

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXV.—No. 5

SUNDAY, JANUARY 29 1905

PRICE TWOPENCE

The belief in Humanity, while stimulating Sympathy, at the same time enlarges the scope and vigor of the Intellect.—COMTE.

The Holy Czar.

It would be a touching sight if a flock of sheep went to the mouth of a tiger's den and bleated out a petition to him that he would treat them more benevolently in future. Something like that was witnessed on Sunday when thousands of Russian working people tramped towards the Czar's Palace in St. Petersburg, with the intention of begging him to take pity upon their unfortunate and miserable condition.

Those poor people meant well, but they were mistaken. They did not know that the sheep should never remonstrate with the tiger, and still less appeal to his kind consideration. They know it now.

Some will quarrel with us for likening the Czar to a tiger. Well, he is perhaps not vicious, but only weak; although that generally comes to the same thing in the end. Nicholas may not be a tiger himself, but he is the friend of tigers; he is the figure-head of a company of tigers; and it is very likely that he knows they will eat *him* up if he shows any disposition to balk them of what they regard as their natural prey.

In a certain sense, therefore, we may pity the Czar. He is in a false position—at a great elevation. And he neither knows how to keep there nor how to get down; so that he may finish by falling off.

Personally we have never shared the admiration which has been entertained for the Czar by the Christian press of England, and particularly by that calculating sentimentalist, Mr. W. T. Stead. This gentleman, as a journalist, knows the value of having a "pal" on a throne. It has always seemed to us that there is more of the fox than the honest watchdog in the Czar. We did not fling *our* hat in the air, nor wave *our* handkerchief, when the Lord of All the Russias called that famous Peace Congress. It simply suggested to us a Congress of Burglars, discussing how to diminish the risks and expenses of their profession. There was no proposal to drop burglary. Anyone with a grain of sense and honesty, combined with a little information, could see that the Czar—either on his own impulse, or at the instigation of the astute diplomatists behind the throne—was simply playing for a profitable interregnum. Russia, to use an expressive Americanism, had bitten off more than she could chew; she wanted a quiet interval for mastication and digestion; and the Peace Congress was a clever move to secure it.

Look at what has happened since. While the Peace Congress was still the latest international novelty, the Czar took up his pen and signed away

the liberties of Finland, which he had sworn to preserve. He winked at the wholesale murder of the unbelieving Jews. He harried the simple inoffensive Christians who stood outside the Orthodox Church; whipping them, starving them, torturing them, breaking up their homes, and driving thousands of them out of the country. He led Russia into an infamous war with Japan, and when his Army was beaten and his Navy destroyed he declared that he would never think of peace until he had obtained his revenge. When his Baltic Fleet, at the great battle of the Dogger's Bank, fired upon peaceful fishing-boats, and slaughtered far more useful men than himself, he had not even the decent feeling to express a frank word of regret. All the time, at home, he has been talking about justice and humanity; but when his people wanted a little of it he gave them only an Autocrat's angry defiance. And when at last they approached him, helpless and unarmed, save in the justice of their cause, he answered their petition with knouts, sabres, lances, and rifles.

It may be replied that the Czar is not personally responsible for all these things, and that we must throw the blame upon his advisers. But if he cannot take the responsibility he should abdicate the power. Let him step down, and step out. If he stays where he is, he must bear the responsibilities of his position.

Our readers are asked to bear in mind that the Czar is full of piety. He may lie and rob, and murder—but he is a very good Christian. He is the head of the Christian Church in Russia. Only a few days ago he went through the superstitious ceremony of blessing the waters of the Neva. He has sent out a great number of ikons—bedizzened images of saints—to his Generals at the front. And his last message to his people ended with the pious confidence that God would yet enable Russia to beat down her enemies.

This good Christian ruler has been spiritually wet-nursed by M. Pobiedonostzeff, the Procurator of the Holy Synod. In the name of Christ, that holy man called upon the Czar to maintain Church and State, the holy hierarchies, and the orthodox faith. And the answer was the bloodshed at St. Petersburg on Sunday.

This Holy Czar is not even brave. He advised his soldiers at Port Arthur to die to the last man, but he never went near the danger himself. He is now hiding from the storm, while bolder villains shoot and stab in his name.

This abject autocrat does not display a single spark of manliness. Fancy a pagan Roman emperor acting in such a fashion! One of those great rulers, such as Europe has never seen since, would have heard what his people had to say; he would have listened to their complaints, and perhaps redressed their grievances; he would assuredly have held himself responsible for their welfare.

Look at the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius on the Capitol at Rome. Look at that grand head, that noble figure, and that hand extended as if in benediction to mankind. Then look at this weak, crawling, and cruel Nicholas. And then admire the progress of Europe after two thousand years of Christianity!

G. W. FOOTE.

Religious Persecution.

Religious Persecution; A Study in Political Psychology.
By E. S. P. HAYNES.

A BOOK on Religious Persecution is almost certain to be of interest to Freethinkers, and, indeed, books on the subject are so few that one would have to be done very badly before it could be classed as unimportant and uninteresting. Plenty of writers have dealt with the subject; one need only mention such modern writers as Buckle, Lecky, Draper, White, or Lea; but there are few who have written a thorough-going systematic treatise that should attempt to trace the conditions of Religious Persecution and the causes of its decline. The subject is surely interesting enough. It is one of the most general in human history, and also one of the most persistent. And its consequences have been neither trifling nor evanescent. The classic example of Spain is before us to show to what extent religious persecution may operate towards the degradation of a country; while more than one close observer has discerned in the less lovely characteristics of the European peoples some of the normal consequences of the generations of persecution that lie behind them.

In his brief essay, limited to 200 pages, Mr. Haynes does not pretend to have dealt with the subject as thoroughly as might be, and offers an unnecessary apology for having published so small a work on so large a subject. His treatment, however, is very suggestive, and, save for an occasional lapse, on the right lines. His statement, for instance, that "Not till the end of the eighteenth century did the Christian idea realise its true self on a large scale in the complete separation of Church and State," does not very well harmonise with a preceding one that "a severance of the temporal and spiritual is very unreal.... If a Christian community were really convinced that it could ascertain the divine will on any given subject as easily as it can discover the will of a majority in its governing assembly, surely it would desire to act upon it." The latter statement, in my opinion, contains the truth. The former is an indication of a momentary and emotional surrender to a current use of the phrase "Christian ideals" that is neither logically nor historically justifiable.

The latter statement, I say, contains the truth, because it would seem almost self-evident that if the historic Christian teaching, that the heretic in society is one who invites the anger of God upon the whole community, and acts as a centre of moral and religious contamination, is correct, his suppression is an act of public self-defence. Persecution becomes, under such conditions, a species of social sanitary regulation. It is a religious duty of the first importance. The manner in which Christians, even of a tolerant description, act so as to keep anti-Christian influences from their families and dependents, show this to be the psychology of the situation. There is a genuine intellectual basis for persecution, and it is only when this intellectual basis decays that toleration is at all certain. But if this is so, what becomes of "the Christian idea"? The Christian idea is not the separation of religion and the State, but its identification. And to-day some of its warmest advocates are found among the possessors of the "Nonconformist Conscience," which Mr. Haynes notes has a "Judaic capacity for justifying to itself essentially self-seeking aims."

Mr. Haynes dismisses somewhat lightly what he calls "the argument of the Hallam and Macaulay school as to the strength of vested interests" as a cause of persecution. It is, of course, easy enough to press this argument too far; but it is gratifying an optimistic view of human nature at the expense of accuracy to dismiss it too lightly. It would be unwise, one hopes so at least, to imagine that at any time more than a small minority of people are given to persecute, from a full consciousness of material

benefits coming from the opinions they profess. But it would be as unwise not to believe that this does operate in a sub-conscious manner with a much larger number of people. Those who find their income and their social position dependent upon certain opinions prevailing, are almost certain to be influenced by this consideration in their attitude towards antagonistic views. These feelings will usually be disguised under a number of plausible excuses, but in this case certainly it is an instance of our reason forging excuses for our instincts. Vested interests would be allowed to play their part in the case of lawyers or doctors, or any other professional class, and there is decidedly no reason for considering that the feelings of the educated professional classes are less admirable than those of the clergy. Rather the reverse; for there is no other body of educated men in the community to whom the higher aspects of conduct appeal with less force than to the clergy.

Some little demur might also be raised against the statement that "our own country is probably now the most tolerant in the world." In some respects this is probably correct, but in other respects there is less liberty in England than elsewhere. In political matters, for instance, we enjoy far greater latitude than Continental countries; but in religious and philosophic matters there is a more effective muzzle placed on opinion here than abroad. Biblical criticism notoriously lags behind Germany, and philosophic heresies are much more daringly expressed in France, Germany, and Italy than in England. Added to this there is the very effective press boycott of heresy maintained in this country—a boycott effective enough to suppress any report of Freethought agitation in favor of Secular Education, even during a period when the question of religious instruction was before the country as a burning political topic. A press that so successfully suppresses reports of Freethought meetings and of Freethought activity as does the English press, can scarcely be said to convey clear proof that our own country is one of the most tolerant in the world. Tolerant it is, within certain limits; but these limits are pretty sharply defined, and if the punishment of those who step beyond them takes the form of a boycott instead of legal imprisonment, I am of opinion that this is due to a political sagacity that recognises the unwisdom of such prosecutions rather than to any real liberality of thought.

There is also the effective boycott placed upon this journal by newsagents. Admittedly the best purely Freethought journal that has ever existed in England, newsagents, with rare exceptions, either refuse to get it or display it. Those who do so often enough complain that their religious customers threaten to withdraw their custom if they persist in offering it for sale, and so place the shopkeeper in the position of either sacrificing his independence or his livelihood. All this would seem to prove that intolerance in its negative aspect—that is, in placing illegitimate obstructions in the way of the free circulation of opinions—is still very strong in Great Britain; and this is an aspect of the subject that Mr. Haynes would do well to deal with should his essay ever make another appearance in a more extended form.

But these, after all, are not very serious blemishes upon a book, the chief fault of which is, that like *Oliver Twist*, it makes one ask for more. Mr. Haynes's main thesis is, as I have said, sound, and it is with that I have now to deal. In most cases this will consist of an amplification of some of the points in the author's work.

The two chief questions in a treatise on persecution are (1) What is the cause of so universal a phenomenon? and (2) What are the causes or conditions of the growth of a genuine principle of intellectual liberty? The plan of Mr. Haynes's book does not carry him into the regions of primitive tribal life; yet it is here, if anywhere, that an answer to the first question is to be found. In all the historic communities the right to suppress an opinion

by force is taken for granted. It was something inherited from their past, and however much this right of suppression was modified or regulated, it still existed. It is not, therefore, in historic communities that the cause is to be found, but in those that ante-date the historic period. And the basis of this principle of persecution is in the first instance, as Mr. Haynes expresses it, "the idea of society being collectively liable to the gods for the offences of the individual." There is little or nothing of genuine moral feeling about such a belief; this does not develop until a much later stage. The most pregnant fact about primitive man is that he believes himself to be surrounded by powers with the ability to do him injury if offended, and that there is a collective responsibility for the action of each member of the community. Individual responsibility, as we understand it is practically non-existent. The gods, made angry by the offences of one, may wreak vengeance upon all. In primitive communities the heretic, even though he keeps his opinions to himself, is a social offender. He is a danger to all around him, not because he is morally worse than his fellows, but simply because his conduct is displeasing to the unseen powers, and may call down punishment upon the whole community. In other words, it is the rudiments of the theocratic conception of society that gives us the principle of religious persecution, and it is one that persists so long as the theocratic idea prevails.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

Man's Place in the Universe.

THIS is an old and familiar subject. The moment one thinks of it, Professor Huxley's famous Essay on it forces itself into one's mind. That Essay has never been surpassed. The twelfth lecture in the present Manchester series on "What is Christianity?" is by E. T. Whittaker Esq., M.A., F.R.A.S., Fellow and Lecturer of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Secretary of the Royal Astronomical Society, and even its title, "Man's Place in *Creation*," is tinged with theology. Mr. Whittaker is a layman who believes firmly in evolution, admits the fallibility of the Bible, and urges theologians not to neglect the duty of adapting their doctrines to the ever-growing scientific knowledge of to-day. The Bible Leaguers would pronounce such a man a dangerous heresiarch, utterly unfit for membership in the Christian Church. To him the Bible is not a revelation of God, but a more or less accurate record of the gradual growth and development of the conception of God among the Jews. Thirty years ago, such a concession would have been vehemently denounced as rank heresy; and even to-day there are not many fairly orthodox divines who would dare to endorse it. Take the following as an instance:—

"If we examine the religions of savage races we almost invariably find that they have an explanation to offer of the origin of life and of the future of mankind. Most primitive religions contain legends of the creation of the Universe, and myths of the life after death. The story of the Garden of Eden, known to us from the book of Genesis, is found with very little variation in the native religions of many of the Indian tribes of North America, and of the Pacific Islanders, and was known even to the savage forefathers of the modern European races."

Those words, coming from a Christian believer, are rightly considered bold; and it is truly surprising that they were listened to without protest in a Wesleyan Mission Hall. But here are bolder words still:—

"The scientific discoveries of the last two centuries have opened up to the human mind a new intellectual view of the Universe; and the religious view, which must keep pace with the intellectual view if there is to be harmony in the mind, has not yet accommodated itself to the new situation. Until this adjustment has been made, doubts and difficulties will be the order of the day."

Now the object of Mr. Whittaker's lecture is to show how such an adjustment may be effected so far as the two contradictory views of man are concerned; and we are curious to ascertain with what success the task is accomplished. He states the scientific view with commendable fairness:—

"A knowledge of the results of scientific research is now very widespread, and the ancient idea of a Creator seated on a throne above the sky and looking down upon the human activity of the plain beneath, has now passed away for ever. The mysterious phenomena of day and night, of heat and cold, the movements of the stars and winds and seas, the rainbow and the thunder, so terrifying and unaccountable to the child and the savage, were interpreted by primitive man as the capricious activity of a superior Being; it is only within the last three centuries that science has recognised in the complex mechanism of Nature an inviolable order, and has accounted for light and sound and motion in terms of impersonal laws inherent in matter. The tendency of scientific discovery is more and more to represent the Universe as a gigantic and eternal engine, grinding out the future in accordance with fixed and inexorable principles. Man's place in the scheme of creation appears infinitesimal: he is a speck of dust, a shadow that flits past in a moment and disappears for ever."

Mr. Whittaker accepts these "results of scientific research," and admits that man's place in the Universe is most insignificant. Everyone who knows the facts, and is not blinded by inherited prejudice, is bound to come to the same conclusion. There is absolutely nothing in the "scheme of creation" to indicate that man's life possesses any significance whatever. "What does one life more or less matter?" We all know the enormous mortality of the human species. We are informed that during every hundred years some seven hundred million human beings are destroyed without knowing that they ever lived. Millions more die before reaching manhood, while often whole communities are wiped out by plagues, famines, catastrophes, and wars. Who is unacquainted with the law of Natural Selection which is constantly pushing the weak to the wall and preventing the unfit from surviving? The fact is that man multiplies at such a rate that, if all children were allowed to reach manhood, "the present population of the United States alone would in six hundred and fifty years cover the terraqueous globe so thickly that four individuals would have to stand on each square yard of surface." Now, the question is how to reconcile the Christian conception of man with these facts. According to Christianity, every human being is of infinite value in God's sight; and yet Nature, itself made by God, treats our race as if it were utterly worthless. God is said to love us with supreme affection, to cherish us with infinite tenderness in his compassionate heart; and yet He allows his own laws to slay us by the myriad. The Bible tells us that God so loved us that He sent his only begotten Son to die for us on Calvary; and yet He permits pestilences, and earthquakes, and volcanic eruptions, and railway accidents to cut us off by the million, as if we were of no more account than flies. What signs are there that we are under the loving care of a Heavenly Father? It may be easy for prosperous people to entertain such a belief; but the majority are poor and wretched—how can these believe in a God of love and active sympathy? What wonder if each of them, in the bitterness of his heart, cries out, "What does God care if I am out of work? What does God care if my children are starving? What could it have mattered in the sight of God if I had never been?"

These difficulties Mr. Whittaker does not even attempt to meet. He ignores them, and asserts that the "existence of every creature is the fulfilment of a design," and that "everything which appears on the surface of things to be trivial and accidental has in reality been appointed by the divine Will." Then he adds: "The apparently blind forces of Nature and circumstance, by which each individual life is surrounded, play their own part in the scheme of all creation, which moves

forward mysteriously but surely to an end predestined by God." Science knows nothing of a design in Nature. It comes across numerous things that seem trivial and accidental, but it has never perceived the slightest indication that in reality they have been appointed by a superior will. Mr. Whittaker admits that the forces of Nature are *apparently* blind; but he does not adduce a single scrap of proof that they are not *really* blind. He assures us that the scheme of all creation moves forward *mysteriously* but *surely* to an end predestined by God. But if the scheme moves forward *mysteriously* how can Mr. Whittaker know that it moves forward *surely* to any definite end at all? If a movement is mysterious it cannot be described. The moment you can tell what it is it is no longer mysterious. In this instance, we frankly admit the movement, but deny the presence of any design in it, or that it has any definite goal or end towards which it is consciously tending.

Science is ignorant of the presence of any design in Nature. One of the most wonderful things known to us is the eye. When Darwin began to study its mechanism—its "inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correcting of spherical and chromatic aberration"—he scorned the idea that it could be a product of Natural Selection; but when he traced the history of its evolution from its first, crude form, he realised how impossible it is to account for it in any other way. Why, it took millions of years to produce the eye as we know it now. It is in the strictest sense an evolved organ.

Mr. Whittaker admits that evolution accounts for everything, but he wants to know what accounts for evolution. "It is true," he says, "that the principle of Natural Selection accounts for the diversity of species; but what is to account for the principle of Natural Selection? It is true that the law of gravitation accounts for the movements of the planets; but what is to account for the law of gravitation?" Thus he endeavors to work his way back to a First Cause which he calls God. But if we grant that ultimately all things can be accounted for by referring them to a First Cause, may we not imitate Mr. Whittaker's example and ask, But what is to account for the First Cause? From a scientific point of view Mr. Whittaker's position is positively absurd, while from a religious point of view his acceptance of evolution cuts all the ground from under his argument for the existence and purely beneficent activity of God. Dark, dark is the riddle of the Universe, and no one has ever been able to unravel it; but the introduction of a God of infinite wisdom, might, and love into it only deepens the mystery. To understand such a God would be infinitely more difficult than to understand the Universe by itself.

The Christian view of man is fundamentally inconsistent with the scientific view of him, and it is in the last degree absurd to hold both simultaneously and try to reconcile them. *They are eternally irreconcilable.* It is sheer nonsense to say that "we, alone among living creatures, have been appointed to share in the divine knowledge and to understand the mystery of the Universe." We do *not* understand the Universe, nor have we a share in any divine knowledge. In endeavoring to explain the Universe, Mr. Whittaker only proves his utter unfitness for the task. It is impossible to be an evolutionist *and* a Christian. To a Christian who believes in the New Testament, man is a fallen creature, while to an evolutionist, he is an ascending animal. The great words of Christianity are *restoration, renewal, regeneration, redemption*; the great words of science are, *growth, development, evolution.* According to Christianity, every human being is unspeakably dear to God's heart and the hairs of his head are all numbered. According to science, man fares no better than a sparrow at Nature's hands, and has no prerogatives whatever beyond those which he has received from Nature. The difference between the

two views is that the latter is a fair, reasonable induction from ascertained facts, while the former rests upon theories unsupported by a single fact and owes its perpetuation in the world, not to reason, but to blind faith.

J. T. LLOYD.

Shelley and Rome.

I.

IN my article on "Two Graves at Rome" I referred to Shelley's presence in the Eternal City; and especially to the illness and death of his boy William, who was buried in the English (or Protestant) Cemetery, which was afterwards the burial-place of Keats, and at last the repository of Shelley's own ashes.

But these references are far from exhausting the interest of the theme. Shelley spent a considerable time at Rome; he was profoundly impressed and influenced by the majestic relics of its antiquity; and it was there, under the spell of a mighty past, that he wrote the larger part of the *Cenci* and the *Prometheus Unbound*.

Many of my readers, therefore, will be pleased to accompany me in tracing the footsteps of the greatest of modern English poets in and around the capital of the world; while others, who have no special appreciation for poetry, may look kindly on this excursion for the sake of Shelley's noble character, his tragical career and romantic death, and the lofty ideals which animated his life as they inspired his song.

II.

Let me introduce at once a very interesting fact. My younger colleague, Mr. Cohen, wandering about with boyish ardor and curiosity, lighted on something which he knew I should like to hear of. Accordingly he hurried back to our hotel and informed me that he had found a mural tablet in honor of Shelley "just round the corner." I went to the spot with him, and copied the inscription into my note-book. The tablet is outside the front wall, on the first floor, of an inconspicuous house on the Corso. I do not intend to convey the idea that the house is of mean appearance, but merely that it resembles the other houses to the left and right. I presume it is the Palazzo Versospi mentioned by Professor Dowden as the place where Shelley and his wife "obtained lodgings" on their second visit to Rome, early in March, 1819. The inscription itself, couched in highly latinised Italian—bold, terse, and sonorous—records the fact that the tablet was affixed by the City Council in honor of the centenary of Shelley's birth; it praises him as a champion of popular liberty, and announces that in the spring of 1819, and in that very house, he wrote his *Prometheus* and *Cenci*.

The last statement is but partially true. Those two masterpieces were not entirely written there, but large portions of them were composed on that spot, or rather while Shelley was lodging there; for he did most of his composition out of doors, in the closest contact with nature, and under the impulse of her most intimate inspiration.

But while bestowing a slight correction upon the records of that tablet, let us not be blind to its inner significance. What credit it reflects upon the people of Rome! They publicly confess that the great English poet of mental and moral, political and religious, liberty is in a manner one of the glories of their own city; that even the city of cities was made more honorable and illustrious by his presence. It is a tribute which Shelley's lovers in the land of his birth will remember with pride and gratitude. But it is a tribute of which few cities are capable. When will London rise to the height of manifesting her affection for the "warriors of the spirit" from other nations who have fled to the solitude of her vastness for protection, while they cherished within them the light of principles which they had seen drenched, if not extinguished, in blood? London is

too dull and sordid for such recognitions. Let us hope she will not be so for ever. And let us be glad that the pulse of a nobler patriotism beats elsewhere. For while loving one's native land one may be in a certain sense a citizen of the world, and be stimulated and encouraged by signs, even from the ends of the earth, that man is lifting his eyes from the mud at his feet to the ethereal loveliness of the heavens above his head; or, to speak the language of science, is purging away his brutishness and developing his humanity.

III.

Shelley fled from England to "the paradise of exiles" with Mary and their child when the law, through the mouth of Lord Eldon, completed the persecution he had suffered ever since his expulsion from Oxford for atheism. Not knowing to what lengths the law might be invoked against him, he fled to the continent, and naturally found his way to Italy—where Byron had already been driven.

It was on Friday, November 20, 1818, that Shelley entered Rome for the first time. He stayed there but a week, for on November 27 he went forward to Naples to secure lodgings there for Mary and William. But even during those few days of cloudless sunny weather he opened up a new chapter in his intellectual history. Writing to Peacock from Naples, on December 22, he said:—

"Since I last wrote to you I have seen the ruins of Rome, the Vatican, St. Peter's, and all the miracles of ancient and modern art contained in that majestic city. The impression of it exceeds anything I have ever experienced in my travels."

He gave a fine description of the Coliseum, which, he said, is "unlike any work of human hands I ever saw before." He admired the arch of Constantine, which had been originally dedicated to a greater and purer emperor, but "the servile and avaricious senate of degraded Rome ordered, that the monument of his predecessor should be demolished in order to dedicate one to the Christian reptile, who had crept among the blood of his murdered family to the supreme power." In a later letter to Peacock he refers again to "this stupid and wicked monster, Constantine," in connection with the same "admirable work of art," and adds that one of his "chief merits consists in establishing a religion, the destroyer of those arts which would have rendered so base a spoliation unnecessary." The "Christian reptile" reminds one of the "Galilean serpent" in the great *Ode to Liberty*.

Shelley began his *Tale of the Coliseum* during that first week in Rome. It remains a fragment, and probably would never have been otherwise; it was one of the spasmodic efforts that Shelley left behind him on his road to perfection. Of course it contains fine passages, including the apostrophe of Love, which prompted Professor Dowden to pen one of those fatuous Christian notes that deface his *Life of Shelley*.

"Shelley, a student of Gibbon, might have known that the highest act of homage to the Spirit of Love ever rendered in that cruel amphitheatre was the heroic self-immolation of the monk Telemachus, which led to the abolition of the games under Honorius.

To which it is a sufficient reply that the story of the monk Telemachus seems to be merely a Christian legend, and that the games were not abolished under Honorius, but continued for nearly another century.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be continued.)

Sunday Laws.

If New York's Sunday law were to be enforced as it is written, a population with sand in its craw would rise up as one man and, in the language of Little Johnny, "fell it to the plain." But the law is not enforced. It is a dead one when not galvanised into life by the people who love their neighbors. A man may live in New York for a generation and scarcely become conscious that such a law has ever been

framed by Christian charity; and then, again, he may with considerable suddenness discover that its hooks are in his vitals. A few weeks ago, with a view of transferring to Skeetside from *The Truth-seeker* office a few books and some other portable property, I got a neighbor to drive in with his team, myself coming ahead on the cars. It was Sunday, and while waiting for my man to arrive I tried to entertain the policeman on the post by telling him what I proposed to do. He came near having a case of dropping dead from heart failure on his hands when he replied that I would not be permitted to carry out my design, or in fact to carry out anything else. In a feeble voice I inquired, "Why not?" He shook his head and murmured "Sunday." The word restored my circulation, and I wanted to know what difference that made. He answered that there was a law against all Sunday labor except work of necessity." "Well," I said, "it is all right then; this is a work of necessity. I never work except when it is necessary, and never saw anybody that did. When it is not necessary for me to work I rest." "That may be so," the copper admitted, "but if you open that building and take anything out I shall have to lock you up." He set his feet wide apart and swung his club end over end behind him. "Am I up against it?" said I. Said he, "You are." I couldn't change his mind. No man was ever less amenable to argument than that policeman. We walked down the street discussing the situation, and he helped me out with the suggestion that I should see the captain of the "precinct." At the station house the captain wasn't in, but I found the sergeant ready to talk. And he was inexorable, too, and didn't care to hear argument. "Don't ask it," he said. "I have no discretion but to forbid it, and the officer on post has none but to lock you up." I was rather insistent, and he finally told me not to talk to him. I replied, "All right; then you talk to me and tell me why a man may not carry away his own property." The proposal interested him, and after collecting his thoughts he said: "There are two reasons why we cannot permit you to do as you propose. The first is because it is against the law, which is a good one in this respect. Sunday is the day chosen by members of firms, or co-partners, to rob one another. Suppose a man wants to rob his partner; he comes around on Sunday morning with a truck, while the other fellow is asleep or at church, and gets away with the goods. We do not know you. You should have seen the captain yesterday. He would have investigated, and if everything was all right he would have granted you a permit, provided it is a work of necessity." I bowed, signifying that I saw the point. He then took up another phase of the matter, and as he proceeded I observed that he accumulated heat under the collar. "And then there is the general Sunday law," he said, "prohibiting you from doing what you want to do on Sunday. There is a class of persons in this town who don't have any business but other people's to attend to. You go there to the store and begin to load your wagon. One of these persons that spend six days scheming to get the best of their neighbors, and on the seventh day go about minding other people's business, as I said—one of these blankety-blanks comes along and jumps stiff-legged when he sees you are not loafing instead of doing something useful and attending to things you couldn't get a chance to do on a week day. This fellow makes a complaint. The officer on post arrests you, and maybe half your fine goes to the society the chap is scouting for. The police have to telephone to the ferry, and your man gets arrested there as a suspicious person. The police are not to blame. It's these fellows that never do an honest day's work in their lives—these virtuous people who think they are running the town." The sergeant was red hot now, and removed his cap to wipe the moisture from his brow. After that illuminative discourse, I should have been blind not to see a great light. It was a question of dodging the "reformers." So I thanked the sergeant for his able remarks, wished him a larger audience should

he ever be moved to repeat them, and went out from the presence. About a minute's walk from the station I met an officer who had just arrested a man (on complaint) for putting up a storm door on Sunday. That was hardly cheering to me, but with a recklessness not to be inferred from my customary temper, I resolved to risk police interference and take the portable property to Skeetside. It was loaded on the wagon under the eye of an officer, whose presence inspired my neighbor with a strength that took no account of a three hundred pound stove, and then the wagon started for the ferry at a clip that wins races over the measured track. The officer, when we parted said he supposed I did not know how near he came to having a "case." With the jail so near, I could see as I never did before what a menace the Sunday law is to the citizen. It seems to require a personal application to bring the iniquity of the thing to the seat of understanding. Shylock had seen his people, the Jews, chased over Europe, and knew that the persecution had been going on for centuries, but when it came to his turn he said, "The curse never fell upon our race till now; I never felt it till now." The reason why we endure the Sunday law is that the majority do not feel it at all.—GEORGE MACDONALD, New York *Truthseeker*.

A Dirty-Minded Revivalist.

The Vicar of Gorleston, in a letter to a daily paper *re* Torrey's views on dancing, theatres, etc., said that a man holding such views must have a dirty mind.

Or Bible-bangers we make fun
To try and set men free;
But quite indorse the words of one
At Gorleston by the sea.

We raise our hats and cease to "cuss"
The pilots of the skies
Whene'er they tell the truth to us
Instead of telling lies.

Hark ye who would the cause advance
Of Torrey and his kind:
"Who thinks that dirty 'tis to dance
Must have a dirty mind."

In pious horror Torrey rolls
His eyes at harmless jigs;
He isn't fit for curing souls,
But only curing pigs.

Forgive us, "brutes," we're much to blame
For libelling you so;
For some of you might put to shame
Some "Christians" that we know.

The Lord had lots of honored chums
Who danced in ancient times
To sound of sackbuts, harps and drums,
Nor called their dances crimes.

He loved a dance, did Jovial J.
(With horror do not start)
King David, so the Scriptures say,
Was after God's own heart.

And David danced a jig close by
His Lord and Master's "box";
A lady at a window nigh
Sustained some fearful shocks.

We won't describe King David's dance,
The pages it might soil
Of this our journal and, perchance,
Its circulation spoil.

Perhaps "Our Savior" danced—who knows?
At Cana's wedding spree;
Wine cheers God's heart and Scripture shows
That wine was flowing free.

They're foes of God, you'll understand,
This Bible-banging crew;
We've shown you dancing's Godly and
A righteous thing to do.

"Who thinks that dirty 'tis to dance
Must have a dirty mind."
Proclaim it widely and enhance
The welfare of mankind!

ESS JAY BEE.

Acid Drops.

We recently said, in our second article on "Two Graves at Rome," that hymns were the poetry of unpoetical minds. Of course some hymns are better than others, but the very best of them would make third or fourth-rate poetry, simply on their intrinsic merits. Some of them that enjoy great popularity in religious circles are positively beneath contempt. Take, for instance, the famous "Glory" Song with which the Torrey-Alexander troupe are to begin their attack upon London. Here it is *in extenso* :—

When all my labors and trials are o'er,
And I am safe on that beautiful shore,
Just to be near the dear Lord I adore
Will thro' the ages be glory for me.

Chorus—Oh that will be glory for me,
Glory for me, glory for me,
When by His grace
I shall look on His face,
That will be glory for me,
Glory for me.

When by the gift of His infinite grace,
I am accorded in heaven a place,
Just to be there and to look on His face
Will thro' the ages be glory for me.

Friends will be there I have loved long ago,
Joy like a river around me will flow;
Yet just a smile from my Savior, I know,
Will thro' the ages be glory for me.

A choir of 1,500 voices is being organised to sing this song, which is expected to sweep London into the net of salvation. But was ever greater rubbish put forward seriously? We should laugh at the idea of printing such stuff in the *Freethinker* as an original contribution. Imagine the mental calibre of the crowds who will hear this hymn sung and fancy it a splendid composition! No wonder they are Christians. They haven't brains enough to be Freethinkers.

This "Glory" Song reminds us of something we read in a newspaper a few days ago, which admirably illustrates the proverb that many a true word is spoken in jest. A slender-witted fellow, who found Jesus in the Welsh revival, was told that he would soon be in the asylum. "Yes," he said, "my asylum will be in heaven, and the Lord Jesus my keeper." A heaven of that sort seems to be very necessary for the "Glory" Song singers.

One of the most extraordinary statements we ever heard was made by Mr. J. H. Putterill, the general secretary of the forthcoming Torrey-Alexander Mission in London. "The main thing," he said to a *Daily News* interviewer—"the main thing will be to give Londoners a chance of hearing the Gospel plainly stated and fairly put before them." Good God! Has it come to this? London with all its Day schools, in which the Bible is read and expounded; London with all its Sunday schools, in which the Bible is further read and expounded; London with its hundreds and hundreds of churches and chapels; London, with its big Missions—the Wesleyan, for instance, in the West, and Charrington's in the East; London with its squadrons of priests, parsons, ministers, and Salvation Army exhorters; this London, which has probably from two to three millions a year spent on its religious training—this very London actually requires a couple of itinerant Yankee soul-savers to come and give it a chance of hearing the Gospel! Surely, if this be true, it is high time to shut up all the churches and chapels, to disband all the regiments of the Black Army, and to save that two or three millions a year, which might be devoted to more promising enterprises. The Yankee soul-savers might be kept permanently on the job in our great capital. This might cost a hundred thousand a year—for they are rather expensive luxuries; but it would be hardly worth considering in view of the immense reduction of expenditure in other directions.

Messrs. Torrey and Alexander are coming to "save" London—which is a big order. They believe that if they can "save" London they can "save" the world. We believe so too.

Archdeacon Sinclair has just returned from a nice holiday in Italy. He was pounced upon at once by an interviewer who wanted his opinion on the Torrey-Alexander Mission. On one point he was perfectly clear; namely, how "meagre is London's religious life at the present day." "The spiritual forces of this city," he said, "want rousing." But he did not seem to be very clear as to whether Dr. Torrey and Mr. Alexander would do it. He said that the Moody and Sankey mission was "largely confined to the middle and upper classes of London," and he was afraid that the new mission would be "very much the same." What they

wanted was to get at the working classes. Ay, there's the rub! Welsh colliers may be reached easily enough, but the London workman generally winks the other eye when a well-fed, well-dressed, well-salaried fellow-citizen comes along and talks to him about Kingdom-Come.

With regard to one point Archdeacon Sinclair let the cat out of the bag. Revivals have their risks. "They often get hold," he said, "of people who are hysterical. Effects which should be attributed merely to physical excitement are credited to religion. It often happens that when the physical excitement has disappeared no religious life remains." Precisely. Revivals are largely, if not chiefly, a form of emotional debauchery.

It would not do to leave that fact standing out bare and naked. Archdeacon Sinclair therefore paid a tribute to the "Wesley revivals." He forgot to add that Wesley was a great organiser. The Wesleyan Methodist Church was built up by careful and far-seeing labor. Nor is this all. The "Wesley revivals" are much misunderstood. Anyone who takes the trouble to read Wesley's sermons will see that they are very little like the poor Come-to-Jesus stuff which is talked at revival meetings to-day. It may sound odd to some persons, but Wesley put *brains* into his work. He was really a man of genius, though we are bound to hold that he worked in the wrong field. Gipsy Smith, for instance, is no more like John Wesley than an Arab tent is like a Pyramid—or a gooseberry bush is like an oak tree. And as for Dr. Torrey—well, John Wesley spoke (at any rate, he wrote) simple, beautiful, lucid English, while Dr. Torrey's English is hardly good enough for a low-class American yellow journal.

That East-End amateur soul-saver, Mr. F. N. Charrington, feels confident that the "spiritual results" of the great Albert Hall mission "will be meagre." He is of opinion that Messrs. Torrey and Alexander should labor for the Lord in the poorer districts. "We had looked to this mission," he says, "to stem the growing tide of Agnosticism, intemperance, and gambling which is affecting the working population of London." Which is a nice display of Charrington's cheek. What impudence on this fellow's part to lump intemperance, gambling, and Agnosticism together! He ought to know better, and we dare say he does; but he has the manners of his kind, and we suppose he will talk like a cad to the end of the chapter.

Plenty of professed Christians drink and gamble. The fact is notorious. Mr. Charrington should "save" them before he deals with the "wicked Agnostics." If charity does not begin at home, reformation should, anyway.

General Booth has had a day with God. But did God have a day with General Booth? The *Daily News* appears to doubt it. Our pious contemporary dismissed it in a single paragraph. It was too much even for Mr. Cadbury.

What contrasts exist in Russia! While the country is almost ripe for revolution the Czar officiates as the central figure in the superstitious ceremony of blessing the water of the Neva. And during the ceremony he narrowly escapes being sent to heaven by a missile fired from one of his own guns—perhaps accidentally, perhaps otherwise.

While our Sir Oliver Lodge is rebuking Haeckel for assuming the natural origin of life, Dr. Matthews, of the University of Chicago, is assuring the students in his physiological class that the divine origin of life is a superstition. Life, he says, is founded on a purely physical and chemical base. "I believe it possible to produce life," he continues, "and there is no doubt in my mind that it will only be a short time before some chemist will discover the process." We do not say that Dr. Matthews is right, but we do say that Sir Oliver Lodge's attitude is rather absurd.

Archdeacon Diggle, of Birmingham, who is named as the new Bishop of Carlisle, has been speaking of Christianity as "a dismal failure." We quite agree with him. But we do not accept his reason. He says that we—that is, all men—have "misunderstood its message, meaning, and power." We believe we understand Christianity well enough. Even if we don't, even if all men have misunderstood it, as Dr. Diggle says, it is still a dismal failure; for what is the use of a "revelation" which is not to be understood in two thousand years?

While the Archbishop of Canterbury is chortling over the Education Acts, and begging American critics to admire them properly, the daily organ of the English Nonconformist Conscience is naturally indignant. It remarks, in a satirical vein, that American Christians will be all the more tempted

to reproduce the mediævalisms of the old country "when they learn that one of the advantages of such transplanting would be the possibility of shutting up in gaol their most distinguished citizens did they decline to pay for the propagation by the State of teaching they believed to be erroneous and ruinous." But why should not "distinguished" persons go to gaol as well as the common herd? And why should not Nonconformists, when they are in a minority, obey the law enacted by the majority? They openly boast that if they can manage it they will enact a fresh law to suit themselves, even if Churchmen and Catholics regard it as oppressive. Moreover, they will force their Christian teaching into State schools, if they can, in spite of the opposition of the most "distinguished citizens" who happen to be Non-Christians. And if Secularists become Passive Resisters, on the ground that the Christian teaching favored by Nonconformists in State schools is also "erroneous and ruinous," it is perfectly certain that Nonconformist magistrates will join Church magistrates in sending them to gaol with the utmost cheerfulness.

Mr. John Morley, in his Brechin speech, naturally said something about America, which he has just been visiting. Here is one passage:—

"It was very interesting to find myself in a country where there is no—I hope none of you will be shocked—no Established Church—and perhaps that is the greatest contribution of the United States Government to what I would call the cause of civilisation, that there is no relation whatever between religious opinion, whatever it may be, and the State. And yet, so I was assured by men of all connexions, there is no country where religion is more genuine, more earnest, or more sincere. The Government schools in the United States are confined to secular instruction, practically, and yet nowhere in the world is what you call religious knowledge more general."

Perhaps this is what Mr. Morley felt it advisable to say to such a meeting. But it is very far from being the entire truth. There are really *no* Government schools in the United States. Every one of the States has its own schools and its own Education laws. And what is the meaning of "practically" secular education? Is not the Bible read in many, if not most, American schools? Is not Christianity endowed by exemption from all taxes on its property? Is there not a strong party working for the admission of "God" into the American Constitution? And is not religious bigotry positively rampant in the public life of the United States? Was there not a universal howl from the Christians when President Hayes wanted to appoint Colonel Ingersoll to the Berlin Ambassadorship? And did we not ourselves hear Colonel Ingersoll say, in October, 1896, that in the whole of the United States it would be utterly impossible for a Freethinker like Mr. Morley to gain a seat in Congress or on any local body?

A letter from Dr. Clifford is a stock piece after a Passive Resistance sale. In a letter read at Darwen he said: "So long as the State forces us to pay for sectarian teaching we must resist." Very well now; does he extend this principle to Secularists, or confine it to Nonconformists? Would it be right or wrong to make a Secularist pay for what he necessarily regards as "sectarian teaching" in the State schools? We have often invited Dr. Clifford to answer this pertinent question. We ask him again.

Dr. Clifford's possible imprisonment as a Passive Resister calls forth a string of queries from Mr. J. S. Greenwood, of Southfleet, near Gravesend. This gentleman wants to know:

- "Will he have a fire in his cell?"
- "What will be given him to eat at breakfast, dinner, and tea?"
- "What kind of bedstead will he lie upon, and what bedclothes will he have?"
- "Will he be allowed books and writing materials for correspondence?"
- "How often will his devoted wife be allowed to see him?"
- "If allowed, will it be through a grating?"

This gentleman evidently thinks that a special prison system should be arranged for the benefit of Dr. Clifford. Perhaps he is of opinion that Passive Resistance "martyrs" should be entertained in Buckingham Palace. But it appears to us that those who play at political rebellion should not whine so much when they have to take their gruel.

On the supposition that Dr. Clifford would go to the Prison which bears the horrid name of Wormwood Scrubs, a *Daily News* reporter hurried off to interview the Governor of that establishment. It appears that, in the event of his committal, he would be treated as a debtor. He would wear his own clothes, and have the usual privileges of that side of the prison. Of course he would not come into contact with the ordinary gaol birds. Altogether it would not be so terrible a martyrdom for (say) seven days. And perhaps it would do the reverend gentleman no great harm. It would

give him a faint idea of what the editor of the *Freethinker* underwent during his twelve months' imprisonment like a common criminal for "bringing the Holy Scriptures and the Christian religion into disbelief and contempt."

The Welsh revival is causing friction at Bangor University College. "A considerable portion of the students," we read, "both male and female, fired with religious fervor, have held prayer meetings during college hours, and classes have in consequence to be cut." Professor Arnold asked an explanation from the absentees, and said that he was prepared to overlook the lapse, on condition of receiving a pledge that under no circumstances should prayer meetings in future prevent the attendance at classes. The students' spokesman coolly replied that they would do their best, but that "they could not give a definite undertaking, as it was impossible to see what the necessities of the revival might be." Clearly the "Spirit of the Lord" is leading to impudent insubordination. It is a pretty notion that students are to attend their classes or not, just as they please, and appeal to an invisible party called God for justification.

At the recent revival meetings at Hirst, in Northumberland, some of the workers fell down in a state of stupor after frenzy, and remained unconscious for half an hour or longer. Nobody interfered with them. It was the work of the Lord. In that case, the Lord must be very active in lunatic asylums.

Dr. J. Guinness Rogers, the veteran Congregationalist, welcomes the Welsh revival. Of course he does. Who expected him to do otherwise? But is he right in regarding it as a proof that "multitudes of people in this country are utterly tired, weary, and sick of a scoffing, supercilious, unbelieving attitude in relation to spiritual life"? Dr. Rogers ought to know that revivals do not bag unbelievers. They simply work believers up into a state of excitement.

While the Welsh revival entertainment still holds the field and defies rivalry, nothing stands a chance against it. Mr. Lloyd-George had arranged to address a great Liberal demonstration at Pwllheli. It was a most important occasion, and the honorable gentleman was fresh from a recuperative holiday. But he knew quite well that the people would never listen to him on politics—not even on the Education question, which was lately so burning in Wales. So he discreetly made a virtue of necessity, and saved his face by pretending that the revival ought to have first place. The meeting in the Town Hall was held, but it was not a Liberal demonstration. Hymns were sung, prayers were offered, and Mr. Lloyd-George orated on the glories of the Welsh Revival. Mr. Broadhurst also joined in these pious proceedings.

Fearful and wonderful correspondence is to be read in the newspapers. The dear *Daily News* has been printing letters under the heading of "Too Much Religion?"—which means, does the *D.N.* give too much religious news? One writer, Stringer Bateman, dating from Abingdon, says: "Has not Matthew Arnold told us that religion constitutes, or should constitute, 'two-thirds of life'?" Now we beg to answer this question in the negative. Matthew Arnold never said anything like what this foolish friend of the *Daily News* fathers upon him. What he did say was that conduct is three-fourths of life. A very different thing!

The Aerated Bread Company's tea-shops are said to be largely owned by clergymen. It is also said that the shop girls have to work ten hours a day—less half an hour each for dinner and tea—for ten shillings a week. Some people are astonished at this. We are not.

Mr. Tree is an excellent actor and a good stage manager, but he should not try to improve so much on Shakespeare. In producing *Much Ado About Nothing* he is going to give the characters of Claudio and Hero "a more dominating position than in any previous revival"—which is simply absurd. He is also going to divide the Cathedral scene, for "the love passages between Beatrice and Benedick might jar on one's religious feelings if spoken in a church," and, he says, "I have arranged for them to be given in the cloisters, so that the cathedral scene will be left uninterrupted and in its sanctity." Prodigious!

The difference between man and a cabbage is that the former has no organ or machine to make food out of simple organic and inorganic constituents, while the plant has.—*R. Hedger Wallace*, in a lecture on the "New Soil Science" before the Royal Horticultural Society, March 11, 1902. (*Journal*, Sept., 1902, p. 79.)

The Divine.

NOBLE man must be,
And helpful and good;
'Tis humanity only
That raises the human
O'er all other beings,
All creatures we know.

All hail the unknown ones!
All hail the divine!
Whom we darkly grope after,
And fain would resemble.
In their good we believe,
Because good is in man.

For Nature is cold,
Unfeeling, and blind;
There shineth the sun
Upon evil and good.
Moonlight and starlight
Gleam down in their beauty
On one and the other.

The flood and the tempest,
The thunder and hail
Rush blindly their way;
And, sweeping along,
They strike, all unheeding,
The one or the other.

So is it with fortune;
She gropes in the crowd,
Lays her hand upon childhood's
Innocent ringlets,
And then on the bald,
The guilt-laden head.

By laws that are iron,
Grand and eternal,
We all must accomplish
Our cycle of living.

And man alone doeth
What else doeth none:
'Tis his to distinguish,
To choose and to judge.
He can to the moment
Eternity lend.

And he alone dares
The good to reward,
The evil to smite,
To heal and to save,
The wandering and erring
For service to bind.

So, likewise, we honour
The mighty immortals
As if they were men,
And did on a grand scale
What good men on small scale
Do, or fain would.

'Tis the glory of man
To be helpful and good,
Unwearingly procuring
The useful, the right:
A prototype so
Of the gods we grope after!

—Goethe.

THREE AMBITIONS.

It will, perhaps, be as well to distinguish three species and degrees of ambition. First, that of men who are anxious to enlarge their own power in the country, which is a vulgar and degenerate kind; next, that of men who strive to enlarge the power and empire of their country over mankind, which is more dignified but not less covetous; but if one were to endeavor to renew and enlarge the power and empire of mankind in general over the universe, such ambition (if it may be so termed) is both more sound and more noble than the other two. Now the empire of man over things is founded on the arts and sciences alone, for nature is only to be commanded by obeying her.—*Bacon*.

Mr. Foote's Lecturing Engagements.

Sunday, January 29, Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints', Manchester: 3, "The Virgin Birth of Christ"; 6.30, "The Last Fight for the Soul: Sir Oliver Lodge's Reply to Haeckel on Matter and Mind."

February 12 and 19, Camberwell.

To Correspondents.

J. LLOYD'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—January 29, West Ham; February 12, Leicester; March 12, Glasgow; 19, Liverpool; May 7, Merthyr Tydfil.

MARGARET.—You think that "any mother who allows her young daughter to attend such a place" as Torrey's revival meeting is "lacking both in duty and common sense." Yes, but so many mothers are lacking in duty, or at least in common sense.

T. R. ALMOND.—There would be plenty, at all times, if all gave what they could afford.

J. D.—Thanks for good wishes.

B. B.—It is flattering to learn that you came all the way from Dorset to hear Mr. Foote lecture and felt well repaid; also that you and your friend look forward every week to the arrival of the *Freethinker*.

J. T. HILL.—Swelled-head is a very common complaint in religious circles. People who believe that God Almighty died for them must have a fair stock of self-conceit to start with.

J. HARVEY.—There will be no price placed upon our Torrey pamphlets, at least for the present. They are to be for free distribution. You, or any other Freethinker, can obtain copies by applying to Miss Vance, at our publishing office. The pamphlets will be ready for distribution by February 4, when the Torrey-Alexander Mission opens at the Albert Hall.

JOSEPH CLAYTON.—It does not follow that you do no good by circulating the *Freethinker* because you hear nothing from the people to whom you send or hand it. Seed springs up sometimes quite unexpectedly, but it takes time in all cases.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance (Secretary) wishes to acknowledge 10s. from R. Green.

S. HOLMES.—Thanks for good wishes. The "show up" will doubtless give Dr. Torrey a fresh experience, and help some Christians along a better road.

W. J. McMURRAY.—Thanks for list of addresses.

E. D.—Acknowledged as desired. Your message is conveyed to publisher.

R. E. LOVE.—The matter shall have attention; we do not recollect your letter at the moment. Thanks for your offer to distribute pamphlets at the Torrey meetings. See this week's "Special." Glad to hear you are enjoying and lending round *Bible Romances*. Your exclamation "What a book! and what a God!" is a fine compliment to our production.

HUGH HOTSON writes: "My three boys, Andrew, William, and Robert, 15, 14, and 12, have brought me the P. O. for 7s. 6d. enclosed, with the request that I will forward it to you, to help in giving Dr. Torrey a 'reception.' I have honest pleasure in doing this, as it is entirely spontaneous on their part." Bless the boys! If they were not so far off we would drop in and have a quarter of an hour with them. They would be worth meeting.

OUR TORREY-ALEXANDER MISSION FUND.—Previously acknowledged, £41 5s. 3d. Received this week: P. W. Madden £2, Andrew Hotson 2s. 6d., William Hotson 2s. 6d., Robert Hotson 2s. 6d., Two Clifton Admirers 10s., Miner 2s. 6d., James D. Stones 10s. 6d., S. Holmes 5s., H. Thomson 2s. 6d., J. Thomson 2s. 6d., Collection at Mr. Foote's Glasgow Lecture £1 1s., R. Lancaster 3s., R. Green 10s., H. W. Parsons 8s., J. Woodhall 11s. 2d., W. A. 5s., F. Wood 2s. 6d., W. J. Mc Murray 2s. 6d., E. Dymond 2s., R. E. Love 5s., J. Gompertz 2s. 6d., Anti-Humbbug 2s. 6d., Unknown 2s. 6d., J. Preston 2s. 6d., F. J. Voisey 5s., Pitman 1s. 6d., Harry Turner 1s., E. Allen 1s., G. Brittan 2s., Alchem 2s. 6d., C. W. Tekill 1s., M. 5s., Collection at Mr. Lloyd's Birmingham Lecture 12s., R. Johnson £1, J. A. Jackson 2s. 6d., J. Harvey 1s., Joseph Clayton 2s. 6d., T. R. Almond 2s., J. D. 1s. 3d., per T. Hogarth 2s., J. T. Hill 2s. 6d., B. B. and S. C. 4s., C. Watkinson 1s., W. S. Dean 2s. 6d.

GERALD GREY.—Always glad to see your "fist." Your good wishes are heartily reciprocated.

M. CORBETT.—Pleased to hear from you. Copies shall be posted to your list of addresses.

P. W. MADDEN.—We are not surprised to hear that your letters to the *Daily Telegraph* were all burked. The "Do We Believe?" correspondence was very carefully edited. Certainly, as you say, our poor £40 looks small beside the £17,000 that is to be spent on the Torrey-Alexander Mission; but we make our money go farther than they do in proportion. We are writing you by post on the other points, when this week's paper is off our hands.

W. STYRING.—Evan Roberts is the Welsh national here now; Mr. Lloyd-George takes a back seat. When people "see red" with religion they have no eyes for anything else.

JAY GEE.—Shall be sent. Delighted to hear of what the

Christians would call the "saving" virtue of our *Bible Romances*. When you refer to the lady as a "wife" we hope you also mean "mother," for if we can get hold of the mothers we shall be certain of the children. With regard to the Father Lambert nonsense, we dealt with the "Phlegon passage" lately in replying to the Rev. F. Sparr. The "Star of Bethlehem" is not mentioned by any Pagan philosopher, nor is "Herod's massacre" mentioned by any Pagan historian. It is a pack of lies.

GEORGE PARSONS asks Branch secretaries and others concerned to note that his address is now 36, Stafford-road, Kilburn.

J. GOMPERTZ.—It will indeed be an eye-opener for some who try to believe that "Secularism is dead."

J. PARTRIDGE.—Received and will have attention.

J. PRESTON.—We wish you better luck.

A. G. LYE.—All right. Also see paragraph.

JAMES NEATE.—Cuttings always welcome.

PITMAN.—Very far from offended; pleased you take the trouble to write us. We keep your letter by us.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings. Letter in our next.

JUVENA.—In our next.

TWO CLIFTON ADMIRERS.—Much pleased to hear from you again; also to know that you "joyfully" send your contribution towards exposing "this abominable American slanderer of men whose feet he is not worthy to touch." Your postscript, which is so human, made us smile.

H. TURNER.—Order passed into right hands. Glad to have your encouraging letter.

JAMES D. STONES.—Pleased to hear you think the *Freethinker* "gets better reading week by week"; also that you think "it is clearly the bounden duty of Freethinkers to rally round us on all such occasions" as the present.

G. BRITAN.—We do not print a weekly contents-sheet now. But we have a permanent poster. Will that do?

ALCHEM.—May your good wishes be realised! Thanks for cuttings.

C. W. TEKILL.—Yes, Joseph Symes is still warmly remembered by many Freethinkers in "the old home."

M.—Thanks for your brave letter. Copies shall be sent.

ELISE.—In our next.

J. STEWART.—Will try to give you the reference next week.

R. JOHNSON.—We admire your fine spirit of toleration, and hope you will yet see that good may be done even with Torrey's dupes. So many Freethinkers were Christians once! A fact that must never be forgotten.

J. A. JACKSON.—Thanks for highly interesting letter.

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

THE National Secular Society's office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 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.

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

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

PERSONS remitting for literature by stamps are specially requested to send *halfpenny stamps*.

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.

Special.

MY attention has been drawn by a friend to the *Life of Hugh Price Hughes*, by his daughter Dorothea, in which some pages are devoted to *The Atheist Shoemaker* case. I believe I have said nothing on this subject since Mr. Hughes's death, but what Miss Hughes says about it is a kind of challenge which I will not ignore. She entirely misrepresents the case as far as she goes, and she keeps back all the facts that I unearthed and published. No one reading her account of the matter, and having no independent information, could possibly suspect that there was any exposure. This may be filial piety on her part, as that virtue is understood in Methodist circles, but it is neither accuracy nor honesty, and I do not mean to let the truth be burked in such a manner. I shall therefore make a fresh exposure of Miss Hughes's blunders or falsehoods, whichever they are; and, at the same time, make a succinct statement of all the principal facts of a case which, after Mr. Hughes's death, I was allowing to fall into "the

dark backward and abysm of time." It is Miss Hughes herself who provokes a fresh controversy; and much as I dislike having to contest anything with one of her sex, I cannot help regarding the truth as more important than her susceptibilities, and I have no scruple in saying that I care as much for my own reputation in this matter as she can possibly do for her father's—though I trust I shall never adopt her means of defending it.

I intend to deal with this subject in the *Freethinker*, first of all; and afterwards, perhaps, in a more convenient and durable form of publication.

Some who followed the case all those years ago may be glad to have their recollection of it refreshed. Others who have come into contact with Freethought more recently may be pleased to know "what it was all about."

I hope to begin my reply to Miss Hughes in a very early number of the *Freethinker*, and to complete it rapidly without a break.

With regard to the Torrey pamphlets, the copy of both will be in the printer's hands before this sentence meets the eyes of my readers; and both will be printed, folded, and ready for distribution at the opening of the Albert Hall Mission, on Saturday evening, February 4.

I may repeat that one of these pamphlets—each running to sixteen pages—exposes Dr. Torrey's filthy libels on Thomas Paine and Colonel Ingersoll, while the other points out in detail how Dr. Torrey's teachings, especially about the Bible, are really repudiated by the leaders of the very Churches that are promoting or blessing his Mission.

Copies of the pamphlets can be obtained gratis by applying, either personally or by letter, to Miss Vance, at 2 Newcastle-street, London, E.C. One penny should be sent for postage, or twopence if several copies are desired.

London "saints" volunteering to distribute the pamphlets are invited to come to the *Freethinker* office on Friday evening, February 3, at 8 o'clock, when I will myself meet them (in company with Miss Vance) and give them certain instructions, which are perhaps better said than written.

Subscriptions are still flowing in, and I venture to hope that a hundred pounds will be realised, for it can easily be spent on this effort. And the amount, after all, is not a great one when spread over even my London readers.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

Owing to a bit of a breakdown at our printing office there may be defects in this week's *Freethinker* calling for the readers' indulgence—which we feel sure will be given.

South Lancashire friends will note that Mr. Foote lectures at Manchester to-day (Jan. 29) in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints. His subjects should attract large audiences, and are fairly well advertised; still, the local "saints" might add to the publicity by letting their personal friends and acquaintances know of the meetings.

Mr. Foote paid a very successful visit to Glasgow on Sunday. There was an excellent audience at his first lecture, and the hall was crowded in every part in the evening, standing room, as well as the seats, being all occupied. Mr. Foote was told that he was in "fine form." Certainly the lectures were much applauded. Before the evening lecture, Messrs. Turnbull and friends discoursed sweet music for half an hour, and their efforts were very highly appreciated. Mr. Turnbull himself took the chair in the morning; in the evening it was taken by Mr. G. Scott, a convert from Roman Catholicism, whose name is becoming familiar to the readers of the *Freethinker*.

The Glasgow Branch is active, prosperous, and full of hope. Its program for the second half of the winter season includes all the "star" lecturers. Mr. J. M. Robert-

son is booked for to-day (Jan. 29), and his well-known ability should, and doubtless will, command large meetings.

Light gives a brief report of Mr. C. Cohen's recent lecture at the Liberal Hall, Forest Gate, on "Ancient Questions and Modern Replies." Mr. J. H. Kennett, a local Spiritualist, mentioned some "facts" which the lecturer could only receive as fancies. Of course it is a waste of time to discuss the meaning of facts before being sure that they are facts.

Mr. H. Percy Ward had good meetings and a hearty welcome at Liverpool on Sunday. His friends were glad to see him almost his old self again after his recent illness. After the evening meeting a large number of the Branch members went to the closing meeting of the Torrey-Alexander Mission and distributed the balance of "Facts Worth Knowing," which were greedily snapped up, just as back numbers of the *Freethinker* had been at former meetings. An advertisement of the Local Branch was pasted on the front of each copy, and good is expected to accrue from the advertisement.

The Liverpool Branch holds its annual Children's Party on Monday evening (Jan. 30) at the Alexandra Hall. Everything points to its being a great success. The Branch's Annual Dinner takes place at "The Falcon" Restaurant, Lord-street, on Saturday, February 11. The tickets are 2s. 6d. each, and can be obtained from the President or Treasurer.

We have been favored by Mr. Francis Haydn Williams, Minister of Flowergate Old Chapel, Whitby, with a copy of his new publication, *A Casket of Pearls*, issued by the New Age Press, London, at the price of threepence. A sub-title calls it "An Edition of the Bible for Secularists," and it purports to be "The Moral Instruction of the Bible without its Theology." Unfortunately it is not stated what translation of the Bible has been used. This is a defect that should be remedied if a second edition is called for. The little volume is well-printed on good paper, and extends to seventy-four pages. Mr. Williams has certainly made an excellent selection, and it bears out what Secularists cheerfully admit, namely, that there are good and fine things in the Bible. These, indeed, have kept the book from perishing. It is pleasant to have them before one in a separate form. We cordially commend this cheap and useful volume to our readers' attention. It really ought to have a good sale.

Mr. Williams also sends us a small pamphlet entitled *Comments and Criticisms*, which is "printed for private circulation." But some of the contents can hardly be regarded as private, in the fullest sense of the word; and we cannot see that we are violating any confidence in referring to them. It gives us pleasurable surprise to find Mr. Williams reading his Unitarian friends a lesson on their superstition of a personal God. "All such grandiloquent phrases as 'God comes to self-realisation in man,'" Mr. Williams says, "are discounted by the fact that 'God' equally comes to self-realisation in the rattlesnake." He declares that Personal Theism is bankrupt, and he "goes bald-headed" for one of its chief exponents, the late Rev. James Martineau. "His managing to rake together £29,000," it is observed, "and leave it, is a standing discredit to his benevolence; while his acceptance of a pension of £300 a year, when he had all that capital invested, was a mean deprivation of some thinker and writer who was great and poor—the poverty being the result of the greatness. He was a special pleader, and held a well-paying brief (with frequent refreshers) for showing up the tottering edifice of Theism."

There is a very strong passage on the tenth page of Mr. Williams's private pamphlet. After referring to man as having, in the course of evolution, attained to the ideality of an angel, while retaining the viscera of a brute beast, Mr. Williams says: "A self-conscious and omnipotent God who could voluntarily design this would deserve to be suffocated in a cesspool."

Mr. A. G. Lye, our energetic Coventry secretary, takes *Justice* to task for saying that "there is none but ourselves"—the conductors of *Justice*—to carry on the fight for "secular education pure and simple." Mr. Harry Quelch and his friends only waste their time in pretending not to know of the *Freethinker* and the National Secular Society. The pretence does not impose on anyone. If we wanted to say anything offensive we should observe that it is only the Secularists who have been straight all the time on this question.

Secularism as a Substitute for Supernaturalism.

WE think most Rationalist and Freethought lecturers, as well as those of us who merely come into conversational contact with our more orthodox brethren, will agree that the point which seems most to trouble those who are as yet outside of our movement, but are half inclined to join it, is what they call our lack of a *positive* gospel. It is an objection that we constantly meet with, and we are sure that it is a question that crops up repeatedly in the experience of every Freethought propagandist. What—in effect asks many a fearful soul—What are you Rationalists going to give me as a substitute for that which you ask me to give up? I am willing to admit—remarks our wavering friend—that the religious persuasion in which I have been reared no longer satisfies my intellect, but it at any rate affords me a certain measure of moral support and furnishes me with something in the nature of an ethical ideal, which ideal it encourages me to endeavor to live up to. Therefore I would be reluctant to surrender what I have, however imperfect it may be, until I am provided with something tangible—and something better—to take its place. So far—our inquiring friend.

We should be sorry to throw any ridicule on the state of mind that prompts anyone to confess to an inward craving that only a belief in the supernatural can satisfy. Many Rationalists, we believe, have never felt that indescribable longing at all. Others, who once experienced it, have outgrown it. But all will recognise that the existence of the feeling referred to is real enough, and constitutes a phase in the opposition to the spread of Secularism which periodically requires to be dealt with. It indicates a state of mind that is not uncommon, and, we think, not unnatural; and it will perhaps be most sympathetically treated by one who has come through it.

Personally, we do not presume to speak for Freethought as an organised movement. We have no authority to do so. But it seems to us that even if Secularism had nothing whatever to submit as an alternative to religion, its existence could be amply justified. Those who have allowed themselves to come into close contact with Rationalism know that it offers extensive scope for the utilisation of the best energies of men and women, and appeals to the highest aspirations and enthusiasms of humanity. But primarily the Freethought policy is a destructive and *not* a constructive one, and, in the nature of the case, the Secularist will require to continue his iconoclastic criticism of the religion of the Churches and his uncompromising opposition to the pretensions of ecclesiasticism for a considerable time yet. A short quotation from Martin Luther which was printed in a recent issue of the *Freethinker* appropriately expresses our view on this matter. "For this is indeed the right order of teaching, first to destroy that which is false, and then to build up that which is true and sound."

There are undoubtedly many people who strongly object—as they put it—to throw out their dirty water until they get some clean; but as that great German apostle of tolerance and freedom of thought (Lessing) once said, "How are you going to take in any clean water unless you get rid of your dirty water?" It is one of the principal objects of Freethought propaganda to persuade people to empty out—metaphorically speaking—their dirty water.

No matter how good the seed may be that you have to sow, it would be vain to expect a healthy crop unless you first free your ground from its noxious overgrowth, clear off the useless brushwood and the old tree-stumps, extirpate the weeds and prepare the soil for the sower. It is this pioneer work in which the Secular Society is largely engaged. Did this clearing away of that which cumbereth the earth constitute the sole object and work of Secu-

larism, is it not a useful, a necessary, a noble work? Is not the task still to be achieved very great, and the laborers few? And beyond this indispensable pioneer work, does not humanitarian Secularism offer a fitting outlet for the exercise of all the pent-up yearning that ever vibrated in a human bosom?

We have said that many conscientious men and women unquestionably experience this peculiar inner feeling that they cannot very accurately define—this vague desire of something without which their higher nature seems to be unsatisfied. The mistake they make, however, is in imagining that nothing but belief in the supernatural will meet their case. For our part, we do not think that religious beliefs and practices ever yet satisfied the enlightened mind of a thinker. Does not religion herself tell us that *nothing* can satisfy the mind and heart of man here below? Does she not endeavor to fob us with promises that in the next world all the desires of the soul will be fully gratified—in that next world which no one knows anything about. As if there were any reason to think that God has any more power in any other world than he seems to have in this, and that is just none at all.

Like most other facts and emotions that come within the scope of human experience, this religious feeling—the existence of which is often put forward triumphantly as a proof that religion must be true—is susceptible of a natural and intelligible explanation. Those who are religiously inclined to-day are the descendants of a long line of ancestors who, in the main, were imbued with religious ideas and a belief in the supernatural. Religion is, so to speak, in the very blood and marrow of a great proportion of the present generation. At any rate it is in the matter of which the tissue of their brain is composed. It would be unreasonable to expect that this inherited tendency to religious belief should be eradicated in one generation, or even in several. The utmost that the man who embraces Rationalism may hope for is—if he should take to wife one who is like-minded—that his children will inherit less of that religious tendency than fell to his lot. He can also to some extent ensure that the intellects of his offspring shall not be clogged and vitiated by any system of education such as that from the effects of which he emancipated himself with such difficulty. In this way he may live to see his children's children evince as little inherent tendency to kneel down and pray as he has to roost in a tree.

Inherited instinct, the effects of early training, the influence of associations, and a confirmed habit of mind—all these causes, or perhaps any one of them, will quite adequately account for that craving for religious consolation which some persons seem to think is inseparable from the human mind. The religious craving—the religious emotion—like all other human feelings, grows by what it feeds on. The oftener thought is turned in a given direction the more readily will it fall into that groove. Religious belief, like prayer, really implies a certain condition of mind in the individual. The more frequently the thoughts of anyone are allowed, or encouraged, to dwell on the consolations of supernatural belief the more easily and naturally will the mind of that person revert to the subject, until it becomes actually ingrained in the texture of his brain through the process of repetition. In fact, we have no need to resort to the supernatural hypothesis to account for the prevalence of the religious idea; and as regards the great multitude of Christian believers, *they* cling to their faith because they have been taught so to do. Their religion is not a spontaneous growth, but has been carefully fostered and cultivated by artificial means.

We have admitted the existence in many people (because they tell us so) of a certain indefinite longing and yearning, which, they fancy, cannot be fully or satisfactorily met save through the instrumentality of religion, with its hopes and promises. But is there any real and perceptible difference between this feeling and that vague inarticulate aspiration to higher things which is perhaps latent

in every human mind, and to the active operation of which in some minds may be ascribed all our intellectual and social progress? We think there is none.

A feeling of discontent with things as they are, both within and around us; a sense of self-reproach for our personal shortcomings; a fervid aspiration towards a higher level alike in the mental, moral, and physical spheres: these emanations of man's consciousness are at the bottom of all that makes for the betterment of humanity. They are indicative of a state of mind that is to be found in all ages and in all nationalities; a state of mind that is co-extensive with humanity itself, and seems indispensable to both the psychic and material improvement of the human race. But it is only with a certain type of mind that these emotions take on a religious complexion. They are aspirations that may be classed as being amongst the noblest that animate humanity, and it seems matter for regret that instead of being utilised in the interests of the human race *here* they are so often devoted to the pursuit of a theological chimera of the hereafter.

Perhaps, after all, when some people tell us they would experience a vacuum in their lives without Christianity it simply means that they feel the need of an object in life, something to live for and work for apart from mere sordid money-grubbing and the monotonous daily round of eating, drinking, and sleeping. We repeat, the pity of it is that the potential energies of such people should ever be so hopelessly misdirected by the Churches in the manner that has unfortunately been but too common in the history of the world.

It is unnecessary in the meantime to deal at any length with that undoubtedly large section of Christians who find a deficiency in Secularism because it has no future rewards to offer men and women for being "good." It is sufficient to say that while we have no imaginary heaven with which to bribe people to live decently and honestly, and no hell to send them to if they choose to live otherwise, we have nothing but contempt for any system of religion that can only keep its adherents in hand by means of such incitements. In doing their duty in life to the best of their ability, Secularists seek no other reward than the knowledge that they have done right. Truly with them "Virtue is its own reward" in a sense that no believer in mansions in the sky can possibly appreciate.

But when inquirers request Freethinkers to furnish them with a *positive* creed they overlook the fact that above all things Freethought stands for the negation of all creeds. Personally we have an insuperable repugnance to a "creed" of any kind. The word "creed," like the word "religion" is tainted by its associations, and lies under suspicion. The formulation of a creed means the enunciation of dogma; the enunciation of dogma leads to intolerance; intolerance usually involves persecution or ostracism in some form where it can be done with impunity; and of all these curses the world has had enough and to spare.

G. SCOTT.

(To be concluded.)

The Christmas Turkey and Salvation Army.

THE Salvation Army has stationed men and women upon every corner in the down town district of Chicago, and furnished them all with collection boxes and placards calling for Christmas contributions to the "ten thousand free dinner" fund for the poor. These collectors made their appearance early, and will be with us during nearly the whole of December. As this same method of raising money is followed in other cities and countries where the Salvation Army operates, there must consequently be many thousands of men and women whose sole occupation during the month of December will be to

stand idle all day long in the streets as silent beggars. Are ten thousand free dinners, once a year, worth the price of ten thousand idle men and women for thirty or more days in the year? Moreover, is it a real service to serve free dinners to anybody? If "free dinners" are a help to the poor, how much more would "free houses" be to the same people? And there is no doubt that, if the Salvation Army could have its way, it would turn out into our streets a larger corps of uniformed beggars to raise money for "free" everything—from soups to salvation. Jesus, in saying "Give unto him that asketh of thee," made no exceptions, and thereby encouraged the indiscriminate alms-giving which raised beggary into a sacred profession throughout Christendom. In Paris, before the Revolution, there were thirty-six thousand beggars who daily reminded their industrious neighbors of the divine injunction to *give* unto him that asketh, or *beggeth*. Rome, too, was, until its fall from the papacy, the Mecca of mendicants. The holy city was as full of beggars as Constantinople is of dogs. As long as it is regarded as an act of religion, and meritorious in the sight of Heaven, to "give unto him that asketh," beggary will remain with us unto the end of time. The idea that "giving" is a science, and that to indulge in it sentimentally, or for personal pleasure merely, or even for the sake of easing our consciences, is a species of selfishness, and hurtful to the best interests of society, can never make any perceptible headway as long as agencies like the Salvation Army and the Catholic Church encourage by precept and example indiscriminate and spasmodic alms-giving. But is it not significant how both Thanksgiving Day and Christmas are associated with a turkey dinner? Formerly, to celebrate a religious occasion, the people killed an ox or a bull, whose roasting flesh was offered, as a sweet-smelling savor, to the deity. In these times the pious folks observe Christmas and Thanksgiving Day by eating the turkey *themselves*. The Lord has the thanks, we have the turkey. But to return to the Salvation Army collectors: we approached one of the boxes or receptacles of money deposited in the public streets, and found that it was fastened with a padlock. Though the collectors are the "lads" and "lassies" of the Salvation Army—that is to say, Christian men and women—nevertheless, the padlock is there to protect them from temptation and to make the managers feel secure. What is the value of all the shouting and singing and the wonderful rescues from depravity, and the unmusical fife and drum, if the converts still need the padlock to take care of their honesty? But perhaps we are asking too much of this brand of religion, when we expect of its devotees to practise their professions. Because a thing is good to shout by, it does not follow that it is also good to live by. When you are at the Army Barracks, sing and shout; but when you are in practical life, use a padlock. We suggest to the Salvation Army that, if it cannot trust its own converts without a padlock, a million free dinners even would be too few to inspire confidence in the "goods" it offers for sale.

—*Liberal Review* (Chicago).

WHERE IGNORANCE IS ———.

Metaphysics, and theology, including all speculations on the why and wherefore, optimism, pessimism, freedom, necessity, causality, and so forth, are not only for the most part loss of time, but frequently ruinous. It is no answer to say that these things force themselves upon us, and that to every question we are bound to give or try to give an answer. It is true, although strange, that there are multitudes of burning questions which we must do our best to ignore; and it is not more strange, after all, than many other facts in this wonderfully mysterious and defective existence of ours. One fourth of life is intelligible, the other three fourths is unintelligible darkness; and our earliest duty is to cultivate the habit of not looking round the corner.—*Mark Rutherford.*"

Correspondence.

FREETHINKERS AND MARRIAGE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Anent the suggestion of a *Freethinker* Matrimonial column, I have often thought that the slow condition of organised Atheism in England is in a large measure the natural accompaniment of our lack of interest in the other sex. The fact is they flock to chapels rather than to our lecture halls, not because they would not enjoy a Freethought sermon as much as a religious one; but we forget what we owe to them—to their discriminating taste for music and general artistic elaboration, and above all for the sympathetic comfort of the domestic, public, and social functions.

This is recognised in Continental Freethought movements, just as it is by the Churches here—in the following announcements, for example, from the notice-board of *St. John's Magazine*, at present pasted outside the fashionable marriage resort at the corner of Goose-green, Peckham:—

OUR NEW INSIDE.
"Clerical Indifference."
FORTHCOMING DANCES.
ALL THE LATEST WINTER WORK.

That explains the success of the religious school; and again I say that it is suicidal to ignore the overwhelming influence of women in any social organisation that would thrive, even as the part they have played in the evolution of the race cannot be ignored.

VIOLA.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The difficulty of a "Freethinker" finding a suitable wife is outweighed by the difficulty of a "Freethinkeress" finding a suitable husband. Although the number of female Freethinkers is small, their chance of meeting an agreeable mate is more difficult. However advanced her ideas, developed by reading, she cannot make friends out of her Christian circle. If she has courage to attend a few lectures she cannot speak to anyone without the conventional introduction. If she did so, even a Freethinker would look at her in anger or amusement, according to his disposition. Therefore if you could see your way to assist the unfortunate in this matter by allowing a few matrimonial advertisements, I shall gladly be the first to avail myself of the opportunity afforded.

MARGARET.

BIBLE MORALITY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—"Chilperic," in a recent issue, made out a good case for thinking that the English Version of the Bible is unreliable, but I cannot bring myself to accept the idea that the Old Testament contains no views on Morality, for there are numerous precepts as to conduct, whether good or bad, so that the Old Testament writers evidently had some standard in their own minds. Then there are the Ten Commandments, all of which seem to imply the possession of ethical ideas.

T. MANVILLE.

CHINA AND MISSIONARIES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I am very much obliged to you for your notice of my book, *China From Within: A Study of Opium Fallacies and Missionary Mistakes*; and I merely write to point out that not "many thousands," but many millions, of lives were lost in the T'ai P'ing rebellion, which, started by a native convert of the Reverend — Roberts, an American missionary, shook the Chinese Empire to its foundations.

Prior to decapitation at the hands of the Chinese authorities, the captured chiefs stated in their confessions that they were led to join the rebellion because they hoped, their leader being the younger brother of Jesus Christ, to escape the punishments of hell in their future life.

It is impossible to estimate with any accuracy the total number of lives lost at that time by slaughter, famine, and famine-fever; but one hundred millions would seem a low estimate to anyone who has resided in China before, during, and after that period. In corroboration I quote from a missionary's letter published in *China's Millions* for January, 1903, which estimates the loss in one single (not seaboard, but only inland) province at thirty millions:—

"No idea can be conveyed to the mind of the English reader of the sufferings endured by the people of this province during the Reign of Terror. Twice did the rebel hordes sweep through its fertile valleys and plains,

carrying off its possessions and multitudes of people, never to return. Those who survived these onslaughts endured fresh suffering when the rebels were driven back by the Imperial troops, who completed the destruction the rebels had commenced.

"Thirty out of the thirty-nine millions were swept away, and in some districts so complete was the desolation that not a man, nor a woman, nor a child, nor a hamlet, nor a cottage, nor even a hut was left to mark the site of a once flourishing place."

The spirits of these innumerable victims of intemperate missionary zeal, like Banquo's ghost, are now enjoying their revenge; like a night-mare they weigh on the breast of proselytising Western Europe in the form of a colossal, collective phantom, familiarly known as the Yellow Peril.

ARTHUR DAVENPORT.

It may be interesting to note that shortly before their surrender to the Imperial authorities the T'ai P'ings stripped the Reverend — Roberts of his booty, when he fled for refuge on board a British gun vessel (I think Her late Majesty's ship *Nimrod*) off Nanking.

"FRIENDSHIP AND FREETHINKERS."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I have been more than interested in the two letters on "Friendship and Freethinkers," as I am sure the want of congeniality has been the means of the Society not making more progress than it has.

I know from personal observation of others, and from my own family in particular, who attended the Lecture Hall in Tottenham Court-road.

They were highly interested with the lectures delivered there by Mr. Foote, Mr. Watts, and others, and acknowledged their ability and earnestness. Still, there was a want, as time after time they attended and no notice was taken of them, they became eventually absentees; whereas, if a welcome had been accorded them by a show of friendship, they would no doubt have become members and been a gain to the cause.

I must say churches and chapels understand human nature better, and act on quite different lines; for instance, one of my sons who is a Freethinker, obtained a situation in a provincial town in Essex, but was there only a little more than a day when in walked the Congregational minister, setting forth the attractions of the Young Men's Christian Association, and giving him a very pressing invitation.

I have no desire to encroach on your valuable paper, but I do think, and especially amongst the young people, that showing such indifference is a mistake and detrimental to the cause.

H. J. THORP.

A Sanitary Psalm.

LET "Israel" trust in wraps,
In thick-soled boots be bold,
Live temperately yet well—and then
See that he catch no cold!

If "Israel" this shall do,
And with due care proceed,
On the high places he shall walk,
And there the righteous lead!

Mark well the foolish man,
Who taketh no such care;
Too late shall he or "Israel" plead
Th' ineffectual prayer!

Too late advice be found,
Relief in vain, prepare!
When he is six feet underground,
Who did not thus beware!

But "Israel's" ruddy face
Shall glow with radiant health,
Far better than a lofty place,
Or all the stores of wealth!

Depend not on "the Lord,"
Whatever be your creed,
For you shall find him "all abroad"
When most his help you need.

Look to yourself, my friend,
And of yourself take thought,
Or in disaster you shall end,
And ruin should be wrought!

GERALD GREY.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, etc.

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

LONDON.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 3.15, C. Jones, "Science and Religion"; 7.30, Herbert Burrows.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Liberal Hall, Broadway, Forest Gate, E.): 7.30, J. Lloyd, "Why I Gave Up the Christian Religion."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Coffee House, BullRing): Thursday, February 2, at 8. A. G. Lye, "Short Survey of the Popular Freethought Movement in England."

FAIRSWORTH (Secular Sunday School, Pole-lane): T. Hornby, "The Conditions and Claims of the Blind of England."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (110 Brunswick-street): 12 noon, J. M. Robertson, "The Religion of Men of Science"; 6.30, "Modern Unitarianism and the Gospels."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Humberstone Gate): 6.30, F. J. Gould, "What is Positivism?"

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): H. Percy Ward, 3, "Crime and Criminals"; 7, "Is the Bible the Word of God? Why I Answer 'No!'" Monday (5-9.30), Children's Party.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints): G. W. Foote, 3, "The Virgin Birth of Christ"; 6.30, "The Last Fight for the Soul: Sir Oliver Lodge's Reply to Haeckel on Matter and Mind." Tea at 5.

NEWCASTLE DEBATING SOCIETY (Lochart's Cathedral Café): Thursday, February 2, at 8, T. Dawson, "Ralph Young."

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, G. Berrisford will lecture. See Saturday's local papers.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation School-room Market-place): 7.30, Lecture arrangements.

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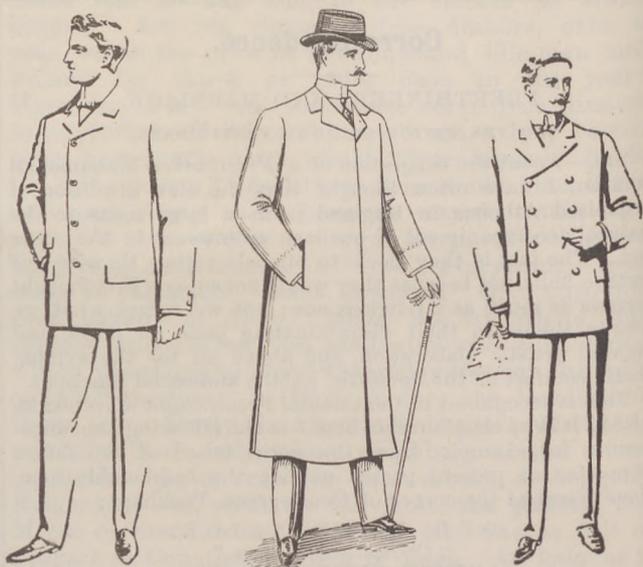
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