

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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PRICE TWOPENCE

I need no priest to promise me a second life, for I can live enough in this life, when I live backwards in the lives of those who have gone before me, and win myself an eternity in the realm of the past.—HEINE.

France and the Pope.

THE English papers are printing their usual nonsense about foreign affairs. Not one of them seems to understand the real point at issue between the Catholic Church and the French Republic. The point is not in any proper way connected with disestablishment and disendowment. It is purely prospective in character. And truth compels us to say that the French Republic is in the wrong on this point.

French Freethinkers ought not to allow their hatred of the Catholic Church to betray them into treating it with injustice. The duty of Freethinkers is not to imitate the bad example of their enemies, but to be true to their own principles. And a policy of revenge and reprisals will really do nothing but hinder the cause of liberty and progress. After all, French Catholics are Frenchmen, and their political and moral rights should be respected by other Frenchmen.

We have said again and again, and we repeat now, that on the whole the French Republic has acted admirably in this Separation of Church and State. The financial interests of the individual priests have been carefully and even generously considered. The process of disendowment is to extend over nine years; during that time payment will be withdrawn by gradual stages from the poorer clergy, and aged priests will be entitled to a pension for life. All this is generous, and it is also good sociology.

The present trouble, which has given the Papacy an opportunity of stirring up fresh religious strife in France, is chiefly due to a certain want of sympathetic imagination on the part of the leaders of the Separation policy. They have also forgotten that there are two sides to a bargain. The Separatists agree to allow the Catholic Church the use of the religious buildings throughout the country—and that is all right. But now comes the question of ways and means, and here we think the Separatists have made a blunder. Of course those buildings belong to the nation, but they are absolutely of no use for any other purpose than religious services, and it would have been an act of good sense to let the Church have the use of them practically on her own terms. Instead of doing this, the Separatists have provided a special machinery for the business. The churches and their contents are to be handed over to the charge of a committee of Catholic laymen in each parish; and this committee, owing to its legal position, would also become the guardian of the parish church funds, and the paymaster of the parish priest. Now it is easy to see that this is an attempt on the part of the State to thrust an alien organisation into the body of the Catholic Church. No doubt it was not meant to be so, but such it is; and this alien organisation is totally antagonistic to the Church's traditions and discipline. A government of the Church by laymen may be an excellent ideal, but it is not the ideal of the Catholic Church. And we do

not see that the Pope had any alternative to proclaiming it an impossibility. This he has done in his recent encyclical.

Religious bodies in France, as elsewhere, should have precisely the same rights as irreligious bodies. The Catholic Church, for instance, should have the same rights of organisation in France that it has in England and America. To deny this is only to play the game of reaction. For if Protestants and Freethinkers may penalise Catholics, why complain when Catholics penalise Protestants and Freethinkers, where they have the opportunity? The only thing that lasts and satisfies is justice. Nothing short of that will even support the weight of an argument.

The Protestant press in England sneers at the idea that the Catholic Church in France has any "martyr spirit" to appeal to. Well, that is just like the Protestant press. But we implore the French Freethinkers not to be led away by that delusion. If they are, it may cost them very dear in the end. They should avoid doing anything that may lead to a Catholic revival in France. It would do them good to ponder the profound sarcasm of Gibbon, that to a philosophic eye the virtues of the clergy are more dangerous than their vices. Even the Concordat had its compensations. It gave the State a considerable control over the Church. The money paid by the State was not all pure stimulus; to a large extent it acted as a narcotic. When the clergy are left to their own devices for a living they will have to be more energetic and zealous. It is foolish to suppose that the Catholic Church cannot exist and prosper except in some sort of alliance with the State. Look at America; look at Australia; look at Ireland. Look at Ireland especially. Difficulties and dangers have not crippled the Catholic Church in Ireland; they have made it omnipotent. Nationalist members of parliament are bound to say that they are Catholics first and politicians afterwards. And, whether they all mean it or not, they have to act up to it. The omnipotent Church stands behind them with an absolute command in her mouth when she chooses to make the point at issue "a question of faith," and they have no choice but to obey.

Even in England it is admitted by some of its best friends that the Established Church is rather the creature than the master of the State, that its political connections sap its religious vitality, and that it would probably have a more flourishing existence, according to any other test than that of sheer money, if it were cut adrift from the State and left to its own resources. In spite of all its wealth and other "advantages" it has been beaten in a stand up fight by its non-established rival. At present the Liberal party is in power with an overwhelming majority—and the Liberal party is controlled by the Nonconformists.

We appeal to our French brethren, therefore, to be on their guard against the temptations of their position. All parties, when in power, are tempted to try short cuts to success—but these are nearly always failures. Humanity can only advance by slow and steady degrees. Great principles can only win their way as gradually as the dawn overcomes the night and develops into the day. The present separation of Church and State in France is not really the work of the present representatives of France in the Chamber of Deputies and in the

Senate. It is the result of two hundred years of intellectual preparation. It is the work of great men who have long been in their graves. Let it not be spoiled, then, by the men of the hour. Above all, let no French Freethinker lift a finger, or say a word, that will give the Catholic Church the immense advantage of standing before the world as the champion of fair-play. Call it posing, call it bluff, call it what you will; the advantage remains—and you may be sure that the Catholic Church will make the most of it. Do not give it the chance.

Since the above was written we have seen the report of an interview with M. Combes, the ex-Prime Minister, who bore the first heavy brunt of the battle over the Separation Bill. M. Combes is a statesman for whom we have great respect. He is also a sterling Freethinker, having left the Church years ago in obedience to his convictions. We heartily joined in the congratulatory telegram that was sent to him from the Rome Congress in 1904. But not even M. Combes is infallible—any more than the Pope is; and there is one thing that he said which was certainly not wise, as he himself must have seen on reflection. He admitted that the Pope was "quite logical." "As to the Freethinkers," he said later on, "they consider that the Pope has at least shown himself consistent." It was perfectly natural that his Holiness should "maintain the supremacy of the spiritual over the temporal power." For all that, however, he had "tollled the knell of the Catholic." So said M. Combes, and we wish it were true; but it is *not* true—and from the very nature of the case it *cannot* be true. All that M. Combes advanced in justification of his extraordinary statement was this. "If the associations disappear," he said, "it will be very difficult to recruit the clergy, for the young men who enter holy orders will no longer be able to earn their daily bread." Now there is some truth in this, but it is very far from being the whole truth. M. Combes should look outside France for a bit. He would then perceive that the difficulty of earning daily bread in the priesthood has never, in any country, destroyed the Catholic Church. Priests get their daily bread in Ireland, in England, and even in Scotland, without State assistance—as they get it in the United States, in Canada, in Australia, and in other parts of the globe. And if that difficulty is what M. Combes is trusting to we think he is leaning upon a broken reed.

Nor do we think M. Combes is sagacious in predicting that "if the Catholic clergy obstinately follow the instructions of the Pope, there will be numerous conversions to Protestantism." The time for Protestantism is past. It ended with the so-called Reformation. There have been no successes of Protestantism since then. Moreover, it is clear enough to all who take the trouble to think—and these are the people who get converted *from* any religion—that Catholicism is a positive thing, while Protestantism in relation to it is only negative. Protestantism is but the first stage in the dissolution of Catholicism. More and more, as Science and the Higher Criticism do their work, religion must become a matter of faith; and more and more the minds that must have a supernatural faith will find what they need in the bosom of the Catholic Church. It is with this Church, as Charles Bradlaugh used to say, that Freethought will have to fight its last battles. And the most foolish and dangerous mistake that Freethinkers can make is to underate the power of their great enemy.

We believe that M. Combes is an English scholar, and we venture to suggest that he should read Macaulay's essay on "Ranke's History of the Popes." Macaulay knew that there are really no new arguments against religion; they are all as old as the earliest records of human thought. He also knew that knowledge of the science of this life does not necessarily destroy superstition with respect to another life; and he further knew that Catholicism was that superstition carried to the highest degree of perfection. With an ample knowledge of history to

back his judgment, Macaulay said that he did not see how the Catholic Church could perish—while mankind wanted the thing she was organised to supply; and at the end of an eloquent passage, after pointing to her long and eventful history, he foresaw her in imagination still existing "in undiminished vigor when some traveller from New Zealand shall, in the midst of a vast solitude, take his stand on a broken arch of London Bridge to sketch the ruins of St. Paul's."

Macaulay may have been right or wrong in this famous picture of futurity; but assuredly he was not so far off the truth as M. Combes was in declaring that a single act of the present Pope had rung the death knell of the Catholic Church. In any case, we trust that the French Freethinkers will pursue the policy of justice; not merely nominal, but substantial justice; and that, for the rest, they will fight Catholicism only with "the sword of the spirit." Their past victories have been won in that way; their future victories must be won in that way too. There is no other way on the principles of Freethought.

G. W. FOOTE.

Exploiting Sunday.

A PHILOSOPHICALLY-MINDED performer of the three-card swindle, when charged with imposing upon the credulity of people, defended himself by asking, "What on earth were fools born for but to be swindled?" I do not know what answer was given to the question, but there was about it a certain Theistic merit. All things being designed for some purpose by a beneficent Providence, some reason there must be for creating both flats and sharps. And as the former are the natural prey of the latter—nay, as the flat seems to seek out the sharp as eagerly as does the sharp search for the flat—there would seem to be here a striking instance of design in nature. The weakness in the card-sharper's answer lay in the assumption that, as the flat was created for the purpose of being swindled, card-sharpping was the only method, and the sharper the only agent, of a far-seeing Providence. But there are, in truth, a variety of methods. Not to detail these at any length, I need only mention one, the subject of this article—Sunday religious papers. Here is a field large in extent, fertile in character, and easy to work—so easy that the word "work" is used only by way of courtesy. The man who cannot run a Sunday religious paper will certainly not owe his failure to want of ability. He may have a distaste for the work, he may find the sport too tame to yield any excitement, he may have conscientious scruples against exploiting the simple-minded—all of these may be disqualifying factors; but, given the desire to run such a journal, success seems pretty easy to obtain.

There is, apparently, about the mere name of a Sunday paper an invitation to imbecility. And this, like the old Puritan Sabbatarianism, has a retrogressive influence even on Saturday. Those who note the columns in certain papers, issued on Saturday, marked "Sunday Reading," cannot fail to have observed the curious character of the fare provided. No editor would for a moment dream of opening his columns to such material under any other circumstance. Even the ordinary "Religious World" or "News of the Churches" column retains a semblance of rationality. But "Sunday" appears to have a paralysing influence on editors in general; and not only is there nothing too stupid for insertion under the head of "Sunday Reading," but great pains appear to be taken to keep out anything that might be mistaken for common sense. Probably the main idea is to keep Sunday readers free from the wisdom of the world; and if this be so the success achieved is most marked.

It is, of course, with the sundry religious papers proper that I am now concerned, and it is with these that one sees the card-sharper's question illustrated in the most perfect manner. As I write I have

before me a batch of these papers—*The Sunday Circle*, *The Sunday Companion*, *Hornor's Weekly*, *Good Words*, etc. I specially mention the above because there are two remarkable features about them. First, they are all edited by the same gentleman, Mr. Hartley Aspden, and they all emanate from the Amalgamated Press, Limited—which is, I believe, only another name for the Messrs. Harmsworth. How many more Sunday papers this company issues I do not know; but four is a pretty fair number to go on with. And, bearing in mind the business shrewdness of this group, one may safely treat it as a systematic exploitation of the credulous. It is certainly one of the most remarkable phenomena of modern times. We have had corners in copper, in iron, in corn, and in a number of other things; but here is an attempt to form a corner in religious imbecility. Nothing is alien to the modern financier. All is fish that comes to his net. Popular education has enabled everyone to read, without raising the intellectual level of the people in any marked degree. Here is, at once, a new field opened to the "smart" business man; a whole army of people waiting, almost praying, to be exploited. Nothing could be plainer; nothing could be easier. Four papers from one firm! Four papers with one editor! To paraphrase what was said at the outset, for what other purpose were the readers of these Sunday journals created but to serve as raw material for a newspaper syndicate?

One must not, however, be too hard upon the Harmsworth group; they did not create this class of readers; they were ready to hand, and only needed exploitation. Nor have they a monopoly of these papers. There are many others, and if I have emphasised these four it is only because, through them, one can better realise the game that is being played. For the insufferable silliness of this class of paper almost precludes the belief that those who manage them believe what they are writing. They are simply a reflection of the tastes of the readers. There is a demand for this kind of silly Sunday reading, and the demand evokes the supply. A curious feature of this Sunday reading is, that often those who indulge in it would not tolerate the same class of stuff on any other day of the week. They may not demand the best literature, but they would at least call for something a trifle above these Sunday productions. It is the word "Sunday" that does it; and, unless the reading on that day is of a silly, pious, sentimental type, it is considered out of harmony with all that is demanded by the "Sabbath."

Of the papers themselves one may say that they resemble in the main a kind of *Tit-Bits* or *Answers*, with the humor (?) left out. There are numerous short paragraphs, of a woodenly good moral type, that are admirably adapted to drive one to drink or gambling or burglary, or even murder, out of sheer desperation. In one of the papers before me there are a couple of illustrations, one showing people, in most uncomfortable attitudes, entering church on Sunday, the other depicting a rather good-looking man sitting up in bed reading and smoking with a pleasant, contented look on his face. As an illustration, meant to induce people to attend church, the drawing may safely be trusted to have quite an opposite effect. It is far more likely to induce them to follow the comfortable-looking man's example. The converted infidel is, of course, well in evidence. There is a wonderful story of how Mr. Walter Mayo, a Protestant evangelist, changed a Hastings "infidel" into a "new man" by reading the fifty-first Psalm, with special stress on "Wash me," "Cleanse me," "Create in me." Then he cried out in agony, and accepted Christ.

In addition to this class of paragraphs there is a plentiful assortment of stories of either the sloppy, lovesick variety, or the idiotically heroic type, with short disquisitions by well-known clergymen. Among these latter is one by the Rev. F. B. Meyer on the burning question, "Should Ministers Cycle to Church?" Of course, in the case of laymen, the reply would be an

emphatic negative, since the machines might not always stop at the church door. But as many ministers do use cycles and motor-cars, Mr. Meyer decides that they may keep on using them because their dress, "to say nothing of their face," will distinguish them from ordinary Sabbath-breakers. Whether this is complimentary, or the reverse, to the minister's face, it is impossible to say; but it is a reply that deserves preservation.

But the gem of the collection is the "Answers to Correspondents." This department is run by Mr. Hartley Aspden; and, judging from the selection published, Mr. Aspden's unpublished collection would be well worth reading. One correspondent is deeply interested in the question as to what is the largest price ever paid for a bonnet—a query that has quite a worldly, not to say frivolous, ring about it. One is, indeed, almost shocked to think of the sacred Sabbath calm being prostituted to discussing the prices of bonnets. But, then, one has heard of bonnets occupying no small part of the meditations of people even during a church service. Another, of a lordly turn of mind, wishes to know why the woman in the New Testament was so anxious to find the missing piece of silver if it was only worth sevenpence-halfpenny. "M. F." wishes to know why Jesus wept; and to this Mr. Hartley Aspden replies that it was because of the extreme sensitiveness of his nature. So there is one mystery cleared up; Jesus wept—because he wept. "F. L." is astonished that his sister is as selfish and as bad-tempered after conversion as she was before; while "Jesse" and "Lil" write for advice as to what to do, seeing that they both sleep in the same room, and one wishes the window closed and the other wishes it open.

By far the larger number of questions, however, deal with affairs of the heart. "H. E. H." is advised to let her lover know that she is sorry. "Helen" is not to take it for granted that her lover has neglected her. There is also no reason, so far as Mr. Aspden can see, why "S. J." should not be happy with the man of her choice. "Uncertain" wants to know what she is to do after having found out that her young man has given his portrait to another girl, and is advised to ask for an explanation. "J. T." is told that the young man is not worth troubling about, and is advised to fix her thoughts on Christ. (Who was it said that Jesus receives all the elderly female hearts for which there are no earthly applicants?) Finally, among others, "Mabel" is advised that although her lover is good and kind and lovable in every way, still, as he is an unbeliever "if you wish for true and lasting happiness, don't marry him so long as he remains an unbeliever." On the whole, if "Mabel" is in the habit of looking for guidance to Mr. Hartley Aspden, one cannot help feeling that the "Unbeliever," whoever he is, will not lose much if he is forced to seek a wife elsewhere.

One might print yards of similar quotations, could the pages of the *Freethinker* be filled with nothing better. What has been selected will, however, serve their purpose of illustrating the character of both editor and correspondents, and as these papers are all of one week's issue, they may be safely taken as a fair sample of their kind. That this kind of writing reflects the mental character of the subscribers may be safely taken for granted. But then there are the writers, the publisher, the editors. What of them? Is there as much honesty, even though it be ignorant honesty, on their part? One does not feel quite so certain on this point. The most robust faith in the power and prevalence of human imbecility might well hesitate to believe that there is much more in the issue of these papers than a calculated attempt to exploit the world of stupid sabbatarianism—all the easier to exploit since compulsory education has given to all the power of reading without creating the ability or the desire to think. The press is a mighty power, and for this very reason it is as powerful for evil as for good. It all depends upon the character of those who direct it. It is also probable that if the foolish were not exploited in this fashion they would be in some other; for so long as the world

contains fools and knaves, the latter may be safely trusted to find out the former. And of all fools the religious fool is the hardest to eradicate and the most difficult to protect. And, after all, the publishers of these Sunday papers may be believers in the philosophy of the gentleman named at the outset. And they, too, may ask in the depth of their religious consciousness, For what purpose are the religiously foolish perpetuated, generation after generation, if not that they may become the prey of the purveyors of Sabbatarian journalism and their kind.

C. COHEN.

The Man of God.

IN essence the man of God is the same in all ages and countries. His distinguishing characteristic is that he is God's spokesman. His one function is to deliver messages from the Deity. He is entrusted with Divine oracles which he must convey intact to those for whom they are intended. Hence he always speaks with absolute authority, confidently falling back on "Thus saith the Lord." He is supposed never to open his mouth until the Word of the Lord comes to him. In olden times his credentials were miracles. "Rabbi," Nicodemus was made to say to Jesus, "we know that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do these signs that thou doest, except God be with him." Men of God can no longer perform miracles; at least they cannot do so in the ordinary course of their work. Everywhere miracles have lost caste, and their evidential value has evaporated. But the man of God is as confident of his authority and as dogmatic as ever. His discourses are messages; he is only the medium of their delivery. Whenever he is about to speak he prays: "O Lord, speak thyself to the people; give thy servant a message suitable to the occasion, and enable him so to deliver it as to convince the hearers that it comes from thee." As a rule, when such a prayer is offered up, the message is already in the preacher's pocket, or well thought out and treasured in his memory. It never occurs to him that under the circumstances, such a prayer is a horrible mockery, and the so-called message a frightful fraud.

Far be it from me even to suggest that every minister of the Gospel is a conscious hypocrite. The overwhelming majority of them are doubtless perfectly sincere and believe what they say. Their main fault is that they never face the facts, that they even cover the facts up with several thick coats of veneer made of superstition and sentimentalism. If they boldly looked the facts in the face their intelligence would soon undeceive them and make them wholesomely ashamed of themselves. They would perceive the ineffable absurdity of their position. Let us now examine a few of the most palpable facts.

Do preachers ever ask themselves this pertinent, conscience-searching question: "If the Gospel is true, and if God makes it known and applies it to us, why is it he does not make it known and apply it to all others in the same way? If Christianity is the only soul-saving and heart-sanctifying religion, why does not the Holy Spirit reveal it and make it efficacious to the whole world, as we believe he has done in our own case?" Had ministers been super-human beings we could have understood their selection and appointment as mediators between God and mankind. As a matter of fact, they are but ordinary human beings. Every faculty they possess and exercise is common to the whole race. Is it not unthinkably strange, then, that God does not save all men in as direct a manner as he is believed to have saved them? If God can whisper the saving message in their ears, what is to hinder him from whispering it in the ears of all his children throughout the globe? The preacher's theory is dishonoring to God. The whole world is lying under heaven's wrathful condemnation, liable to everlasting perdition; but the Gospel could and would change all this

if it were but universally known and believed. As a matter of fact, however, although the Gospel is the power of God unto the salvation of all believers, it is yet powerless to do the glorious work unless preached by men specially set apart and ordained. That is to say, God can deal directly and immediately with only a few chosen men, while with all the rest he can deal only through the former. China and India and Japan and Persia are in a lost and ruined state, but not even God can deliver them except through the instrumentality of the missionaries from the West, and through these he can only do it very slowly and partially. How many ministers have honestly faced this fact? Sometimes ministers affect great humility and say: "Yes, it is marvellous that God should have laid this high honor upon us; but in his infinite wisdom he has seen fit to appoint us to this sacred ministry." If there be a God, what unforgivable blasphemy! One feels unutterably sorry for him as he sits impotent on his sham throne, for he is supreme only in name. He is omnipotent, universal Love, and his heart yearns towards the poor children of the fall; but he can do nothing for them except through his appointed ministers, and very little even through these!

Here is another fact. If God existed and had his ordained ambassadors, would not the message, from the lips of all of them, be identical? But it is not identical. Not only it is not identical, it is even contradictory. The Word of the Lord nullifies itself through its lack of self-harmony. Some preachers assert that Jesus of Nazareth was God Almighty. Others declare that he was only a man specially endowed. Others regard him as neither God nor man exclusively, but as a mysterious being between the two. Some teach that Jesus died on the cross as an atonement to eternal justice, and so made it possible for the Father to forgive penitent sinners and admit them to his eternal bliss. Others maintain that he only died as a martyr in the cause of righteousness, while others still see in him only a perfect revelation and exemplification of the Divine Love. Some announce that the Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God, every word between its two covers being true. Others claim that the Word of God is contained in the Bible among a multitude of other words decidedly not his. Others pronounce the Bible a human document which is to be judged by the same standard as all other books. Again, no two preachers are agreed as to the nature and attributes of the being they pretend to represent.

This lack of agreement among God's spokesmen extends to the realm of human conduct. Some preachers denounce theatre going as contrary to the will of God, while others defend it within limits. Some speak of dancing as irreligious and immoral, while others approve of it as a health-giving exercise. Some hold that every moment of Sunday should be devoted to worship and pious meditation, and that to indulge in any form of carnal pleasure on it is to desecrate it, while others give permission to those who attend morning service to make the rest of the day a pleasant holiday. Some insist on literal obedience to all Christ's commandments, while others persist in finding in them nothing but principles to be interpreted and applied with discretion, and according to circumstances.

And yet, in spite of the contradictory character of their utterances, on every conceivable subject, ministers of the Gospel claim to speak the mind of the Lord. It is the Lord who tells them what to say. What a confused, chaotic thing the mind of the Lord must be if we are to believe these its alleged exponents. It looks as if the Lord does not know his own mind!

Take another fact. It is notorious that ministers talk about God as if they knew him intimately. Evan Roberts was once asked, "How do you know that God exists?" He answered, "Because I have seen and conversed with him." Mr. Roberts has thrown upon the Lord the whole responsibility for extremely silly and mischievous utterances, as well as for many injuriously foolish actions. The present

point, however, is that even the wisest and most serious-minded of the men of God have never once transcended human wisdom. We will set aside their vain babblings about the Supreme Being and his doings and confine ourselves to expressions bearing on man's life in this world. All these on their lips are said to bear the Divine stamp. Take the sayings of Jesus himself as recorded in the Gospels, and can you affirm concerning a single one of them that a mere uninspired man could not have uttered it? Strip them of the false unction that has gathered round them, and regard them simply as embodying the moral teaching of Christ, can you honestly claim for them any uniqueness or originality? Those that are true are old and were common to ancient civilisations, and those that are new are not true. "Love your enemies," is often quoted as the very highest ethical utterance. Granted; but even then there is no super-human atmosphere about it. Buddha had said the same thing four centuries earlier; and Confucius, too, in other terms, had expressed the same sentiment. Thus taking the sayings of Jesus as they stand, you must admit that they are characteristically human. Conceding their historicity, it is clear that not one of them transcends the limitations of human nature.

Now if Jesus, the Master, the God-man, did not burst the limitations of humanity, nothing can be more evident than that his servants have never done so. It is not the mind of the Lord that they give us, but their own. They have nothing to impart to their hearers but their own beliefs, opinions, and predilections. Great and high-sounding are their pretensions, but their achievements are in proportion to their human capabilities. An orator is always followed by a crowd, while he who lacks the magnetic touch is left severely alone. The so-called God-filled man counts for nothing in the pulpit unless he has the fluent tongue, while he of the magic speech is quite independent of God and his Spirit.

The above facts, and others that might be mentioned, show conclusively that the claims which the man of God makes for himself are entirely false. He has no right to speak in the Lord's name, nor to mislead the ignorant by exclaiming, "God says so." It is he himself who says so, and he knows it. This is the only explanation of the conflicting character of the utterances of the pulpit. Why, a preacher fathers even his prejudices, his jealousies, and his ill-natured observations upon God, and makes the Holy Ghost responsible for his own foolish eccentricities. When a minister says, "God is not pleased with you when you forsake his house and go cycling and motoring in the country on his own day," what he really means is, "I hate preaching to empty pews and to have small collections." When he says, "A Sabbath-discreating nation is standing on the brink of moral ruin," what is in his heart is this, "A Sabbath-breaking nation spells a bankrupt Church, and the demolition of my profession." This is not a charge of insincerity; but it is a charge of being unconsciously in a false position. It is because the people are beginning to realise this that they are abandoning the churches in such large numbers. The discovery that the preacher is in every respect an ordinary man is bound to rob the pulpit of its power, and to alienate the masses. It was only when they believed that he spoke for God that the people put the minister on a pedestal and revered him. Now that he is known to represent only himself he is practically unheeded.

I do not mean to say that the day of the pulpit is over. But the pulpit of to-day is not the pulpit of a hundred years ago. It is much more human now than it was then. The truth is that it is being rapidly ethicised, that its supernatural character is being destroyed, that supernaturalism itself is being pushed into the background in it, and that the time is coming when it will advocate Secularism as the only satisfactory philosophy of human life.

J. T. LLOYD.

Acid Drops.

Father Ignatius, of the Anglican Church, is not going to let Father Vaughan, of the Roman Catholic Church, have all his own way in denouncing the "smart set." Preaching at Llandudno, he declared that civilisation always ended in rottenness, because the origin of the force of civilisation was Satan. Father Ignatius also believes that Satan is behind the so-called Higher Criticism. England, indeed, is going to the dogs for the simple reason that nobody nowadays, not even the clergy, believes the Bible as the true Word of God from Genesis to Revelation; and there will be no hope for us until we all believe, as we used to, that man was made out of dust, and woman out of a rib, that serpents spoke, and asses talked—as they have done ever since. When we believe these things—*really* believe them—we shall all be good again; and until we do, there will be no health in us. Such is the message of Father Ignatius. But the remedy he proposes seems worse than the disease. We are reminded of the story of the great Earl Derby and the wine-merchant. The latter sent the Earl a case of port wine, which he said was good for the gout, from which his lordship suffered. Soon afterwards the Earl wrote to the wine-merchant: "Sir, I have tried your port, and I prefer the gout."

"What is the use," the *Manchester Evening Chronicle* asks, "of this periodic bickering at the smart set, while the mass, smarting under the sores of unsanitary houses, of too much or too little work, of ignorance and disastrous poverty—are treated by the Churches either as disreputable lepers or as the estuary of a stream of demoralising charity that salves the conscience of the givers but does not ease the burden of the recipients?" Yes, what is the use?

The newspapers make much ado about the Bishop of Manchester's "great mission" on Blackpool sands, but a correspondent informs us that his lordship had about a hundred people round him the other day, while a couple of thousand were listening to a troupe of "carnal" entertainers not far off. Our correspondent suggests that the Bishop might catch on better if he blacked his face and wielded a banjo.

Some six hundred Boers, who have been living on the banks of the Vaal River, almost in a state of communism, are trekking to the Breede River, where they will found a new colony. They believe that God has forsaken the Transvaal, and that Johannesburg and the other towns will be destroyed. The principal doctrine on which they differ from the Dutch Church and the Doppers concerns the clergy. They believe that no pastor should ever receive a reward for preaching. They insist on having their spiritual medicine for nothing. Which is probably what it is worth.

The late Mr. William Imre, one of the owners of the White Star Line, has left £100,000 to the Liverpool Cathedral Fund. This is a first-rate windfall, and the heart of the Bishop will rejoice. The cathedral, when completed, will cost £500,000. All that money is to be spent on a House of God in a city where thousands of Christians live in horrible slums, such as the old Greek and Roman pagans never dreamt of even in the nightmare. But swagger temples for God, and wretched dwellings for men, always went very well together.

Rev. Dr. Horton, the famous inspired Nonconformist, has been telling the National Free Church Convention at Harrogate that missionary work is making no headway—which we have been saying in the *Freethinker* for years, and which Mr. Cohen amply proved in his excellent pamphlet on *Foreign Missions*. According to Dr. Horton there are missionaries enough in the field to convert the whole world. Yes, if they had the Holy Ghost behind them, as they pretend to. But it is not the want of Holy Ghost power that Dr. Horton mentions as the cause of failure. No, it is the want of money. The missionaries are not "backed up by the Church at home." "Thousands of Christians," the reverend gentleman said, "and many ministers, spent more money on tobacco than on mission work, and many Christian ladies gave more for a single dress than they ever contributed to missions." The moral, we suppose, is that ladies should go naked rather than keep the missionaries without money. And how much money do they want? All they can get. So we are likely to see a lot of ill-dressed or undressed Christian ladies if Dr. Horton's advice catches on.

Of course, Dr. Horton could not conclude without flatly contradicting himself. "At the same time," he said, "some of the work of the mission field to-day was much finer than

anything in the Acts of the Apostles." Yes, a magnificent work was being done and glorious results were witnessed, in China and elsewhere, even at the present time. It is by such claptrap that congregations nowadays are being thrilled and entertained!

"Does Woman Help?" is the heading of a public discussion that helps to fill up the pages of the *Daily Chronicle* in the big gooseberry and sea serpent season. Anything sillier than what is written on both sides it is impossible to conceive. If the writers represent the average readers of the *Daily Chronicle* we tender the management our profound compassion. We doubt whether such a discussion would be possible in any but a Christian country.

We don't notice all the men of God who die and leave nice well-feathered nests behind them. We only notice a few that seem to call for special attention. Archdeacon Joshua Ingham Brooke, of Woolgreaves, Sandal Magna, Yorks, has left estate valued at £109,236. How he must have enjoyed himself when reading the Sermon on the Mount!

According to the Rev. T. Allen, D.D., a Wesleyan Methodist, of the 7,000,000 Sunday-school scholars in this country "the vast majority" would eventually be found "in the pub., in the club—which was worse than the pub.—at the card table, in the betting circle, at the gaming board, in the house of ill fame, in every haunt of vice and crime, in gaol, in prison, in penal settlement, in hospital, workhouse, and all such places." Had we said this it would have been called a libel. Being said by a man of God it may be taken as gospel truth.

Heine, in his wicked way, said that the literary eunuchs were always complaining of his virility. Victor Hugo, in his wonderful book on William Shakespeare, passes a similar criticism on the respectable commentators. "Driven on by the demon of genius" the Master is shockingly virile and prolific. "The stallion," Hugo says grimly, "is over demonstrative; there are jack-mules passing by to whom this is displeasing." "For nearly three centuries," the great Frenchman adds, "Shakespeare, this poet all brimming with virility, has been looked upon by sober critics with that discontented air which certain bereaved spectators must have in the scraglio." Further on in the same chapter Hugo remarks of Shakespeare that "the gastritis called 'good taste' did not afflict him"; he was so powerful and fecund that he could afford to leave "good taste" to his inferiors, who could often boast of nothing else. They could do nothing, and they did it in an elegant manner; that is to say, with no offence to anybody.

We were reminded of all this by something on Mr. Swinburne in the *Daily Chronicle*. Mr. Swinburne is, and always has been, a Republican and an Atheist, like Shelley. Of course he is not a second Shakespeare, but he has always had plenty of passion and power. Whatever his faults are, dullness is not amongst them. His fiery spirit gives a splendid sweep to his finest verse, making it in that respect unmatchable by the work of any of his contemporaries. Mr. Swinburne's force is not merely literary, it is organic. Many years ago (we were told) he met with an accident, which caused considerable loss of blood. For a time he was unconscious, and the bystanders talked of taking him to the hospital. Just then he came to, and told them his opinion of the hospital suggestion, and requested them to put him in a cab—in language that left nothing to be desired from the point of view of vigor and effectiveness. Rabbit-minded persons among the bystanders were naturally shocked; but the poet's strong expressions after such an experience were really a grand evidence of his natural strength.

This natural strength of Mr. Swinburne makes him also inimical to the gentlemen of "good taste." The *Daily Chronicle* reviewer of the new edition of the forty-year old book on William Blake quoted a certain passage from it and then proceeded to rebuke the writer for having "no possibilities of speech in prose between the fortissimo of admiration and the fortissimo of detestation," and for indulging in "senseless outbursts, so overdone, so disproportionate." This sweeping criticism of Mr. Swinburne's prose is extremely foolish. There is plenty of good matter in his prose-work between the extremes of admiration and detestation. But we do not desire to dwell upon that point. We want to show how vigor of speech is offensive to common critical minds.

Here is the passage which the reviewer boggled at. Mr. Swinburne observes of the ladies who used to warble Moore's "Irish Melodies," that they—

"thought fit to inhale with wide and thankful nostril the raucous flavor of rotten dance-roses and mouldy musk, to

feed 'in a feminine delusion' upon the sodden offal of per-fumed dogs'-meat, and take it for the very eucharist of Apollo."

This "senseless outburst" is remarkably strong criticism, which lays bare, with a few strokes, the very heart of Moore's sentimentality. Every word is well considered, and to the point. The language is remorseless because the writer has only contempt for what he is criticising; and it is concrete because the writer is a poet, who does not think in cold abstractions but in ideas that have the reality of visible and tangible things. The *Chronicle* reviewer could not see all this because his "good taste" was offended. He wanted Mr. Swinburne to be too much like unto himself. But happily the world is not threatened with such a misfortune.

We also, in our humble way, have been accused of violating the canons of "good taste." Ineffective people have often told us that we spoke the truth too plainly, that we did not mince our words enough, and that we did not sufficiently consider orthodox and conventional "feelings." But all that sort of criticism has rolled off us like water from a duck's back. We have always had something to say—and we have said it; and that is the great thing, after all.

The Rev. Robert Primrose, of Glasgow, is an exceedingly wise man. He listens to the sea, and it speaks to him of strange things. One of the chief effects of the speech of the sea is to make us ashamed of ourselves. And why? Because it is so suggestive of eternity. Mr. Primrose says: "God has put the sea as a great constant picture and reminder to us of eternity." Of course, the sea, like the Bible, can be made to say whatever the listener wishes it to say. To an unbeliever, the sea brings not the faintest whisper of a life beyond the tomb, nor the least suggestion of the existence of God. But Mr. Primrose should have stuck to his text (Isaiah xxiii, 4) instead of using it as a mere peg on which to hang an utterly irrelevant sermon.

What a boon Eternity is to the preacher! How safe to relegate the solution of all dark problems to a realm beyond the present! The Rev. George Jackson, B.A., the well-known Wesleyan minister, assures us that pain is an instrument of God. He admits that in connection with suffering there are questions we cannot answer, and shadows that will not flee, and that "the Christian optimism needs the Christian faith to sustain it." What an eloquent self-exposure is here! The Christian interpretation of human life is based upon a dream. The Rev. Mr. Jackson says so. Were it not for his belief in a future life the serious contemplation of the present life would drive the Christian mad. The Rev. Mr. Jackson says so. That is to say, if God were to be judged on the basis of his management of *this* world, he would stand utterly condemned.

Canon Newbolt, preaching at St. Paul's Cathedral, exclaimed: "Christianity is not merely 2,000 years old; it is as old, nay, it is older than the world itself, for it is before time." That is rather rough on Jesus Christ. His claim to have made known the Father falls to the ground. The Canon is quite right; but then the New Testament and the Church are all wrong. The Canon is on perfectly safe ground. If Christianity means the precepts of Christ, he says, "then Christianity has been a lamentable failure." But if Christianity is a great system which is older than time itself, then its advocates can make what claim they like on its behalf and not be amenable to reason. In reality all this is nothing but sheer nonsense.

Dr. Reuen Thomas, of America, who is now doing duty at the City Temple, "has been much impressed with the declining reverence for Sunday which the motor-traffic causes. In America and in England alike there is an increasing restlessness which affects Church members as strongly as others." The truth is coming out by degrees. Where would the Apostle Paul be were he among us to-day? Would he too be classed with the Sabbath-breakers? To him, you know, all days were alike. Would Dr. Horton and Dr. Thomas lecture him on his character-killing heresy?

After all, religion is *more* than morality. So the Rev. Alex. Cowe, M.A., tells us. Men who have the average moral habits of society naturally ask, "What lack we yet?" and Mr. Cowe answers, "Spirituality is needed as well as morality." But what on earth is spirituality? How can it be "at once root and fruit of morals?" If it is the root it cannot be the fruit, and if the fruit it cannot be the root. That certainly ought to be self-evident.

The Dictionary defines spirituality as *incorporeality*, *heavenly-mindedness*. But who knows anything about incorporeality, and to whom has the mind of heaven been revealed? "We must be right towards God as well as towards men," says Mr. Cowe. But God, as distinguished from men, is both unknown and unknowable, and to be either right or wrong towards him is naturally impossible. "We must be pious as well as just," adds Mr. Cowe. Surely, but to be pious is to be reverential towards parents. Piety towards the unknown and unknowable is pure waste of energy.

Professor Marcus Dods argues, in the *British Weekly* for August 16, that it is ideals, not formal rules, the Sermon on the Mount gives us. These ideals, he says, "are of the nature of proverbs, which the dull logical mind, concerning itself only with the literal shell, will break its teeth upon, but which honesty sucks the truth out of and converts into invigorating blood." That is very well put; but what on earth does it mean? It means, in plain words, that the precepts of Christ are utterly impracticable, and that Christians, while professing absolute loyalty and obedience to their King, are dependent, like other people, on their own common sense. Non-resistance to evil is not even an ideal to them, for they are all active resisters.

In Dr. Dods' opinion, loyalty to Christ is only a profession. Christ says, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." Dr. Dods says: "To what extent a man may hold this world's 'treasure' is a question for each man's conscience." That is common sense, perhaps; but it forms a direct opposite to the teaching of Jesus.

Dr. Dods delivers himself of a glowing eulogy on what he calls the spirit of Christ. We are exhorted to live in an atmosphere of love. Love is to be our supreme guide in all situations. "Only by entering into Christ's spirit of love can we obey his precepts." If that sentence is to be interpreted by its context, its meaning is that it is by entering into Christ's spirit of love that we shall discern which, if any, of his precepts are to be obeyed literally, and which are to be amended at the dictate of our own judgment. Of course, this turns the profession of loyalty to Christ into a mocking farce.

The *Daily News* is unnecessarily severe on that band of Sunderland Methodists which humorously calls itself the Thornhill Men's Cheerful Meeting. A leaflet, issued by that association, intimates that a company has been formed under the title of "Jesus & Co." But it is an ancient company, having been formed 2,000 years ago. Its object is to rescue the perishing, the dividends are, concurrently, earthly peace and earthly happiness, the deferred dividends consist of heavenly mansions, crowns of glory, and garments washed white in the blood of the Lamb. The chairman of the company is the Almighty, the manager Jesus Christ, and the secretary the Holy Ghost. The head offices are in Beulah Land, and one of the branch offices is Thornhill Church, Sunderland. Such is the information contained in the Prospectus.

But why should the *Daily News* be so terribly shocked, and say that "the depths of vulgar sensationalism have been touched here"? Judged by the New Testament conception of Christianity, is not the "prospectus" strictly accurate, though adopting the language of modern commercialism? The Sunderland handbill will doubtless serve the purpose of opening some people's eyes to the essential absurdity and irrationality of the whole Christian scheme.

Here is another contribution to the world's knowledge of God. It is made by the Rev. Dr. Watkinson, a celebrated Wesleyan minister. This divine is on terms of closest intimacy with the Sovereign of the skies. Dr. Watkinson informs us that God knows us *personally*. "He does not know the ocean only, but the drop; not the milky way, but the star; not the meadow, but the flower; not the mass, but the atom; not the million, but the man. He knows you and knows you altogether." Surprising! But God's strength is as unlimited as his knowledge: "He can bear your burden. It would crush your neighbor, but it will not crush him. He can bear it as easily as the Atlantic bears a bubble, as easily as Mont Blanc a snowflake." When God is so knowing and so strong and so sympathetic, why is it that mankind are still groaning under burdens that crush the majority of them? What is the use of having such a God when he does not act?

Charles Jennison, assistant schoolmaster at Rushden, has vindicated his character at the Birmingham Assizes—a thing which the New Testament, by the way, expressly forbids

him or any other Christian to do. It appears that he was grossly slandered by Samuel Hulatt, a clerk, who "had accused him, by implication, of teaching his class that there is no God, and consequently no heaven and hell." The jury evidently thought it was a shocking thing to accuse a man of teaching children that there was no hell for them to go to, and they awarded the plaintiff £10 damages. We suggest that he should spend the money on the cost and maintenance of a large brass-plate outside his place of residence, bearing the inscription: "I teach the children hell."

We should like to ask Charles Jennison, or Samuel Hulatt, or the jury, where hell is. They all seem very certain about it, and we would thank them for a little information. We have been seeking it for more years than we care to count, and we seem to be on the right track now—if only one of these gentlemen will condescend to instruct us.

Considering that Jesus Christ is said to have been so poor that he had nowhere to lay his head—Rowton Houses and fourpenny dosses not being then invented—and that his Apostles were also so poor that Judas the Cashier "sold" the whole lot for thirty shekels (some £3 15s.) the late wrangle between the Bishop of Rochester and the collector of Queen Anne's Bounty was a very curious one. The collector claimed £45 from the Bishop for first fruits and £39 7s. 6d. for tenths, the estimate being based on the income of the Rochester see (£4,500) for the year ending December 25, 1905. The Bishop did not dispute the figures, but contended that he was only liable from May. That point, of course, is one that neither we nor our readers are interested in. Our point is that when a Bishop is charged £84 7s. 6d. as a mere commission on his income, the right reverend father in God must be "following Jesus" a long way behind.

The Bishop of London is a very accurate-minded person. In his evidence before the Royal Commission on Ecclesiastical Discipline he stated that he had stopped the introduction of superfluous vestments in a church at Finchley—"St. Luke's, Finchley, I think it was." Just as though it were no business of his to be certain—outside the pulpit. Well, it was not St. Luke's, Finchley. The incumbent of that church contradicts the Bishop publicly, and says that St. Luke's has always been "strictly evangelical."

What a fortunate man of God the Bishop of London is! He can leave his diocese for two months, entrusting thousands of immortal souls to the tender mercies of underlings. His lordship is enjoying himself, where heresiarchs cease from troubling and the Kensitites are at rest. On his return he may find that Satan has been loosed.

In the Rev. Dr. Anderson's article, "Why not Face the Facts?" in the current number of the *Hibbert Journal*, perhaps the most piquant observation is that Jesus was not a Christian, or that Christianity as generally understood to-day was utterly unknown to its nominal founder. It seems a daring thing to say, but it is perfectly true. And yet the churches are everlasting defending and defining Christ as if they owned Him. "Now," says Dr. Anderson, "if anything is clear from recent study of the New Testament, it is that none of the characteristic ideas of orthodoxy came from Jesus." Christianity is, therefore, not a supernatural religion revealed and established by Christ, but a purely human development, which has undergone serious changes in all ages of its history, and which is passing through a process of radical transformation just now.

Dr. Clifford seems to have a perfect genius for misunderstanding and misrepresenting the real issues involved in public questions. On the subject of education he is completely at sea. He mistakes Nonconformity for the nation. He pretends to believe that it is as a citizen, pure and simple, not as a Dissenter, he is so vigorously fighting for undenominationalism. Are not Catholics and Episcopalians part of the nation? Are not Freethinkers citizens? If Dr. Clifford were honestly playing the part of a citizen, he would advocate the giving of justice to all citizens alike. Instead of that he insists upon a system of education that will prove most advantageous to Nonconformity. Dr. Clifford is a citizen, *plus* a minister, and the minister is really, though disguisedly, always in the forefront.

W. T. Medhurst, of Barry, explains in the *Daily News* how he kept out of the abyss of poverty. At one time ruin stared him in the face, but he resolved to put "the kingdom of God and his righteousness first," and then the Lord began to bless him. This is what the gentleman asks us to believe.

But he furnishes a more natural explanation of his success in business by stating that he puts fourteen hours a day—from 8.30 a.m. to 10.30 p.m.—in his shop, six days in every week. What an existence! There doesn't seem any miracle in it, though; fourteen hours a day at the grindstone ought to keep the knife sharp.

"The Divine Carpenter" is what Jesus Christ was called in a recent *Daily News* leading article. How a carpenter can be divine passes our comprehension. But if a carpenter can be divine, any other workman may be so too; and in that case we might hear of the Divine Bricklayer, the Divine Plumber, the Divine Potman, or even the Divine Scavenger.

The late Mrs. Craigie ("John Oliver Hobbes") had a great admiration for old Hobbes before she became a Roman Catholic. Hobbes was called "the atheist philosopher," and was the best hated man of his generation. The clergy hinted so often that his presence in the world was a misfortune, that he was in constant fear of assassination. Mrs. Craigie might easily have selected a worse ideal. She confessed that the recollection of Hobbes had restrained her impulsiveness and saved her from maudlin sentiment. A course of Hobbes would be good for some other ladies we could mention—if they were equal to it; for he is strong meat, and not milk for babes and sucklings.

Mrs. Humphreys, seeking a separation order against her husband, at the Clerkenwell Police-court, gave some interesting evidence, from which we make the following extract:—

"Mrs. Humphreys said she left the defendant on August 4 because he told her to go and take her 'blooming child' with her. He also struck her in the eye. During the last six months he had followed her about the house abusing her.

She complained more of his objectionable language than of his cruelty. He treated her very unkindly in speech, making horrible accusations against her. Formerly he was given to drink. A year ago he became a Christian Scientist.

'He has changed his religion three times,' added the wife. 'First he was a Protestant, then he was a Roman Catholic, and now he is a Christian Scientist.' (Laughter.)

'Has he been more violent since he has become a Christian Scientist?' (Laughter.)—'He has been more horrid.' (Renewed laughter.)

According to this account, if it be true or half true, Mr. Humphreys was not improved by his religious adventures.

The Rev. David Smith, in his Correspondence Column in the *British Weekly* recently, is guilty of grossly misrepresenting well attested facts. An inquirer asks, "How can it be said that modern science has substantiated Divine Revelation?" Mr. Smith answers thus: "We have the assurance of the greatest of living men of science that modern science has substantiated Divine Revelation." Then he quotes the altogether foolish remarks Lord Kelvin made at the London University College some three years ago, which were so severely criticised and condemned at the time. But even Lord Kelvin did not claim, either in the speech or in the *Times* subsequently, that modern science has substantiated the alleged Divine Revelation embodied in the Bible. To be compelled to believe in a "Creative Power" is by no means synonymous with being compelled to believe in the truth of the Bible. Herbert Spencer accepted the idea of Creative Power, but he firmly rejected the idea of a Divine Revelation. To him the Creative Power was inscrutable, unknown and unknowable.

Lord Kelvin woefully blundered when he stated that "Scientific thought is compelled to accept the idea of Creative Power," as was abundantly shown by the correspondence in the *Times*. Professor Ray Lankester, Sir William Thiselton-Dyer, and others, proved conclusively that scientific thought is not compelled to accept the idea of Creative Power, inasmuch as it conceives of matter as both eternal and infinite. Later, Dr. Russel Wallace regretfully admitted that with very few exceptions our leading men of science are blank Atheists. And yet the readers of religious journals are misled by such men as Mr. Smith who either conceal or falsify the facts. Lord Kelvin is undoubtedly one of the very greatest men of science; but it was not as a scientist, but as a theologian, that he spoke at University College.

Revs. S. T. Williamson and J. Wilkinson, vicar and curate of St. James's Church, East Crompton, Shaw, together with Mr. F. Oxlade, captain of the Church Army, have been cultivating the working classes a good deal lately. It occurred to them that a procession to church in favor of Sunday observance would be a good thing. They duly announced it to start from Salts-street at 10.15, but not a single working man turned up. Twenty young men of the congregation

went to the houses of many of them and tried to persuade them to come. It was in vain. Nobody could be induced to go.

Shakespeare has reached his zenith at last, and may now exclaim "Thus far I can go, and no farther." General Booth has been to Stratford-on-Avon—General Booth has visited the poet's birthplace—and General Booth has waved a Salvation Army flag over it and given it his blessing. Grand old William Booth! Happy William Shakespeare!

"General" Booth has been ramping round the country again on his motor car, and the Grand Old Showman has had a big reception everywhere. This is a good advertisement for his business, but does not make it any sounder. Neither as a spiritual nor as a social experiment is the Salvation Army really successful. But the "General" is a magnificent hustler, and the Army will probably last his time. But will it last five years longer? We doubt it.

Truth slips out accidentally now and then. The *Daily News* says that General Booth "plunged" into the social abyss "with the Bible and a brass band." Exactly! Lies and noise! And the result is what might be expected. In spite of General Booth and all his works the abyss gets deeper.

When the late Bishop of Exeter confirmed thirty-eight lunatics in the county asylum, and declared that he had always found such persons peculiarly susceptible to religious influences, we were far from disputing the statement. We felt that the Bishop was probably right, and that lunatics were pretty sure of front seats in heaven. That is the reason, perhaps, why lunatics are allowed out of asylums to begot lunatics. In the case of Maud Parker, of Tottenham, charged with the wilful murder of her three months' old son, by drowning him in the copper, it was given in evidence that she had been in the asylum twice. Parentage of that kind would not be allowed in a Freethought community.

Albert Matthias Stones, one of the "Protestant leaders" at Liverpool, has to pay £25 damages to Mrs. Jane Fox for slander. Stones denied the slander, but the jury didn't believe him. There seems to have been a lot of "kissing" mixed up in the case.

The forty Frenchmen, headed by the Mayor of Dunkirk, who have been "doing" London under the *entente cordiale*, saw many things to admire, and at least one to laugh at. They went on Sunday to the Victoria and Albert Museum, and thought it a fine joke that some of the pictures were covered up on Sundays by order of the donors, and said, "That will amuse them in Dunkirk." We should think so.

The Christian Evidence Society has got the newspapers to print a list of books for its examination next March. We never saw such an antediluvian catalogue. In the course of time, we daresay, this Society will learn that Queen Anne is dead.

"John Strange Winter" says: "It was the first and greatest Christian who spoke those memorable words, rebuking men, in defence of a woman: 'Let him that is without sin among you cast the first stone.'" The lady evidently does not know that the story of the woman taken in adultery is a late addition to the fourth Gospel. The author of the "memorable words" was therefore, not Jesus Christ, but some writer whose name will never be known.

One good turn deserves another. Torrey and Alexander came over from America to save England. Gipsy Smith is now going over from England to save America. He will be there five months, so the job will be done thoroughly. In the course of his soul-saving tour he will visit Chicago. As he is such a good hand at "saving" he might try to save the canned meat trade.

After the earthquake at San Francisco comes the earthquake at Valparaiso. The old globe gives herself a shake and proud man finds himself a helpless nonentity. He who claims immortal life, and worships a Deity who is to give him a fine eternity in heaven, discovers that this wonderful being can do nothing for him when he gets into trouble on this planet. People prayed to God at San Francisco; they prayed to God at Valparaiso; and the answer of God was the same in each case—silence. Nature took her course, and she kills man with as little compunction as she kills a cockroach.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

(Lectures suspended during the Summer.)

To Correspondents.

W. D. JENKINS.—Certainly there is good to be got from reading Tolstoy, who is a man of genius; but his disciples, as usual, ground themselves on his peculiarities. We admit, however, that there is something sublime in the way in which he goes on repeating his own ideas of non-resistance without paying the slightest regard to anything that is said against them. Religionists are prone to that practice. Tolstoy would probably have been a greater and more beneficent power if he had dropped Christianity altogether.

J. R.—It is all nonsense. We did not "refuse" the advertisement you refer to. It dropped out in the ordinary way of business, our manager tells us, because the advertiser was not paying for it.

GEORGE JACOB.—You are as much entitled to your opinion as we are to ours. Thanks for the cuttings. Glad to have your opinion, in reference to the *John Bull* paragraph, that "Mr. Foote chose the better part."

L. HADFIELD.—Thanks for the cuttings. See "Acid Drops."

H. SCHLECHTE.—We dealt with Mr. George Wise's nonsense in last week's "Acid Drops." Thanks for cutting, all the same.

F. HALL.—Neither verse nor prose. Sorry we cannot insert. From one or two sentences we think you have done yourself an injustice.

P. JERMIN.—The Education Bill has to go through the House of Lords yet. We shall wait until the kaleidoscope gets its last shake; then we intend to get to business. If "Simple Bible Teaching" is finally established as the State religion in schools we shall be obliged to carry on a fresh campaign against the Bible by addressing the children.

I. J. (Belfast)—Sorry we have not time to answer such letters by post. Literature on all subjects is so vast now, that you must indicate more particularly the direction in which you wish to read before we can refer you to suitable books. "Present-day thought" is far too wide.

F. LONSDALE.—Book sent; hope you received it.

T. M. WATTS.—Evan Roberts seems a poor creature. Send us news about something else if possible.

D. E. BONVONNI.—That Sunderland prospectus was issued without the knowledge of the pastor or the church; it appears to have been the work of a well-meaning zealot, who had no idea that the truth could be blasphemous, or that what is so serious to him would be such a joke to other people.

G. ROLEFFS.—Mr. George Wise is as slippery as ever. His converted "Secularist leaders" fade into "members and speakers of the N. S. S.," and are still without names and addresses. He also denies having said that there were only five or six N. S. S. Branches now; he was referring to "halls of science." The only course with such men is to pin them down to black on white.

E. MURCROFT.—As the Protestant champion practically denies having said what you challenged him to prove, you should point that out, and waste no more time upon him. We quite understand that Christ is his "best friend." He would never have been heard of otherwise.

E. W.—Letters like yours give us encouragement. We are very glad to hear that your six months' reading of the *Freethinker* has "educated your mind from a dense and muddled conception of things to one of light and reason." Your gratitude for such aid is natural, but don't repine because you cannot give the cause money; there are other ways of helping; every *Freethinker* can be a missionary by circulating *Freethought* literature. Put this journal into fresh hands; lend or give away a pamphlet when you have read it; and thus promote the mental emancipation of others.

E. HUNTER.—Glad to hear you were so helped by our paragraphs in reply to Sir Conan Doyle. Your clerical friend is romancing about Darwin. The only truth in his rigmarole is the statement that Darwin subscribed to a missionary society working amongst the lowest of the human race in Patagonia. He never subscribed to Christian work in any civilised country. See our pamphlet, *Darwin on God*, which gives full information on the whole subject.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

J. BURRELL.—Yes, we are still sending gratuitous copies of this journal post free for six consecutive weeks to addresses supplied by our readers. Pleased to have your congratulations on the standard maintained in the *Freethinker*.

D. MALINGER.—Sent as requested.

W. MALONEY.—Glad to see you are challenging the Wigan bigots who have been raking up the Torrey filth about Paine and Ingersoll. We congratulate the *Examiner* on its sense of fair play.

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.

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Sugar Plums.

London Freethinkers will please note that Sunday, September 9, is the date fixed for the "reception" of our old friend and colleague, Mr. Joseph Symes, who has returned to England after an absence of twenty-three years. The Queen's (Minor) Hall has been engaged for this function, and Mr. G. W. Foote, as President of the National Secular Society, will take the chair and introduce Mr. Symes to the audience, many of whom, of course, will only know him through frequent references to him in the *Freethinker*, or through his occasional contributions to our columns. Mr. Symes has been a hard worker and a bold fighter in the cause of *Freethought*. We hope, therefore, that the metropolitan "saints" will turn up in strong force on this occasion, and give the veteran an enthusiastic greeting.

We have asked Mr. Cohen and Mr. Lloyd to join in this reception to Mr. Symes, and both have cheerfully agreed to do so, the latter cancelling an open-air engagement in order to be present.

Stratford Town Hall has been engaged for three more Sunday evening lectures, under the auspices of the Secular Society, Limited, with the co-operation of the West Ham N. S. S. Branch. The dates are September 16, 23, and 30, and the lecturers Messrs. Foote, Cohen, and Lloyd.

Mr. Foote's lecture at Stratford Town Hall on Sunday evening, September 23, will be the beginning of his new lecture season. On the following Sunday he will lecture at Manchester, on the Sunday following that at Glasgow, and so on throughout the winter. He hopes to be in first-rate form for the platform work, which is, of course, a serious addition to his editorial labors.

Mr. Cohen has been holidaying in Wales and laying in a stock of health and strength for the winter's lecturing. He appeared to us to need the change, and we are glad it has done him so much good.

Mr. Cohen will be lecturing in Victoria Park to-day (Aug. 26), both afternoon and evening. Having just returned home from his holiday, he will doubtless be in three-star form.

We have received a letter, dated August 19, from our veteran friend, Captain Otto Thomson, of Stockholm. Several copies of the *Freethinker* failed to reach him, and he feared we had stopped sending it, but he discovered that they had been intercepted by the police, who appear to have extensive functions in Sweden. Captain Thomson sends greetings to Mr. Joseph Symes, and to us and the *Freethinker* staff the heartiest good wishes—which are reciprocated.

One of our Belfast readers, a working man, has just ordered £2 worth of literature from our publishing office. He has for some time been actively circulating *Freethought* literature amongst his fellow workmen. "I have distributed," he writes, "two or three parcels of your Torrey pamphlets, some 2,000 or more. I had also from you some 1,500 *Facts Worth Knowing*, which I have made good use of. I have also sold and given away six dozen *Age of Reason* and as many *Bible Romances*." Nor is this "saint's" effort confined to our own publications. He does his best all round, and we wish his example were freely imitated. Every *Freethinker* might become a *Freethought* missionary if he would only take the trouble—like William J. McMurray.

Dr. Culpeper.

["Faith-healing is the only explanation of the fact that mediæval medicine, with its unspeakable potions and deadly methods of treatment, left any of its patients alive."—*Daily News*, June 2, 1906.]

FREETHINKERS may discover an interest all their own by perusing Dr. Nicholas Culpeper's *The English Physician*, with which is bound *The London Dispensatory*. This ancient book, somewhat rare now, is proof of the generally chaotic condition of the physician's mind in the days of Cromwell. It is, moreover, an example of the abject credulity of the ignorant and afflicted at that period. With its old leather covers and curious binding, its worm-eaten pages, the s's like f's, causing one to lisp in reading such words as "faid" for said, "Jerufalem" for Jerusalem, "Mafter" for Master; the interposition of extraneous snatches of hymns, and ridiculous references to God amongst the formulæ for pills for the gripes and mixture for the worms, carry one back in imagination, and present in visionary fashion the venerable Dr. Culpeper himself. One can see him, in the mind's eye, in stockings and shoes, carrying a gold-nobbed stick and snuff-box, and, with the air of learned greatness, setting out to dose with bitter wort and surging electuary some unfortunate sufferer.

The first page is—"To the Readdr." In this Dr. Culpeper calls Aristotle to bear witness that—

"Pride is the first visible sin in a child, whereby we may gather that it was the first sin of Adam; for knowledge, being the first Virtue a Child minds, so if apparent to them that do but with the eye of Reason heed their actions even whilst they are very young, even before they are a year old, even by natural instinct whereby a man may more than guess but knowledge was the greatest loss, or at least one of the greatest we lost by the fall of Adam: knowledge, faith, Aristotle, is in Prosperity an Ornament, in Adversity a Refuge; and truly there is almost no greater enemy to knowledge in the world than Pride and Covetousness: but some men are so damnable proud and envious withal, that they would have no body know anything but themselves; the one I hope will shortly learn better manners, and the other be a burden too heavy for the Earth long to bear."

In the same strain is his *Description and Nature of Herbs*, in which he declares that Solomon employed his wisdom received of God in searching after them, which he wrote in books which were carried to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, kept in the Temple at Jerusalem, transported to Babylon in the Captivity, Alexander the Great Tyrant gave them to Aristotle, who committed them to the "mercy" (sic) of the fire, and so on. He says:—

"But since the daies of Solomon, many have those famous men been that have written of this Subject, and great Encouragements have been given them by Princes. Mathiolius, his greediness was such to finish his Comment upon *Discorides*, which book is yet in use in the famous Universities.....that he forgot to count what the charges of it might amount to, although I rather commend him for his diligence in Studie and Care of the World's good, than harbor the least ill thought of him for not counting the middle and both ends before he began the Work, I say when he came to count the charges of Printing and Cutting the Cuts it far surmounted his Estate," etc.

There follow pages of this hodge-podge, all to the "Readdr," and further extended quotation would only be wearisome. Dr. Culpeper explains, however, that he satisfied himself as to the virtues of herbs, plants, and trees; he says he knew well enough the "whole" world, and everything in it, was formed of a composition of contrary elements, and in such a harmony as must show the wisdom and power of the "Creator of the Creations"; that "sickness and health were caused naturally (though God may have other ends best known to himself), by the various operations of the *Macrocosm*; and I could not be ignorant that as the cause is, so must the cure be; and, therefore, he that would know the operations of herbs must look up as high as the stars." He declares that the influ-

ence of the stars upon herbs and the body of man show the admirable harmony in creation. He frequently breaks into verse, and does so here with the words:—

"Because out of thy thoughts God should not pass,
His Image stamped is on every grass."

"This, indeed, is true," he affirms, "but how much more doth the Wisdom and Excellencie of God appear if we consider the Harmony of the Creation in the Vertue and Operation of every Herb?" Unfortunately, it does not appear to have occurred to the Doctor that his God would have shown himself wiser in preventing the diseases instead of "sending" doubtful antidotes.

"Macrocosm" is a good word for Culpeper; he was ignorant, of course, of microcosm. He probably meant minute, but visible, life. As for the word itself, we could flabbergast him now by merely quoting one of the known staphylococci—say the *staphylococcus pyogenes aureus*—and Culpeper would have killed any patient by the bare mention of it.

According to the Doctor's astrology, the planets cause many diseases, and he shows which planet causes a particular disease, which planet cures by sympathy, which by antipathy, and so on. The cures are duly set forth, though it is difficult to find them in this big book without definite plans, and having an homonymous index perfectly exasperating; in fact, the index is Holy Ghost-like in the sense that it passeth understanding. Mercury appears to wield the sceptre with regard to the brain; the breast and liver are "mightily influenced" by Jupiter, and the heart and vitals are governed by the Sun. He asserts:—

"You may oppose diseases by herbs of the planet opposite to the planet that causeth them, as diseases of Jupiter by herbs of Mercury, and the contrary diseases of Mars by herbs of Venus, and the contrary."

If this is so, then God must have been foolish to create the planets at cross purposes. The Sun and Moon cure the eyes, Saturn the spleen, Jupiter the liver, Mars the gall, and Venus diseases of generation. He has the following words of adoration before the shrine of the "Blessed Thistle":—

"The key of all is the herb Wormwood; which, if it will not fit the lock, I will here give it you again in another herb of the same planet.....and here I give it you plainly, without any circumstances. The herb is *Carduus Benedictus*, or 'Holy Thistle'.....it is a herb of Mars, and under the sign Aries."

It "cures swimmings of the head because Aries is the house of Mars; yellow jaundice because Mars governs Choller; strengthens the attractive faculty in man; helps red faces because Mars causeth them; helps plague-sores, boils.....and bitings of mad dogs." It cures another ailment by antipathy to "Venus, who governs it; strengthens the memory, cures deafness by antipathy to Saturn, who hath his fall in Aries, which rules the head; cures Agues and other diseases of Melancholly.....caused by the Moon." He concludes "to the Readdr" as follows:—

"If you please to make use of these Rules you shall find them true throughout the Book.....for your good did I pen it.....you see what necessity there is for every Physician to be an Astrologer; you have heard it before, I suppose, but now you know it; what remains, but that you labor to glorify God in your several places.....I remain, a Friend, during life, ready to my poor power to help,

NICH. CULPEPER.

Spittle-fields, next door to the red-lyon,
Novb. 6, 1652."

Then there is a list of books "printed by Peter Cole at the sign of the Printing Press in Cornhill, by the Exchange, London." This refers mainly to medical books, but sandwiched between them are astrological works, like the *Ephemeris*, foretelling the state of the year by the conjunction of Saturn and Mars. There is a Godly and Fruitful Exposition of the First Epistle of Peter, and Mr. Phillip's Treatise on Hell, doubtless soothing and comforting to the poor sufferer in extremis.

Culpeper's drugs were composed of many varieties of herbs, grasses, trees, and insects. Perhaps at the present time, when medical science seems to be tending towards reduction in drugging, and up-to-date medical men are, to some extent, returning to the "simples," we must not be too hard on Culpeper. According to his lights he was wise, and in the world as it then was, and compared to his patients who were mere human turnips, he was even clever. We can trace a shrouded perspicacity throughout. But what he would do if he could return and peruse a late biological work, or witness an intricate operation under anæsthetics, say ovariectomy or appendisectomy, who can say? Probably he would invoke Venus, or, as a short cut, fall on his knees and appeal to the "Creator of the Creations." He says ground ivy and swines' grease "helpeth old fores and draweth forth nails gotten into the flesh." Fancy a four-inch nail extracted by ivy-leaves and fat! Apples are good for "fainting stomachs," but, he says, "they are extream windy."

No less than seven columns are stuffed with a laudatory diatribe on Wormwood, and the following abbreviated extract therefrom, without the lispings and capitals and italics, will serve as an example:—

"Three Wormwoods are familiar with us; one I shall not describe, another I shall describe, and the third be critical at. And I care not greatly if I begin with the last first. Sea Wormwood is good for something, because God made nothing in vain. Near the sea people live, therefore it is more fitting for their bodies because nourished by the same air; and this I had from Dr. Reason. In whose body Dr. Reason dwells not, dwells Dr. Madness; and he brings in his brethren, Dr. Ignorance, Dr. Folly, and Dr. Sickness; and these together make way for Dr. Death, and the latter end of that man is worse than the beginning. Pride was the cause of Adam's fall; Pride begate a daughter; I do not know the father of it, unless the Devil, but she christoned it and called it Appetite. The tender mercies of God being over all his works, hath, by an eternal Providence, planted it by the sea side. The eternal God, when he Created the Creation, made one part of it in continual dependency upon another part, because himself is only permanent."

Under "Vertues of Wormwood" we have: "It helps the evils Venus and her wanton girls produce, by Antipathy," and Dr. Culpeper asks, "Did God make creatures to do the Creation a mischief?" He does not answer his question, but rails at the "Colledg of Physicians" because they are "too stately to learn about Wormwood; they say a mouse is under the dominion of the Moon, and that's the reason they feed in the night. The house of the Moon is Cancer. (Rats are of the same nature with mice, but that they are a little bigger.) Mars receives his fall in Cancer; ergo Wormwood, being an herb of Mars, is a present remedy for the bitings of rats and mice." What incontrovertible logic! Then comes an imaginary conversation between Jupiter and Mars, which is a lengthy jargon and medley of words. He concludes his description of Wormwood as follows:—

"He that reads this, and understands what he reads, he hath a jewel of more worth than a diamond; he that understands it not is little fit to give physic..... There lies the key which will unlock the 'Cabbinct of Physick': I have delivered it so plainly as I durst..... this shall live when I am dead; and thus I leave the world, not caring a halfponny whether they like or dislike it. The grave equals all men, and therefore shall equal me with the Princes, until which time the Eternal Providence is over me; then the ill tongue of a prattling priest shall never trouble me, and so much for Wormwood."

Good old Doctor! You saw through the priests, at any rate!

The second half of the book, *Pharmacopœia Iron-dinensis*, contains an explanation of the qualities and properties of every "Simple," virtues and uses of the "Compounds," and all the medicines that were in the old *Latin Dispensatory*. There is an elaborate preface from the printer, Peter Cole. Cole, himself a physician, in long-winded phraseology, complains that the old physicians consulted with flesh and

blood rather than with "the Nervous Divine Liquor." After the style of the penny showman, he thus trots out his wares:—

"Here in this book you have the Emperours Pils, the Queen of Colens Plaister, the Countess Ointment, the Bishops Electuary, the Abbots Cordial Poudr: You have Medicaments invented by the Consultation of whol Colledgs of Physicians, Parliaments of Physicians, such as *London Treacle*, Syrup of Rhubarb, etc."

Fancy a Parliament sitting in solemn conclave on the merits of treacle! He goes on: "Nay you have one Medicament invented by a King which if you take you have a King to be your Physician." Under the heading "Parts of Living Creatures and Excrements" we have the "brain of an hare being roasted, helps tremblings and prevents hair falling off. The head of a coal black cat being burnt to ashes in a new pot and some of the ashes blown into the eyes cures blindness. The head of a young kite treated the same and a dram taken every morning cures the gout. Crabs eyes break the stone and open stoppings.....The lungs of a fox dried strengthen the lungs." (Many things are here printed quite unfit for reproduction to-day.) The "scul" of a man that was never buried, beaten to powder, and given inwardly, helps palsy; and the "small triangular bone in the scul absolutely cures falling sickness so that it will never come again." This appears so definite that the marvel is Mr. Cole ever gave for this ailment anything else. Oh, Mr. Cole, what a funny man you were! In those days they were always being possessed by the Devil, or bewitched; so Mr. Cole tells us that if anyone be so, put some quicksilver in a quill, "stop'd close," and lay it under the threshold of the door. The Cole treatment was certainly more merciful than the nearly drowning of the insane obtaining at a later period, and both no doubt were equally efficacious. Then we are informed that "*Johns Wort* born about one keeps one from being hurt by Devils." As Freethinkers, we can only hope John's Wort flourishes in the tropical regions prepared for us.

Under "Mettals Minerals and Stones" Dr. Culpeper says: "The saphyr resisteth Necromantick Apparitions," in which case the Psychological Research Society should be informed; they might at least seek to circumvent the approach of any inquirer wearing sapphire jewellery. "There is a stone of the bigness of a bean found in the gizzard of an old cock, which makes him that bare it beloved, constant and bold, valiant in fighting, beloved by women, potent in the sports of Venus....." This gizzard remedy sounds a bit bizarre now—metaphorically sticks in our gizzard; but why, if true, did not every man Jack of them carry one? Then we are told that in ancient times, when men lived more in health, simples were more in use; now compounds take the chief place, and men are far more sickly than before, and the opinion is often expressed that herbs, roots, and plants that grow near a man are more "congruous to his nature than any outlandish Rubbish whatsoever." Perhaps there is a substratum of truth in this, Culpeper; but we elect to take it with a grain of chloride of sodium nevertheless.

Of "Living Creatures" he gives us—"Snails with shells on their backs, the shells broken, and they boyled in spring water, but not scumed at al, for the scum will sink of itself, and the water drunk for consumption." These snails must not be "purged from their slime because man being made of slime of the earth the slimy substance recovers him when he is wasted." There was no Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Dr. Culpeper's time, or he would have got six months for the following:—

"Hang a water snake by a string through her tail over a vessel of water into which she may put her head, after some days she will vomit a stone, which dropping in the water will drink it al up, which being hung about the neck stops melancholly illusions."

Under "Oyntments" we have:—

"Oyntment of the Apostles, because of its twelve

ingredients,.....it may justly merit such an Appellation, as great Mountains in the Old Testament and great Cedars are called Cedars of God and Mountains of God by the Holy penman, without any imputation of blasphemy or undecency.....so to call this the *Oyntment of the Apostles* and another *Manus Christi* savors of honor and adoration of Christ and his worthy Messengers. And he that called an approved excellent Plaister *Gracia Dei* did thereby piously acknowledge that the vertu of that Plaister did spring from God, and that it was of his meer grace and favor to aid the Invention and Application thereof."

This last expression is quite Patent Office phraseology, and really sounds too modern.

"Likewise he that finding the sovereign refreshment and comfort of *wood-sorrell* in a burning Feaver called it *Hallelu-jah*, Praise the Aeternal, was a pious person and exceedingly to be comended as wel quarrel with the Patriarch *Jacob* for anointing a stone and calling it the House of God and for building an Altar and calling it the God of Israel."

There is a big heading with the word PLAISTERS, under which Culpeper admonishes his readers—also in special type—not to eat them. He says: "I hope no body is so simple as to eat Plaisters." This seems a standing proof of the general simplicity and blind credulity of his patients.

Amongst the recipes to have in hand are Flakes of Brass with Salt and Brimstone burnt to ashes, young Swallows, Hedgehogs, Frogs, Toads and Mice, burnt in a vessel, and the ashes kept for use, Thin flakes of Lead with Sulphur, the fresh Lungs of a Fox dried, etc.

The spelling of certain words is extraordinary, as Culpeper repeatedly spells certain words differently, and capitals are thrown in with a very free hand. Altogether it is a book, as we have said, of exceptional interest to the Freethinker—although, of course, it would also be of interest to the thoughtful medical mind. There are occasional spaces unfilled with type, and these have been utilised for the written snatches of hymns and extempore appeals to the great God above. One such space has verses in shaky and infirm characters—probably a woman's hand; the ink is now faded almost out of sight. This writing may, for what we know now, have been prompted by terror of the lay mind after diligent perusal of the dread and disgusting, and often useless, remedies of Dr. Culpeper, and the characters rendered more tottery as a result of repeated dosing and drenching by him. We can imagine his treatment when it was at last proving fatal, being coupled with references to one greater than himself, the Infinite and Omnipotent Physician who had ordained Death and after this the Judgment. Hence the following:—

"O welcom to me Death and Grave
My deare Redemer is my Champion Brave
He is my Hop and Confidanc
He is my Councelor both day and night
Blessed Jesus Christ thee Implore
Grant thy grase that I thee may adore
Thy holy spirit take not away from me
But still encrease it to me hourly."

Dr. Culpeper's scientific definition of lightning is just worth quoting as showing the free and easy way in which he dealt in the bitter wort and the sorrel as infallible cures for ills for which he largely failed to "diagonisticate" the cause. It is—"Sulphurios vapor being kept in the cloud turns to real Fire." *Se non è vero, è ben trovato!*

In the whole book Dr. Culpeper says not a word as to the all-important matter of diet. But perhaps it is just as well. For one trembles to think what personal acquaintance with him might have involved. An invitation to dine with him, for instance, might have meant a *menu* something like this: "Puppy dogs newly whelped ("oyl of whelps"), with cat's head served up with "oyl of earthworms," garnished with field mice, and with a *sauce piquant* of unmentionable ingredients. This, or something like it, seems a dish that shoves itself in front of us, as it were.

However, Dr. Culpeper is dead.

A. FAGG.

Roasting Torrey-Alexander.

WE are living in a striking age from whatever aspect considered—an age of decadent creeds and changing standards. The historian of the future, in summing up the salient characteristics of the present inhabitants of the United States, will no doubt classify them as the most restlessly progressive people, the greatest road, city and empire builders that this world has known, and an essentially practical race. On the other hand, the amazing facility with which so intelligent a people submits to being exploited by any religious fakir or thaumaturgist that just happens along will not escape criticism from the Greens or Gibbons of future ages.

It was refreshing to find the esteemed *Public Ledger* not long ago rejoicing, apparently, in certain strange discoveries and tidings of great joy that had been brought to the good people of Philadelphia by a Doctor Torrey and a Mr. Alexander, itinerant, "evangelists" or "missionaries," or "revivalists." For, while Philadelphia may possibly lack some of the briskness of New York and other large cities, yet surely the marvels alleged to have occurred under Tiberius Cæsar should have reached that fair city by this time. They were stale news even when Constantine, led by his Empress Helena, promulgated an official religion for the Western Roman empire, only sixteen centuries ago, and since that time these wonders have certainly been exhaustively discussed in all their possible bearings on human society as well as the proved interpolations in the few passages of contemporary writers, which refer to them. Yet, notwithstanding the deductions (so contemptuous for certain forms of primitive beliefs) arrived at by masters of the human intellect—such men as John Stuart Mill, Spencer, Darwin, Huxley—at the present moment, to our discredit be it said among English-speaking races, the profession of "Howling Dervish" for which ignorance is a good qualification, is one of the most immediately profitable that even a get-rich-quick schemer can turn his attention to.

The good news that Philadelphia was asleep and needed reviving reached the ears of Doctor Torrey and those of the similarly inspired Mr. Alexander at an opportune moment, and they very laudably hastened to introduce salvation to the city of brotherly love. A much wider field of effort has presented itself in France. And what may not have been lost to the French population by the absence of these reverend gentlemen at this precise juncture? The government and legislators of that country have been engaged for a year or more in a rough-and-tumble fight with "the church" there; indeed, that was a precious opportunity for our revivalists, either as umpires or, better still, participants in the fray. In the absence of any such champions "the church" over there has been worsted, and the principal French newspapers, with few exceptions, are congratulating the government upon its victory.

In our own land we appear slow in realising that cant and superstition are the deadliest enemies of human progress. Has education not sufficiently advanced among us to render Holy Ghosts, Dowicium, spook worship, and other such religious masquerades impossible? What renders such beliefs possible in the first instance? There lies the crux of the problem. Thirty years ago, when Franco, still trembling after her tremendous defeat by Germany, was being reorganised by such pure patriots as Gambetta and M. Thiers, Paul Bert, then minister of public instruction, addressed the chamber of deputies to the following effect: "It is not our domestic discords, it is not England, nor even the trained German legions that constitute the greatest menace to Frenchmen and the prosperity of France, still bleeding from her wounds, but 'the man in black.'" His memorable words have borne fruit. But as to the vultures who, under a clerical garb and under all kinds of denominations, are allowed to impose on the credulity of the British or American public without restraint, such as these were not tolerated in France, Germany, or Switzerland at any period, but were amenable to the law as rogues or impostors. The French minister was referring only to the orthodox regular French clergy, good enough for the feudal ages of Europe, but now deemed mischievous, reactionary, and a breeder of debasing superstitions.

Is there no lesson that our cultivated and more thoughtful class of citizens can derive from this great French national movement? For such it is. Are the "shepherds" and "tub-thumpers," the types so well portrayed by Charles Dickens, forever to be encouraged and go unrebuked by the press of this country? We must decline to believe that Philadelphia was asleep and needed awakening by Doctor Torrey and Mr. Alexander. The Reverend Doctor Cass, chairman of the "mission," announced that the total expense of "the revival" reached \$40,000. The profits were not stated. In this kind of business they never are, nor their disposal. On a rough calculation it cost about \$5 a head to convert a Philadelphian. In Atlanta, the next "stand" for the two worthies, it no doubt costs much more.

—New York Commercial

The Tyneside Picnic.

On August 5 we (the Stanley Branch) visited Marsden Rock for our Annual Picnic, where we were joined by the Newcastle, South Shields, and Hetton Branches of the N. S. S. We had an excellent program drawn up for the occasion, and there is no doubt that we would have had a very pleasant day but for an unfortunate accident that happened. Some of the West Stanley friends were about four or five hundred yards from the end of the journey when the trap-shafts broke, the occupants being thrown violently to the ground, with the result that one little boy, who was with some of the friends, had his arm broken, which, of course, marred the pleasure for the rest of the day.

We sat down to tea about 4.30 in the Grotto, and did full justice to the grand repast placed before us. Afterwards we held a very successful meeting under the able chairmanship of Mr. Peacock, of South Shields, who, after a few introductory remarks, called upon Mr. Mitchell, of Newcastle, to propose the following resolution: "That we, the Freethinkers of the North of England, view with dissatisfaction the present Education Bill of the present Government, and hereby express our opinion that purely Secular Education in all State-supported schools is the only just and logical solution of the question, and that we view with great pleasure the introduction in the new code from the Education Department of the teaching of morality apart from all religion." The resolution was seconded by Mr. Hall Nicholson, of West Stanley, and supported by Mr. Elstob, of Newcastle, and several other gentlemen present. The resolution, on being put to the meeting, was carried unanimously. The chairman then called upon Mr. John White, of the West Stanley Branch, to propose the following resolution: "That we, the members of the West Stanley, Newcastle, South Shields, and Hetton Branches of the N. S. S., here assembled at Marsden Rock for their Annual Picnic, extend to Mr. Joseph Symes a hearty welcome on his return to his native land, and hope that he will live long to grace the Freethought Cause." The resolution was seconded by Mr. Chapman, of South Shields, and supported by Mr. Wright and others, and, on being put to the meeting, was also carried unanimously. The chairman then closed the meeting, and, as it was near the time settled for our departure, we had to bid our friends adieu and make preparations for our homeward journey.

JOHN W. WHITE.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF ETHICS.

Certain biases, talents, executive skills, are special to each individual; but the high, contemplative, all-absorbing vision, the sense of Right and Wrong, is alike in all. Its attributes are self-existence, eternity, intuition and command. It is the mind of the mind. We belong to it, not it to us. It is in all men, and constitute them men. In bad men it is dormant, as health is in men entranced or drunken; but, however inoperative, it exists underneath whatever vices and errors. The extreme simplicity of this intuition embarrasses every attempt at analysis. We can only mark, one by one, the perfections which it combines in every act. It admits of no appeal, looks to no superior essence. It is the reason of things. The antagonist nature is the individual, formed into a finite body of exact dimensions, with appetites which take from everybody else what they appropriate to themselves, and would enlist the entire spiritual faculty of the individual, if it were possible, in catering for them. On the perpetual conflict between the dictate of this universal mind and the wishes and interests of the individual, the moral discipline of life is built.—Emerson.

Your gods are as avaricious as old age could make them. Every religion that starts up, beyond Persia, takes only as much truth to stand upon as will raise her safely to men's purses. The Egyptian priests have extensive lauds; Attica is poorer in soil: there is requisite to have oracles too and sacrifices, gold and cattle, oil and milk, wax and honey. If this religion should be succeeded by another, as it must be when the fraud is laid open, the populace will follow those enthusiasts who throw down the images of the gods, and will help them the next morning to raise up others in the same places, or even those elsewhere, differing but in name. Pride will at first put on the garment of Humility; and soon afterward will Humility raise up her sordid baldness out of Pride's. Change in rituals is made purely for lucre, and under the name of Reformation, comes only to break up a virgin turf or to pierce into an unexplored mine. Religion with you began in veneration for those who delivered you from robbers; it will end in the discovery that your temples have ever been the dens of them.—Landor, "Cyrus" to "Xenophon."

For my part, with the manifold directions in which my nature moves, I cannot be satisfied with a single mode of thought. As poet and artist I am a polytheist; on the other hand, as a student of Nature I am a pantheist—and both with equal positiveness. When I need a God for my personal nature, as a moral and spiritual man, he also exists for me.—Goethe.

Matter and its movement are the ultimate factors to which all things may be traced, whilst they themselves can be traced no further. They are the great X and Y, whose eternal and illimitable process constitutes the universe.—Büchner.

Verily there are rewards for our doing good to dumb animals, and giving them water to drink. An adulteress was forgiven who passed by a dog at a well; for the dog was holding out his tongue from thirst, which was near killing him; and the woman took off her boot, and tied it to the end of her garment, and drew water for the dog, and gave him to drink; and she was forgiven for that act.—Mohammed.

THE SHIP OF LIFE.

Where lies the land to which the ship would go?
Far, far ahead, is all her seamen know.
And where the land she travels from? Away,
Far, far behind, is all that they can say.

On sunny moons upon the deck's smooth face,
Linked arm in arm, how pleasant here to pace;
Or o'er the stern reclining, watch below
The foaming wake far widening as we go.

On stormy nights when wild north-westerns rave,
How proud a thing to fight with wind and wave!
The dripping sailor on the reeling mast
Exults to bear, and scorns to wish it past.

Where lies the land to which the ship would go?
Far, far ahead, is all her seamen know.
And where the land she travels from? Away,
Far, far behind, is all that they can say.

—Arthur Hugh Clough

Death is a cool and pleasant night,
Life is a sultry day,
'Tis growing dark—I'm weary;
For day has tired me with his light.

Over my bed a far tree gleams,
There sings a nightingale;
She sings of aught save love;
I hear it even in my dreams.

—Heine.

Nature and Mind—to Christians we don't speak so.
Thence to burn Atheists we seek so,
For such discourses very dangerous be.
Nature is Sin, and Mind is Devil:
Doubt they beget in shameless revel,
Their hybrid in deformity.
Not so with us!—Two only races
Have in the Empire kept their places,
And prop the throne with worthy weight.
The Saints and Knights are they: together
They breast each spell of thunder-weather,
And take for pay the Church and State.

—Goethe's "Faust" (Part II).

FOUND OUT.

Come, let us damn him—he has fallen—
He that a week ago
Was listed with the high and mighty
Is mean to-day and low.

We knew he lied and gouged and cheated
To gain his wrongful ends,
But he was rich and we were flattered
To be among his friends.

Come, let us damn him—he is branded—
The law has brought him low—
He was as bad before—we knew it,
But it wasn't proved, you know.

—S. E. Kiser.

A BUSY SAGE.

Solomon was making his summer preparations.
"Think," he groaned, "of the number of windows I have to close, cats to feed and letters to write while the Mrs. S.'s are away."

Thus indeed did he keep bachelor's hall under difficulties.

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.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15 and 6, C. Cohen.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S.: Brockwell Park, 11.30, 3.15; and 6, J. Rowney.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road, Dalston): 11.30, Mr. Davies, "Are We Downhearted?"

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill, Hampstead): 3.30, F. A. Davies, a Lecture; 6.15, H. B. Samuels, "Bible Morality."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (The Grove, Stratford): 7, Carl Quinn, "The Death of Miracles."

WEST LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Hyde Park, Marble Arch): 11.30, Debate, Messrs. Schaller and Lawson, "Is Atheism Superior to Christianity?"

WOOLWICH BRANCH N. S. S. (Beresford-square): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey.

COUNTRY.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Milton Hall, Daulby-street): 7, Mr. Stile, "The Empire and its True Ideal."

MERTHYR VALE BRANCH N. S. S. (Ruskin Hall, Aberfau): 3, Debate, F. Honeybone and J. Edwards, "The Efficacy of Prayer."

MOUNTAIN ASH BRANCH N. S. S. (Glyde's Restaurant, Commercial-street): 6, W. H. Powell, "Science and Religion."

PORTH BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Room, Town Hall): 6.30, "Is the Preaching of the Gospel an Honest Calling?"

WEST STANLEY BRANCH N. S. S. (4 Kip Hill): 3.30, R. Bell, "The Folly of Collecting Frozen Facts."

OUTDOOR.

WIGAN (Market Square): Every Tuesday night, at 7.45 p.m., a Lecture.

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