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It is plain every great change is effected by the few, not by the many; by the resolute, undaunted, zealous few.—NEWMAN.

The "D. T.'s."

THE *Daily Telegraph* was once said to be run by a Jew in the interest of Christianity. The original Hebrew of the tribe of Levi who got hold of it traded a good deal on the cheap, shallow, popular writing of George Augustus Sala. And thereby hangs a tale. Mr. Sala (it is said) in the early days of the connection was instructed to write a rousing article on the Crucifixion. It was to appear the day before Good Friday, and the great G. A. S. wrote it at home, and took it down to Fleet-street himself—which was the cause of all the trouble. For on the way down Mr. Sala, who was not a teelotaller, met several friends, and the journey was broken by the usual adjournments. When he arrived at the *D. T.* office he was eagerly received by the aforesaid Hebrew gentleman of the tribe of Levi, who had begun to despair of that particular contribution. "Ah, Mr. Sala," he said, "I'm very glad to see you. Have you brought the article?" "Yes," replied the welcome contributor, and he held it out. But just at that moment he was seized with a fit of maudlin compunction. "You shan't have it," he stammered; "it was you—Jews who crucified the Savior. You shan't have it! You shan't have it!" And he reeled over and dropped the article into the fire. There was weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth on the part of the disappointed principal; and still more weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth on the part of the self-disgusted contributor, when he was able to realise the terrible sacrifice he had made on the altar of a too-well-stimulated piety.

Many, many years have rolled by since the probable, possible, or mythical date of that touching incident. But the *Daily Telegraph* still maintains its pious reputation. Was it not the *D. T.*, in the early seventies of last century, when Albert Edward Prince of Wales was down with typhoid fever, that invited us all to watch the great national wave of prayer surging against the throne of Grace? Was it not the *D. T.* that almost told God he would forget himself if he let the Prince die? And was it not the *D. T.*, when the Prince recovered, that sang the loudest in the Thanksgiving Chorus? The *D. T.* "caught on" to British piety on that occasion, and it has held on ever since.

Our Jew-Christian or Christian-Jew contemporary came out on Monday with a magnificent article on the Thanksgiving Service at St. Paul's Cathedral. It was written in the fine bold style that Matthew Arnold so much admired, and so celebrated in the Dedicatory Letter of *Friendship's Garland*. Yes, *Adolescens Leo*, Esq., is still the same. Time has not impaired his youthful vigor. It has not even mellowed him. He roars with the same robust music. He displays the same unction in his moments of piety. The voice breaks, the tears fall; and a large admiring public gazes spellbound at the pathetic spectacle.

"If the King's life," our contemporary said, "was

precious to his people before his grave illness, it is doubly so now, in that his subjects throughout the world devoutly believe that he was restored to health in direct answer to their supplications and intercessions."

We doubt if the writer believes a word of this. We fancy he had his tongue in his cheek from the beginning to the end of the sentence. Anyhow it is not true that *all* the King's subjects "devoutly believe" in the supernatural character of his recovery. Many of them believe they could have recovered themselves—with or without prayer—in the same circumstances. With a number of the first doctors in the land, with the best nursing skill obtainable for love or money, and with every other conceivable advantage that ample wealth and lofty position could afford, it is very difficult to see much room for divine assistance in the King's case. When there are six doctors and one God, will someone tell us how the celestial share in the patient's treatment is to be calculated?

According to the Bible, the doctors are a sort of interlopers in any kind of illness. But upon this point our contemporary is discreetly silent. There is no reason, however, why we should practise the same hypocrisy. We beg to observe, therefore, that the Bible persistently sneers at doctors. In the Old Testament we read that things went wrong with King Asa because in his sickness he sought unto the physicians instead of unto the Lord. In the New Testament we read of the woman who had "suffered much of many physicians," and was made worse rather than better, until at last she was healed by the power of faith. Definite directions are also given about what should be done by believers in time of sickness. There is the calling in of elders, the anointing of the sick, and the praying over them; but there is no reference to calling in a doctor. Indeed, it is expressly said that "the prayer of faith shall recover the sick," so that all the other proceedings are purely formal. Such is the teaching of the Bible—the book which both Church and Chapel force into the hands of the children in our public schools; yet no one has the honesty to admit it except Freethinkers and a handful of Peculiar People—so-called, perhaps, because they have the peculiarity of squaring their practice with their profession.

Let us ask our contemporary a question. If it be true that the King's restoration to health is owing to the prayers of his people, is it honest to send poor parents to prison for relying upon prayer to save their sick children? If the doctrine of the efficacy of prayer be true at Buckingham Palace, how does it become false at Barking? And if it be right to thank God in a Cathedral for saving the life of a King, how is it wrong to trust the same God to save the life of a little child in a poor man's cottage?

So much for the *Daily Telegraph*. And now a few words on the Bishop of London. This right reverend Father-in-the-Lord was allowed five minutes for his Thanksgiving Sermon. That was all the King could spare him. But the Bishop made good use of the time. Never was there a worse exhibition of flunkeyism. Dr. Ingram expressed no end of astonishment that King Edward had twice—yes, actually *twice*—been near death. Such things, of course, are never heard of in the case of ordinary men. God meant something by saving the King's

life a second time; yes, it was to be thought that "God had some plan for that life of special service and usefulness and strength." Altogether, if we may judge by the rest of the preacher's observations on this head, the Almighty has been thinking of little else of late but the respectable, though not very brilliant, gentleman who happens to occupy the throne of Great Britain and Ireland. All the rest of the world has presumably to look on and wonder—and wait for its share of the divine attention.

Dr. Ingram thought it necessary to refer to "the instruments God used." Courtier-like he mentioned first "the noble lady who was constantly by the patient's side"—just as though it were an uncommon thing for wives to act in that way. Then came "the surgeons and physicians whose untiring skill and care were of so great avail," and last "the nurses who were so faithful in their service." Yet the object of the Thanksgiving Service was not to sing their praises, but to "honor God." For without his spoken word "all skill and all nursing is unavailing." Now what is the legitimate inference from these expressions? Why this. Doctors and nurses must attend the sick; it is not safe to leave a patient entirely in the Lord's hands; God can do nothing without instruments; but, on the other hand, if the doctors and nurses pull the patient through his trouble, it is really not their doing, for all their skill and attention is useless if God does not give the word for the patient's recovery. Such is the mental muddle in which we find a Bishop and a most "distinguished" congregation at the beginning of the twentieth century.

But the worst offence of this Thanksgiving Sermon was the prostitution of a noble poem by Robert Browning. It would have been specially sacred to any true lover of the poet. "I was ever a fighter." Fancy citing such a poem in such a presence! An ounce of civet, good apothecary!

G. W. FOOTE.

Catastrophies and the Moral Order.—II.

THE performances of Messrs. Armstrong and Horton are of a somewhat different description to that of Professor Howison. The latter was at least acute enough to see the weakness of the customary apologies; the two former gentlemen find themselves capable of nothing better than the old-fashioned "It's all for our good in the long run," or "We shall see the meaning of these things better in the next world," kind of argument. Mr. Armstrong sees one good purpose in such catastrophies, inasmuch as they "act as an electric irritant on the spiritual nerve." And Mr. Horton, in a similar vein, declares, "the value of such a catastrophe, from an intellectual and spiritual point of view, may be that it calls our attention to the catastrophic nature of human life, and requires us to settle accounts with the fact.....One may say that a disaster.....is a necessary lesson in ethics and religion, given by the Professor of those subjects who holds, indisputably, the premier chair."

Thus the representatives of two opposite sects are agreed; and it is tolerably safe to assume that when two such people are agreed there is an absurdity underlying their unanimity. Were it a point of sound common sense, one of the two would be almost certain to dissent. If we imagine what our feelings would be towards a teacher of morals who took to slaughtering certain members of his class in order to impress the remainder with the heinous nature of homicide, a teacher of chemistry who asphyxiated some of his pupils to instruct the others in the dangerous nature of certain compounds, or a father who seated one of his children on top of a fire to stop the others playing with it, we may by this means get a fair conception of the moral and intellectual value of such an apologetic. Surely Messrs. Armstrong and Horton must have forgotten that in Great Britain the amount of punishment a parent

may inflict upon a child is limited by law, and even the plea that the child was half-starved or badly beaten in order to teach it better in future, does not avail the parent in such cases escaping punishment. Of course, it may be urged that the "Professor" in this case is beyond the jurisdiction of the courts, but then so very often are other "Professors" who do not hold the "premier chair," only the fact of their being so can scarcely be said to mitigate one's judgment concerning the offence.

Mr. Armstrong finds further consolation in the fact that many worse things—worse even than the sudden annihilation of 20,000 or 30,000 human beings—occur in nature. "In the autumn of 1891 the waves broke over the islands at the Ganges mouth, and in one night slew 215,000 members of an industrious, inoffensive, agricultural population, which cannot be supposed to have awakened the exceptional wrath of God." And Mr. Horton, not to be behind, argues, "It is surely illogical and childishly inconsistent, accepting the fact that 30,000,000 of people perish by old age, disease, accident, or their own fault every year in the ordinary way, to see in that nothing to shake one's faith in Providence; but to fly into revolt against the idea of Divine oversight and care because in one particular year 30,000 of the 30,000,000 are killed suddenly in a striking, though probably painless, way."

Well, there is a gleam of common sense here, but a gleam only. Certainly, if one can swallow all the other facts of existence which make against the belief in "Providence," it is developing a peculiar fastidiousness of taste in straining at this particular one. If one can watch unmoved the the tragedy of life, with its heaping up of rewards upon the wrong doer and punishments upon those who strive to do right, if one can witness unaffected the sight of children born into the world cursed with some hereditary disease, or a whole people's means of subsistence swept away by deluge or drought, or a breadwinner carried off from a family—probably as the result of doing some good towards others, if one can witness these and other things and *still* thank an overruling deity for his *goodness* and *wisdom*, then it is ridiculous to kick at the destruction of a paltry 30,000 by a volcanic outburst.

But how if one does *not* swallow all these other things? Put up with them we must, and it is foolish to cry out against the inevitable. But how if, while perforce submitting, we are nevertheless keenly alive to the unwisdom and injustice of nature, and merely utilise this particular case as an illustration of what is general in nature, what then? Is a criminal excused because he can point to greater criminals than himself? Can "Providence," when charged with the wanton destruction of 30,000 people, adequately defend itself by retorting that it kills 30,000,000 annually? Or do Messrs. Armstrong and Horton mean to imply that this is a mild illustration of one of "Providence's" habits? The old lady, who after catalogueing her own afflictions finished up with the pious reflection, "But thank God there's many worse!" must certainly have been a member of one of their congregations.

And Mr. Armstrong even finds something soothing in the whole arrangement. Thus:—

"There in Martinique comrades and friends fell all together. Death, the inevitable, left mourners few and rare. A multitude were spared the sorrows of orphanage or widowhood. Where for these was death's sting? Nay, they were spared that visible approach of death which so many have described as the horror of horrors.....allowing all that must be allowed for the abnormal circumstances of pain and terror which accompanied this swift stroke of destiny, I cannot but think that the balance of the account lies the other way, and that we have not to ask, "Were these men of Martinique sinners above the rest?"—but rather, "What were these husbands and wives, parents and children, lovers and beloved, of Martinique, that God blessed them thus above the rest, robbing death of its sting, the grave of its victory?"

So that instead of pitying the people of Martinique, we ought to envy them. Instead of feeling glad that

our island is not one where earthquakes assume alarming proportions we should be sorry. We should ask, in the manner of Mr. Armstrong, "Why are we not blessed with a volcanic eruption now and again that would spare the child the sorrows of orphanage, the wife the pains of widowhood, or the lover the loss of the beloved?" Clearly we have a complaint against "Providence," but it is not that it sends earthquakes to Martinique—Mr. Armstrong's dialectic disposes of that, our legitimate complaint is that it does not send them here as well. Mr. Armstrong does not realise that his argument amounts to a proof of gross and quite culpable partiality on the part of "Providence."

Mr. Horton's way of arriving at substantially the same conclusion is by way of the "illuminating idea" that pain ceases to be pain when looked at from the proper point of view. He informs us that, "To make the most excruciating tortures tolerable, it is only necessary that the sufferer should be convinced that he suffers for a worthy end." All very well; only one wonders what on earth this has to do with the Martinique disaster. What idealism was there about their death? What useful end did their death serve? Of course, there is the Bishop of London's suggestion that these people were killed so that "we" might know more of "God's laws"; and it needed a man of Bishop Ingram's mental calibre to make a statement of this character. There are occasions when one voluntarily undergoes pain and privation, and when the whole world looks on in admiration; but the application of such a principle in the present instance is faulty, for two reasons. First, because these people were not voluntarily undergoing suffering, and their death served no useful end. There was not one of them who would not have avoided death had they had the chance; and there was not one who was made better by the catastrophe. So far as one can see, the only useful end subserved by such occurrences is to give certain clergymen an extra chance to air their banalities in pulpit and magazine.

And, secondly, there is a very obvious distinction between a human being sacrificing himself for the benefit of his fellows and a Deity sacrificing some of his creatures for the benefit of the remainder. Against God the claim of each human being is identical. Each has the same claim to protection and to happiness; and consequently each has the same right of protest against the arbitrary caprice of a Deity who may feel inclined to indiscriminately slaughter a few thousands of them in order to give the others a lesson which might conceivably have been given in some other manner.

But in saying this we run up against Mr. Armstrong, who, commenting upon the objection that God might have arranged things in a more agreeable manner, replies: "No doubt He might; though he soon suffers inextricable confusion who attempts to edit an expurgated and amended order of creation." Probably; but the fact of our being unable to remove an evil need not blind us to its existence. Disease and vice are things that so far baffle all human endeavors for their destruction; but this does not induce us to deny their existence, or to feel thankful for their presence. Man does not call the universe into being; but, as he finds it already in existence, he may surely be permitted to point out in what direction it is capable of improvement. And, as a matter of fact, man is always attempting "to edit an amended and expurgated order of creation." Every time he discovers a cure for a disease, or how to check a plague or stave off a famine, he is amending "God's work"; and it is only as nature is amended and corrected by human intelligence that the higher kind of human life becomes possible.

One curious aspect—curious from the religious point of view—of the Martinique disaster was that the people were of an intensely religious character. Large numbers were at their prayers when the eruption first broke out, and about the only person saved in one of the places overwhelmed was a negro criminal. Now, if there is any moral to be drawn

from this case, it would seem to be that of the uselessness of prayer. The people were petitioning God for mercy, for protection, for favors, and he sends them a volcanic eruption. Mr. Horton's moral is as peculiar as his reasoning. The fact that the people were killed while at prayer proves, according to him, that "we should always be at our prayers, because the uncertain order of the world is such that the catastrophe may come upon us at any time." Well, with all due respect to everybody, let me say, for one, that a God who takes advantage of a population being on its knees, with its eyes shut, to murder 30,000 of its members, is a downright disgrace to decent human society.

Finally, Mr. Horton calls to his assistance the doctrine of immortality. "Obviously," he says, "if the mind sees, with Jesus [note the inherent dishonesty of the implication that immortality is only seen through belief in Jesus], that death is not death, but merely the shuffling off of this mortal coil, in order to put on a more effective tabernacle of life, that future life begins for the 30,000 engulfed people of St. Pierre as composedly, as surely, and as effectively as if each had died separately in his bed, with all the consolations of religion. It would, indeed, be foolish, when life and immortality are brought to light.....to haggle at the fact that death comes suddenly and simultaneously to some, in solitude and lingering pain to others."

So it really doesn't matter; and Mr. Horton is once more in substantial agreement with Mr. Armstrong that, on the whole, the people of Martinique were to be envied in being brushed quickly out of a world which *God rules*. Well, in the course of my writing and speaking I have, during my twelve years of Freethought work, said many hard things against the belief in Deity; but I doubt if I have ever said anything quite so severe as these two gentlemen now say in defence of their God. Here are a brace of clergymen who deliberately assert that God's normal government of the world is so wise, so equitable, so benevolent, that the people are most to be envied who are taken out of it in thousands by some sudden catastrophe, and those most to be pitied who are left in the world to experience the full results of God's government! Thus is Atheism justified of its enemies!

But after all one has the feeling that all this is only a pious game of make-belief. One feels that neither Mr. Armstrong nor Mr. Horton really believes that people are blessed who are suddenly overwhelmed by a volcanic eruption. Nor do they really believe that the child is blessed who is killed before it has the chance of living its life, or the friend before having time to say good bye to his acquaintances. These are only so many excuses forged in defence of a belief that cannot bring forward any intellectual justification. The facts of life are at variance with religious beliefs, and it is the duty of the clergy to propound some sort of a reconciliation. To give them their due they make the best of a bad case. But while flowing sentences, and imaginative arguments, may tickle the ears of one class and divert the mind of another, they can neither supply proof where proof is altogether wanting, nor carry conviction to a mind that is not already narcotised by religious verbiage.

C. COHEN.

Consolatory Thought.

An optimist met one day with a lugubrious parson, temperamentally a pessimist and usually a bore, who said to him: "Doctor, the tendencies of the times are indeed deplorable. The longer I live the worse the world seems to become. The optimist replied: "My dear sir, perhaps you exaggerate the relations which it would seem to establish between cause and effect. However, I would not let that worry me too much. Perhaps the world will be better when you are out of it." The longer the elder pondered this reply the less satisfaction was he able to derive from it.

The Source of the Emotions.

LIFE is a succession of emotions. We are perpetually passing through alternations of pain and pleasure, grief and joy, fear and anger, hatred and love. These emotions are almost always called out by something in the external world which affects us; and the problem is to discover what it is within us that is excited by this something, and which gives rise to that state which we call an emotion. A hungry man is invariably impatient and irritable; but the same person, after a good meal, is changed to a contented, peaceable, and good-humored individual. How, then, does it come that a few ounces of food should produce such a complete revolution of sentiment? One man will stand with equanimity upon the very edge of a precipice, and look calmly down at the landscape spread out hundreds of feet beneath; while another man's body will tremble, his heart will beat convulsively, and his skin become pale and cold. What change, therefore, has taken place in the latter man which is not shown in the former? We say he is afraid. But if the source of the fear is the dizzy height upon which they both stand, then why should the height affect the one and not the other?

It is a matter of universal observation that the emotions are accompanied by a greater or less change in the body; and in many cases this change is obviously connected with the circulation of the blood. In anger the face reddens, and the veins swell; in a state of fear the face blanches, and the veins flatten; showing that in the one case there is a rush of blood to the head, and in the other case a withdrawal of blood from that area; and in very violent emotions the face is alternately red and white, showing a great and unusual upsetting of the circulatory system. It must be remembered that the veins are not mere pipes, which do nothing but hold the blood which is pumped through them by the heart. Each section of the arteries is controlled by what are called the "sympathetic nerves," which have the function of expanding and contracting the size of the veins, and thus regulating the flow of blood in that part of the system. As is well known, there is not a sufficient quantity of blood in the body to charge all the veins, but it is continually passing and repassing from one portion to another. If, therefore, a sudden stimulus passes through the nerves of the viscera, so as to constrict all the blood vessels in that region, the blood will be forced into the other parts of the body, and the heart, the brain, and the superficial muscles will become gorged. This is the condition met with in cases of sudden and violent anger. If, however, the stimulus is one that dilates the visceral arteries, then the blood will be drawn into them, and the loss of blood in the upper veins will cause the skin to appear pale, the muscles to lose strength, and the head to feel dizzy. This is the condition of the body during a spasm of fear.

Apart from any question of emotion, it is essential that the veins should be under regulation; otherwise great inconvenience and danger would ensue. If some impulse set the heart too vigorously to work, so that the pressure in the blood-vessels became dangerously high, the veins would be ruptured; but the sympathetic nerves guard against this by dilating the arteries, and so accommodating the temporary excess supply and reducing the general pressure. That it is the sympathetic nerves which perform this office has long been known. Claude Bernard showed that the section of one of these nerves in the neck of a rabbit was followed by an immediate reddening of the ear on that side, and a very decided rise of temperature there. An electric current, sent through the same nerve, caused the ear to grow pale, by reason of the constriction of the arteries of the head. In the human subject, however, the influence of the sympathetics is far greater, and it has been observed that when the arteries are at their widest they are three times as wide as when they are in their most constricted state; so that nine times as

much blood flows through them in their relaxed state than in their constricted condition. Such enormous changes in the volume of the circulation must naturally be strongly felt by any sentient being. J. W. Langley has also shown that the tiny muscles attached to the hair, bristles, and spines of animals, and the feathers of birds, are all connected with the "sympathetic" system; and we know how certain states of emotion affect the hair, etc. Extreme fear makes the hair stand on end; but this occurs very rarely in the human subject, owing to the degeneration of these small muscles, although we are all familiar with the "creepy" feeling in the scalp which occasionally accompanies a sudden shock. When an animal lies quiet under the influence of ether, stimulation of the proper sympathetic ganglion will raise the bristles of a dog, the spines of a hedgehog, or the feathers of a bird, and the creature can thus be made to exhibit all the external signs of fear or antagonism.

We can well understand, therefore, that those sensations which we call "emotions" have their source in changes of the circulatory system. In a hungry man the stomach is empty, and has no call for any activity of the blood in its vessels; consequently the circulation is greatest around the external muscles, which are thereby stimulated. The stimulation of these muscles causes an uneasy sensation, and the man feels restless and irritated. When, however, the stomach is filled, the presence of digestible matter calls all its activities into play, with the result that large quantities of blood are summoned to fill its arteries and supply its energy. The muscles are no longer stimulated by excess of blood, but are rendered quiescent by lack of it, and the man experiences a soothing feeling of rest and satisfaction.

We may also instance the effect of drugs in calling out the emotions. All drugs which affect the sympathetic nerves, and thereby alter the flow of blood, produce emotional changes. It is well known that alcohol acts by paralyzing the sympathetic nerves, and so causing the bloodvessels to expand; more especially those upon the surface of the body, and in the brain. After a time, however, reaction takes place, the bloodvessels can no longer remain distended, but collapse through fatigue, and so obstruct the blood flow. After two or three glasses of wine, the skin assumes a uniform rosy tint, and is slightly puffed; the warm blood, pouring from the interior of the chest and abdomen over the surface of the body, imparts a pleasing glow; the face shares the general flush, and the pulsation of the temporal arteries very often becomes easily visible. A most agreeable feeling of comfort pervades the whole frame, and there is a sense of joyousness and lightness of spirit. Two or three glasses more, however, cause the bloodvessels to become over-distended, the face reddens, the voice is loud, the temper becomes quick and argumentative, perhaps even quarrelsome. It is difficult for a man in that state to be cautious, for caution implies that the circulation is shut down. A half-tipsy man will climb to dangerous places, will disclose secrets, make rash assertions, or otherwise betray emotional conditions in which the usual influence of fear is absent. After two or three hours, however, the face grows pallid, the blood gathers in the viscera, perspiration breaks out. There is now a complete reversion of emotional tone, the drinker weeps, grows maudlin, and from his grief-laden breast come professions of friendship, and appeals for sympathy, and he feels himself steeped in endless woe. With other drugs, such as opium, the effect is much the same, though perhaps more intense.

Morbid conditions of the body supply other evidence of the source of the emotions. Diseases which promote the surface flow of the blood tend to feelings of exaltation; diseases which impede the flow tend to produce feelings of depression. Derangements of the liver (in which organ the blood pressure is normally extremely low) always cause melancholy. We see young fellows go out to India, cheerful and good-tempered; and return in a

few years low-spirited and irascible, entirely owing to bodily derangements brought on by the climate. On the other hand, lung complaints make the patient sanguine. He sees the bright side of everything, and even the full consciousness of his own frail hold on life fails to damp his ardor. Griesinger, again, tells us in his *Mental Diseases*, "that in those afflicted with heart disease, anxiety appears; while in cases of disease of the intestines, moods of sullen irritability occur." Asthmatics are generally inclined to be timid and taciturn; scorbutic patients are peevish; those suffering from persistent constipation carry with them a vaguely anxious state of mind which they cannot reason away, however groundless they know it to be. "Many a man thinks he has got religion, when he has only got indigestion." Van der Kolk in his work on *Mental Diseases* (p. 139) summing up an immense experience of the mentally diseased, says: "In cases of religious melancholy, we should rarely err if we assumed the sexual apparatus to be impaired." Such enfeeblement is often brought on artificially, and accounts for certain well known exhibitions of piety.

The emotional sex is the one which undergoes the greatest bodily changes in maturity, marriage and maternity; and at all critical periods there is a great tendency to extreme emotional states, such as are manifested in hysteria and insanity. These bodily changes are, of course, accompanied or, rather, engendered by considerable alterations in the circulatory system. In the lower animals, much more than in the human subject, we see that the amatory emotions depend entirely upon the growth. Just as the flowering and the fruit of the vegetable world is a matter of the season; so in the springtime the young birds' fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love. In many species the sexes are hostile except at pairing time; and in other cases they are indifferent, thus presenting certain proof that the amatory inclination depends entirely upon the bodily condition of the animal; this bodily condition depending partly upon external circumstances (that is to say the seasons) but still more upon internal growth and adjustment.

When, therefore, we consider that the emotions are always manifested in conjunction with changes in the circulation of the blood; and when we observe that they can be called out by drugs, and induced by disease (not to mention that some important emotions can only be experienced at a certain age of the organism) it must be evident that these feelings which we call "emotions" are really the sensations of the internal changes of circulation in our bodily system; and as the lower animals display the same forms of emotion in association with similar oscillations of the vital fluid, it is clear that there is no difference in the source of emotion in men and in animals. This being the case, if we wish to experience a majority of pleasurable emotions, we must see that the bodily system is in a sound state; or, in other words, "to be happy one must be healthy."

CHILPERIC.

Under a Fool's Cap.

"The witty and the tender Hood."—LANDOR.

"A most loyal, affectionate, and upright soul."—THACKERAY.

"Le rire c'est le propre de l'homme."—RABELAIS.

THOMAS HOOD was born on May 23, 1799. His life of brave humor closed nearly forty-six years later, on May 3, 1845. The larger part of it was a constant struggle against ill-health, which was, however, powerless to affect the gaiety of his disposition. "Here lies one who spat more blood and made more puns than any man living," was the epitaph he jestingly proposed for himself. But in that short life he won his way to the heart of the public, for he had a sure touch upon the laughter and tears of humanity. The high-water mark of his praise is in

the lines of one greater than himself. that "unsubduable old Roman," Walter Savage Landor:—

Jealous, I own it, I was once—
That wickedness I here renounce.
I tried at wit—it would not do;
At tenderness—that failed me too:
Before me on each path there stood
The witty and the tender Hood.

Of Hood's earlier days but little is known. His father was a minor novelist, whose works are now forgotten, so that his more distinguished son was born, as he expressed it, "with ink in his blood." Hood was sent as a lad into a counting-house in the City, was withdrawn through illness, and after some idle years in the purer air of Scotland was apprenticed to an engraver. His literary career began in 1821, when he became assistant editor of the *London Magazine*. This brought him into contact with a band of brilliant contributors to that periodical, amongst whom were Lamb, Hazlitt, De Quincey, John Hamilton Reynolds, and "Barry Cornwall." Like Reynolds, whose sister he married, Hood fell under the dominant influence of Keats. His earlier poems were published in the *London Magazine* up to 1823, and afterwards in the various Annuals, "Forget Me Nots," "Keepsakes," which were then popular. Hood's first appearance as a jester was in 1826 when he published the first series of *Whims and Oddities*. The critics took offence at his puns, for his style was novel. His book was full of word-play, and it is easy to conceive, as Hood said in his address to the second edition, "How gentlemen with one idea were perplexed with a double meaning." However, the public approved, and the book reached a fourth edition. "Come what may," said Hood, "this little book will now leave four imprints behind it—and a horse could do no more!"

In 1827 he published *The Plea of the Midsummer Fairies*. This was destined to prove his only volume of serious verse, for he had a reputation as a jester, and the public declined to listen to him in any other capacity. Hood had his living to make, and he turned with a sigh and donned the cap and bells.

The famous series of "Comic Annuals" began in 1830, and lasted for some ten years. They delighted and inspired everyone like an ozoned breeze fresh from the ocean. In spite of great provocation, Hood seldom or never wrote a bitter word, though that he could wield the lash is amply indicated in his "Ode to Rae Wilson."

This gentleman was a Scotch Presbyterian, the writer of feeble and pretentious books of travel. His views were of the narrowest, puritanical type, and in one of his volumes he attacked Hood on the ground of flippant allusions to the Bible.

Hood twined and rent him in the Ode, and his unique power of using wit to point a serious thesis never found happier vent:—

Well!—be the graceless lineaments confest!
I do enjoy this bounteous beauteous earth:
And dote upon a jest

"Within the limits of becoming mirth";—
No solemn sanctimonious face I pull,
Nor think I'm pious when I'm only bilious—
Nor study in my sanctum supercilious
To frame a Sabbath Bill or forge a Bull.
I pray for grace—repent each sinful act—
Peruse, but underneath the rose, my Bible:
And love my neighbor far too well, in fact,
To call and twit him with a godly tract
That's turn'd by application to a libel.
My heart ferments not with the bigot's leaven,
All creeds I view with toleration thorough,
And have a horror of regarding heaven
As anybody's rotten borough.

The last two lines have become a familiar quotation. So have these:—

A man may cry "Church! Church!" at every word,
With no more piety than other people—
A daw's not reckoned a religious bird
Because it keeps a-cawing from a steeple.

In 1834 Hood fell upon evil days. Family troubles, chronic ill-health, and "the eternal want of pence which vexes public men" harassed him to the limit

of endurance. Like many authors, he was unbusinesslike, and the failure of a firm in which he was involved brought him to the verge of ruin. He refused, however, to become bankrupt, and retired, for the sake of economy, first to Coblenz, and then to Ostend. Unfortunately, neither place suited his health and he was compelled to return to London. An offer of work on the new monthly magazine somewhat restored his fortunes, and in 1841 he succeeded Theodore Hook as editor. In 1843 his *Song of the Shirt* published in *Punch*, that most respectable of comic papers, made an immediate sensation. *The Haunted House* and *The Bridge of Sighs* belong also to this Indian summer of his life. It was not destined to last. Too soon came—

The blind Fury with the abhorred shears
And slit the thin-spun life.

Overwork, anxiety, and unsuitable climates had broken a constitution never strong, and organic disease of the heart had declared itself. Hood was in harness almost to the end. Like Heine on his mattress grave, he jested about his disease. "The physician declares that anatomically my heart is lower hung than usual—but what of that? *The more need to keep it up!*" He died courageously as he had lived. Hood's career, indeed, seems to be one of the minor tragedies of literature. His popularity as a humorist prevented him from following his truest as well as his highest faculty—that of a poet.

The bulk of his work is simply journalism. We are not in love with punning, but Hood's puns are simply excellent:—

The parson told the sexton,
And the sexton tolled the bell.

Miss Kilmansegg and Her Precious Leg is as readable as Byron's *Don Juan*, and will always merit attention by its astonishing display of high spirits and fertility of invention:—

Into this world we come like ships,
Launched from the docks and stocks and slips,
For fortune fair or fatal.
And one little craft is cast away
In its very first trip in Babbicome Bay,
While another rides safe at Port Natal.
What different lots our stars accord—
This babe to be hailed and wooed as a lord,
And that to be shunned as a leper!
One to the world's wine, honey, and corn,
Another, like Colchester's native, born
To its vinegar only and pepper.
And the other sex—the tender, the fair—
What wide reverses of fate are there!
While Margaret, charmed by a Bulbul rare,
In a Garden of Gul reposes,
Poor Peggy hawks nosegays from street to street
Till—think of that, who find life so sweet!—
She hates the smell of roses.

Hood possessed many of the qualities of a real poet. When he laid aside his puns and pranks, and put his cap and bells off, and spoke out of his heart, all English-speaking men and women listened with tears and wonder. Lyrics such as the *Song of the Shirt*, *The Bridge of Sighs*, *Eugene Aram*, and the song beginning "I remember, I remember, the house where I was born," are assured of immortality. The influence of Keats is unmistakable in his writings; but the poems show that Hood had given his days and nights to a greater than Keats—Shakespeare. His mind was steeped in that standard and touchstone of perfection, the writings of "the greatest Englishman." And Shakespeare was justified of his literary child, "the witty and the tender Hood."
MIMNERMUS.

Undertaker—"James, have you heard anything of a change in Mr. Slimson's condition since noon?" Assistant—"No, sir; except they just turned off the doctors and called in a Christian Scientist." Undertaker—"I guess we'd better keep the shop open half an hour longer to-night, James."—*American* (Chicago).

Sunday-school Teacher: "When the prodigal son returned home his father fell on his neck and blessed him. Now, why did he do so?" Pupil: "'Cause he was glad he didn't come back with a wife and family."—*Baltimore World*.

Acid Drops.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE, on Friday, October 24, was the scene of a curious little drama. The British and Foreign Bible Society presented the King with a copy of "Holy Writ" suitable to a sovereign. It was to have been the Coronation Bible, but the Archbishop of Canterbury would not allow it to serve for that occasion, as it did not contain the Old Testament "Apocrypha." Of course it is a most sumptuous volume, and has cost a lot of money to print and bind. Lord Northampton, who presented it to the King on behalf of the Society, made a very courtier-like speech; and his Majesty graciously replied that the Society was doing a good work, and long might it flourish! Whether he thinks as much of the present as those who made it do, is naturally an open question. It is just possible that he feels something like a certain prolific lady of title, who, when the nurse told her that the fourteenth new baby was a girl, said "Put it with the rest."

The King's Thanksgiving was bound to bring out a crank. It happened to be the Rev. George Martin, an unattached Church of England clergyman. He seems to be a good man gone wrong; one with a fair-sized heart and weak head. He took some gunpowder with him to blow up the stand in St. George's churchyard. He thought it was not right to erect stands on consecrated ground. Evidently the poor fellow is not a man of business. Most of his brethren know it is right to make all the money you can. As for consecrated ground—well, the better the ground the better the gate-money.

Loyalism is really a form of religion. Its devotees are quite incapable of seeing the objects of their worship accurately. Take the case of the Queen, for instance. We should be sorry to show her any disrespect, but this is not involved in pointing out that some of her admirers often talk very great nonsense. If they talked to themselves it would not matter, but they insist on talking to other people. Her Majesty is verging on sixty years of age, yet even a staid journal like the *Westminster Gazette* continues to call her "a vision of youthful loveliness." Such fulsome flattery is really an insult. If the Queen read it she would probably do so with a contemptuous smile.

General Viljoen, whom we had the pleasure of hearing in London the other day, spoke of the Boer religion with a certain detachment. He referred to it as "their" religion, not as "our" religion. There was a sly rich unctious in his description of the prisoners' camp he was in at St. Helena. His tent was near the barbed wire enclosure—which he said he never could understand, as there was no way of escaping from the island to South Africa except by swimming seven-hundred miles. Not far from his pitch was a Tommy Atkins sentry, who had to shout "All's well"—and he *did* shout it—every quarter of an hour, both day and night. Moreover, the Boers, in accordance with "their" religion sang hymns till very late at night, and resumed singing them very early in the morning. What with the "all's wells," and the bugling, and the "different hymn from every tent," General Viljoen said he had a very pleasant time; only he was getting readier every day for a lunatic asylum, and might have gone to one before the end of a month, if he had not persuaded the British commanding officer to let him live outside on parole.

Personally, if we may say so, we were very favorably impressed by General Viljoen. There is nothing of the fire-eater about him, and he was wonderfully impartial without the least loss of manliness. His voice is soft, and his English a good mixture of the bookish and the vernacular. The worst epithet he used about the war was "unnecessary." This was a wise selection, considering whom he was addressing. It did not directly affront susceptibilities; but, at the same time, it said all in a single word; for, if the war was unnecessary, it was everything else that was regrettable.

Cambridge hooligans have been doing their best to convince the Boer generals (Kritzinger, Fouché, and Joubert) of the horror of their country's incorporation in the British Empire. Their meeting in the circus was orderly enough, but a threatening crowd waited outside, and the vigorous interposition of the police was necessary to protect them from violence. Such scenes are enough to fill truly patriotic Englishmen with sickness and despair.

Dr. Clifford is incorrigible. He is even getting worse. At the recent Battersea meeting he called upon his hearers to "fight for the right of all citizens to enter the teaching profession." He ought to have said "all *Christian* citizens."

Dr. Clifford knows as well as we do that non-Christian teachers—if they avow themselves as such—have no sort of chance under the present School Board system. The historic case of Mr. F. J. Gould is quite conclusive on that point.

Mr. John Burns supported Dr. Clifford at the Battersea meeting. He was good enough for once in a way to refer to "the Secularist" as a person having some interest in the controversy. He also prophesied that if the present Bill were carried it would in the long run bring about secular education. Perhaps he is right. But he can only be right on the supposition that the Nonconformists will be forced into accepting "secular education" as the winning card in the fight with Church of England and Catholic sacerdotalism.

"What are your Church views?" "Are you and your wife regular and early communicants?" These were two of the questions in a letter from a Clerical Manager to a Teacher—read out by Mr. Macnamara in the House of Commons. Comment is unnecessary.

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

The *Christian Commonwealth* tells a little tale. A child had just received an explanation as to the existence of the "soul" from a fond and foolish parent. An elder brother pointed to the younger one's body, remarking: "Your soul is in there." With grave face the little one opened the top of his blouse, and looked for it. Is this meant to be retailed in the Sunday-schools?

This recalls one of Bishop Thorold's many good stories. A child was told that the cemetery was the place where people's bodies were buried when they died. "I suppose," said the tiny mite, "their legs and arms have gone to heaven."

The Dean of Norwich has been lecturing against Christian Science. We agree with him that such a thing is an absurdity. Nevertheless we cannot see the force of his argument that the miraculous powers referred to in the New Testament were only conferred upon the early Church, and were gradually withdrawn as the Church became securely established. This argument just suits the Protestants, but it is repudiated by the Catholics. Our own reading of the New Testament satisfies us that the Dean's argument is one of convenience. He knows that miracles cannot be produced at Norwich, so he propounds a reason for not expecting them there. That is all his lecture comes to. If he were a Catholic priest in a superstitious locality, where miracles could easily be worked off on the gaping multitude, he would probably denounce as a rank heresy the statement that the age of miracles is past. The truth is that miracles only disappear when they cease to be profitable. When there are no more dupes with money to be found, what is now called Christian Science will die a natural death. Sharps cannot live without flats.

In a Brixton churchyard a worm of the dust named Budd has a stone tomb weighing many tons. His pious relatives evidently don't want to see the deceased Budd at the general rising on the Day of Judgment.

In the many press notices of the cheap edition of *Supernatural Religion* one continually meets with references to the smashing rejoinder to that famous volume by Bishop Lightfoot. This is simply a piece of pious impudence. Lightfoot never did meet the arguments of the author of *Supernatural Religion*. He merely quibbled about matters of syntax. As if a man said: "Two and two ain't five"; and the candid critic replied: "Yes they are, because the man is not a grammarian."

Mr. T. H. Ferris writes to the *Daily News* from the Brotherhood Church, Purley, Essex, with reference to the matter that was commented upon in our last week's "Acid Drops"; namely, the non-legal marriage of a young girl, on a visit to the colony, to one of its members. Mr. Ferris says that the girl is not just turned sixteen, but nearly eighteen; but he does not say how he knows it, and we should imagine that the father was a better authority. Be that as it may, Mr. Ferris does not state how the Brotherhood justifies the marriage—non-legal or otherwise—of a young girl without the slightest regard to her parents, who apparently were not informed of the "marriage" until it was "celebrated." Most people will think that, on any view of marriage, except that of dogs in the street, this is hardly common decency.

The feelings of parents are as much a natural fact as the sexual proclivities of their offspring.

"We accept," Mr. Ferris says, "the Christian ideal of marriage, believing it to be permanently binding and sacred; but we do not recognise that the sanctity of a marriage can be increased by law." Of course not. Who ever said that it could be? The intervention of the law is not for the protection of the sanctity of the marriage, but for the protection of the social interests of the wife and the children.

"The law encourages soulless marriages," Mr. Ferris says. What nonsense! The law doesn't "encourage" any marriages. It simply registers marriages—and enforces their social obligations on the contracting parties. What has the law got to do with the "soul"? Whether the marriage is based on love, or any meaner motive, is a question for the married people themselves. What have other people to do with it, one way or another?

Mr. Ferris's reference to the Quakers is either ignorant or dishonest. The Quakers did not object to legal marriage. What they objected to was a religious marriage in a State church. The legal recognition of marriage as a civil contract, and the establishment of Registrars' Offices, put an end to the Quakers' grievance.

The history of Christianity, and indeed of religion in general, has abounded in instances of pious people serving their own turn in sexual matters under the pretence of serving God. What it means, in the long run, to women and children is well known to the student of evolution.

The father of the girl in this case has replied to Mr. Ferris himself. He says that his daughter was born on November 21, 1885. "The girl," he adds, "went to Purleigh on a visit to her brother and his wife, which visit was prolonged owing to the brother being stricken with small-pox. On his regaining his health he and his wife left for a lecturing tour. On the journey he called on me, and reported his sister as very well, and minding his younger children in his absence. Then, all unknown to him or his wife, this abominable business took place." This puts a still worse complexion on the case.

Mr. Aylmer Maude writes to the *Daily News* to correct a mistake to which we ourselves drew attention last week. This girl-capturing "Church" is really not carrying out the teachings of Tolstoy. At least, not in this respect. And it is only fair to a great man's reputation to say so. Mr. Maude states that he has discussed English life and movements with Tolstoy lately, and is "confident that he, at any rate, knows of no such 'Church.'"

A condemned man who was not sure he was going to be "jerked to Jesus" has been hanged. He should have had a new trial, for the probability is that he was innocent. Murderers never seem to have any doubts about their salvation.

A London County Councillor visited a lunatic asylum, and was introduced to a patient whose delightful hallucination was that he was "Gawd." "Can you tell be anything as to my state in the next world?" anxiously asked the Councillor. "My dear fellow," said the assumed Deity, "I never talk shop."

It is good to see a magistrate now and then stand between a prisoner and the cruel letter of the law. Mr. Alderman Smallman, at the City of London Guildhall, had Esther Cole brought before him on a charge of unlawfully pawning a ring. She had suffered six weeks' imprisonment for stealing it; yet she was arrested again, and the machinery of the law was officially set in motion to give her another dose of the same bitter medicine. It is really a wonder the law doesn't make a fresh crime of every step in a criminal action. In that case, Esther Cole might have had six weeks for stealing the ring, six weeks for pawning it, six weeks for taking the money from the pawnbroker, six weeks for spending it, and another six weeks for not giving up the money to the owner. Mr. Smallman, like a sensible magistrate, discharged the woman.

Mr. Charles Henry Bray, residing at Paris-street, Lambeth, was charged before Magistrate Garrett with unlawfully soliciting money on Clapham Common. The case was dismissed on the ground that Mr. Bray's religious meetings were carried on under the auspices of a properly regulated, if humble, society. The object of it was stated to be "to help doubters, convert atheists, and convince sceptics." The public does not appear to have contributed very generously towards the expenses of this great work. The only collec-

tion that was referred to in the evidence amounted to two and tenpence.

Mr. John Jones, one of the best known Wesleyan local preachers at Leicester, has disappeared. The sum of about £4,600 has disappeared too. There is a lot about in the local *Evening News*; more than we care to trouble our readers with. We have given the solid facts.

Rev. Principal Lindsay, D.D., addressing the Baptist Union of Scotland, denied that "little progress" was being made by foreign missions. He said he was sure that no less than 350 heathens per day were being converted. Well, suppose he is right; does he call this a satisfactory result? Ought there not to be far greater progress, considering the multitude of missionaries at work, and the vast amount of money expended? Nor is this all. It is the only true religion they are alleged to be propagating, and they have the assistance of God Almighty. What a poor missionary this makes of the Omnipotent! Dr. Lindsay can hardly have worked out what 350 converts a day come to in a year. The number is only 127,750. This is at the rate of less than thirteen millions in a century. On which basis it will take 7,700 years to convert the thousand millions of "heathen" at present on this globe—without allowing for the constant increase of population.

A memorial service to the late Mr. John Kensit was held in the Mission Hall, Union-street, Shoreditch. According to a newspaper report, it was "in this hall in 1865 that the deceased gentleman was first converted to Christianity." This seems to us a very foolish statement. Mr. John Kensit was brought up as a Christian; moreover, he was hardly twelve years old in 1865.

It is gravely reported in the press that threatening letters have been sent to Mr. F. N. Charrington, the Liberal candidate for Mile-end, and Pastor Ellis, of the East London Tabernacle, promising them the fate that befell Mr. Kensit if they persist in opposing the Education Bill. But why make a fuss about such communications? We have received plenty of them in our time, but we never condescended to advertise the fact. We always treated the writers with silent contempt.

Dr. Parker continues to be unwell. His place at the City Temple on Thursdays is being taken by the Rev. J. R. Campbell, of Brighton. One of his first discourses was on "The Agnostic Temper." The Christian temper has been a much more expensive thing to the world. It has been the cause of immeasurable discord, persecution, and bloodshed.

Mr. Campbell, during the opening prayer, returned thanks to God for Dr. Parker's partial restoration to health. Later on in the service he announced that the Doctor had passed a restless night, and his condition was no better and no worse than it had been for the last few days. Is not this a sort of playing bo-peep with the Almighty?

Rev. J. Pearse, of the London Missionary Society, who has been engaged for forty years on mission work in Madagascar, has just told an interviewer that "he could only once remember to have been shown a little unkindness on the part of a native. He looked back upon the time he lived amongst them as the most happy of his life." Poor "heathen"! How they have been slandered! And the slander has been done wholesale, but the justice only retail.

The sixth new volume of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* has an article on Macedonia by Mr. J. D. Bourchier. "Macedonians" means Turks, Jews, Bulgarians, Albanians, Greeks, Circassians, Servians, Roumanians, Gypsies, etc. There are 1,300,000 Christians, and 800,000 Mohammedans. If only the Christians were united! the *Daily News* sighs. But, alas: "Each Christian sect detests its rival more piously than it detests the infidel Turk."

The *Academy's* prize of one guinea for the best four-line aphorism in verse on some phase of the Education Bill has been won by the writer of the following:—

With Church against Chapel,
And Chapel against Church
Christ and the Children
Are left in the lurch.

This idea of the Children being left out of account in the controversy struck other competitors. One says:—

Beyond the ring, past even the chance beholder,
Remote, unmoved are seen the Parent and the Child.

Another says:—

Split hairs and dogmatised till both were wild,
And thought of everything—except the Child.

During a discussion on "Sunday Observance" at the Llandaff Diocesan Conference a layman took exception to the rigorous Sabbatarianism of the clergy. "If I am to have a cold dinner," he said, "my Sunday will be no Sunday." It is all very well for the clergy to have a cold dinner once a week on Sunday, but that is the only day on which a great many laymen can have a hot one—at least one worth calling a dinner. "Put yourself in his place" is as good a maxim for parsons as it is for other folk.

The headmasters of elementary schools in East and South London, we hear, often complain that Monday is nearly wasted, as far as education is concerned, because of the big dinner the youngsters eat on Sunday. Sad, no doubt! Though we daresay the youngsters look at it in a different light. But the remedy is not to stop the big Sunday dinner. If the youngsters had a reasonably good dinner every day they would be under less temptation to overeat themselves on Sunday.

The Rev. A. J. Waldron writes to the *Daily News* complaining of the "most objectionable attacks upon Christians and the Christian religion" made by Mr. Parsons, of the Rational Reform League, who was recently proved (by the police) to have created disorder at a meeting in Hyde Park. Mr. Waldron is a good authority on such tactics. When he censures another speaker for using them, he reminds us of Satan rebuking Sin.

"Satan rebuking Sin" is not a Bible reference, as Mr. Waldron may imagine—for we understand that his literary knowledge is somewhat limited. It is a Miltonic reference. He may find it by reading *Paradise Lost* for himself.

"Hundreds of working men," Mr. Waldron says, "are prepared to support me in protesting against the insulting blasphemies which are the stock-in-trade of the so-called Rationalist and Freethought platforms." Hundreds of Freethinkers will read this with much amusement. It is so diverting to see Mr. Waldron in the new character of a friend of courtesy. But he might try to write better English. "Insulting blasphemies" is on all fours with "Slandorous libels." Some educated Christian should explain to Mr. Waldron the meaning of *tautology* and *pleonasm*.

The Glasgow University students have chosen Mr. George Wyndham their new Lord Rector, giving him 674 votes as against 645 polled for Mr. John Morley. As the election turns chiefly on political considerations there is no need to emphasise the point that Mr. Morley would have deserved the honor (if it is an honor) more fully than Mr. Wyndham. On the other hand, it is political bigotry to sneer at Mr. Wyndham as Mr. Cadbury's organ does. Mr. Wyndham is far from being a poor writer. Certainly he need not take off his hat to anyone on the staff of the *Daily News*. Our contemporary's satire on Mr. Wyndham is very heavy-witted. Has the writer of it been drinking too much of Mr. Cadbury's cocoa, instead of the more inspiring Mocha?

The Archbishop of Canterbury has been talking on the drink question at Ramsgate. The local publicans will be glad to know that he does not wish to pull their houses down wholesale. The most effective way of dealing with excessive drinking, he says, is to make drunkards religious men. This is reassuring. The publicans will smile again, and leave that job to Dr. Temple—who is paid to do it.

Mrs. Ada Jane Rowland has obtained a divorce from her husband, the Rev. C. W. H. Rowland, on the ground of his adultery and desertion. The fear of the Lord is not always the beginning of wisdom.

The "Mad Mullah" seems to be mad in the same sense as Churchites and Chapelites are in England. According to Mr. A. E. Pease, M.P., he was once well-disposed to the British, but he was made angry by seeing Somali children educated as Christians. When the Berbera Mullahs would not side with him on this point, he went and preached his crusade amongst the Dolbahuntas.

Two ministers of religion gave evidence as to the excellent character borne by Stuart Simonet Scott during his residence at Bexley, and as to his generous support of local charities. Commissioner Lumley Smith said that vicarious benevolence was no reason for leniency to a confidential servant who had been robbing his employers at the rate of something like £1,000 a year. The sentence was eighteen months' hard labor.

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

Sunday, November 2, Hall of Science, Rockingham-street, Sheffield: 3, "Church, Chapel, and Children; with a Challenge to Dr. Clifford"; 7, "Good without God, and Happiness without Heaven."

November 9, Camberwell; 16 and 23, Athenæum Hall; 30, South Shields. December 14, Leicester.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—November 2, Athenæum; 9, Birmingham; 16, Leicester; 23, Liverpool.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.

THOMAS EDWARDS.—"Deist" came into use to designate those who rejected revelation but still believed in God. "Atheist" means one without God—because he knows nothing of the existence of such a being.

HENRY JACOBS writes us with regard to the case of Mr. Parsons, of the Rational Reform League, which we devoted a paragraph to last week. He denies that the League meeting in Hyde Park sang "Early in the Morning" against the Christian hymn-singers close by, in order to shame them into respect for the rights of others. Chartist and Rational songs were sung. The false report arose through the magistrate's taking one-sided evidence and refusing to hear the opposite witnesses.

STUDENT.—There are few, if any, abler books on the Old Testament and the Jewish Religion than C. G. Montefiore's *Hibbert Lectures, 1892*. We read it with great admiration on its first appearance; and that sentiment has been heightened rather than diminished by occasional reference to it since.

"MIMNERMUS" writes: "Hocking's silly mistake about Johnson's 'Rasselas' being written to prove optimism is explainable. In the *Universal Library* Professor Henry Morley published in one volume 'Candide' and 'Rasselas,' and in a characteristically disingenuous preface makes the same preposterous claim, and plays off the orthodox Johnson against the Freethinker Voltaire. Probably Hocking read the preface and glanced at the book itself. It is clear that Hocking either wrote the thing which is not, or never read the book he criticises."

AYR FRIEND.—No doubt the American divine will wish he hadn't spoken.

H. WALLER.—Glad to hear there was a good audience at the debate between Mr. Edwards and Mr. Mayrick; also that you sold a "lot of literature."

H. W. (ROCHDALE).—We have placed your order, with remittance, into the proper hands. You do quite right to be careful in the midst of so much bigotry. Trying to do too much often means doing nothing at all. And, after all, you must live to do anything. We thank you for introducing the *Freethinker* to new readers. Many other friends might help us in that way.

V. PAGE.—The paper you refer to did not reach us.

GEORGE COLLINS, 7 Baines-street, Wyndham-street, Blackburn, is the new secretary of the N. S. S. Branch. Those concerned will please note.

GEORGE KEENE.—Being sent to Mr. Foote, who was in the country, your advertisement is too late for insertion in this week's *Freethinker*. It will appear in our next, unless we hear to the contrary.

W. MANN.—Thanks. We will refer to the marked passages next week.

F. J. VOISEY.—It was announced that Mr. William Redmond was going to prison, like the other Irish members who have been sentenced under the coercion law. That he has not yet gone does not affect the substance of our criticism. We thank you, however, for your kind communication.

E. PARKER.—We will call attention to it next week.

R. DICKIE.—May be of use. The matter is referred to in Mr. Foote's *Bible Romances*. Thanks.

HEAD MASTER.—We inserted your letter for two reasons; first, because it was a very good one; next, because it showed what even Radical papers are "unable" to insert. No wonder, as you say, that the general public hears so little of "secular education."

C. F. LABSALLE (Manchester) writes: "Let me, as a Frenchman and an Atheist, congratulate you on your lecture on Zola. It was one of the largest crowds I have ever seen in the Secular Hall. We should like to hear you oftener, but I suppose you cannot give us that pleasure."

F. S.—Much obliged for the references. Mr. Cohen has been dealing in our columns with the "Catastrophe and Moral Order" articles. Your suggestion shall be borne in mind, and acted upon as far as possible in future. A little under £5 is now required to make up the £50 for the Camberwell Branch. You may be right in thinking that we ought not to have had to appeal so much for such a sum. But the longer we live the more we see the need of patience.

W. P. BALL.—Your welcome article is in hand for our next issue, and a proof shall be sent you in good time.

RICHARD FORREST.—Shall appear.

H. PERCY WARD.—Mr. Foote is writing you personally on the matter.

G. CROOKSON.—Thanks for your genial letter. We shall be glad to see any number of the Barnsley "saints" with you at Sheffield. Pleased to hear you still remember the Failsworth evening meeting as "immense."

PAPERS RECEIVED.—New Life—Gravesend Reporter—Crescent—Secular Thought—Truthseeker (New York)—Great Thoughts—Public Opinion—Boston Investigator—Protestant Standard—Railway Times—Blue Grass Blade—Haltwhistle Echo—Two Worlds—Freidenker—La Domenica del Corriere—Recorder (Ilford)—Progressive Thinker—Torch of Reason.

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

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

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

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Sugar Plums.

MR. FOOTE delivered two lectures in the Manchester Secular Hall on Sunday. The afternoon meeting was an exceptionally good one, and the evening meeting was the largest seen there for many years, the place being crowded right up to the edge of the platform. There was also a particular warmth in the lecturer's reception. Prior to the evening lecture Mr. Foote gave a dramatic reading from *Othello*, apparently much to the delight of the audience. Mr. Pegg, who was in the chair, made a special appeal for new members, and a collection was taken up for the N. S. S. Benevolent Fund. Considering that every person in the hall had already paid for admission, it is gratifying that £3 15s. was realised.

MR. FOOTE visits Sheffield to-day (Nov. 2) after an absence of some years, and delivers two lectures in the Hall of Science, Rockingham-street. His subjects should attract large audiences. Friends coming from a distance will be able to obtain tea at the Hall between the afternoon and evening lectures at the moderate price of sixpence.

MR. COHEN is delivering two lectures at the Athenæum Hall. Sunday evening's was the first, and it was much appreciated. The second is this evening's (Nov. 2), when the subject will be "Can Christianity Live?" London "saints" should try to induce some of their more orthodox friends to hear Mr. Cohen answer this question.

Including the £10 voted by the Board of Directors of the Secular Society, Limited, we have nearly raised the £50 we asked for on behalf of the Camberwell Branch of the National Secular Society. A little less than £5 will suffice to carry the Fund to the desired altitude. We hope a few "saints" will make up that trifling deficit immediately. It would give us great pleasure to be able to say "It is finished" when we meet the Branch committee and members at their Hall next Sunday evening (Nov. 9).

MR. MANN, in his recent interesting list of books in our columns, mentioned *The Gospel History and Doctrinal Teaching Critically Examined* as by an unknown author, who was also responsible for a work entitled *Mankind, their Origin and Destiny*. The former was published by Longmans in 1873; at least that is the date of the copy in our own library. There is a reference on the title-page to the latter volume. Was this a paraphrase rather than an exact reproduction of the title of that previous production? We have in our library a book entitled *Man's Origin and Destiny* by J. P. Lesley, an American, published by Tribner in 1868. Judging by the contents, the same author may have written both works; but the earlier one is by far the more eloquent. This, however, may be due to the fact that it was first written to be delivered as Lectures in the Lowell Institute. We do not feel quite satisfied on the point. Perhaps one of our readers—with the necessary learning, leisure, and inclination—will try to trace the matter out at the British Museum.

One of the most sensible letters we have seen of late on the Education question in the newspapers, bears the signature of L. Johnson, Margate. He says that his father and grandfather were schoolmasters, and that for thirty years he has made a special study of the training and growth of

children. He does not touch the religious difficulty, but there is a great deal of truth (we think) in what he says on other points. He urges that children go to school too soon; none of them ought to go till they are seven years old. In the next place, they attend school too many hours a day, and are taught very badly in large classes. Mr. Johnson holds that a child would learn more in a class of twelve children, during a couple of hours each day, than he would learn during five and a-half hours in a class of fifty. At present the children suffer by being too long in schoolrooms. Eye and brain disease are increasing amongst them. Poor parents suffer because they are deprived of the natural domestic assistance of their own children. The teachers suffer because they know they cannot do really good teaching with large classes. And the ratepayers suffer because, although the number of teachers would remain about the same under Mr. Johnson's policy, the school-buildings would not need to be so large and costly, as the children would be taught in relays instead of altogether.

Mr. Carnegie bought the late Lord Acton's library as it stood, and presented it to Mr. John Morley. Mr. Morley has just presented it to the University of Cambridge. "For some time," he says, "I played with the fancy of retaining it for my own use and delectation. But I am not covetous of splendid possessions; life is very short; and such a collection is fitter for a public and undying institution than for any private individual."

Mr. F. Legge, in the *Academy*, says that astronomical records were probably made in Egypt and elsewhere some twenty thousand years ago. Anyhow, this "earliest of the sciences can boast a pedigree undeterminate indeed, but of a far greater antiquity than that to which any current mystical theory can lay claim." "Mystical theory" is good. Of course it includes the Creation Story of the Christians.

Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, whose death is just reported from New York, was in her eighty-seventh year. She was the daughter of a Judge and the wife of an anti-slavery orator and Senator. She called the first Woman's Rights Convention at Seneca Falls in 1848. In every way she was devoted to the emancipation of her sex. Her eightieth birthday was celebrated at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York, when three thousand delegates from all the women's societies in the States attended. Mrs. Stanton was also a pronounced Freethinker, though the fact is not disclosed by the English newspapers. She was responsible for the most plain-spoken parts of the *Women's Bible*, some extracts from which were printed at the time in our own columns. It was her profound conviction that the Bible was chiefly responsible for what John Stuart Mill called "the subjection of women." She called upon her sisters to throw off the yoke of that savage superstition.

We are delighted to notice that Messrs. Swan, Sonnenschein & Co., are continually issuing new editions of Strauss's *Life of Jesus*, translated by "George Eliot." The latest is a bulky volume of nearly 800 pages and is issued at 15s. Despite the sneers of the orthodox, Strauss is by no means obsolete, and his book is much more satisfactory for the student than the more brilliant pages of Renan's *Life of Jesus*.

Dropping the Devil: and other Free Church Performances is the title of a new pamphlet by Mr. Foote which will be issued in a few days by the Freethought Publishing Company. The price is twopence.

The American divine who wrote to the *Ayrshire Post* protesting against the association of the names of Robert Burns and Robert Ingersoll made a considerable mistake. Admirable letters in defence of Ingersoll have since appeared in that journal.

A Puzzled Boy.

A LITTLE boy was reading the story of a missionary having been eaten by cannibals.

"Papa," he asked, "will the missionary go to heaven?"

"Yes, my son," replied the father.

"And will the cannibals go there, too?" queried the youthful student.

"No," was the reply.

After thinking the matter over for some time, the little fellow exclaimed:—

"Well, I don't see how the missionary can go to heaven if the cannibals don't, when he's inside the cannibals."

Jerome.

JEROME was born in the Roman Empire, of well-to-do Christian parents, about the year 343 A.D., some ten years after the conversion of the Emperor Constantine. He studied at Rome and other places; and at the age of twenty-seven he, like many other young Christian students, began to be attracted by the monastic and ascetic romances and ideals of the time. In 371, he and his friend Rufinus visited Rome to preach the gospel of celibacy, poverty, and world-renouncement to the worldly Christians of that populous city. Now, to appreciate and rate Jerome fairly, we must try to imagine his feelings and put ourselves in his place. Tyranny, slavery, and ignorance were the causes of a general degeneracy of character. Rome contained a large number of lazy ladies and economic parasites from all races and districts of the empire, together with a degraded city-proletariat, interested mainly in brawling, doles, and the circus-exhibitions. Writers, both Christian and Pagan, dilate upon the senseless self-indulgence, the pride, folly, and sensuality of the upper classes, and upon the fawning intrigues and trade-craft of clever scoundrels who wished to rise into these classes, of usurers, contractors, eunuchs, freedmen, Syrians, and Greeks. Noble citizens tried to avoid military or civic service. Ammianus, who fought in the Persian war along with the Emperor Julian, says:—

"They pass their days in Turkish baths, and then swathed in transparent lawn and linen; they hate learning as they hate poison, they read only novels and scandal-papers, they dread all honorable exertions, but gambling they are never tired of."

There was a general indifference to science and culture (few books of any value in prose or poetry had been composed since the days of Aurelius) and a tendency to rush to all the lectures of any theosophist, sacramental freemason, or pious miracle-monger that puffed his wares upon the metropolitan stage. Priests of Isis, of the Virgin-Mother Cybele, of Mithra, the Sun-God, spiritualists, astrologers, and exorcists, Pagan and Christian, were all well received at Rome. There was constant fear of the invasion of Goths and Tentons, but little done to guard the frontiers. In fact, so general was the feebleness of the times that some historians have come to believe that every nation has an allotted life-time, its cycle of years, like the individual man, and that Rome was now in its old age. Now, men and women in their dotage need alcohol, anaesthetics, petting attentions, and the veiling from their eyes of disagreeable facts; and so we may regard the Christian religion, with its comfortable illusory hopes of Christ's speedy second coming on the clouds and the consequent duty of rapturous martyrdom or chastity and world-renouncement, as the emotional pietistic medicine for the diseases of the age. But, for the moment, there seemed to be a likelihood that Christianity would lose all its distinctiveness and become a mere hypocritical appendage to luxurious society. There was little battling against cant and sin, little crucifixion of the lower for the sake of the higher self. The clergy had now come to be the fashionable pets of the lazy ladies; they dressed in silk, wore jewels, oiled their periwigs, and smirked and flirted at afternoon parties. By affected elegance, by flattery and clever contrivances, they got round the rich old ladies, and frightened them by fear of hell into making legacies to themselves and the Church; they pleased women by delicate romantic attentions; they even carried on intrigues of a criminal character with younger ladies; they were violent pushful partisans, using abuse and fists in case some burning dogma or some fat living were at stake. When the Papacy at this juncture became vacant, two parties were formed, and the rival candidates encouraged catlike squabbles in drawing-rooms, and violent riots in the streets, so that the Praetor fled from the city, and one day 137 people were killed in

a single Church. "I do not wonder," says a writer of the time, "that clerics struggle violently for a bishopric. For then they will be enriched and petted by the leading ladies, with splendid carriages and dresses, and feasts more luxurious than those of princes." Now such a worldly, endowed, established, and fashionable Christianity was a loathsome fraud; and St. Jerome, like St. Francis, or Ignatius Loyola, or Wesley after him, were at any rate nearer to the original teaching of Jesus and Paul, in recalling Christian leaders to a more ascetic, a humbler and more world-renouncing form of life. They could quote the texts of the very words of Jesus, when he bade men to "Hate father, and mother, to leave all, and follow him." ["He that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal."] This ascetic remedy was probably almost as bad as the disease, nor can we commend it to men of our day, yet it was perhaps the best ideal that that age could conceive.

At such a time then, Jerome discovered, to his joy, that Marcella, a wealthy widow, had formed a sort of nunnery in Rome on Mount Aventine, where she was speedily joined by Asella and Paula and her daughters. A young lady, called Melania, about this time, was bereaved of her husband and two out of her three children. "She gave way to no grief," says her friend Jerome, "but standing at the foot of the crucifix, and holding out her young arms as if to embrace Jesus, she cried, 'More ready now shall I be free to serve thee, dear Lord, in that thou hast relieved me from so great a burden.'" She then left her one remaining child to the care of the city-government, and departed with Rufinus, to establish nunneries in Palestine. Jerome defended her against the blame of her Roman relatives, as a second Thekla, worthy of universal imitation. He agreed, of course, with the optimist Christian notion, that sorrow and world-renunciation always purify and redeem the soul, the facts being often the other way. Sorrow often makes us stupid, hard, and pitiless; and world-renouncement is no remedy: "It is gladness that most needs sharing." Melania as a mother, and perhaps re-married, might have been a healthy influence on the side of sanity and tenderness in contemporary Roman society.

As it was, Melania and many other women of superior morale and position, left Roman society to be fashioned and carried on, and children to be borne and to be mothered by those who were less clever, less good, and less affectionate than themselves.

In Rome of the fourth century (as in the England of the twentieth), it was the ignorant, the scum, and the dregs, the diseased and immoral who married early and had the most children.

Paula's eldest daughter at this time fell ill and eventually died, and the sick-bed talks of Jerome roused this lady to a pitch of ecstatic enthusiasm, so that she soon determined to leave all her great wealth and fashionable friends and join Melania in Palestine. Society was very much disgusted at her behavior, and the envious clergy were so insulting to Jerome, that he left Rome, shaking off, as he says, "the dust of accursed Babylon, the purple harlot of the Apocalypse." Paula was not so rigid in feeling as Melania, and as her ship began to move, and her daughter Rufina and her little son stretched out their arms to her from the quay, she could bear the sight no longer, but gave way to a passion of tears. Poor Paula would carry away to Egypt "something nibbling and gnawing in her heart. Jerome wrote a letter to Rufina exhorting her also to become a nun, and begging her to transmute all sexual and romantic feelings into ecstatic and rapturous transports of affection for Christ. "She who becomes a worldly and carnal wife," he wrote, "will throw out through her passion her special pillar in Paradise." When Rufina finally obeyed his will, he called her the young spouse of Jesus, and Paula the mother-in-law of God. On their way to visit the monks and nuns of Palestine and Egypt, Paula and Jerome made pilgrimages to many places of reputed historical

associations. They were shown the bedrooms of the four daughters of Philip, "virgins which did prophesy," the room in which Tabitha was restored to life, the marks of the chain which held Andromeda to the rocks, the carcass of the monster whom Perseus had slain, the oak at Mamre where Abram entertained the Son of God and two angels to dinner, and a pot used by Elisha, and they kissed the holy dung-hill (presumably over 2,000 years old) whereon Job had squatted with his comfortless friends!

The intense credulity and childish superstition of the age is so illustrated by these stories, that even apart from the Christian influence, we feel that there must have been a down-grade tendency in the contemporary mental and moral movement of the races that constituted the old Roman Empire. Some few of the Christian devotees were no doubt men of sincere piety, and Paula regarded these anchorites of the Egyptian deserts with awe-struck reverence, as though they were the very person of Christ himself. But when we remember how they really looked, sun-tanned, hairy, and dirty, scarred on the back, with no clothes but a thick loin-cloth of sacking, we should feel more inclined to have consigned them to the nearest poor house, or to a comfortable lethal chamber for the unfit. Some of these men were grouped into monasteries under a superior, and were thence occasionally led forth into the streets of Alexandria to "do something for the Trinity," as for instance, by killing the Arian bishop, or by tearing the cultured lectress, Hypatia, to pieces before the altar of the Cathedral-Church. But partisan or mystical enthusiasm seems to have been rarer than mere mechanical stupidity. Some troglodytes became corybantic, hysterical, and epileptic; others stupid and cruel. They carried their original propensities with them to the desert, and loneliness and fasting did not settle any physiological problem nor redeem the Commonwealth.

Jerome, Melania, and Paula, now retired to Bethlehem, where they busied themselves in founding and managing monasteries and nunneries; there was no lack of new arrivals, for these were the days when Rome was attacked by Alaric and Goth, and a terror of the last days and of sudden judgment perturbed the minds even of men of the world. But Jerome, in spite of monasticism, still possessed an active and restless brain. For a time he still read Greek and Latin authors, until an angel appeared to him and threatened to drag him before the judgment-seat of God as being no true Christian. When he protested his innocence, the angel pointed to a volume of Cicero before him, and cried, "Thou liest, a Ciceronian thou art, and no Christian, for where the treasure is, there will the heart be also." This story well illustrates the truth of the theory that the thrill of the Christian heart meant the paralysis of the Greek brain. Jerome now turned his attention to the Bible, he learnt Hebrew, collected manuscripts, and translated the whole Canon of Scripture into the Latin version known as the Vulgate. This authorised Holy Bible, with the theology of Jerome's contemporary St. Austin, and the imperial power and riches of the Papacy, formed the three foundation stones of the mediæval Roman Church.

We cannot but sympathise with the ardor and energy of this father of the Catholic Church; we may even allow that his gospel of world-renouncement may have been a comforting medicine for that moribund age (for crime, slavery, and stupidity are diseases, and the Church was a palliative, a hospital for sick souls); but of one thing we are convinced, it is not the counsel for our present problems, and we will openly resist that black brigade, which flourishes by the unreal presentation of this out-worn faith, and by opposing science and education to-day.

All these problems that worried St. Jerome, the sphere of work for voluntary neuters in this social hive, the proper relations of the sexes, the suppression of male selfishness, and monopoly and lawless sensuality, the frivolity and lust of the lazy rich, the

free breeding of diseased submerged classes, the worldliness of the paid "Reverends"; Christianity and Catholicism have failed to solve them—they are still pressing for solution; and it is time that secular psychology and humanitarian education should be allowed to go further on their methods of answering them, on their lines of reform, which have already brought forth such good fruits.

J. A. FALLOWS.

Christian Evidence Reasoning.—I.

A CLASS of books which I find vastly entertaining is one which deals with Christian evidences, and attempts to demonstrate the historical character of the Gospel narratives, with a view to the conversion of unbelievers. It is really amusing to take up one of these works and note the many and big assumptions which the writers gravely advance as weighty and sound arguments. There is a veridancy in some of this Christian evidence reasoning which is positively refreshing. Thus, Paley, in the Introduction to his "Evidences," puts the following as a strong case against Hume's well-known argument:—

"If twelve men, whose probity and good sense I had long known, should seriously and circumstantially relate to me an account of a miracle wrought before their eyes, and in which it was impossible that they should be deceived; if the governor of the country, hearing a rumor of this account, should call these men into his presence, and offer them a short proposal, either to confess the imposture or submit to be tied up to a gibbet; if they should refuse with one voice to acknowledge that there existed any falsehood or imposture in the case..... if I myself saw them, one after another, consenting to be racked, burned, or strangled, rather than give up the truth of their account.....I undertake to say, that there exists not a sceptic in the world who would not believe them, or who would defend such incredulity."

Paley's *Evidences*, as many Christian apologists now admit, is somewhat out of date; but notwithstanding this, it will be found that the methods of reasoning employed in that work are precisely the same as those that now obtain among more modern Christian advocates.

In the paragraph above quoted the reference is to the preaching of the twelve apostles, as recorded in the "Acts." These were the "twelve men, whose probity and good sense had long been known." In this grand argument Paley makes no less than five big assumptions, viz.: (1) That the stories narrated in the canonical *Acts* are, in all their details, strictly historical; (2) that all, or nearly all, the twelve apostles suffered death by martyrdom; (3) that in the narratives in the *Acts* we have the testimony of twelve men to the truth of the Gospel miracles, including the most important of all—the alleged resurrection of Christ; (4) that these twelve men were all of well-known "probity and good sense"; (5) that it was "impossible" that these twelve individuals "should be deceived."

With regard to the first assumption—the historicity of the narratives in the *Acts*—it need only here be said that we possess many proofs of the fictitious nature of the stories. The book is a compilation from three earlier works now lost, one of which recorded the acts of Peter, another the travels of Paul, and the third an account of the journeyings of Peter and Paul written in the first person, presumably by Peter. Next, as regards the high moral character of the Apostles, we have no evidence that any of them were noted for the possession of "probity and good sense"—neither of which virtues was common among the early Christians—or that it was "impossible that they should be deceived." All the evidence we possess points the other way. Paul's account of the dissimulation practised by Cephas at Antioch when he "resisted him to the face" (Gal. ii., 11-14) does not favor Paley's view; neither does the wholesale fabrication of lying histories relating to Christ.

In the next place, instead of possessing the testi-

mony of "twelve men," we have in the Acts of the Apostles merely a number of stories narrated of Peter and Paul, with a passing notice of incidents relating to John, Philip, and James; but we have not the "testimony" of these persons. The original writers from whose narratives Luke compiled his "history" are unknown, and may, for anything we know to the contrary, have fabricated the stories themselves. There was nothing, as far as I know, to prevent those writers from making the characters they have introduced in their veracious "histories" say or do whatever they pleased. As a matter of criticism we know that the late editor, Luke, has himself composed the speeches which he has placed in the mouths of Peter, Stephen, and Paul (see *Supernatural Religion*). We know, also, from the Preface to the Third Gospel, that the compiler of the Acts did not live in apostolic times, so that we have not even the testimony of Luke to the truth of what he records in that book.

Finally, the only plausible argument which Paley has been able to advance by the aid of all these assumptions is that of men remaining steadfast to their convictions under persecution. But this fact, as has been often demonstrated, proves nothing whatever. We know as a matter of history that thousands of Christians have, in later times, "consented to be racked, burned, or strangled," rather than renounce faith in certain doctrines and Gospel "facts," which were, with them, solely matters of belief. Moreover, as regards the alleged persecution of the first promulgators of Christianity, it can, I think, be shown that the earliest Christians were Essenes, a sect whose opinions were respected by the majority of the other two Jewish sects, and who were never in any case persecuted. But apart from this question, we have not a scrap of evidence that any of the so-called Apostles "consented to be racked, burned, or strangled," rather than give up teaching the religion supposed to have been founded by Jesus Christ. All the accounts of these alleged martyrdoms, such as those of Peter and Paul at Rome, are derived from lying apocryphal histories fabricated by second century Christians. If we believe the statements of the early "Fathers" and ecclesiastical writers, there were undoubtedly persecutions of Gentile Christians in later times, but none that can be clearly established during the first century.

Another line of argument employed by present-day Christian Evidencers with regard to the Gospel miracles may be illustrated by the following choice extract from Paley's *Evidences*. That defender of the Gospel "history" says (ii., i., viii.):—

"If a person born blind be restored to sight, a notorious cripple to the use of his limbs, or a dead man to life, here is a permanent effect produced by supernatural means. The change was instantaneous, but the proof continues. The subject of the miracle remains. The man cured or restored is there; his former condition was known, and his present condition may be examined; and of this kind are by far the greater part of the miracles recorded in the New Testament. When Lazarus was raised from the dead, he did not merely move and speak, and die again; or come out of the grave and vanish away. He returned to his home and family, and there continued; for we find him, some time afterwards, in the same town, sitting at table with Jesus and his sisters; visited by great multitudes of Jews, as a subject of curiosity.....No delusion can account for this.....The blind man whose restoration to sight at Jerusalem is recorded in the ninth chapter of St. John's Gospel, did not quit the place or conceal himself from inquiry. On the contrary, he was forthcoming to answer the call, to satisfy the scrutiny, and to sustain the browbeating of Christ's angry and powerful enemies."

Here, it will be perceived, the argument, from beginning to end, is entirely dependent upon the first word—"if." If the miracles attributed to Christ in the Gospels were performed exactly as there recorded, then the "proof continues," the "subject of the miracle remains," the man "is there"—otherwise he is only "there" on paper, in the Gospel story—and there we can always "find him." Even if we happen to have forgotten the particular Gospel and chapter in which the miracle is recorded, we can still discover

his whereabouts with the aid of a good concordance. Lazarus, after being restored to life, "returned to his home and his family," and, later on, we "find him" in the same village, alive and well—that is, in the pages of the Gospel narrative. The concoctor of the story had sense enough not to make him die again immediately; consequently the resuscitated man is seen and visited by multitudes of the Jews—that is, in the fictitious narrative found in the Fourth Gospel.

Similarly, the blind man "did not conceal himself from inquiry," but was "forthcoming" to "satisfy the scrutiny" of all who were sceptical—according to the story. In short, if the Gospel narratives be true, the miracles were perfectly genuine; if everything happened exactly as recorded in the Gospels, there could be neither deception nor delusion with regard to any of the events related. This fact is clearly established by Paley, so that all that is now needed is trustworthy evidence proving the truth of the Gospel stories. This we shall have to weigh calmly and impartially, without allowing any preconceived opinions to bias our judgment. But where is this evidence? Echo answers, Where? As a matter of fact, Paley has not adduced any. It does not appear to have dawned upon him that evidence of this nature was necessary. We are first to assume that the Gospel narratives are historically true; then the narratives furnish proof themselves.

It is needless to say that we have not the testimony of a single person—man, woman, or child—who is stated to have witnessed either the raising of Lazarus from the dead or the miraculous cure of the man born blind; nor do we even know that the author of the Fourth Gospel (who is the only evangelist who records these two miracles) was ever asked whether he knew of anyone who professed to have seen them performed. Moreover, since they are not mentioned by Matthew, Mark, or Luke, who record what they considered most credible, the probability is that he fabricated them himself. And this probability is strengthened by the circumstance that a comparison of the Fourth Gospel with the First Epistle of John—which two books were unquestionably composed by the same writer—reveals the fact that the author of the epistle has placed words of his own composition in the mouth of the Jesus portrayed in his Gospel—the latter being an entirely different person, both as to words and deeds, to the Jesus in the other three Gospels.

Paley's easy and delightful method of proving the historicity of the Gospel narratives, however incredible the statement may appear, has been adopted and followed by the majority of Christian advocates from his day down to the present. For the first illustration of this fact I will take *The Witness of History to Christ*, by Dean Farrar, who says (p. 73):—

"Yet Christ, surrounded as he was by the immense publicity of furious Jews, and haughty Romans, and sneering Greeks, not only claimed the power to work miracles, but his claim was undisputed by his deadliest enemies. Neither the Pharisees, nor the multitudes, nor Caiaphas, nor Herod.....dreamt of denying that he had wrought deeds apparently supernatural."

Here again, it will be seen, the narratives in the Gospels are first gratuitously assumed to be historical, and upon this assumption they are then adduced as proofs of their own historical character. And this is what this rev. gentleman is pleased to call the witness of "history" to Jesus Christ. Because the pious concoctors of the Gospel history did not (for obvious reasons) make any of the *dramatis personæ* that figure in their narratives deny the power of Jesus to work miracles, therefore, it is argued, Jesus undoubtedly possessed, as well as exercised, that power; consequently the Gospel stories in which he is represented as performing miracles must be true. We thus arrive at the marvellous fact that, if everything happened exactly as related in the Gospels, then the Gospel accounts of the sayings and doings of Christ are strictly historical.

ABRACADABRA.

Correspondence.

"A BENEFICIAL PROCESS."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I always read your "Acid Drops" with pleasure, and moreover esteem them as a most useful form of propaganda, for they are assimilated by the simple and the unlearned, and do much to dissipate in the minds of such that "atmosphere" of superstition and religious prejudice which everywhere exists, and is so hard to break through. Especially is this the case with women, for they will pick up little bits of personal gossip when they would in no wise read a philosophic article. It all helps to broaden minds, and for this reason I am most anxious that these weekly morsels should be pure and unadulterated. With this view may I point out what appears to be a misapprehension in the "Acid Drops" dealing with Sir Frederick Treves' address at Liverpool. You quote him as saying, "The so-called symptoms of tuberculosis were the expressions of a beneficial process which had for its end the cure and not the destruction of the patient." You call this propounding a curious theory, and you go on to say: "But is not the disease, which generally manages to kill the patient, as much a part of the 'beneficial process' as the symptoms that call attention to it? This argument in favor of a beneficial *something or other behind* nature is always based upon an arbitrary selection of phenomena." In the report which I have seen there is nothing to justify the use of the words which I have italicised, nor is there anything to show that Sir Frederick Treves had in his hand anything "behind" nature at all, but only the action of a natural process which he termed "beneficent." I think the word may be permitted; it simply means *doing good*, and as I read it carries no implication of the supernatural. Be that as it may, Sir Frederick, so far from propounding a curious theory, was stating a most important truth, when he said: "Inflammation was a beneficial process upon which the life of the patient depended"—a truth now recognised by science, and which is destined to have a great influence on the future treatment of disease. You use the word *disease* as though it meant something in contradistinction to the *symptoms*, but the disease is the inflammatory action set up by the microbes, and is beneficent, and the symptoms are merely the expressions of that beneficent process. The inflammatory action *sometimes* (not generally, for tuberculosis is curable, and many cases recover) kills, but that is where it cannot be controlled, and science is learning to guide this beneficent process, and will in time be able, by that means, not only to save but to enhance life. My objects in writing are, first, to save from ambiguity, and to bring out in a clear light what I conceive to be a most important truth of physiology. I hope I have succeeded. Second, to show that there is not necessary any implication of the supernatural in Sir F. Treves' words, and to guard against any unfairness, however slight, being done to him. I have only seen an abbreviated report, and the one you have may contain allusions to the supernatural, or such may be embodied in another portion of the address, but as it stands, I think it may be said, as you say of another matter, "He was celebrating a triumph of pure science, in which supernaturalism has demonstrably no share." T. H. DUKK.

The Clerical Wine Merchant.

THE Abbé Bertrand is charged with having originated and carried on a great wine swindle. He founded in the 18th Arrondissement (Batignolles-Courcelles) a great dépôt of wines and numerous agencies. The dépôt turned out to be all frontage. The agents he recruited by advertisements. He allowed them 3f. a day and a commission on the sale of the wine—a poor sort of Jurançon. In return they had to lodge with him from 1,000f. to 1,200f. security in ready money, which they never succeeded in getting back. The alleged shady side of his transactions were brought to light by a widow lady, who, seeing one of the Abbé advertisements, had a wish to become one of his agents. He received her charmingly, offered a clerkship to her son, required 1,800f. surety, which she gave, and was to have had the wine in two days. She waited a fortnight, and then went to the Abbé's stores to make inquiry, but could not see him. Trying again, and failing, she denounced him to justice, and he is now in detention.

Girl with the Gibson Girl Neck—"And you've been to prayer meeting? That must have seemed strange, after being three weeks at a summer resort." Girl with the Julia Marlowe Dimple—"No; it reminded me very much of the summer resort. There were no men there."

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, C. Cohen, "Can Christianity Live?"

EAST LONDON BRANCH (Hayfield Hall, 160 Mile-end Road): Monday, November 3, at 8.30, Business Meeting. After the Meeting Mr. Brien will open a discussion on the Education Bill.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bromley Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, Mr. J. McCabe, "The Growth of the Moral Ideal."

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

STREATHAM AND BRIXTON ETHICAL INSTITUTE (Carlton Hall, Tunstall-road, Brixton-road, S.W.): 7, Hon. Dadabhai Naoroji, Ex-Prime Minister of Barodah, "Parsee Religion."

SOUTH LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Masonic Hall, Camberwell) 7, Harrold Johnson, B.A., "Self-Respect."

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Kensington Town Hall, High-street): 11.15, Joseph McCabe, "St. Augustine and Rousseau."

COUNTRY.

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY: 7, R. P. Edwards, Lantern Lecture, "Religions of the World." Illustrated by fifty oxy-hydrogen slides.

GLASGOW (110 Brunswick-street): Mr. J. M. Robertson: 11.30, "The Survival of Monarchy"; 2.30, "The Future of the Lower Races"; 6.30, "The Sacrificed Savior-God."

LIVERPOOL (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, A. W. Short, "Mahomet and His Book."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Percy Redfern, "The Socialisms of To-Day."

NEWCASTLE DEBATING SOCIETY (Lockhart's Cathedral Café): Nov. 6, at 7.45, T. H. Elstob, "Sunday: The People's Holiday."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School, Market-place): 7, "The Education Bill."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): G. W. Foote, 3, "Church, Chapel, and Children; with a Challenge to Dr. Clifford"; 7, "Good without God, and Happiness without Heaven." Tea at 5.

LECTURER'S ENGAGEMENTS.

H. PERCY WARD, 51 Longside-lane, Bradford.—November 4 and 5, Parkgate: Debate; 9, Manchester; 12 and 13, Liverpool: Debate with G. H. Bibbings; 16, Liverpool; 25 and 26, Bolton: Debate with G. H. Bibbings. December 7, Failsforth; 9 and 10, Staleybridge: Debate; 11, Pudsey; Debate with Rev. W. Harold Davies; 21, Glasgow.

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