

THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

I wish to be out on the high seas. I wish to take my chances with the wind, the wave, and star. And I had rather go down in the glory and grandeur of the storm, than to rot in any orthodox harbor.—INGERSOLL.

Dr. Parker's Ascension.

JESUS CHRIST is said to have ascended into heaven. But he was original in nothing, and this feat had been performed previously. Not only did all the ancient sun-gods end their careers in that manner, but even the Jews believed that Enoch was transported bodily to heaven, and that Elijah had travelled thither in a chariot of fire. It would appear, also, that going to glory by special express did not altogether cease about the year thirty-three of the Christian era. The Roman Catholics believe, for instance, that the Virgin Mary, when an old woman, was taken to paradise by a company of angels. This is what is called her Assumption. And now, if there is any truth on coffin-plates, something of the same sort seems to have happened to the late Dr. Parker. The brass tablet on his last receptacle bore the following inscription:—

JOSEPH PARKER, D.D.,
Minister of the City Temple,
Born 9th April,
1830.
Ascended
28th Nov., 1902.

At first sight there seems to be a good deal of what William Cobbett used to call "face" in this inscription. Yet it appears to be meant quite seriously; for, on the very day of the funeral, the *Daily News* reporter remarked that "Joseph Parker might be holding glorious converse on the terraces of the City of God." It is almost as rapid as Eugene Stratton's coon song:—

Nine, ten, eleven.
New face in heaven.

•We are far from saying that Dr. Parker did *not* ascend. We know nothing about it. But we are willing to learn. We therefore ask how the fact of the great preacher's ascent was discovered. By what right do these Nonconformists decide a difficult point so peremptorily? The largest Christian Church in the world is the Roman Catholic Church, and according to the belief of this body it is almost impossible for any human soul to reach heaven without going through purgatory. Even the Church of England, while rejecting masses for the dead, does not censure charitable prayers on their behalf; which is an admission that they do not go to heaven in such a hurry as is suggested on Dr. Parker's coffin. Even amongst Nonconformists there are many who hold, with the late Dr. Edward White and the present Dr. Agar Beet, that the Christian doctrine of a future life, as taught in the Bible, is not that the souls of the dead go straight to heaven or hell, but that they all wait for their fate to be determined at the general resurrection. This was also the view of Archbishop Whately and Mr. Gladstone—not to mention a number of other distinguished Christians. Of course

it is not for Freethinkers to adjudicate between "believers." We do not feel the slightest wish to act as umpire. Such a post is sometimes dangerous in a football match, and is likely to be still more dangerous in a religious dispute. But when the Christians are so divided amongst themselves, we may justly ask why Dr. Parker's friends are so cocksure that they are right, and by consequence that all who differ from them are wrong? Perhaps the answer would be that Dr. Parker himself wrote the inscription for his coffin-plate, leaving it to other hands to fill in the figures.

According to his own words, and the statements of his panegyrists, including Dr. Robertson Nicholl, who preached the funeral sermon, Dr. Parker was not always so certain about the way to heaven. When his wife died, a few years ago, he reeled under the blow; his faith passed under a heavy black cloud; for months he was in the shadow of doubt, and it was the dead wife's faith in immortality that "finally enabled him to triumph." This is at once a tribute to his affection for her and a strange commentary on the text of his own "ascension."

Let us suppose, however, that Dr. Parker is in heaven. A very interesting question then arises. It is something like a question that was once put to Jesus, and which he so dexterously evaded. We have read some gushing passages in Christian papers about the great preacher's reunion in heaven with Mrs. Parker. But they do not say which Mrs. Parker they mean. There were two, for Dr. Parker was married twice, and he is reported to have deeply loved both his wives. Which of them is Mrs. Parker in heaven? And how does the other like her grass-widowhood? Or are there two Mrs. Parkers in heaven, and how do they (and he) like that arrangement?

These may be called rude questions. But it is easier to call them rude than to answer them. And why are they rude if they are reasonable? Surely the point involved is of vast interest to all who believe in a future life. To think the contrary is to show a sad poverty of imagination and a sadder coldness of feeling. Is the "believer" who marries twice to think only of the wife he lost last, who was perhaps of better education and higher station in life than the first? Is he to overlook the wife of his youth, the woman who first faced the world with him, and whose body in the grave is not colder than her soul would be through his forgetfulness? And is it dignified for the Christians to leave these reflections to the Atheists?

We might close this article by wondering why heaven was in such a hurry to receive Dr. Parker. But we refrain from doing so, although we cannot join in the loud chorus of praise over his grave. We fail to see what particular work he did for the liberation and progress of the world. He was in no sense a pioneer. Christians existed by the million before him; all he did was to gather a number of them around himself. He was handsomely paid for his preaching. According to the Rev. John Hunter, he "honorably earned and could as honorably receive his remuneration, as a physician or lawyer of eminence his fees." Quite so. But this proves that preaching is only a trade.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Faith of the Future.—II.

(Concluded from page 717.)

MR. WELLS also appears to find some sort of justification for his belief that the men of the future will believe in a nebulous kind of a theism, by arguments drawn from the sphere of morals. Man's whole knowledge of God—so far as he has any knowledge—he believes will be gained by a study of tendencies in the Cosmos, and the coming race will strive to bring their wills into harmony with the universal will. It will not do to speak of the universe as non-ethical, because

"To anyone whose mind is pervaded by faith in God, a non-ethical universe in conflict with the incomprehensibly ethical soul of the Agnostic, is as incredible as a black horned devil, an active material anti-god with hoofs, tail, pitchfork, and Dunstan-scoried nose complete.....The Ethical system that condemns the ways of life as wrong or points to the ways of death as right, that countenances what the scheme of things condemn, and condemns the general purpose in things as it is now revealed to us, must prepare to follow the theological edifice upon which it was originally based. If the universe is non-ethical by our present standard, we must reconsider these standards and reconstruct our ethics."

The italics are mine, and they contain a very common form of confusion from which Mr. Wells is, apparently, not secure. It may be granted, however, that to a believer in God, or in what amounts to the same thing, an intelligent purpose in nature, the workings of nature should contain the principles of ethics. And to the believer to speak of the non-ethical character of things is to pass censure upon the author of that order. But even granting this, one stumbles at the "incomprehensibly ethical soul of the Agnostic." Why incomprehensible? On this thesis Agnostic and theist alike are produced by the order of things, and as we are only to know God through this order, the fact of a man having an ethical "soul," while refusing to go beyond the natural to an assumed creator, ought surely not to be incomprehensible! The ethical sense has been developed by social intercourse, principally, and by other natural forces less directly, and whether one believes in a God or not, the influence of natural forces is identical. Either way, then, the fact of a non-believer possessing as keen a moral sense as the believer gives no reasonable ground for astonishment. Surprise is only possible on the assumption that morality depends upon a belief in God. But this Mr. Wells clearly does not believe. He believes, and rightly, that man is fashioned by cosmical forces, unconscious to himself, and only becomes conscious of the process at a late stage of his development.

The latter part of the passage quoted, which identifies the ethics of the future with the conduct of nature at large, seems to me clearly indefensible. There is, moreover, a plain begging of the question of the question in the statement concerning ethical systems which "condemns the ways of life as wrong, or points to the ways of death as right." By way of life, Mr. Wells means, I imagine, course of nature, because no one condemns the ways of life as wrong, the question being whether certain ways—i.e., the imitation of nature—are ways of life or ways of death. And it appears tolerably plain that man only becomes ethically greater as he departs from nature's methods.*

The mere appearance of mind as a conscious force in social evolution marks a change in the mode of operation. Forces that hitherto operated slowly, now work quickly. Others are encountered, and although not destroyed, are so checked and modified that they cease to be harmless and may even become beneficial. Social aggregation itself is a protest, at first unconscious, but ultimately conscious, against

non-human methods. To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not even that which he hath not shall be taken, is truly and literally the method of nature untouched by human aid, and uncorrected by the ethical standard. But society by its very existence, presupposes a modification in this. The weak receive from society something to atone for their weakness, and the strong are not permitted to push the demands of their strength to the utmost limits. But nature at large knows nothing of this. Waste and disregard to human sufferings, are its characteristics, and it is precisely these elements that human society seeks to counteract. To say that we must readjust our ethical standards by what is observed to be the nature of things is to come very near the absurd. There is no ethical standard apart from ourselves, and we need only consider the forces outside ourselves so far as they are believed to be capable of utilisation in the furtherance of our ideals, or standing in the way of their realisation.

Besides, what is meant by the "general purpose of things?" So far as we can see there is no general purpose in the universe, in any human sense of the word. Is it the purpose of things to preserve or sustain human life? "Things," blot out life with apparently as little care as a stone is set rolling down a hillside. Man utilises certain products in nature; he drinks the water, eats the fruit or grain, utilises wood, minerals, and other products, but who will say it was part of the "purpose of things" that he should do so? The expression is so hopelessly anthropomorphic and absurd, that when used by Mr. Wells, one feels inclined to look for some other than the usual meaning in it.

But while disagreeing with Mr. Wells on his way of expressing the almost certain reconstruction of ethical ideals that will take place in the future, I can agree with him that it will take place, and also as to some of the directions in which this is almost certain to occur. The last few pages of his work Mr. Wells devotes to a forecast of what shape opinions will take concerning the general question of population—a subject usually avoided by the timid, and one which the apparently inherent unhealthiness of the average Christian mind seems unable to approach except amid suggestions of indecency and obscenity.

The position facing a serious student of sociology may be briefly and roughly described as follows. The cooperative ethics of a more socialised intelligence is rapidly replacing the competitive naturalism of earlier conditions. The result is, in one direction, that while under earlier conditions a certain type is killed off, our increased sympathies with suffering and our increased medical knowledge, induces and allows us to keep a large proportion of this type in existence. Not only keep them in existence, but passively encourage them to perpetuate themselves, and thus intensify the problem that future generations will have to deal with. Now no one, I imagine, has any burning desire to see society stocked with individuals of a type that are unable to carry out the functions of social life in a desirable manner. We do not care to destroy them once they are here, but unless something is done that will have a tendency to prevent them being here, then, as Mr. Spencer has repeatedly warned us, our "interference" with the struggle for existence is only laying up troubles ahead, and our knowledge and sympathies, instead of being our best friends, become our greatest enemies.

How will the society of the future deal with this problem?—for face it it must. Mr. Wells seems to think that the people of the future will have none of the hesitation to kill—when killing is necessary—that we have, and that the undesirable will be rigorously suppressed. For my own part, I believe that public opinion is powerful enough to do a great deal in the right direction if only the leaders of public opinion had the knowledge and courage—the latter quality is much rarer than the former—to speak out. At present, as Mr. Wells says, "All our philanthropists, all our religious teachers, seem to be in a sort of informal

*I am, of course, using the phrase "departs from nature's methods" in the narrower sense of an imitation of nature as existing outside human intercourse. There is a wider sense of the phrase in which an escape from nature's methods is a sheer impossibility.

conspiracy to preserve an atmosphere of ignorance about these [sexual] matters which, in view of the irresistible nature of the sexual impulse, results in a swelling tide of miserable little lives." It is this silence which, as much as aught else, fills our slums with misery and stocks society with undesirable specimens.

A corrective of some considerable value would be found if only people had courage enough to teach that life is a privilege and a responsibility, not, as Mr. Wells says, a "night refuge for base spirits." And further: "Procreation is as avoidable for sane persons of even the most furious passions, and the men of the New Republic will hold that the procreation of children who, by the circumstances of their parentage, must be diseased bodily or mentally—I do not think it will be difficult for the medical science of the coming time to define such circumstances—is absolutely the most loathsome of all conceivable sins." A public opinion, properly directed, that would only emphasise this lesson would do an enormous amount of good. But where, at present, is the public teacher that will do this? Certainly not in any of the pulpits, and certainly not on any of our political platforms. Increase and multiply is the lesson openly taught or tacitly implied, and so we go on recruiting from a class which carries well-marked symptoms of its own worthlessness.

In other words, the society of the future having minimised the working of the Survival of the Fittest, most consciously strive for the Birth of the Fittest. Having reduced the potency of that purely natural force which cuts off the least desirable type, we must seek to bring about a state of public opinion which shall regard the perpetuation of it as an offence against society at large. Nor does the matter end here. We have to realise that a great many of the degraded human natures around us are created by the demoralising conditions under which so many are compelled to live. The pig creates the sty as often as the sty creates the pig. Our social conditions are creating an heredity that will press heavily upon future generations. Nearly all diseases are eradicable, and, conversely, they may all be created; and unhealthy conditions, among both rich and poor, are creating them. The preservation of the Fittest must follow the Birth of the Fittest; otherwise Mr. Spencer's warning is likely to be only too well justified.

Into Mr. Wells's other speculations concerning the future I have not now time to enter. Prophecy is always a dangerous occupation, but when it is based upon a careful study of existing tendencies it becomes prevision; and some sort of prevision is indispensable. We can only work for the immediate future by means of some sort of forecast as to its probable nature, and, providing our speculations are free from individual prejudice, they are pretty sure to serve a useful purpose. As I said at starting, Mr. Wells is among the most admirable of this class of prophets. His "Anticipations" are suggestive, even when one disagrees with them. And it is the writer who suggests most who, after all, best repays study.

C. COHEN.

Blaise Pascal.

1623-1662.

"There is no darkness but ignorance."—SHAKESPEARE.

"Why follow ancient laws and ancient opinions? Are they wiser?"—PASCAL.

THERE is hardly any name more famous at once in literature, science, and theology than that of Blaise Pascal. Cut off at the early age of thirty-nine, he had already attained distinction as a mathematician and scientist. His reputation as the author of the *Provincial Letters*, and as one of the chief defenders of Christianity, had spread far and wide. His writings continue to be studied for their style and vitality. As a writer he belongs to no school, and is

admired simply for his greatness by Freethinkers and Christians alike; by men like Voltaire, Condorcet, and Sainte Beuve, no less than by men like Bossuet, Vinet, and Neander. His writings are in danger of being more admired than studied. They have been so long the subject of eulogy that, like most classics, their character is taken for granted.

Opinion is not so unanimous concerning Pascal's religious views. Some critics regard him as a mere fanatic. Others imagine him as a mystic. A few think that he was, by fits and starts, a believer and an unbeliever. There are also critics, like Victor Cousin, who have considered him a real sceptic.

There is a certain plausibility in this attempt to prove Pascal's scepticism. He always writes strongly. There is passion in all his thought. He has a deep sense of human weakness, which lends venom to his irony. He speaks of religious tenets with great freedom and cynicism. But Pascal, of all men, is not to be measured solely by his rhetoric. His intellectual nature, while profound, was narrow and intense. He put his whole mind into what moved him for the time; and a certain excess of passionate emotion evidently speaks in some of his most striking passages.

Pascal's finest work is an apology for Christianity. The book was never finished; but the fragments known as Pascal's *Pensées* form one of the treasures of literature. It is so, not because of its evidential value, but for the study of man and its magnificent style.

In his analysis of human nature he is really great. Like Hamlet, he dwells on the melancholy antithesis of the greatness of human thought and the littleness of human conditions and desires:—

"All our greatness is in thought. It is by this we must raise ourselves, not by time or space which we cannot fill. Let it be our aim to think well, for here is the starting point of morals."

He is awed by the majesty and mystery of Nature: "The eternal silence of those infinite spaces terrifies me." Man is an enigma—the equal of angels and the brother of brutes. The key to the riddle, thought Pascal, was in Christianity, in original sin, the grace of God. To those who have found the solution of human incongruity in the doctrine of evolution the story of the Fall seems a childish fable, and the scheme of Redemption a fiction founded upon it. Yet to Pascal original sin offered the best explanation of the mystery of man. It was the very basis of his theology. An acute, reasoning mind could not be entirely satisfied with this. Hence we find in Pascal a curious mixture of the Rationalist and the dogmatist. He doubts of all, and uses reason to deride reason.

On the fundamental question in theology, he says:—

"The metaphysical proofs of God are so removed from human reason and so involved that they hardly impress, and even should they serve some one, it is only for an instant, but an hour after they fear they are deceived."

To the Atheist, whom he seems to look on as a desperate gambler, he offers a gambler's argument. The believer, he contends, stands to win an eternity of happiness:—

"Place against this the free disposition of your earthly life, and surely it is safest to bet on the side on which the gain is greatest. Wager, then, without hesitation, that God exists."

Yet Pascal has no patience with the Cartesian method of explaining the origin of all things.

"I cannot forgive Descartes. He would willingly in all his philosophy have done without God, if he could; but he could not get on without letting him give the world a fillip to set it going. After that, he has nothing more to do with God."

He even spoke of Descartes' philosophy as "useless, uncertain, and troublesome—nay, as ridiculous." He has added in his brusque, characteristic style, that "he did not think the whole of philosophy worth an hour's trouble." Again:

"To set light by philosophy is the true philosophy."

Reading such expressions, and remembering that in many of his phrases he echoes the cynicism of old Montaigne, it is not to be wondered at that Pascal has been considered a sceptic. If he repeats some of Montaigne's ideas, he was without that old Free-thinker's sense of humanity.

"The noble deaths of Lacedæmonians and other Pagans move us little, for what have we to do with them? But we are strongly touched at the deaths of the martyrs, since they are members of our body."

The natural affections of the man are cramped by his creed. His sympathies are confined to his own sect. A loyal son of the Great Lying Church, he detests heresy, and piously professing to love all men, hates his neighbor.

Pascal sees through shams, yet is not bold enough to cast them off. Thus he says:—

"The power of Kings is founded on the reason and on the folly of the people, but far more on their folly."

He anticipates the philosophy of Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, and says:—

"Our magistrates have well understood this mystery. Their scarlet robes, their ermine, in which they are swaddled like furred cats, their palaces, and fleur-de-lis; all this august array is most necessary. If the physicians had not cassocks and mules, and the theologians no square bonnets and ample robes, never would they have duped the world, which cannot resist so authoritative a demonstration."

Virtually he holds that man must be imposed on. "All men naturally hate one another," he says, with offensive exaggeration. Again, concupiscence, desire, and force, are the sources of all our actions. Concupiscence makes voluntary ones force the involuntary. With the venom of a Swift he tell us:—

"Men are so necessarily mad that he who would be otherwise would be a lunatic of a new kind."

Pascal has been considered a pessimist. "Imagine," he said, a number of men in chains all condemned to death, some every day strangled in the sight of others, who see their own condition is that of their fellows, and hopelessly await their turn. Such is the condition of men."

Pascal does not rest content till he has, in his own mind, degraded nature into a mean and disgusting machine, a man into a contemptable brute. Looked at from any standpoint but that of Christianity, life is, he thinks, but a petty business.

There is one short, but ample and final reply to this essentially absurd ultimatum. The ghastly spectre of a vile and insignificant humanity is simply the offspring of Pascal's brain. Pascal's reading of the Riddle of the Universe cuts straight alike at the roots of thought and action. Faith to him is the only alternative of intellectual bankruptcy. Such Pyrrhonism is the utmost contribution of Pascal, one of the most famous apologists for the Christian superstition to philosophy. A keen critic, a great writer, a dignified figure in history, this much may be said of him. No apostle of Humanism, no light-bearer in social crises, no inspirer of liberty, Pascal's relentless questionings have their use so long as we remember that they are questionings and nothing more. To ask of him any positive contribution to the sum total of human knowledge is to ask what he is powerless to give.

MIMNERMUS.

What Do the Animals Believe?

(From the German of Eugen Wolfsdorf.)

A PECULIAR question! but peculiar only to those who still regard man as a special creation, as a sort of demi-god, fashioned in the exact image of the Almighty. We, on the other hand, knowing man to be developed from lower forms of life to the highest place among the vertebrates, have all the more reason to consider this question, since most people love to regard the *conception of deity* as the peculiar prerogative of the human race. As for the other supposed prerogatives—*an upright attitude, speech, thought, etc.*—it is demon-

strated that they are shared in greater or less degree by the animals. Nor is it otherwise with *conscience*: and here we trench on religious ground. Who has not observed the action of a staghound's conscience when it has done wrong? It slinks about in a shy, frightened manner, while the poodle, in similar circumstances, would be sound asleep. Huxley, in a well-known work, gives an instance in point. The Naturalist, Bennett, possessed a small monkey which loved to steal the soap from the washstand, and was frequently punished on this account. On one occasion, believing itself unobserved, it stole cautiously towards the washstand; but, as soon as it seized the soap, the Naturalist called it, and the animal at once replaced its prize—a clear proof that it was smitten by conscience.

"Conscience" is the result of education and environment; it is the fear evoked by the chastisement of moral law, a fear bequeathed from generation to generation.

But fear is a sentiment common to all living beings. The beast has derived it from its long struggle for existence—the fear of the weak for the strong. Animals which live in the vicinity of man fear him, because he has often subdued and dominated them by means of severe punishment. Man himself has inherited fear from earlier times; for he was not always the highest and greatest of earth's creatures. He has been obliged to obtain his position by a long struggle in which the individual frequently succumbed. But when he obtained it—when he became the highest of the animals—the old legacy still lingered in his flesh and blood; man still *feared*.

But where were now the greater and stronger beings to evoke his fears?

Here entered the imagination, the *Fancy*—the common scourge of humankind.

Fancy is the nervous quality by which we picture as living something that does not live, something that is dead. This quality is also derived by man from the animals, for they, too, possess fancy. A kitten playing with a skein of wool thinks it is alive. Darwin's dog, which barked furiously at an umbrella carried along by the wind, saw in it a living unknown power. Fancy worked in him.

When, therefore, man became elevated to the highest place, and found no superior being to excite his fears, his fancy animated the mechanical forces of nature with life; he fashioned them in his own image; he made them his gods.

The sources of the God-idea are therefore (1) Fear; (2) Fancy; and (3) Ignorance of natural processes.

All these three qualities are likewise shared by the animals; the elements of religion are present in them. The shepherd who educates his dog, and the animal-trainer who tames the lion are the gods of the creatures they dominate; they occupy the position of the stronger towards the weaker organism. They are feared and trusted; but they do not evoke *belief*, in the religious sense of the word, for they are *seen and heard*.

Animals likewise fear the powers of nature. Dogs howl in stormy weather; they are terrified by a solar eclipse; but it is necessarily unprovable that their fancy operates like that of man, in the cultivation of the belief in God. It is clear, however, that the religious ground-work does not exist solely in mankind—a proof, as the priests sometimes affirm, of man's likeness to God—but that the belief in deity is a sad aberration of the human mind which works unspeakable harm.

It becomes, therefore, the duty of everyone who is emancipated to fight this belief, and lead his brothers to the light.

Trans. by E. R. WOODWARD.

Not a Free Moral Agent.

Mrs. Powers: "Hezekiah, if you were to live all your life over again, and it came to the matter of choosing a wife, do you think you would choose me?"

Mr. Powers (submissively): "There's no doubt about it, Maria, provided you wanted me."

—*Richmond Dispatch.*

Personal Identity.

METAPHYSICAL inquiries are not generally of much direct value, as far as I can ascertain. The whole region occupied by them is a dreary waste with at best a verdant spot here and there, like an oasis in a desert. In metaphysics you can have but little certainty beyond the knowledge that consciously or unconsciously the disputants are juggling. Here each man or each school uses words in given combinations, and the propositions seem to have definite values. But every opposing school avows that its rivals circulate base coin; and where to find the genuine metal in metaphysics is still as great a problem as ever. Metaphysics is a game, in which much ingenuity is played, much high-class amusement acquired; but it leads to nothing; the world is no wiser for it all. The people in ancient India worked out and wore threadbare many ages ago most of the metaphysical subjects that have occupied European philosophers since the age of Plato. What good has it done? It has shown how keen and abstract the Hindu intellect is, and how clever the Eastern philosophers have been at their endless game of ghostly chess. Not one useful, pregnant thought has emerged from the long play; and real knowledge has to begin just where all this bewildering strife of words and fantastic network of empty ideas end. So has it been in Europe; and so, probably, it must ever be. For metaphysics deals almost entirely with fictions and illusions; whereas progress can be effected only by the study of matter and material relations.

Then why, it may be demanded, have I taken up such a subject as Personal Identity, which is so purely metaphysical? I have two valid reasons for so doing. First, Personal Identity, if anything more than a fiction, must be materialistic; and if it be so, I wish to rescue it from the clutches of superstition. And if Personal Identity be nothing more or less than an assumption, a phantom, a name without an owner, then I wish to do what I can to establish that point, for the special purpose of undermining theology. As is well known, some of the fundamental dogmas of Christianity are based upon the assumption of Personal Identity, such as the existence of the human soul; the future life of rewards and punishments. If, therefore, Personal Identity, in the sense usually held, be a truth and not a fiction, theology has a possible basis in fact, though by no means an indisputable one; but if Personal Identity be a fiction, all that theology erects upon that basis must be equally fictitious and false.

The two words, Personal Identity, may need a little explication, even though they are so familiar to us all. There is, perhaps, nothing we are more likely to blunder in than our estimate of the value of words, and consequently of the value of the thoughts which those words should represent. Words are the current coin of human society, of which we have no definite standards of value. All words not denoting weight or measure are more or less loose in their meaning, that is, of uncertain value; and it will always be necessary to remind ourselves of this fact in discussions, and to state, as definitely as may be, the exact value we attribute to the fundamental words employed.

Now the word *personal* is an adjective denoting what belongs to a *person*. But what is a person? Our word is derived, very little altered in the process, from the Latin word *persona*, which means a mask worn over the face; it denotes a part or character such as an actor sustains in a play; it bears the meaning of false appearance as well; also a personage, or the man or woman that acts the part in the play. All these senses it has in Latin. I presume we may say in English, here substituting real life for the drama, that a person means not merely the appearance, the outward show, the part played, the character borne, by man or woman, on life's stage, but also all that living organism which lives, plays, or acts; all that individual set of bones, muscles, blood, the living, throbbing, feeling, hoping,

fearing thing which acts its part in life. That, I daresay, may pass as an approximate definition of the word *person* as used by English-speaking people.

And now for *identity*. This is a slightly altered French word (*identité*) derived from the Latin *identitas*, which, however, does not occur in classic authors. Its root is *idem*, *the same*. And identity means *sameness* as distinguished from likeness or resemblance. Personal Identity, then, is a phrase used by philosophers and others to set forth the belief that any given person is always, from his very beginning to his end, the same person; that whatever changes he may undergo he is still the same person; he may grow from a minute cell to manhood, and yet be the same person; he may weigh at one time many times more than at another; he may grow fat through good nature and high feeding, and waste to a skeleton almost through sickness or want; he may change his color, lose his limbs, or what not, but he never loses himself, his person is ever the same. And the Christian philosopher will tell you that this same identity will endure for ever; that the very same person who did good in time will be rewarded through all eternity; and he who did evil will suffer punishment for ever.

It cannot be denied that those ideas and beliefs have some sort of foundation in fact; they are inferences drawn partly from experience. That will not be denied. All that can be legitimately done is to inquire whether the facts appealed to will warrant the inference; whether the orthodox have rightly interpreted the facts.

It is not my purpose off-hand to deny personal identity, but to inquire into its existence, nature, and value. Personal identity, or something very closely akin to it, may be discovered in other parts of nature as well as in animals and plants. Stand by the brink of a river. Perhaps you remember being there many years ago; you may have swum in its waters and rowed upon them, or crossed the river again in a railway train. But Dr. Young's dictum is,

"In the same stream none ever bathed him twice."

And I am inclined to agree with him. The banks may be little altered for years, the bed is to all appearance the same for ages. But what of the river? There is the same depth, the same meander, the same stretch, the same rapid, the same little cataract; but the essence of the river is all changed. The water that flows down it is different every moment; it comes, it goes, and never all returns just as it was before. An intelligent fish in that river, not too scientific, would affirm the river to be absolutely identical as long as he could remember. The river itself, suppose it endowed with our intelligence and our purely unscientific education, would be apt to say that its memory extended backwards for millions of years, and it would regard it as a matter of course that it was the same river, and would, no doubt, feel astonished that anyone could be silly enough to call in question a truth assured by its very consciousness. We are, in this case, to suppose that the river is no more conscious of the flux of its atoms than we are of the flux of ours. To its consciousness there must be in it a something, which it would designate by the pronoun *I*, that was permanent and never underwent the least change.

Now, in such a case, we could easily correct that intelligent river; though we could never convince him that his own consciousness had been playing him a trick. And the same remarks would apply with equal force to the Niagara cataract. There, too, you find permanence combined with evanescence; a permanent form with an ever-rushing substance, inverting completely a well-known philosophical dictum to the effect that the form changes, the substance remains for ever. A gas-jet is a capital illustration of the same truth. Imagine that to be alive and intelligent; its consciousness, like ours, would assure it of personal identity; though science declares it is not the same flame any two successive moments. What we have is a rush of matter, a long train of chemical atoms, hurrying on to a chemical union; they unite in the fraction of a second, and flash out

brilliantly in doing so. Before the flash of the first rank fades from the retina there is a second, a third, etc., giving unbroken continuity by means of a constant change of substance.

Is not our personal identity parallel to these? Is its value any greater? What really is a man from beginning to end? Is he an individual or a race? Perhaps both. Every race of men is an individual as compared with all other races; but it consists of an aggregation of human beings united by ties of blood and other bonds. And is not man a miniature race, beginning in one single living cell, derived from a parent, vivified by a living cell from another parent? The full-grown man is but an assemblage of cells, numbering countless millions. Those cells are incessantly born; they proceed through the processes of growth, nutrition, reproduction, and decay; and each living unit when it dies and becomes unfit for the system is excluded and thrown away. Man is a compound mass of living cells, cells of great variety; these constitute him what he is. Their life is his; their numbers constitute his bulk and weight; their forces reappear in his experiences and actions. Is a man the same being, the same individual, all through? By no means. He is no more the same than the river, the cataract, or the gas-jet. Who can pretend, in face of the marvellous changes a man undergoes in his history, that he is the same at both ends of his life? Where was his intellect, soul, if you will, when he consisted of no more than a cell or two, small, invisible except by the aid of a microscope? If his soul, consciousness, reason, were there, why did they not act? and why have we no memory of that early period? If they were not present from the first, when did they arrive? Reason knows nothing of human souls, human intellect, etc., except as properties—properties of the animal, not when it first begins, but after more or less development. If the development does not take place those properties never appear; they come at given stages of the development, they rise and develop with it; they share its vicissitudes, and decay with its decay.

It is a common practice with psychologists of every school to speak of the body, the organism, as one thing, and the *Ego* as another. This *Ego*, or *soul*, or *spirit*, figures largely in books, and rolls out pompously in popular speech. But what is it? Is it reality or fancy? What essence can remain permanent in a man who undergoes such incessant waste and renovation as physiology teaches us we all do? We are never two days alike. Weight, health, rate of pulse, ability for work, appetites, hope, fear, thought, are never at one stay. Our mental life changes as rapidly, as thoroughly, as the bodily. States of consciousness are as various as the weather. Where is, what is, that something which remains through all this incessant change? It is not the body, nor anything else that can be named and described. Let us turn for a moment towards our river—say the Thames. Cæsar crossed it nearly 2,000 years ago; and ancient men did so very likely millions of years before that. Is the Thames therefore the same river? What is left? Only its locality—all else is changed. Yet its personal identity, such as it is, remains, consisting merely of locality—that is, water constituting a river flowed here ever since a certain epoch in geology, and has continued to do so. So with a man. He started life of a semi-independent kind years ago, has grown and developed—a constant stream of matter, exerting its physical and chemical qualities, has been focussed within a certain area, and has constituted a being known as a man; as long as this rush of materials continues so long does the man live and exhibit his well-known qualities; the moment this ceases he ceases. Then what is the personal identity? Nothing more than the continuity of motions and experiences; and the *Ego* is nothing more, as far as I can see, than a series of states of consciousness, varying in intensity and variety. A personal *Ego*, apart from the organism, is as great a fiction or phantom as the qualities of iron apart from the iron.

J. SYMES.

(To be concluded.)

Acid Drops.

"It was decided," the *Christian World* says, "that the body of Dr. Parker should lie in state in the City Temple from noon till the evening." And so it came to pass. And the persons who decided this are Christians! They are no Materialists. Oh dear no! The body is nothing to them, and the soul is everything. Yet they drag the body about, weep over it, preach over it, and pray over it. Such a thing was unknown to the old Pagan world, and we doubt whether it is to be met with even now outside Christendom. This was referred to by John Wesley in his sermon on "Dives and Lazarus." The Bible says that Dives died and was buried. "Doubtless," Wesley added, "with pomp enough, suitable to his quality: although we do not find that there was then in all the world, that exquisite instance of human folly, that senseless, cruel mockery of a poor putrefying carcase, which we term *lying in state*." How sweet Wesley's words would have sounded in the City Temple!

Mr. G. J. Holyoake is quoted in the *British Weekly* as saying, during an interview with the Rev. S. B. Lane since the death of the oracle of the City Temple: "I appreciate Dr. Parker's arguments more to-day than I did when uttered. They seem to me more pertinent now." We presume this refers to what Dr. Parker said in an old debate with Mr. Holyoake some forty years ago. Unfortunately we do not know what the arguments were that Mr. Holyoake finds so improved with age. We believe no report of the debate was ever published. Which is a pity, for many people would like to read it.

The National Free Church Council visited Lord Spencer's House on Monday afternoon to lay before the Liberal Peers their views concerning the Education Bill. One of the speakers was Mr. R. W. Perks, M.P., the well-known lay Wesleyan. This gentleman said that Wesleyans had never been in favor of a purely secular education. They had always contended for Biblical instruction to be given by the teachers. Quite so. And that is the joke of the Nonconformist position. They want to have Christian teaching in the public schools, and they want to fix its quality. While they can do this, all is well in the best of all possible worlds; but when the quality is fixed by others, they scream out that they are persecuted.

Mr. Perks stated that the largest part of the Wesleyan Church would be in favor of secular education if it were possible to provide a religious education outside school hours. Quite so. And here again the Nonconformist treachery to principle is obvious. If the Free Churches saw that they stood to lose nothing in the competition with the Church of England, they would vote for the right policy at once. In other words, they are supporting the wrong policy now for reasons of self-interest.

Dr. Temple is old and infirm. He nearly dropped in the middle of his speech in the House of Lords the other day. But he is in no hurry to leave this world and the Archbishopric of Canterbury. Heaven will keep.

The late John Kensit's son is now carrying on the business. He has been posing before a crowd, chiefly composed of women, at Exeter Hall, as the successor of his martyred father. The meeting prayed that he might be "divinely guided." Of course the Ritualists, against whom he is crusading, believe they are "divinely guided" too. No doubt one side is as much so as the other. Our own private opinion is that the Lord (if he exists and knows anything about the conflict) would cry "A plague on both your houses!"

The *Daily News* has begun its religious census of London. A start was made at Kensington on Sunday, December 1. The population of this rather aristocratic part of the metropolis is 176,628; the males numbering 69,084, and the females 107,544. The enumerators worked both morning and evening, so that many of the persons attending "divine service" in churches and chapels must have been counted twice over. The total figures in the morning were 5,996 men, 13,993 women, and 5,977 children. The evening figures were 4,607 men, 9,823 women, and 2,966 children. The grand total of men, women, and children, at both services, was 43,372. This is far from being what it should be in "the most Christian country in the world," but is probably very much better than the church and chapel attendance in the less "fashionable" parts of London.

One striking feature of the Kensington census is the easy triumph of the Church of England. Of the 43,372 total

attendances it boasts 25,216, thus beating all the other sects put together. The Roman Catholics come next with 8,110 attendances; then the Baptists with 2,717; then the Congregationalists with 1,750; and then the Wesleyans with 1,612. The smaller sects do not, any of them, amount to a thousand. The Salvation Army boasts 450, and the Unitarians 211. Thus the grossest and the most refined Christians are nearly at the bottom of the scale.

Devoting a leading article to these figures, the *Daily News* says that they "give grave cause for thought on the part of those who consider that the public observance of religion is necessary to the well-being of a nation." The worst feature of all is that the male attendance in the morning was less than one in ten of the population; in the evening it was worse, being but one in fifteen. Allowing for the children among the males, it is evident, our contemporary says, that "only a small proportion of the men of Kensington enter a place of worship."

Hampstead, another "fashionable" quarter, was attacked by the *Daily News* enumerators on the same day. Here again the Church of England was an easy first with a total of 11,056 attendances, the Free Churches coming next with 6,970, and the Roman Catholics next with 1,599. The Unitarians numbered 287, and the Salvationists 240. The Quakers came last with 20. This was getting pretty near "where two or three are gathered together in my name."

The population of Hampstead is 81,942; including 31,688 males, and 50,254 females. Allowing for the large number of domestic servants in such a district, it is evident that the "male poverty" of the Churches is also marked at Hampstead. The number of men at divine service in the morning was only 1,885; in the evening it was still less—only 1,189.

There have recently been several burglaries at a small town in Surrey, and the burglars have invariably escaped. A minister, walking along the main street of the town the other day, met a policeman, and could not refrain from alluding to the topic of local interest. "What a large number of burglaries there have been lately," said he; "why don't you and the other policemen stop them?" Robert looked solemnly at the parson for a moment ere he replied, "Sir, there are thousands of people going to hell every day; why don't you and the other ministers stop them?"

So many and so various people say it, from doctors down to policemen, that we suppose it must be true that drinking is sadly increasing amongst women in England. According to Mr. W. B. Gardner (Max Philpot) the case is no better in Scotland. Fifty years ago, he says, a drunken woman was seldom to be seen; now she is quite a common phenomenon. A medical man in a small Lanarkshire town says he knows fourteen female drunkards in one street. A still smaller town in Berwickshire has not less than seventy hopeless female drunkards in a population of only four thousand. "Paganism," Mr. Gardner says, "would have blushed at a record like this." Of course it would. The notion that Christianity has had an elevating influence on human morality is so glaringly false as to be positively ridiculous.

Here is another sample of Christian civilisation. A *Westminster Gazette* man gives a most pathetic account of how he went round at night recently in the bitter cold weather, with the thermometer several degrees below freezing point, distributing soup-tickets to poor homeless starving wretches huddled in doorways and dark corners. "Within a stone's throw of this terrible picture of a mighty city's misery," he says, "was another scene—one of brightness, gaiety, wealth, and splendor. As scores of cabs and carriages hurried by, bearing their occupants on to the brilliance of a Covent Garden ball, the vehicles had to thread their way through the batches of hungry men, all making for the first meal many had had for more than twenty-four hours." There were women as well as men in that awful crowd of hunger and misery. Yes, and children, too. Fancy hurrying past *starving children* to a Covent Garden ball! And this is a Christian country! Could a country of "infidels" be possibly worse?

It was the homeless, desolate, hungry child that most touched the heart of a great "infidel"—James Thomson ("B. V.") the poet—as he roamed his "City of Dreadful Night." Take the following stanza of the first section of his masterpiece, in which he introduces, slightly veiled, some of the scenes he had witnessed by night in London, while

treading its streets under the goad of Insomnia and Melancholia. He met:—

Mature men chiefly, few in age or youth,
A woman rarely, now and then a child.
A child! If here the heart turns sick with ruth
To see a little one from birth defiled,
Or lame or blind, as preordained to languish
Through youthless life, think how it bleeds with anguish
To meet one erring in that homeless wild.

A correspondent of the *Westminster Gazette* says that a friend of his in Scotland, having built a new house to live in, wished to have "My house shall be called a House of Prayer" cut over the door, and the workmen were left to carry out his wishes. When he returned he found they had cut the whole text, "My house shall be called a House of Prayer, but ye have made it a den of thieves." They explained it in this way: "We had a wee thing mair room, ye see, so we just pit in the end o' the verse."

What sublime subjects occupy the minds of some parsons! A catechism for them appears in *Goodwill*, and one of the questions is "Should the celebrant and his ministers bow or genuflect during the Nicene Creed and the Prayer of Consecration?" In other words, should the parson bend his body or his knees? Some people would put it, Should he bow or scrape. Fancy a problem like this agitating the Church while myriads of people are living in squalor and misery; or, from the orthodox point of view, while millions on millions of them are rushing to hell!

After stating their reasons for bowing or genuflecting, the parsons are asked to "Write a note on the Liturgical colors." Prominence should be given to *green*.

Well, well, well! There is no end to the folly of parsons. We have just come across the funniest thing in the world. Joseph Chamberlain is off to South Africa, and the Bishop of Rochester asks the clergy of his diocese to pray for the wanderer. Not for his health or safety, but that the Lord may vouchsafe him "the spirit of counsel and guidance." What a job for the Lord! Joseph will "gang his ain gate" in spite of all. In that respect, at any rate, he is past praying for.

Ingersoll long ago observed that God was often asked to do impossible things. "For instance," he said, "I heard the chaplain the other day asking God to give Congress wisdom."

The Rev. J. Moffat Logan, pastor of Old King-street Baptist Chapel, Bristol, has had a "call" to the Baptist Church, Cannon-street, Accrington. We presume the "call" is accompanied by the usual increase of stipend.

Mr. Logan is far from being of colossal dimensions. It is not wonderful, therefore, if there be any truth in a certain proverb, that he is not too heavily endowed with humility. This is said to be a Christian virtue, but there seems to be less of it among Christians than among any other religionists on earth.

A good many years ago Mr. Logan had a public debate at Bristol with Mr. G. W. Foote. Ever since then he has been bragging of his "victory." We see by an "Interview" in the *Bristol Evening News* that he brags of it still. It does not occur to him that it is not customary for one of the disputants to award the palm. Nor does it occur to him that there is, or should be, a considerable difference between an intellectual debate and a wrestling-match or a prize-fight.

Mr. Logan tells the *News* interviewer that the debate was a great success financially, the sum of £53 being paid over to the Children's Hospital. This is quite true, though it is just possible that Mr. Logan did not earn all the money. There seems to be some exaggeration, however, about the shilling tickets being sold for five shillings. We did not hear of it at the time.

With that characteristic humility of his, Mr. Logan calls this debate "the first between a Christian and a Freethinker upon a thoroughly scientific basis." We believe it would be more accurate to say that the very opposite of this is much nearer the truth. Mr. Foote has debated the Resurrection with other representatives of Christianity, but Mr. Logan was the only one who flatly refused to discuss the plain question "Did Jesus Christ Rise from the Dead?" He said he would be a fool to discuss that—which was doubtless true, though he was not wise to say it. All he would discuss was the somewhat fantastic question of why people believed that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Mr. Foote objected on grounds of reason to this as the topic of discussion, and it was well known at the time that he only engaged in the

debate after a sufficient protest; his object being to bring about any sort of public discussion rather than none at all, as it would enable him to address a lot of Christians who would never hear him otherwise.

So much for the "scientific basis" of the debate. And now for another aspect of it. "It was," Mr. Logan says, "an unexampled triumph of the Christian cause." Not only a triumph, but an *unexampled* triumph. This is Mr. Logan all over. But why does he go to the ridiculous length of saying that "the whole audience rose and sang, 'All hail the power of Jesu's name'?" The whole audience did nothing of the kind. The minority of Freethinkers, as a matter of course, did not sing a Christian hymn. Some of the Christian majority, too, were disgusted at such an out-of-place performance. They had the sense to see that if the Freethinkers had retaliated the place would have been turned into a pandemonium. The Christians who lacked both taste and perception were the members of Mr. Logan's church, and it is sad to state that they violated the decencies of debate at his instigation. During the debate itself it was Mr. Logan's grimaces and gestures that were incentives to the gross interruptions which the party of "humility" indulged in while Mr. Foote was speaking.

Mr. Logan's "victory" is an expression of the fact that the Christians were in a great majority at both meetings. But it was known beforehand that there were more Christians than Freethinkers in Bristol. That the "victory" led "many souls to salvation" is one of those loose statements to which Christians are only too liable. Mr. Logan did not succeed in converting a single Freethinker, and he knows it; on the other hand, the debate brought some Christians into the ranks of Freethought, and he knows that too. For a considerable time after the debate the Bristol Branch of the National Secular Society was remarkably flourishing. Its subsequent adversity had nothing whatever to do with Mr. Logan, but was chiefly due to the difficulty that arose in obtaining a hall for lectures. That difficulty still exists.

The one Christian phenomenon that undoubtedly followed the Logan-Foote debate was the advent of the beastly Walton Powell. He started up at Bristol opposing the Freethinkers in the spirit of Mr. Logan's hymn-singing friends. He went on from Bristol to other parts of the country, gaining great acceptance among the orthodox as an "infidel slayer," in spite of his frightful illiteracy, his vulgar manners, and his repulsive appearance. His triumphal progress was eventually stopped by imprisonment for debauching young girls; immediately after which he fell into the hands of the Philistines again on a charge of bigamy. We believe this was the most notable fruit of Mr. Logan's "victory."

The *Christian World* puts it that Mr. Logan "accepted a challenge from Mr. Foote." This is not true. Mr. Foote has never issued a challenge, and never accepted one. It was a gentleman present at Mr. Logan's discussion class who asked him if he would be willing to discuss certain points with a representative Freethinker. Mr. Logan said "Yes," and Mr. Foote was written to subsequently. There was no sort of "challenge" on either side.

"The origin of maypoles is of a Christian character." So says the Vicar of Billesdon, in a letter which was read by Dr. Macnamara during the Education Bill debate in the House of Commons. The vicar's deduction from this "fact" was that there should be a maypole "exclusively for children of the Church." But he is as wrong as to his "fact" as he is bigoted in his deduction. The celebration of the first of May is a relic of ancient sun-worship. Proofs of this may be gathered from east, west, north, and south; and one may be cited as typical of all the rest. The old Romans observed the four last days of April, and the first of May, in honor of the goddess Flora. This goddess presided over fruit and flowers, and the celebration was a festival, sometimes running into extravagance and license. For this, however, there was some slight excuse. The pagans were then in a rejoicing mood. The summer season was just dawning, and they were casting the thought of winter behind them and hailing the new victory of the glorious sun. The Maypole was dedicated to the Goddess of Flowers, and was surrounded by various emblems of beauty and fertility.

The Puritans realised the pagan origin of May Day and set their faces sternly against it. The Long Parliament, in 1644, ordered all Maypoles to be taken down and removed by the constables and churchwardens. They called the obnoxious thing "a heathenish vanity." After the Restoration the Maypoles were restored,

The Dean of Ripon is no fool. He is gradually explaining away the "heresy" that caused such a flutter in Church

circles. By the time he publishes the peccant address he will be able to make it as innocent as you please. And when he wants to talk "heresy" again he will probably make sure that there are no reporters listening.

Dr. Fremantle's second letter of explanation to his "Dear Lord Bishop" points out more definitely how he has been "misunderstood." He is shocked to learn that some people have read the reports of his words as "implying that Our Lord was born from a man and a woman by the ordinary process of generation." This, he says, is an "entire misconception." What he attempted to do was to show that "Our Savior" was born of a Virgin Mother "without any violation of biological law." Indeed! We should really like to see how he carries on this attempt. Has he hit upon some new piece of sophistry? Or does he simply manipulate the nonsense about "virgin births" with which Huxley, in one of his too frequent ill moments, provided the orthodox apologists? This point will be dealt with in Mr. Foote's *Mother of God*, a little work which he is now seeing through the press, and which will be published at Christmas.

Sir William Harcourt writes to the *Roumanian Bulletin* in reprobation of the treatment of the Jews in Roumania. We reprobate that treatment too. But really Sir William Harcourt might look nearer home. He has never expressed any regret for having flouted a memorial signed by the leading men of England in science, art, and literature, asking for the release of the editor of the *Freethinker* when imprisoned for "blasphemy"—that is, for attacking Christianity—in 1883. Sir William was then Home Secretary. He held the key of Mr. Foote's cell-door, and he not only held it tight, but gratuitously insulted the prisoner inside. It is quite right to sympathise with ill-treated Jews in foreign lands; but it is not an equivalent to helping the cause of justice in your own country.

The Catholic Church is moving heaven and earth, and the other place too, to prevent a Divorce Bill from being carried in Italy, though the Cabinet is pledged to such a measure. Divorce is not allowed by the Catholic Church except in special cases which the Pope himself decides. You have to be very rich, or very powerful, to gain the Holy Father's good graces.

Two clergymen figured conspicuously at Marylebone Police-court, the Rev. H. Denning, Vicar of Holy Trinity, Bronesbury, being summoned for using threats to the Rev. Owen Parry. Defendant cheerfully acknowledged that he had contingently promised complainant "about one of the soundest lickings" he had ever had in his life, but pleaded that he had been acting in the interests of Mrs. Parry, who had obtained a judicial separation from her husband, but was constantly being molested by his attempts to kidnap the child committed to her custody. Mr. Plowden, however, told the vicar that it was no part of his duties to constitute himself the champion of distressed ladies or an officer of the law, and bound him over to keep the peace.

The "Secularist" Dreamer.

To him who knows where every snare is set
To take the simple souls who vaguely feel
They part from Truth, who outworn faiths forget,
There is no risk; and, therefore, no appeal
Is made to him who treads life's rut in sorrow,
Fearing the past, the present, and the morrow—
In whose dark way lurk gods and demons yet.

The eyes bedimmed by superstition's dust
See in the Son of Mary God as man;
See in a narrative of crime and lust
Dark hints of that dread God's mysterious plan
To save some toys he made from condemnation—
This to consume, to that give free salvation—
Still gaze into the blue with childlike trust.

Shadows! you cry; but, list, no shadows they
To trembling Ignorance, who vainly gropes,
Dreaming, perhaps, to find a better way
To lead him to the zenith of his hopes.
Shalt thou, then, free man, stand aloof and scornful?
Deem all men free whilst—struggling, weak, and mournful—
The millions know not, think not—*only pray!*

JOHN YOUNG.

Small People's Sayings.

Willie: "Your papa's got only one arm, has he?"
Robbie: "Yeth."
Willie: "Where's the other other one?"
Robbie: "Ith up in heaven."

SPECIAL.

London Freethinkers are earnestly invited to see that the Holborn Town Hall is crowded on Wednesday evening, December 17, when a Demonstration will take place in favor of "Secular Education" as the only wise, just, and peaceable policy, and the only way out of the present difficulty. The chair will be taken at 8 o'clock.

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

Sunday, December 14, Secular Hall, Humberston-gate, Leicester, at 6.30, "Freethought in English Literature, from Shakespeare to Meredith."

Wednesday, December 17, Holborn Town Hall, Grays Inn-road, London, at 8, Demonstration in Favor of "Secular Education."

December 14, Leicester; 21, Camberwell.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—Address, 241 High-road, Leyton.

B. M.—It is Mr. Foote's intention to complete *Crimes of Christianity* at an early date. Most of the material has long been collected, and some of the writing is already done. Arrangements are being made to allow Mr. Foote to command more time for literary work of a non-periodical character. He will then be able to complete several undertakings which he has planned.

H. T. SAUNDERSON.—The persons and the paper you mention have been carrying on their peculiar crusade against "infidelity" for many years. You are probably not aware of this, or you would scarcely say that they are "likely to do considerable mischief unless checkmated." It is not in their power to influence a single person who could by any possibility be a welcome convert to Freethought. To advertise them would be a gratuitous folly. In manners and intelligence they are quite beneath contempt; and hunters who have plenty of other sport do not pursue vermin.

G. F. H. McCUSKEY.—Perhaps it would, as you suggest, be a good thing if Freethinkers were to give more support to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, to compensate for its loss of Christian support through such prosecutions as that of Mrs. Penruddocke. It is perfectly true, as we stated, that Mr. Waugh did unsay at Leeds the slander he uttered against the Secularists at Chester. Thanks for your solicitude about Mr. Foote's health. He is in good condition at present, and has not been at all affected by the severe weather, although he has a decided personal preference for something balmier.

PERSONS remitting for literature by stamps are specially requested to send *halfpenny stamps*, which are most useful in the Freethought Publishing Company's business.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for your very useful and ever-welcome batches of cuttings.

W. BIRDON.—A modest man, indeed! And he looks it. See "Acid Drops." Thanks for cutting.

A. W. TURNER.—You are quite mistaken. Ingersoll was an Atheist as well as an Agnostic; that is, he admitted that both terms meant the same thing. You will find a special chapter on "Ingersoll's Agnosticism" in Mr. Foote's new pamphlet, *What is Agnosticism?*

GREYHOUND.—We are very much obliged to you, but it would hardly do to begin with a suburb of London. What is wanted is a hall, etc., in a central situation, so that Freethinkers could attend it from all parts of the metropolis. When halls can be multiplied, owing to the growth of the cause, the suburban parts will be cultivated. But the time for that is not yet. Once more, however, we thank you.

R. MELLOR.—Your question must be answered in the affirmative. Mohammedans have fought Mohammedans. But they are less prone to fratricidal strife than the Christians, who have been, and still are, constantly fighting each other all over the world.

ENQUIRER.—The passage you quote from *Facts Worth Knowing* is doubtless based upon an American book, by a writer called Graves, if we recollect aright, entitled *Sixteen Crucified Saviors*. It is really a record of the various Sun Gods of antiquity, from the mythology of which the Christian story was largely made up. We cannot possibly tell you the "dates of their appearance." Legendary characters may have a name, but they have no local habitation.

E. GWINNELL.—The *Secular Almanack* is to be merged in the new *Secular Annual*. Times change, and men must change with them. We are not printing *Freethinker* placards at present. So few got displayed that they did not pay for the trouble and expense. We shall be advertising in fresh directions in the new year. Thanks for your other suggestions, which shall have our best consideration.

R. W. COLLIER.—Thanks. We have devoted our leading article to the subject.

W. ROWLAND.—We are obliged to you for sending us the *Referee*, though we had previously seen it. "Merlin" is not easy to reply to, for the same reason that it is difficult to fight a pillow or clasp a cloud. Of course it is impossible to disprove the existence of any possible God; on the other hand, proof is as impossible as disproof; as Mr. Foote has just been showing in his new pamphlet, *What is Agnosticism?* Equally it is impossible to disprove the existence of witchcraft. Nevertheless the belief in witchcraft drops into contempt as civilisation advances, because it is out of harmony with the teachings of science. It seems likely that every form of supernaturalism will perish in the same way.

M. E. PEGG.—Mr. Foote is writing you with respect to another date for Manchester.

OBSERVER (Glasgow).—Our own article must suffice. We don't think the late Dr. Parker's views or services to the world call for any further treatment in *our* columns.

E. CHAPMAN.—Received. Letter follows. See paragraph.

W. STEVENS.—Thanks for your encouraging letter. Mr. Foote keeps in health at present. With regard to the newsagent, whose general agent will not supply the *Freethinker*, the only advice we can give is that he should see if he cannot deal with a more accommodating firm. A little pressure is sometimes alarming to a bigot, who proceeds on the assumption that the worms he treads on will never turn.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Freidenker—Public Opinion—Newtownwards Chronicle—Cambria Daily Leader—Accrington Observer—Blackburn Weekly Telegraph—Leeds Daily News—Portsmouth Evening News—Newcastle Daily Leader—Morning Advertiser.

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.

LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Freethought Publishing Company, Limited, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

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

Sugar Plums.

THERE was an improved audience at the Athenæum Hall on Sunday evening, and Mr. Foote's lecture on "The Fable of Jesus Christ: with Reference to Dean Fremantle" appeared to be thoroughly enjoyed. Mr. Foote lectures this evening (Dec. 14) at the Secular Hall, Leicester. His subject, chosen by the management there, is quite new and almost too big—"Freethought in English literature, from Shakespeare to Meredith." The last time Mr. Foote was at Leicester a terrible fog covered the town, stopped every kind of transit except walking, and made even that dangerous. It is to be hoped that the weather will be better behaved on the present occasion.

Mr. Cohen occupies the Athenæum Hall platform this evening (Dec. 14), taking for his subject "A New Religio Medici." We hope there will be a good attendance. On the following Sunday evening the Athenæum Hall will be closed; that being one of the dates reserved by the proprietor for a private use. Frequenters of the Hall will please note this, and save themselves a disappointment. Mr. Foote has arranged to pay the Camberwell Branch another visit that evening, when he will deal with a seasonable topic, "The Virgin Birth of Christ: a Secular Sermon on Christmas."

The Demonstration in favor of "Secular Education" as the only wise, just, and peaceable policy, and the only way out of the present national difficulty, is to be held at the Holborn Town Hall next Wednesday evening (Dec. 17). The National Secular Society's Executive is finding all the work and all the expenses, but its name does not appear in the general public announcements, in order that no sort of prejudice may stand in the way of all the friends of "Secular Education" in the various progressive parties in London rallying round a common standard on this occasion. Invitations to speak have been sent out to a number of well-

known progressive men and women, but at the time of going to press we are unable to say how many of them have accepted. Full particulars will appear on the second lot of handbills. The first lot have been in circulation since last Sunday.

Friends who can circulate copies of the Demonstration handbill are earnestly requested to communicate at once with Miss Vance, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C. She will forward as many as they say they can use with advantage.

Mr. Foote, Mr. Cohen, Mr. Davies, and other N. S. S. speakers will attend the Demonstration in any case—whoever else comes or stays away. Good speeches will therefore be a certainty. That matter being settled, it becomes the duty of all London Secularists to do their utmost to make this Demonstration a triumphant success. Not that the meeting will affect the fate of the Education Bill, or the quarrel between Church and Chapel. Its object is to show that the call for "Secular Education" in state-supported schools is not an insignificant thing which may be absolutely disregarded. Consequently the Holborn Town Hall should be crowded to the doors. A really big and serious Demonstration will be an eye-opener to all parties, including the ordinary partisan press.

We shall have no other opportunity of drawing our London readers' attention to this Demonstration, as it will be held before the next number of the *Freethinker* is published. This notice, therefore, is once for all. We beg all our London friends to be up and doing. That is our last word.

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, under the auspices of the National Secular Society's Executive, will take place at the Holborn Restaurant as usual, on Monday, January 12. There are many reasons why the "saints" should make a strong rally on this occasion. We beg them to take a note of the date at once.

Mr. F. J. Gould contributes an article on "The Reformation of Reformers" to the new number of the *Candlestick*. Most "advanced" movements are passed under review. "Of the Secularist propaganda," he says, "as carried on by Mr. Bradlaugh, or by my friends Mr. Holyoake and Mr. Foote, one may say that its mission is three-quarters accomplished. It has sometimes taken an aggressive form which I refrain from, and sometimes assumed a jesting attitude which has its dangers. But it has effected a vast clearing in the orthodox jungle; it has made the path smooth for the foot of many a fair Muse; and I scorn the cheap scorn which some of my Agnostic colleagues occasionally pour on the work of the vanguard." We hope Mr. Gould is not too sanguine.

The *Leicester Reasoner*, a bright little penny monthly, opens its December number with a portrait of Mr. G. W. Foote, and a succinct sketch of what is somewhat grandly called "Mr. Foote's Career," presumably from the pen of Mr. F. J. Gould. There is also a bright and admirable paper "About Animals" written "For the Children."

Mr. H. Percy Ward and Mr. Will Phillips, editor of the Spiritualist *Two Worlds*, have had an epistolary debate on Spiritualism and Secularism, which is now published in pamphlet form by Mr. J. W. Gott of Bradford. No doubt it will find a good many readers in both camps.

Humanity, the monthly organ of the Humanitarian League, has an article on Christmas under the heading of "The Christian Saturnalia." The following extract is from its introduction:—"Once again, in the long course of the much-boasted but none the less little-edifying ages of Christian civilisation, the annual special worship of the most adored of the divinities of the national Pantheon (or Pandemonium?), Gaster, is about to be celebrated throughout the length and breadth of the land; about to be celebrated with all the wholesale sacrifices on the altars of that insatiable Moloch of Christendom—stained with the blood of countless innocents, to adopt the language of Shakespeare's Pucelle to her persecutors. Celebrated, too, to make it all the more revolting for every feeling mind, with the accustomed religionist formulas and resounding hymns in every church and chapel, in pretended honor of the poor and humble prophet of Nazareth, mocked with the title of 'the Prince of Peace.'"

The *Open Court* (Chicago), edited by Dr. Paul Carus, maintains its excellent character. The last monthly number to hand contains a scientific article ("The Theory of Heat") by Dr. Ernst Mach, of the University of Vienna. A fine essay on Richard Wagner, by Professor E. P. Evans, of

Munich, is concluded. This is followed by an instructive, and illustrated, article by Professor Franz Cumont, of Ghent, on the "Mithraic Liturgy, Clergy, and Devotees." There can be no doubt that Mithraism, both in its ideas and its cultus, had an important influence on Christianity. Next comes an article on "Gospel Parallels from Pali Texts," by A. J. Edmunds. Lastly, there is what we may call "broken matter" at the end of the articles, such as "Notes" and "Book Reviews." The *Open Court* is published at ten cents per copy, and is sold in London by Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., at sixpence per copy.

Mr. A. H. Savage Landor, in his new *Across Cove'ed Lands*, says that Christian missionaries are merely tolerated in Persia, and a Mohammedan turning Christian would run the risk of losing his life. Disbelief, however, is spreading, and the younger generation of Mohammedans are "practically Atheists at heart."

Early in the new year the French government will introduce a Bill to transfer the remains of Balzac, Renan, Michelet, and Quinet to the Pantheon. Notice has been given of an amendment in the shape of an additional clause to include the remains of Zola in this translation. The notice is fathered by M. Brisson, who has been Prime Minister, M. Jaurès, the Socialist leader, and M. de Presense. The government is said to be quietly friendly, but vehement opposition is sure to be offered by the so-called Nationalist party. We venture to think, however, that the Zola amendment will be carried. France is understanding more and more what a noble part he played in the Dreyfus affair.

The South Shields Branch held a meeting after Mr. Foote's recent visit, and appointed a committee to make inquiries and report as to the possibility of arranging a ten weeks' course of lectures, with a social party to open the new year. We hope the "possibility" will soon become a "certainty."

We have been too busy to deal with the Camberwell Fund which was closed some weeks ago. We take the present opportunity, however, of stating that the total amount we collected for the Branch was £51 8s. 4d. We hold the Branch's receipt—signed on its behalf by Victor Roger, president, and W. H. Baker, financial secretary—for that amount less £1 3s. 4d., the cost of printing and postages. As a subscription of £1 appeared in the list from Mrs. Foote, intended to provide for these expenses, it is clear that the actual deduction was only 3s. 4d. The Branch tendered us hearty thanks for our successful effort on its behalf. Of course we had pleasure in making it.

A Chinaman on Priests and Prayer.

[This letter was sent to the *Daily Mail* as "A Letter from a Chinaman," which, indeed, it is. It was refused insertion. We print it in our columns to show what is "barked" in the ordinary press.]

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "DAILY MAIL."

DEAR SIR,—

I have been much amused and instructed by what I find relating to "Starvation Livings" in your publication. It would seem from the numerous letters that have appeared in the *Daily Mail* that the clergymen of the Established Church are not in a very enviable position; it appears that a great number of them have all they can do to keep body and soul together. Many of them are evidently in a very deplorable condition, and they certainly have my sympathy, but we have a similar state of things in China. Many years ago the Buddhist priest might have been said to live on the fat of the land; China was indeed "a land flowing with milk and honey" for him. But Buddhism, which is a similar religion to Christianity, has greatly deteriorated during the last thousand years, and so, at the present day, the Buddhist priest finds it a very difficult matter indeed to live off the people.

The letter from Mr. S. F. Pells has interested me greatly. As it is very short, I quote it verbatim:—

"To the Editor of the 'Daily Mail.'"

"An aspect of this terrible question of clerical poverty which I have not yet seen touched upon is the efficacy of prayer. Does prayer avail nothing?"

"Are the promises of the New Testament of now avail? To a devout and logical mind this is, I think, the most painful thought of all.

"Hove.

S. F. PELLE'S."

I have always been much interested in the efficacy of prayers, and have always regretted that there were not more definite and reliable data at hand in regard to this subject.

We have no exact data as to which form of prayer is the most efficacious. Then again we are completely in the dark as to the relative efficiency of prayers, whether addressed to the Trinity, to the individual members of the Trinity, or any of the saints.

Many years ago, when Mr. Tyndall took this important subject up, I had great hopes that we might arrive at some definite and reliable knowledge on this great subject. Mr. Tyndall suggested that experiments should be conducted in a London hospital with a view of ascertaining how much prayer was equal to an ounce of quinine; this was referred to as "Tyndall's prayer gauge." Had the experiments been carried out as he suggested, they could not have failed to have been of great value to the whole world. As to the formulæ of prayers, I think we may reasonably conclude, from all the knowledge at hand in England, that the Lord's Prayer would have the highest efficiency. I should say that mathematically we might consider this as unity, and that all other prayers should be multiplied by some co-efficient less than unity. But who is to establish the coefficient of the numerous forms of prayer that we find in use among the clergymen of the Church of England?

After long and careful observation of this subject, I am led to the belief that prayer is not so efficient as has been supposed; I think that nearly all prayers have a very low coefficient; in other words, in order to make them efficacious, we should employ a great number of them. If we look at the matter from a practical standpoint, I do not see that it is possible for there to be any misunderstanding on the subject; it matters not how low the coefficient of prayer may be, provided that the number of prayers is great enough. The question of prayer has been the subject of careful study for the last 6,000 years, and, as we know, the Chinese have probably given more attention to this subject than any other people in the world. I think that the conclusions that we Chinese have arrived at after long years of careful experiment and observation cannot fail to be of great value and interest to the religious world in England. We very soon learned that prayers were not very effective, *i.e.*, when considered individually; to have any appreciable effect a great number of them was required. We, however, found by experiment that if a prayer was written on a piece of paper and put into a teacup and turned round once that it was just as effective as if it had been repeated orally. If we put ten prayers into a teacup and rotated the cup ten times, it recorded a hundred prayers, each one of which was just as effective as any other prayer; this was a great and important discovery. Careful study and investigation also showed most conclusively that this system might be enlarged to any extent, so now we print a million prayers on thin light paper, we place these in a large cylinder which rotates easily on a fine pivot, and by gearing it up and attaching it to a crank we are able to rotate it ten times by turning the crank round once. Suppose now that one wishes to pray, the only thing to be done is to give the crank one turn on its axis in order to register ten millions of prayers, each one of which is just as effective as any other prayer. By grinding away at the handle for a few minutes as many prayers may be recorded by one person as could be prayed by a whole nation orally in a week. This system has other advantages; as we are completely in the dark as to the comparative efficiency of prayers, it may be possible if one prays orally that one may repeat over and over again a prayer that has only a very low efficiency, but with the Chinese system a good many different kinds may be included, some of which, according to the laws of chance may be relatively efficient; therefore, there is a greater degree of certainty in the Chinese praying machines than is possible in England where the relative efficiency of prayer is unknown, and only a few can be repeated.

May I therefore recommend to your distressed clergymen that they should employ a Chinese praying machine, which is easily made out of a tin can and a bit of wire? I feel certain that if this system is given a fair trial it will be found quite as effective, prayer for prayer, as any other system; moreover, it will save a lot of time and thus enable your distressed clergymen to write more letters to the press.

ALF SIN.

The Bishop's Move.

Sir Charles Wyndham, speaking at the county bazaar at Leeds, told the following amusing story. A bishop was ordered to the South of France by his physician. The bishop told his medical attendant that he was resolved to winter in England. "My lord," said the physician, "if you resolve to stay in England, in less than a month your lordship will be in heaven. The bishop replied: "You don't say so! I will go to the South of France at once."

Brute Habits in Man.

ALL readers of Darwin and of Darwinian literature—*i.e.*, the majority of educated people—are familiar with the word "reversion." Any animal, any plant, that has been domesticated or cultivated by man is apt to throw back to the form whence it has been evolved by the artificial selection of particular variations. The seeds of any of the many varieties of pansy may produce a flower unlike the parent, but like the remote parent of the parent. The mare may give birth to a foal striped like a zebra. From the egg of any one of the many varieties of pigeon, the blue rock, common ancestor of all the varieties, may be hatched.

Monsters, or unusual individuals, either of a plant or of an animal species, are thus very instructive to the naturalist. For the structure or function that makes them monstrous is generally of a genealogical significance. It tells of a structure or function that was normal in some ancestral forms. All this holds good of monsters among human beings. I use the word in its biological, not its police-court sense, although the two are often synonymous. In the study of brute habits in men reference will often be made to the cases of human descent that are non-human, either in all or in some particulars of their physiology and psychology. But the examples to be mentioned will be more frequently taken from those habits that are either general or occasional in normal individuals of civilised races. It is not proposed only to deal with such cases as that of the microcephalous idiot who chirped exactly like a bird. Such a case is interesting in its very painfulness. But yet more interesting, I think, are the many examples of habits of those of every one of us, and are yet traceable to our brute origin. Of course I use the word "brute" as a convenient name for the non-human members of the animal kingdom.

Let us begin by taking one or two illustrations from the outcome of the savage passion for slaying that is well named "brutal." When the negroes fight by running full butt, head against head, or when the Lancashire rough falls to kicking—probably his wife, or when the slum-dweller bites off fragments from the body of her foe, we are reminded of the fighting habits of lower animals. In physical material contest of any sort, our origin from them comes out generally. But the negroes' method reminds us that we have the blood of the hooved and horned beasts in our veins; the use of the posterior limbs that we have that of the horse and his allies; the tearing and biting that we have that of the Carnivora.

Our flesh-eating ancestry unhappily shows its influence again and again, not only on individuals but on nations. The thirst for war is but a general thirst for blood, and alike in the deliberate planning and plotting of wars by statesmen, in their carrying out by generals, and in the detailed fighting of the common soldiery, we have the old bestial appetite of the lower man and of the lower than man coming out. The extremest form of this thirst for blood is of great interest to us in our present study, inasmuch as it is clearly analogous to phenomena that occasionally occur in the Ungulata or hooved animals. That extremest form is the running amok (or amuck, as it is usually written) of the Malay. This form of homicidal mania, rarely met with in Italian sailors and other European races, is exactly analogous to the ephemeral mania that sometimes affects cattle, and, in crowded streets of our cities, results in injuries often fatal to man himself.

Something of the same lust for blood is shown in a fashionable form by our wealthy brutes of the upper classes when they indulge in what they are pleased to call "sport." The butchery of pigeons at Hurlingham, the coursing of hares at Altcar, are examples of that reversion to the brute type which finds its most holocaustic expression in the battues of birds or of game, for the amusement of bloodthirsty aristocrats and *blasé* kings.

Our methods of expressing rage are generally borrowed from the lower animals. Even the shaking of the fist is not a purely human action. The monkeys of New Guinea, at least, go through the same performance. When the passion of man becomes most ungovernable his expressions of anger take such forms as "dancing with rage," stamping the feet on the ground, thumping—often in a quite suicidal manner—the table. Now according to Yvan, the orang beats the ground with its fists when in a passion, and here is the primitive table-thumping. The same animal expresses anger by stamping, and the dancing with rage of the child, or of the adult under the influence of uncontrollable passion, seems to recall a habit of the anthropoid apes. It is said that they, when threatened with attack, leap up into the air again and again.

The barbarous cruelty of children is proverbial. Your average lower school boy is as indifferent to the pain of others, save as a source of enjoyment to himself, as any of the lower animals. Now this delight that children take in inflicting pain on one another is not only paralleled by the studied pleasure of the savage races in torturing their foes,

but by the numberless instances of the enjoyment of the same pleasure on the part of the other Mammalia. Dr. W. Bryden, C.B., saw in India a tame monkey and, as tame, on its way manwards, lie motionless on its back until certain deceived crows, regarding him as defunct, came within his reach. Seizing one unfortunate bird, the monkey proceeded to pluck it alive with cruel deliberation. When this protracted torture was at an end, the fiend in Simian form flung the naked and dying bird among its quondam friends, who soon gave it the *coup de grâce* with bills and talons.

The whole of the phenomena of courtship in the human race have a genealogical interest. Nobody can read the chapters on Sexual Selection in the *Descent of Man* without being struck by the oneness in the nature of the attractive performances in love affairs in man and in many of the lower animals. The males amongst insects, birds, and beasts, who are in a majority as compared with the females, display their charms of color, shape, voice, movement, or strength, and the most attractive are selected by the females as the result of an open or implicit contest. All this is repeated by man. I use the word in the generic sense, for the display of charms is in the genus *homo* not confined to one sex.

Whilst that which I have called implicit contest is constantly going on, there are even cases in which occurs actual trial of strength or of attractive power of some other kind. Thus among the Indians the men wrestle with one another for their wives. When one sees the increasing number of women in attendance at cricket and football matches, lawn-tennis championships, athletic sports, one cannot but call to mind the Indian wrestling for wives, and even the contests of stags and bulls for the prize of a wife is remembered. In some of the lower races of mankind performances are indulged in by the men that are literally comparable with the love antics of birds. Just as the male birds "strut and jet under their borrowed plumes," turn this way and that, show themselves to every advantage in their power, so the male savages dance and stride to and fro, pose as they were any modern aesthete, and woo by muscular contractions.

Darwin has already dwelt with the methods of expression of the emotions in man and his fellows. He has shown the general principles on which these outward and visible signs of an inward and spiritual feeling have gradually evolved. In this article I can only point out one or two special facts.

That the lower animals laugh and cry is well known. From our present point of view it is interesting to note that the laugh of man's allies is a doubtful quantity, as it is in man himself. You cannot tell always whether the human laugh is a good or bad sign. When men laugh only "from the lips outward," the acutest physiognomists may be puzzled to know whether the laugh bodes ill or not. The same thing is true of the anthropoid apes. Wallace tells us that the grin of the ape may indicate either anger or fun. Considering the converse expression of emotion into or out of which laughter glides so readily, we find that tears are shed by many animals. Here is a picture that is not without its pathos. In *Wonders of Nature and Art* it is recorded that the chimpanzees of Sierra Leone have been trained to carry water jugs for men. If they let the jugs fall, and their charges are broken in pieces, the chimpanzees "weep bitterly." You will see in the streets of any of our great cities little children in tears for the like cause.

As an instance of the depths to which in the animal kingdom the feeling of strong emotion and its expression in the same way as in human beings reach, I may mention the fact that ants, when any catastrophe overtakes, and often overturns their nests, and they are reduced as individuals to despairing of the commonwealth, express their intense feelings by wringing their pincers. When, therefore, we fall to wringing our hands in despair, we are but using a gesture that is of insect origin.

The treatment of children furnishes us with a whole school of illustrations of the reversion to brute habit. The brutal parents who strike their children, and even those who are so debased as to hit their little ones on the head, have not bettered the instruction of the animals from which they have sprung. Cats cuff with their paws kittens that sin against the canons of good taste, or the special laws of the special cat-kind, and a big dog rescuing a little one from a watery grave administered cuffs with alternate paws.

On the other hand, that affection for children that takes the form in certain cases amongst solitary human being of the adoption of those that are not only not the offspring of the adoptor, but are even in many cases not even of the same species or order—this also has its parallel in the brutes. And even the truth that this adoption is far more general on the part of females than of that of males, is in harmony with the fact that among the lower animals it is generally the female who takes to herself foster-children. Old maids with their affection for cats and dogs and parrots are the analogues of the birds and beasts up to the anthropoid apes, who, themselves childless, adopt and tend most carefully the young of others.

Everyone knows the delight taken by mothers and elder sisters, and even by nurses, in combing the hair of children, always supposing that the hair is pretty, and that the women can find time "to seek delight." This is a case of the retention of a habit far-reaching in its sway. Hens are known to comb out the feathers of their chicks with their beaks. This custom is not confined to the ordinary domestic fowl. Peahens indulge it, and a case is recorded of a Brahma hen, who, after hatching the egg of a pea fowl, spent some part of every day for eighteen months in combing out with a becoming pride the top-knot of her fine son. Even when some ferrets were placed with a much-troubled hen of the Brahma breed she was in the habit of combing out their hair with her bill.

Preyer, in his *Die Seele des Kindes*, has done more to throw light on the very obscure problem of the development of the child-mind than any other thinker. He points out the first imitative movement on the part of the young occurs about fifteen weeks after birth, and takes the form of a protrusion of the lips when that gesture is performed by anyone in front of the child. Romanes considers this action as not necessarily imitative. He thinks it "comes natural." In either case the movement is very strongly marked in the anthropoid ape, and most strongly in the orang-outang, as everyone may see by reference to the picture on page 141 of Darwin's *Expression of Emotions*.

Many of the services rendered by human beings to one another, some of which are from parents to children, come under the general category of the habits we are studying. Dr. Rainey writes of the South African negroes that "the utmost they will do is to assist each other if their back itches." This most rudimentary form of altruism is very noticeable in monkeys, and perhaps it is not too great a straining of probabilities to suggest that the habit of patting the hands of children is not unconnected with the Simian custom of mutual assistance in integumental research.

In that which we eat, and in the manner of eating, further illustrations are to be found. The Bible story of Nebuchadnezzar eating grass like a beast of the field is one instance of a fact familiar to the physicians who attend on the insane. In certain forms of insanity the patient who has lost the power of ruminating in one way takes to eating grass after the ruminant manner. Our boyish delights in bird-nesting, tree-climbing, egg-hunting, are all cases of the survival of ancestral habits. The common ancestor of our race and of the anthropoid apes was doubtless an arboreal frugivorous animal who acquired a taste for the eggs found in the nests that were built on his sleeping places, and the truant who breaks away into the woods, and clambers up trees for nests or birds' eggs, is clearly a reminder of his and our origin. Nay, our camping-out, our tent-dwelling for a few days on Wimbledon Common, our living in house-boats, our haunting the Norfolk Broads, our very picnics are all so many instances of the tendency at times to revert to the open-air condition of living and feeding.

Amongst our lower human brothers we find, as might be expected, more affinity with the ape-method of feeding. At Honolulu, one of the Sandwich Islands, a Kanake, one of the savage human inhabitants not only climbed a cocoa-nut tree in true boyish fashion, but seized on the fruit, and when he had obtained his prize, he "tore off the outer husk with his teeth, getting purchase on the nut with his feet and hands like a monkey."

In some peoples and individuals the things that are eaten and the manner of eating them carry us very far back. When the carnivorous animals give birth to their young, the placenta or after-birth is devoured by the mother. Even this bestial habit is to be found among human beings. Worse than the carrion-eating of the Zulus, almost as bad as the cannibalism of the Caribs, is the custom of some of the savage mothers, who devour the placenta after parturition.

I pass, in conclusion, to a few of the cases in which certain peculiar acts of the human being are traceable to ancestral habits of the brute progenitors. The first one to be taken is of particular interest because of its local nature. In tropical Ohmitahi, the mountain parrot, originally a honey-cater, has become a carnivore. Flocks of these parrots come to the flocks of sheep. They single out one sheep, and one after the other attack it, pecking out piece after piece of the wool until first blood is drawn, and then the victim runs away from his companions. The parrots pursue the sheep until it is tired and worn out. The merciless attack continues. It is directed with quite anatomical accuracy at the fat that covers the top of the kidneys. Through the bare skin and the muscle walls of the abdominal cavity beneath the parrots make their way bit by bit, until an aperture once bored they may, the sheep dying, or happily dead as the work goes on, reach at length the desired morsel and be glad. The dingoes or Australian wild dogs pursue a similar plan. If they kill a sheep, they seek the same mass of fat over the kidneys. The Australian aborigines in their cannibalism

follow the lead of the lower animals. They only eat the fat that is found over the kidneys of their human prey.

Kleptomania is not confined to misguided members of families holding positions actual and potential in society. Rats and starlings will steal and hoard up coins, plate, any number of articles as useless to them as his gold is to a miser.

The absconding mania that is far more frequent than even our police reports would have us believe, the resulting desertion of home and of all the customary belongings, affects the domestic animals as well as their masters.

The slavish kneeling posture only to be assumed by a man lost to all honor is analogous to that of the dog crouching at the feet of his master.

Sometimes, and the present time is one of them, natives or tribes unable or unwilling to elect a leader of their own choose to be led by some one of an alien people. This is only a *replica* of an ancestral habit. The kangaroos of Australia are led by the apis deer, camels in Asia Minor by a donkey, and Turkish or Egyptian soldiery by a Baker Pasha.

The affectionate way in which drunken men cling to one another is familiar to the passenger through streets of civilised cities after, or on occasion before, nightfall. The monkeys of Darfur in Africa when they have been made intoxicated for the purpose of capture go through the same self and companion-supporting evolutions.

The marmoset that pretended to read, turning over the pages of a perfectly incomprehensible book with due gravity, was but the prototype of many a man holding a ticket for the British Museum reading-room; and the gorilla who uses a stick in walking is the prototype, and ought to be a shame to, the masher of to-day. For the latter, needing no support, yet employs the crutch-handled stick that is the relic of the tree-branch, or haply the uprooted sapling that was wont millions of years ago to be actually used by his less pretentious ancestor.

Finally, the man who has the courage or the love for his fellows, or both, requisite for a visit to the Adelphi arches, or to any other of the dark, part-sheltered places where the wretched congregate at night, will be reminded of the crowding together in caves and sheltered places of the anthropoid ape. He will see in the huddled-up forms, whose limbs are often interwoven in a horrible embrace, something akin to the linked arms and legs, the intertwined bodies of a colony of gibbons asleep in the Asiatic night.

(THE LATE) EDWARD AVELING.

The Celestial Bookstall.

WITH a gleam in his eye that made David stop winking at Beth-Sheba, and caused beads of golden perspiration to start out on the bald, halo-encircled brow of Elisha, Jehovah rose from the throne. The central portion being warmer than the golden ends, the Son and the Paraclete promptly slid up. Seeing trouble coming the beasts remembered that it was feeding time, and the crystal sea moaned. It thought, perhaps, that the Son was going to do his Galilee trick again and walk on it. He was wearing the latest fashion in Celestio-American sandals, with pearl buttons and a cherubic squeak. Mary Magdalen whispered to Potiphar's wife that he looked so nice she could hug him, couldn't she? Potiphar's wife was heard to murmur, "Not for Joseph," and Jonah missed a bite, the first bite of a century.

"Send for the proprietor of the Paradise Bookstall Monopoly," said the Father, in a still, small voice, as he gazed at the topaz-typed copy of the *Freethinker*.

The man appeared, wiping his lips. He had been treating Salome to a small milk-and-honey, which John the Baptist, being off his head, had heavily watered.

"Worm of the dust," quoth the Lord, "dost thou not know that I do not allow this paper to be sold among the elect? And I see thou hast crossed out the price 2d. and printed over it with a rubber stamp, 'One thousand talents.' Why is this?"

Expecting another flood, Noah put up his umbrella, and Lot, remembering the Sodom affair, got closer to the fire-alarm.

"Oh, for the fleshpots of Egypt, Moses," sighed Aaron. "We could see snakes there in comfort." The man humbled until his halo fell off.

"It—it was a mistake, O Lord," he stammered. "I—I thought it was a—a Christian Sunday paper—"

"Worse and worse," moaned the Children of the Fiery Furnace. "He'll get it hotter still."

Jael picked her teeth with a tenpenny nail amid a dreadful silence, and Samson wildly combed his hair with the jawbone of an ass. The Deity spoke:—

"Worm of the dust, thy crime is tenfold," he cried, in Mount Pelée accents. "The *Freethinker* I could have pardoned. Dost thou not know that I—we—us—I mean—"

"The Three in one and the one in Three," piped a pale curate, whose wings were moulting. "Alleluia!"

The Deity nodded his thanks.

"I do get mixed a bit over the relationship," he added; "but I suppose you are right."

"I get three quid a week, anyhow, for saying so," murmured the curate in Sarah's ear. "Alleluia!"

"Don't talk shop, I've had thousands of years of it," snapped the Hebrew dame. "It's worse than Hagar, though she was a tartar. I'm sick of it."

"Man, explain yourself," said the Lord.

"Oh, Most Highest," sobbed the wretched Purveyor of Literature, "it is true, Holy One, Light of Lights—"

"Only Holy of Holies," chipped in the curate, "Very God of Very Gods. Ow!" (Noah had prodded him with the gamp.)

"It is true, Etcetra of Etcetras," moaned the man, "that you dislike the *Freethinker*, and that you hate and abhor the Sunday story papers and sich much more. I know, O Lord, that you have, and are, taxing us to the bursting point to buy up big stocks of coal to give the editors of these rags a hell—pardon, a hot time for telling such lies about you. But, O Lord, I wanted to get one of them for Jonah, and the *Freethinker* was sent by mistake. He tells such yarns about fishing, O Lord, that I thought that if he ever caught a minnow, a copy of the *Sunday Family Companion and Pat Female's Fireside Friend* would do to wrap it up in."

"Give him another harp," said the Lord. "He is pardoned. I think I shall send Jonah down to edit one."

Again all was peace.

"And, O Lord," added the purveyor of literature, "when there't another spicy divorce case on down in that vale of tears, I'll order an extra five billion of the *Daily Slime-Chucker*."

"Give him a blooming Pianola," said the Lord, as he hustled the other two out of the warm place.

And Solomon's thousand wives chanted, glad that Uriahs were not snuffed out nowadays before giving evidence:—

"Alleluia! He is a dear. Let's order our copies."

E. J. M.

Correspondence.

A MODEST REQUEST.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The catholicity of that veteran Secularist, Mr. G. J. Holyoake's, sympathies in sending—sending unsolicited—tributes to the late Reverends Hugh Price Hughes and Dr. Parker has struck me; and, as I understand he is in the habit of paying similar tributes, from time to time, to representatives (living and dead) of the various denominations, I am desirous of making a collection of them.

Can you favor me by giving the names of the journals in which they generally appear?

Hoping I shall not be putting you to much trouble in asking such a favor.—Sincerely yours,

Leyton.

J. ROBERTS.

[Mr. Holyoake's tributes to Mr. Price Hughes and Dr. Parker appeared in the *Daily News*. Most of his communications, we believe, appear in that journal; but we cannot give any more precise reference.—EDITOR.]

Last winter David Higgins, an actor, and one of the stars in "Up New York State," was travelling from New York to Albany by rail. Seated near him was one of those good men who have a conviction that their duty in life lies in being conscience-keeper for the rest of us. He kept a solicitous eye on Mr. Higgins, and finally, touching him on the shoulder, he queried:—"Do you know where you are going?" "Albany," was the reply, in a tone of irritation. "O, I don't mean that," explained the benevolent world saver. "Didn't mean it!" exclaimed Higgins. "Well, if this isn't the Albany express it must be stopped." He made a grab for the bell rope and would have stopped the train had not an amiable friend assured him that the train was on the right track for Albany. "What did you mean, then?" Higgins sharply demanded of his neighbor. "I simply wanted to ask you," was the reply, "if you knew whether you were going to heaven or—the other place." For a moment it looked squally for the querist, but on second thought Higgins sank back into his seat with a sigh of relief. "O, that's all right."—*Chicago Tribune*.

In common parlance: Sunday School Teacher—And so Lot's wife was turned to salt. Can anyone tell why? Wicked Willy (from the rear)—She was too fresh!—*Harvard Lampoon*.

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, "A New Religio Medici."

BATTERSEA PARK GATES: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey.

CAMBERWELL SECULAR HALL (61 New Church Road, Camberwell): 7, Madame Sans Carola and Company, operatic recitals in costume.

EAST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Bromley Vestry Hall, Bow-road, E.): 7, Miss Margaret MacMillan, "The Creative Imagination in Moral Reform."

HOLBORN TOWN HALL: Wednesday, December 17, 8 p.m., Demonstration in Favor of "Secular Education." Speakers, Messrs. Foote, Cohen, Davies, etc.

STREATHAM AND BRIXTON ETHICAL INSTITUTE (Carlton Hall, Tunstall-road, Brixton-road, S.W.): 7, Rev. Morris Joseph, "Judaism."

COUNTRY.

CHATHAM SECULAR SOCIETY: 7, F. A. Davies, "The Priest and the Child."

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberston-gate): 6.30, G. W. Foote, "Freethought in English Literature, from Shakespeare to Meredith."

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

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, A. Wollerton, "Mr. Arnold White and Efficiency: a Criticism."

NEWCASTLE DEBATING SOCIETY (Lockhart's Cathedral Café): Thursday, December 18, at 8, Mr. R. Turnbull, "George Eliot as a Novelist."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market-place): 7, "The Industrial Revolution"; 7.45, Report of Lectures and Social Committee.

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, G. Berrisford, "Early Christianity."

LECTURER'S ENGAGEMENTS.

H. PERCY WARD, 15 George-street, Great Driffeld.—December 14, Glasgow.

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