down in the water, and between them they drag me to land. They work the water out of my lungs; they rub me down till I regain consciousness. A fire is lit and a camp formed, and we stop there a week until I am able to travel.

No need to tell of my gratitude. I came to know the plucky fellow well who saved my life, and through him many of his countrymen. Words cannot tell what simple devotion and kindness I received from those poor black men. Wild, uncivilised races we call them. I have met with more virtue, truthfulness, loving kindness among them than among the most civilised men in Europe.

I have only to add that the above account of an experience of the pains of drowning, and the thoughts and feelings of the moment, are taken almost verbatim from the pages of my journal, written the day after the event. I was an Atheist then, and my Atheism troubled me not. If the experience of a few moments passed in the jaws of death were a true and sure test of the happiness or unhappiness to be had in any form of belief, then has Atheism in my case come out triumphant. But more is required than this. It is not only how a belief "stands to you," to use the words of my Christian friend, in death, but how it stands to you in life. That is the true test of its goodness, its truth, its utility. And surely modern Atheism—the Atheism that has its roots in the teachings of Darwin, Haeckel, Büchner—the Atheism that has grown around the fearlessly honest workful life of men and women in England whose names are becoming household words—is already bearing fruit in lives the fairest, best, and most human the world has yet seen.

ESTO PERPETUA.

A Secular Funeral.

A LARGE number of friends, in addition to members of the family, assembled at the Western Necropolis, Glasgow, on Tuesday, September 30, to pay a last tribute of respect to the memory of Mr. Robert Turnbull, whose death was recorded in our last issue. Mr. Thomas Robertson, corresponding secretary of the Glasgow N.S.S. Branch, read a selected burial service, which was highly appreciated by all who heard it. The whole function was dignified and impressive.

True and False Philosophy.

Is it so small a thing
To have enjoy'd the sun,
To have lived light in the spring,
To have loved, to have thought, to have done;
To have advanced true friends, and beat down baffling foes—

That we must feign a bliss
Of doubtful future date,
And, while we dream on this,
Lose all our present state,
And relegate to worlds yet distant our repose?

—Matthew Arnold,

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, F. A. Davies, "What do we Know about Jesus?"

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, Debate between Messrs. Schaller and Rutter.

BROCKWELL PARK: 3.15, F. A. Davies.

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

CAMBERWELL SECULAR HALL (61 New Church-road): 7.30, J. McCabe, "The Unknown God."

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bromley Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, G. Jackson, Es., C.C., "Imperialism."

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, A lecture.

KINGSLAND (Ridley-road): 11.30, E. Pack.

MILE END WASTE: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Vanishing Gods."

STATION ROAD (Camberwell): 11.30, F. A. Davies.

STRATFORD (The Grove): 7 p.m., G. Parsons, "Christ and His Teachings."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Masonic Hall, Camberwell) 7, Miss Vallance, "Ibsen's Borkman."

STREATHAM AND BRIXTON ETHICAL INSTITUTE (Carlton Hall, Tunstall-road, Brixton): 7, "Mr. Aylmer Maude, "The Root of Religion."

VICTORIA PARK (Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.): 3.15, A lecture.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, High-street): 11.15, Sidney Lee, M.A., "Shakespeare's Philosophy."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM: H. Percy Ward: 11 (in the Bull Ring), "Secularism: Its Principles and Objects"; 3 (Prince of Wales Assembly Rooms), "Did Jesus ever Exist"; 7, "The Gospel According to Charles Darwin."

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY: 7, Lantern lecture by R. P. Edwards, "Bible and the Monuments," with fifty oxy-hydrogen slides.

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, W. Haydon, "Walt Whitman: His Influence."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Stewart Gavin, "Drink the Cause of Poverty."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): Ernest Evans: 3, "The Earth's Interior and the Recent Terrible Volcanic Outbursts"; 7, "Bacteria: Our Friends and Foes." With lantern illustrations. Tea at 5.

LECTURER'S ENGAGEMENTS.

H. PERCY WARD, 51 Longside-lane, Bradford.—October 12, Birmingham. November 13 and 14, Liverpool. Debate with Mr. G. H. Bibbings; 16, Liverpool. December 7, Failsworth; 21, Glasgow.

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