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THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXVII.—NO. 8

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 1907

PRICE TWOPENCE

*Others, I doubt not, if not we,
The issue of our toils shall see;
Young children gather as their own
The harvest that the dead had sown,
The dead forgotten and unknown.*

—A. H. CLOUGH.

Satan.

CARDUCCI, the great Italian poet and Freethinker, who has just been buried at Bologna amidst the grief of a whole nation, made himself famous forty years ago by his *Hymn to Satan*. The very title of this poem is enough to upset the godly. To treat Satan with respect and even admiration is shocking; to address him as if he were intellectually and morally superior to Jehovah is blasphemy. This is how it strikes the orthodox Christian. But in this, as in so many other matters, the orthodox Christian is wrong.

Satan is the great, vague, impressive figure of the Bible. When the "sons of God present themselves before the Lord" in the first chapter of Job, Satan comes also amongst them, and the Lord addresses him in terms of the highest courtesy. They bow to each other like a couple of old Castilian nobles. And when the compliments are over the Lord boasts of his servant Job as a fine and noble fellow; but Satan throws cold water on the heat of the Lord's exultation by asking the dramatic and searching question, "Doth Job fear God for nought?" This was a fresh view of the case; the Lord had not seen it in that light before; so he resolved to put Job to the test.

Satan is here the challenger. He asks the Deity himself if he is perfectly sure of what he is talking about. And is it not curious that while one account represents the Lord as tempting David to number Israel another account represents Satan as tempting him to take the census—which was certainly a step in civilisation? Over against the Lord, with his omnipotence and his cocksure omniscience, stands Satan with the probe of his perpetual interrogation. Ancient custom is confronted with the spirit of novelty—solid conservatism with the quick spirit of revolt. Is it so? Should it be so? Shall it be so? Such is the eternal gradation of questioning which is the vital essence of all progress.

It was this spirit of revolt that Carducci addressed in the *Hymn to Satan*. In our own smaller way we touched the same point, many years ago, in an *Imaginary Conversation* we wrote between Satan and Michael. After reminding Michael of his unsuccessful effort to send a breath of freedom through the courts of heaven, Satan continues (in that old piece of ours) in the following manner:—

"I animate all who fight against servitude and somnolence. The heroes and martyrs of liberty and progress

in every age have drunk of the strength of my spirit. I inspire the revolter, the scorner, the sceptic, the satirist. I still distribute the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. I am the soul of the world. The fire of my inspiration may consume, but it gives unspeakable rapture. I am the Prometheus of the universe, and keep it from stagnating under the icy hand of power. Milton, Goethe, and Byron made me the hero of their greatest poems, and felt my power in despite of themselves. Burns spoke of me with a tenderness he never displayed towards God. Wits and humorists own my sway. I moved the minds of Aristophanes and Lucian, of Erasmus and Rabelais, and through the pen of Voltaire I shattered the mental slavery of Europe. I am the lightning of the human mind. I level thrones and altars, and annihilate blinding customs. With the goad of a restless aspiration I urge men on, until they outgrow faith and fear, until the Slave stands erect before the Tyrant and defies his curse."

The statement that Satan is the hero of Milton's, Goethe's, and Byron's greatest poems is perfectly true. Let us look at the facts of the case for a moment.

Milton's genius dilates to its greatest capacity whenever Satan appears upon the scene. God the Father, in *Paradise Lost*, is a pompous old fogey, and God the Son is a prosy prig—but Satan is always magnificent. What a grand picture Milton draws of the fallen archangel, with his splendid presence, his sleepless intellect, his indomitable pride, and his invincible courage. Some of Cromwell's characteristics crept into the portrait. The great Regicide sat as one of the models for the great Rebel—and the result gives the poem its finest majesty. And when Satan is humiliated, as in the hissing-snakes episode, we feel shocked and pained as at the spectacle of fallen greatness trampled into the dust. This also is very noteworthy. God the Father never shivers at the thought of his creatures' damnation; he is only concerned to vindicate his own character; but Satan, as he watches the innocent couple in happiness in the garden, feels compunction at making them pawns in the game between himself and the lord of heaven, and deplors the necessity of having to do what else, though damned, he would abhor.

Goethe puts nearly all the intellect, and all the best of the morality, of *Faust* into the mouth of Mephistopheles. Satan thus became, for the great German poet, the spokesman of all sorts of daring ideas and profound reflections. Mephistopheles is the real soul of *Faust*. Faust himself, and Marguerite, are but the foils for that subtle and audacious spirit. Sentimentalism has made too much of them. For, after all, there is great force in Lamb's question as to Marguerite's value, and his remark that Marlow gave his Faust no less a star of beauty and romance than Helen of Greece.

And does not Satan dominate in Byron's superb *Vision of Judgment*? Southey, George III., Michael himself—these are all nothing to the tremendous figure of the lord of hell. All the rebellious force of

Byron's own nature went to the composition of that grand design. "And where he gazed a gloom pervaded space." Magnificent—yes, and true! For the rebel's spirit must, first of all, cast a gloom over the sparkling inanities of false and foolish life.

"Sabbathless Satan," as Charles Lamb quaintly called him, is the ideal of energy and activity. He is also the ideal of intelligence. His worst enemy never called him a fool. Even the clergy admit that he represents what they call the pride of intellect. And thus it is that they call every sceptic who looks as if he meant business "a child of the Devil." To believe what they preach, and do what they say, and pay what they demand, is to be a child of God.

Jehovah, on the other hand, only represents irresponsible power. All the bloody wars, all the deliberate wickedness, all the abominable cruelty in the Bible are the work of his hands, or the execution of his orders, or the perpetration of his friends. The Bible calls the Devil the father of lies; but even this is a wretched slander—for when the Lord wanted a lying spirit to go forth and fill the mouths of the prophets so that Ahab might be led on to his doom at Ramoth-Gilead, there was no need to send to hell for a clever practitioner; the Lord found an excellent volunteer at his very elbow in heaven.

Why should not men, if they must worship somebody, worship Satan for a change? We never heard of anything really to the discredit of this personage. He never taught men to love their enemies—and hate all who differed from them; he never incited men to cut each other's throats for a difference of opinion; he never instigated religious wars; he never aided in the oppression and spoliation of the people; he never countenanced slavery and the degradation of women; he never promised to damn people through all eternity for exercising their wits and trusting to their common sense. "The name of God has fenced about all crime with holiness," as Shelley said; but no such charge was ever brought against Satan. He is cleaner, sweeter, more moral, and in every way more eligible as an object of worship than his great rival. But the principal advantage, it appears to us, is that he allows people to think—nay, urges them to think. In this respect, he is an improvement on all the gods we ever heard of. So three cheers for Satan!

G. W. FOOTE.

Bruno.—III.

(Concluded from p. 100.)

To appreciate the difficulties in the way of intellectual development is to appreciate Bruno's service to the race. It is also to appreciate the hostility of the Church towards him. The greatest difficulty of all was the power of the Church—a power so penetrative that people in the highest positions were afraid to whisper their innermost thoughts, even within the confines of their own houses. Every man might be a spy upon his neighbor, and an anonymous accusation meant years of imprisonment, or more fortunately, a speedy death. The Church was fighting for its life and shrank from no measure to perpetuate its existence. At this, Bruno struck, first by attacking the principle of authority as represented in both the Church and the schools, and next, more solidly, by rejecting the whole mass of doctrines which suggested a supernatural interference with the order of nature for the benefit of man. It is true that he never rejected specifically the idea of God; but his God was more or less of a Spinozistic Deity, which for all serviceable purposes is no God at all. In calling the un-Theism of Bruno—as it afterwards did that of Spinoza—Atheism, the Church was correct. For whether one identifies God and Nature, or rules God out and leaves Nature only, is merely a difference in statement. To be religiously serviceable, God must be a ruler. To say that all is God, or that nothing is God, is practical Atheism, whatever metaphysical distinctions may be drawn to the contrary.

Bruno's teaching gives no place for the miraculous, no place for prayer—save as an aspiration—and no place even for immortality, save as a reabsorption of the individual into the infinite.

As Bruno did his work in breaking down the mere authority of the Church, so he helped to give his age a sounder scientific knowledge. In this his great work was to bring men back to a study of nature as the only source from which truth could be derived. Science was still largely dominated by metaphysical ideas and more or less magical formulæ. Against this Bruno protested, as Bacon did after him, although Mr. McIntyre is probably correct in attributing Bruno's insistence upon the study of nature as being due more to his poetic temperament than to aught else. Still, the scientific temper was there, and is shown in his quick seizing on old and new scientific conceptions, as well as by the nature of many of his illustrations. Among the Greeks the Atomists appear to have had the greatest attraction, and he gives hearty praise to the "deep thought of the learned Lucretius," and there is to be traced the influence of Lucretius in his teaching that matter produces all its forms, not from something external, but from its own inherent properties. He was also quick to perceive the importance of the Copernican theory, and championed it against Catholic and Protestant in all his wanderings. He said of Copernicus: "There is more understanding in two of his chapters than in the whole philosophy of nature of Aristotle and all the Peripatetics." And in combining the Lucretian and the Copernican teaching, and concluding that the fixed stars were suns, each with its attendant system, with probably inhabited planets, and that these systems extend throughout infinite space, we may agree with Large that his work was almost as important as the doctrine of the revolution of the earth. One may further agree with another writer that had Bruno been permitted by the Inquisition to sum up and reduce all his doctrines to order, the history of philosophy would have been considerably shortened.

How far Bruno influenced Bacon it is impossible to say. There is no certainty that Bruno and Bacon met while the former was in England, and there is, I believe, only one reference to Bruno in Bacon's writings. On other writers Bruno's influence is much clearer. The points of resemblance between the teachings of Bruno and that of Spinoza, Descartes and later writers such as Schelling and Leibnitz, are many and clear. Leibnitz was accused of drawing his whole system of "Monads" from Bruno, and in the case of Spinoza, the dwelling on one principle as the cause or substance of the Universe, the identification of the highest kind of knowledge with the love of God, the assertion of the perfection of everything after its kind, and the discussion of the nature and function of morals, are all reminiscent of Bruno. The terms are used with greater exactitude by Spinoza, and the conclusions worked out more logically, but the relationship is pretty clear. Sir Frederick Polloch suggests that it was probably through Van den Ende, Spinoza's sceptical tutor, that the later became acquainted with Bruno's writings. The same writer also points out that Spinoza's not mentioning Bruno by name does not prove non-acquaintance. Those were days when men were imprisoned or damned for the company they kept as well as for what they said and did, and to be silent concerning one's mentors was often a necessity of the situation.

After this digression, we may return once more to Bruno. It is probable that Bruno never fully realised the danger he was in until his trial before the Inquisition at Venice. Then his eyes were opened by the request of the Papal Government that he should be sent to Rome for trial. To the questions put to him he gave a full and fair amount of his real teaching, repudiating some of the charges against him. The statement that Bruno recanted at Venice is accepted rather too readily by Mr. McIntyre, bearing in mind that such recantation does not fit in with after accounts of his conduct, and that the

information comes to us from the side of his enemies. Besides, it was to the interest of the Church that so well known a character as Bruno should; and in such cases, it has never shown any compunction in manufacturing material to meet its requirements. Or some expression of formal submission to the Church in doctrinal matters may have been tortured into a recantation. And Mr. McIntyre notes: "One thing is certain, he never either then or afterwards recanted, or in any sense withdrew, a single proposition belonging to his philosophical creed."

Whatever hopes Bruno may have entertained concerning the protection of the Venetian government, were doomed to disappointment. For reasons of its own, Venice just then wished to stand well with Rome, and sacrificed to a political necessity, Bruno was formally handed over and entered the prison of the Inquisition at Rome on February 27, 1593. For the next seven years there is an absolute blank in our information concerning Bruno. The torture of such years of confinement to a nature such as his is beyond question. Whether actual torture or not was applied is a matter of conjecture, but it is at least probable. We know that the Holy Office had gone to great trouble to secure him, for Bruno was no ordinary citizen who might be seized, tried and executed in the space of a few days. That they should have kept him so long a prisoner is, as Mr. McIntyre says, a testimony of how much more important in their eyes was Bruno than other heretics.

At length, on the 14th of January, 1599, Bruno was brought to trial, among his judges being no less than sixteen Cardinals. Again in February and in the following December, the prisoner was brought forth in the hope of securing a recantation. Bruno declared—so runs the report—"that he neither ought nor will recant, that he has nothing to recant, no matter for recantation, does not know what he ought to recant." At length, on the 8th of February, 1606, it was decided to pass sentence, and he was handed over to the secular power to be punished "with as great clemency as possible, and without effusion of blood"—the Church's hypocritical formula for burning alive. Bruno heard the sentence he must have expected to hear without showing any concern, and his famous retort to his judges, "Greater perhaps is your fear in pronouncing my sentence than mine in hearing it," was the full expression of his real nature, heightened by the contempt he must have felt for the tribunal that condemned him.

At a later period, defenders of the Church have had the grace to be ashamed of Bruno's judicial murder. And their defence has taken the usual line of Christian defence—a lie. It has been denied that Bruno was burned, and the ground for the statement is the scantiness of references to the event. The references, it must be admitted, are few, but they are adequate, particularly when allied with Bruno's disappearance from the scene. There are references to his burning in two contemporary news letters. There is also an account in the reports of the Company St. John the Beheaded, whose duty it was to minister to the condemned, giving an account of the burning of "Giordano, son of the late Giovanni Bruno, an Apostate Friar of Nola in the Kingdom, an impenitent heretic." Finally, there is a letter from one Gaspar Schopp—given in full in Mr. Frith's *Life of Bruno*—a converted Protestant, giving an exulting account of the burning. "He was burned," says Schopp, "and perished miserably, and is gone to hell, I suppose, in those other worlds of his fancy, how the blasphemous and the impious are dealt with in Rome." An agreeable thing to learn of this same Schopp is that Lord Digly, while English Ambassador to Spain, caused him to be soundly horse-whipped.

On the 17th of February, 1600, Bruno was led forth from his prison for the last time. It was a year of jubilee in Rome; the city was crowded with dignitaries, and amidst the general festivities his burning was a mere incident. In addition, the burning of heretics was not so unusual an event as to rivet public attention upon it. It was amidst all

the paraphernalia of a public holiday that Bruno, clad in the sombre *sanbenito*, and surrounded by chanting priests with the symbols of the faith he must by now have learned to detest, marched to the stake. Death had no terrors for him. Long before he had written "The practical test of a perfect philosophy is when one, by the height of his speculations, is so far withdrawn from bodily things as hardly to feel pain.....He who is deeply moved by the thought of some other thing does not feel the pangs of death." Prophetically, he had also declared that torches of fifty or a hundred would not fail him, even though it be midday, should it be his fate to die in a Roman Catholic country. His expectation was not disappointed, nor did he over-estimate the strength of his philosophy. Without a word he submitted to be bound to the stake. In the customary manner, a crucifix was held up to his face, from which he turned "with a terribly menacing countenance." The crucifix was probably red-hot, which was also a common custom on such occasions. A little while, and all was over; one of the bravest of the sons of men had helped by his death, as he had done by his life, to awaken men to the folly of superstition and the danger of ignorance.

Neither hypnotised by religion, nor supported by sympathisers, Bruno died a martyr's death; and at the side of his martyrdom, that of the religious fanatic is cheap and tawdry. Few have lived a braver life; none have died a nobler death. "As men die, so they walk among Posterity," says a modern writer; and among posterity the name of Bruno is honored wherever men revere intellectual ability and manly fortitude. The triumph of the Church was, after all, but temporary; it was losing its hold on the world then, it has been losing its hold ever since. To-day Bruno's beloved Italy is free from the rule of the Church, if it is not yet wholly from the rule of superstition. His statue, raised by the loving help of thousands, looks down proudly over the spot where his body was consumed. The Reign of the Ass is not yet over, but its rule is declining, its subjects a dwindling number. And among those who have helped to dethrone the Ass and establish Reason, high place must be given to Giordano Bruno, "The Awakener."

C. COHEN.

Appalling Facts.

DOES the world not know that February 5 was the third National Passive Resistance Day, and that an inevitable series of public meetings marked its celebration? There was first of all a Divine Service, at which the Rev. G. Campbell Morgan, D.D., delivered a remarkable discourse in glorification of the principles and doctrines of the National Free Church Council. The subject was "Authority in Religion," and the treatment was in Dr. Morgan's usual dogmatic style. He did not specifically mention the New Theology, but at one or two points it was quite clear that he had it in his mind's eye. His central point was that "no man can live the religious life save under authority," or that "the very essence of religion is the recognition of the necessity for obedience to authority, if a man is himself to reign in life." I have no wish to challenge that statement; but it may be well to remind Dr. Morgan that, judged by his own definition, he does not live the religious life. "There can be no religion," he repeats, "unless there is authority," and, he ought to have added, unless there is obedience to that authority. Now, the authority to which religious people ought to bow in complete submission is the will of Christ; and of the will of Christ there is a perfect expression in the Bible. Dr. Morgan informed us, in a much-applauded lecture, given only a few weeks ago, that to him the Bible is the inspired and infallible Word of God. Therefore the Bible is to him an authority to which he is bound to render absolute obedience, if he desires "himself to reign in life." This is the rule by which he is to regulate his conduct on every occasion. But

this Divine and infallible rule of life distinctly condemns all resistance, passive as well as active. "Resist not evil," the heavenly Guide-book says; and yet Dr. Morgan is a member of the National Passive Resistance League. "Is any among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save him that is sick, and the Lord shall raise him up," says the King of the souls and bodies of men; and yet when a member of Dr. Morgan's household falls ill he sends for his medical adviser and relies on the prescribed drugs, when he ought to take his stand with the Peculiar People and follow the direction of the Infallible Book at whatever cost.

From the orthodox point of view this is a most appalling fact. Christ is worshiped as the only one whose every word is law, and the Bible is declared to be a perfect and final revelation of his will; and yet in daily life his worshipers deliberately set his precepts aside and act as if they were not aware of his existence at all. Either the Bible is not the infallible Word of God, or these orthodox preachers and their followers are not Christians. Their religion is an affair of the emotions and the lips, an unctuous profession without the corresponding practice.

Dr. Morgan proceeded to show that only the Free Churches know the very innermost of Christianity. It is hidden from the Catholic and Anglican communions. The members of these erratic Churches cannot see the one absolutely authoritative Teacher for the Pope, the Priest and the Sacrament. It is the Free Churches alone which are in direct and immediate communication with the Sovereign Lord of the Universe. Such is the dogmatic claim of Dr. Campbell Morgan. "My brethren," he said, "our foundation principles as Free Churchmen are, first, the authority of Christ and the right of every soul to seek him immediately, the Fatherhood of God, and the relation of every soul to him, in direct fellowship for the sustenance of life, the guidance of Christ, and the duty of every soul to apply directly to him for the instruction needed in all conduct." Pity blind Catholicism and more than half-blind Anglicanism! At last the Free Churches have arisen, and soon all other Churches will have to retire covered with everlasting confusion and shame! But that is all rhetoric, empty rhetoric, reckless dogmatism, dictated by a wicked spirit of self-righteousness and self-complacency.

Here is more rhetoric, and worse, if possible:—

"If, indeed, Christ is the perpetual guide in the matter of conduct, our positive teaching to our own people, the constructive work that we are doing, is that of attempting to compel our people not to listen to our view, or accept our interpretation, or to follow our guidance, but to remit the whole of life, individual, social, civic, national, to the judgment of Jesus Christ and to the ways of Jesus Christ."

And yet, according to Protestant orthodoxy, Jesus Christ condemns Passive Resistance and proclaims the needlessness of doctors and their medicines, and the leaders of the Free Churches take no heed whatever.

Here is another appalling fact. Before he left the earth Christ promised to dwell in his Church to the end of the world; to protect it from all error and lead it into all the truth; to guide it in all its deliberations and inspire all its actions. Has he fulfilled that gracious promise? If he has, how are we to account for the dark deeds of the Church throughout most of its history? If he has, how are we to explain the existence of Catholicism, Anglicanism, and Nonconformity, as well as the jealousy and hostility between them? This is an old argument, but it needs to be driven home afresh and with greater force than ever to-day. Even Dr. Morgan is staggered by the deplorable truth that underlies it. Preaching to Passive Resisters he had the subject of education at the back of his mind all the time, and at last he brought it to the front thus:—

"Does it not seem to be almost an appalling shame if it is not possible for the whole Catholic Church to find

some statement of truth concerning Jesus Christ which we may unitedly present to the children of our land? Does it not seem, if that be so, an appalling thing?"

Dr. Morgan knows right well that Roman Catholics, Anglican Catholics, and Free Catholics, as he calls them, if they met in conference, which is not at all likely, if even possible, could not find any common ground. These communions differ *essentially*, and so there can be no ground common to the three. And yet they all claim to be led by the same Holy Ghost, and to "remit the whole of life, individual, social, civic, national, to the judgment of Jesus Christ and to the ways of Jesus Christ." Is it any wonder then, that, as Mr. Campbell says, "intelligent men take little notice of preachers and sermons, and that the religiously-minded layman is such a rarity as to be noteworthy?" Mr. Campbell goes further and observes that if it were not for the social activities in connection with them, a good many of the Churches would have to be shut up.

Here is another appalling fact. If the Churches cannot find some common ground, if a compromise between them is not practicable, then Dr. Morgan is prepared, most reluctantly, to put up with secular education. Note his words:—

"If that be impossible, then there is only one thing left to us, and that is that those of us who believe in this spiritual conception of religion, shall deliberately say to any and every Government of whatever Party—There is only one thing for you to do, and that is for the State absolutely to leave religion alone.....It is a sad thing and a sorry thing, if the varied branches of the Catholic Church cannot find some simple, shall I say residuum, of Christian truth, some substratum of Christian doctrine which we may present to the children. But if we cannot come together, then there is nothing for it, I repeat, but that the State shall take its hand off the matter of religious teaching."

Rather than that religion, as understood by the Roman or the Anglican, should be taught in the State schools, Dr. Morgan would prefer to have no religion taught in them. Beyond Cowper-Templeism he will not go. He will protest against every other form of religious training by refusing to pay the education rate. What a deplorable position for a clergyman to occupy! The Rev. Stewart Headlam holds the same ground, and for the same reason. He is as opposed to Cowper-Templeism as Dr. Morgan is to the English Church Catechism. I admit that on this point Mr. Headlam is perfectly consistent. He wants the same religious teaching to be imparted in the State schools as in the State Church, which is quite intelligible. But Dr. Morgan is opposed to all State interference in the affairs of the Church. If possible, he would disestablish and disendow the Episcopal Church to-morrow; and yet he wishes to establish and endow some form of religion acceptable to himself in the State schools, which is the height of inconsistency. Ecclesiastically, he stands firm and immovable on the principle that it is not the proper function of the State to teach religion to adults; but educationally, he flings that principle to the winds, and maintains that it is the proper function of the State to teach religion to children on week-days if it agrees to teach a form of religion that meets with his approval. How unspeakably nobler and more consistent is the attitude taken up by such men as the late Dr. Dale and Dr. Guinness Rogers.

Dr. Morgan is unquestionably a great preacher, and I, for one, enjoy listening to, though totally disagreeing with, him; but his theology cannot vindicate itself before the facts of the world. His conception of Christianity is only one among many, and he is powerless to prove its superiority. Those outside all theologies and churches do not hesitate to lump them together, and say, They are but so many humanly-woven theories resting on unverified assumptions, and the differences between them are so great that we are inevitably driven to the conclusion that they are all alike—groundless and doomed to perish.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Old Theology.

WHEN I was a boy I used to go to church to learn how a good God had created me, with intent to make me live in a burning brimstone lake for all eternity; and he would have done it too, only a better God interfered, and by undergoing a few years of about such discomfort as falls to the lot of a modern wage-slave, induced the good God to let me off, conditionally, on my praying very hard and admitting that the brimstone was a perfectly just punishment on me for the sin of a very remote ancestor of mine. I remember that now and then the thought would occur to me that this good God must be a most unmitigated brute, and how I used to try to banish the thought, and shiver with dread, for fear the good God would find it out and do some more goodness to my wretched soul by way of convincing me that he was the God I ought to love, and all other gods were but counterfeits. And I remember, too, that when I thought he had found me out, I used to plunge, with desperate joy, into a perfect sea of boyish wickedness—a regular debauch of Devil-serving—because I knew I had got to repent, anyhow, before I could be safe again, and I might just as well make one repentance do for the lot. Of course, I took the risk of being cut off in the midst of my sins, with no time allowed for repentance. But I think I really enjoyed that uncertainty. It was a sort of gambling with Providence, quite as interesting as pitching pennies, and for a good deal higher stakes. And then that old hymn was a great comfort to me, about the sinner who was killed by a fall from his horse, and "tween the saddle and the ground, he mercy sought and mercy found." I thought I was pretty safe to have at least that much time allowed me; and I held myself always ready for a sudden call, with my repeating machinery in good working order, ready for instant operation.

Well, it was a very nice church with a very comfortable rectory attached to it, a highly-respectable and wealthy congregation, a rector at £800 a year, a curate at a good deal less, a big Sunday-school with a library of the usual sort of books, lots of carriages at the doors on Sunday mornings, and everything else which the tender-hearted, simple-minded, sham-hating Jesus would have loved to see about him. This church made a speciality of Foreign Missions. It had dealings in Home Missions too, but Foreign Missions were its strong point. We were always being called on to save the poor heathen, and "From Greenland's Icy Mountains" was the most familiar hymn in the hymn-book. The older people contributed their sovereigns and banknotes, and we youngsters chipped in with our threepenny-bits and sixpences, all for the salvation of the poor blinded idolators bowing down to wood and stone. They used to tell us that if we didn't contribute to the support of the missionaries the Chinese and Africans and East Indians would have no opportunity of hearing about the scheme of salvation, and would consequently burn in hell for all eternity. I can remember thinking what a big place hell must be compared with heaven!

Those old memories came back to me as I read a missionary sermon preached recently in this same church by the present rector, the Rev. John Smith. It is a very interesting sermon, because it shows how the Church has changed its mind about the heathen. It no longer believes that the heathen will go to hell unless missionaries are sent to them, but it keeps on sending the missionaries all the same, which seems a little rough on the heathen, because the heathen who has heard the gospel will be damned if he doesn't believe it, while the heathen who hasn't been told about it will be all right. But the Church has a good reason for maintaining its Foreign Missions, and the Rev. John Smith tells us what it is. "Let us," says he, "admit the truth, not grudgingly, but gladly. We do not send missionaries to rescue the heathen from hell; we send them out to bring the heathen to a knowledge of God as re-

vealed in Jesus. I cannot believe that Buddha has done for a single Pagan what Christ has done for me. Therefore I stand here to speak for the agency which is sending Christ's message to the world." Well, Christ—or somebody—has done a good deal for the Rev. John Smith. He has a good salary, a nice rectory, an admiring congregation, and, I have no doubt, an approving conscience. If Christ—or somebody—could be relied on to do as much, or half as much, for every converted Pagan, I guess the missionaries would have a pretty easy time of it. Why I can remember when it was announced by the French Consul in Shanghai that Roman Catholic Chinamen would be protected from the extortions of the native officials, there was quite a boom in the French brand of Christianity, though previously converts had been dull with few inquiries.

But in the same newspaper that contains the Rev. John Smith's sermon I read the story of a certain Grace H—n, who killed herself by jumping into the Thames; and I begin to doubt whether what Mr. Smith calls "a knowledge of God as revealed in Jesus" can be relied on to produce equal benefit in all cases. Her husband was threatened with consumption, and his only chance was to go off into the country. Grace could not afford to go with him, so he went alone, while she stayed and faced the problem of life in London. She had no money, but she was perfectly willing to work. She answered advertisements, and tramped about the great city from morning till night for days in succession, but it was no use—there was no work for her. She could have earned money easily enough—she was young and pretty—but she had a foolish self-respect, quite incompatible with her position, which prevented her from earning it in the only way open to young and pretty women in this Christian country. So after pawning everything, she gave up in despair, jumped into the river, and put an end to it all.

Now it seems to me that Buddha could have done at least as much for any Pagan as the Christ of the Rev. John Smith did for Grace H—n. T. L. M.

Acid Drops.

Dr. Macnamara, M.P., is a clever little man, and knows how to be "on the make." He is also very religious. At least, he has taken religion under his patronage, and lost no opportunity of praising "Simple Bible Teaching" and holding forth on the sad consequences of Secular Education. And for all this he is receiving his reward. But while he is a good speaker, Dr. Macnamara is not always felicitous. Speaking at a recent Alexandra Palace demonstration, he said that the Lords passed the Trades Dispute Bill "because they knew the Labor Party had big feet." This may be true, but was it a happy announcement? Dr. Macnamara went on to say that the Lords rejected the Education Bill because they thought they could flout the Nonconformists. Well, that was not a happy announcement either. We have always called the poor deceased Education Bill a Nonconformist Bill. This was indignantly denied by Dr. Clifford and other Nonconformist leaders. But in a moment of candor, weeping over a newly-made grave, Dr. Macnamara tells the truth. Behind the Education Bill were the Nonconformists and the Nonconformists only.

While the speech of Dr. Macnamara was tickling the Nonconformists (labelled Liberals) at the Alexandra Palace, Dr. Clifford was talking to a National Democratic League meeting at Caxton Hall about the House of Lords. Of course the House that settled the hash of the Education Bill ought to be broken. Dr. Clifford is sure of that. But how to do it? Ay, there's the rub. The political Dissenter's recipe is to get the King to create enough life peers to flood the Upper Chamber. But this is all nonsense. It will never be done. The House of Lords was dealt with once in English history. It was shut up as "useless and dangerous." That was a revolutionary act. And nothing but a revolutionary act can deal with it radically again. Meanwhile, the Lords know their own business. They will never resist any measure which they know the nation means to have. They will never stand up against a national steam roller. It is different when they only see a Nonconformist perambulator.

"It was high time," Dr. Clifford said, "that the people of this country determined to govern themselves." We agree with him. Only when that time arrives the people will snap their fingers at Archbishop Clifford as well as at Archbishop Davidson and Archbishop Bourne. Men of God of all churches are priests. They aim at doing the thinking and controlling the minds of the multitude. That is why they fight over public education. The object of all of them is the same. Their watchword, to use the language of the street, is "Collar the kids." But the people should collar them—and fling them out of the nation's schools.

Mr. W. R. Lane, who appears to have once served in the Coldstream Guards, is now a travelling Evangelist. He goes round the country holding "Missions." We suppose his aim is to make up for the deficiencies of the regular soul-savers and to catch sinners who escape their nets. That he succeeds in this enterprise may well be open to doubt. Like other peripatetic missionaries, he probably converts the converted, inflames the zeal of persons naturally enthusiastic, and perhaps warms up a few Laodicean believers, who are hot for a brief time but soon cool down again when the heating apparatus is removed.

Every modern evangelist has his meeting for "Men Only." Mr. Lane had his on Sunday afternoon last (Feb. 17) at the Southend Kursaal. A friend of ours residing in the borough received a sort of special invitation to this meeting. A card to "Admit bearer" was dropped into his letter-box. The "Men Only" line was printed in the boldest type; indeed, it overshadowed all the rest of the announcement. At the bottom was a notice that "His worship, the Mayor, Councillor W. R. King, J.P.," would act as chairman. Presumably this was a guarantee that if "men only" came to the Kursaal they would hear something really worth listening to on the suggestive subject of the "Purity and Morals of the Community." Mr. Lane's experience as a soldier very likely widened his information on the topic he was to speak upon; and as he was going to say what could not be said in the presence of ladies, it was an opportunity not to be missed by the lovers of the spicy and the exciting. On the whole, it must be admitted that modern evangelists, whatever they don't understand, do understand business.

Freethought speakers have never condescended to such tactics. What they have to say in public is for the public ear—that is, for an audience of both sexes. The man who wants to say something to a meeting which is too bad for women to hear, should keep it to himself. Nor is that all. Freethought speakers are not so well qualified to talk about "Purity" (it really means "Impurity") as Christian evangelists are. Most of these gentlemen boast of having been Terrible Turks until they found Jesus. Perhaps that is why the "men only" meeting catches on so splendidly.

Mr. W. T. Stead, in the *Review of Reviews* for February, says that "The majority of Frenchmen, and no small portion of educated Frenchwomen, have long ceased to take any active interest in the Christian religion. Even those who are nominally Catholic regard its practice as consisting chiefly in rites and ceremonies—a kind of conventional minuet which ought to be correctly performed, but which has no direct practical bearing upon their everyday life." The latter part of this statement is not very pertinent to the present situation; for precisely the same might be said of the Protestant religion in Great Britain. The former part of the statement, however, is of real importance—if it be true. We hope it is so, but how does Mr. Stead know it? He offers no evidence at all; or rather he does offer a bit of evidence later on which is not of much value. Mr. Stead should tell us (we wish he would) on what information he bases his statement. Calling at Paris on his tour round Europe would hardly put him in a position to speak so peremptorily. For our part, we are open to conviction, but at present we are obliged to dissent from Mr. Stead's view of the French religious situation. We believe that sincere French Catholics are more numerous than he imagines. That they do not make a great row is no proof of their non-existence. It is not their policy to make a great row. What good could that do? Their enemies are in possession of power. What they have to do is to play their game as cleverly as possible just now and to wait until they can get into power themselves. So much in general, and now for the one bit of evidence just referred to. Mr. Stead says that, in 1900, a political pamphlet of his entitled *The Candidates of Cain* was translated into French, but the Paris publisher said, "You must give us another title. Nobody in France knows who Cain is." Mr. Stead repeated this to some literary friends in Paris, and they assured him that the French publisher was quite right.

"Nobody," they told him, "reads the Bible in France." Now on the face of it this is an exaggeration. But where there is exaggeration there must be some truth. And in this case it is very simple. The Bible is not the Catholic's fetish, as it is the Protestant's. Catholics do not, and never did, read the Bible like Protestants. But the Bible stories get fairly well-known, for all that. There was no Bible in the hands of the Italian people who admired and understood the Bible pictures of (say) Giotto. What they knew of the Bible was what they had heard in church or at outdoor preaching. And just in the same way the English people of Shakespeare's time knew the Bible stories. Such copies as existed of the printed translation into English were very expensive and were therefore chained up in the places of worship. The common people had never turned over the pages of a Bible. Yet they knew all about Cain and Abel. And we dare say Mr. Stead would find that Cain and Abel are better known than he believes amongst the Catholics in France.

Mr. Stead says a good thing about the "New Theology." "The peculiarity of the New Theology," he says, "is that there is in it little theology strictly so called, and absolutely nothing new. The main positions are quite hoary. The only new thing about it is the megaphone which it has found in the eloquence and popularity of Mr. Campbell; and, we may add, the beating of the tom-tom in the half-penny Press."

Later on, in the *Review of Reviews*, we read the following:—

"Samson as a solar myth is further explored in the *Monist*, by Dr. Carus. He does not deny 'factic elements' in the Hebrew story, but is emphatic in tracing by analogy with other legends, such as those of Heracles and Izdubar, the mythical elements in the Samson story."

We trust Mr. Stead will pardon us for saying that all this was done, twenty years ago, in the "Samson" chapter of our *Bible Heroes*. That work is written for the people to read, but it incorporates the conclusions of the best scholarship and is far more instructive than many duller and more pretentious volumes.

There is a rifle club in connection with a parish church in Dundee. If the minister doesn't hit the bull's-eye in the pulpit, there is no reason why the congregation shouldn't at the shooting range.

Rev. H. C. Wagnell, of the Baptist Tabernacle, Blackpool, allows an "interval for coughing" in this cold weather. We suppose there will be an "interval for light refreshment" in the summer-time—if it ever arrives this year. Perhaps the reverend gentleman will also consider the advisability of smoking pews.

Jerusalem is now a good market for playing-cards, and *Paper-Making* says it must have changed in the last two thousand years or so. But why? Playing-cards were not known in Bible days, but dice were, and other methods of gambling. Casting lots was common. The soldiers raffled for Jesus Christ's old clothes, and the Apostles cast lots to see who should succeed Judas as the twelfth member of their company. They may have used dice, for all we know, or tossed up for it.

An "Austrian Converted Jew" advertises in an Edinburgh paper his readiness to "go to any Hall or Private House to Read and Explain the Scriptures to Jew or Gentile without money or price." We have seen that kind of prospectus before. It is to be presumed that the advertiser makes a living out of the business. Sometimes a thing begins for nothing but costs a good deal to finish. Barnum once advertised his show "free." Of course there was a tremendous crush. The tent was terribly crowded. One item in the performance was a pugilistic display by a number of stalwart blacks. When the program was over these gentlemen were at the exit, and it was half-a-dollar each to go out.

We cut the following from an Edinburgh paper:—

"In one chapter of his reminiscences recently published, Bishop Wilkinson writes: 'At Hanover there is a grave covered, by order of the man who lies in it, with gigantic stones. He was an unbeliever in the Resurrection. In life he laughed at the idea, and said: "If any living thing should be able to move the stones over my grave, then you may believe in the Resurrection." The seed of a larch-tree, dropped by a bird or otherwise, germinated between two of the great stones, and growing into a tree, has literally rent them asunder, exposing the vault beneath. As I looked at it, I said to myself, "What small instruments the Almighty One uses to confute the fool who says in his heart, There is no God!"'

A similar story is told of an "unbeliever" in an English

churchyard. One is an English product, the other is made in Germany. Both are doubtless as true as gospel.

Bishop Wilkinson may accept our assurance that thousands of unbelievers in the Resurrection are lying peacefully in their graves, and the Lord never takes the trouble to demonstrate over their coffins. Bishop Wilkinson will lie in his grave some day. Meanwhile he lies out of it.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton is a paradox-monger—that is, he is fond of standing on his head. He is also a fictionist. We understand, therefore, how he came to tell the Guild of St. Edmund the other day, in a lecture on "The Sanity of Christianity," that he was converted to that faith by infidels. Bradlaugh, Huxley and Robertson, had done the business for him. He had read them, and come to the conclusion that they were wrong. That is how they made him a Christian. Well now, this is clever—in a way; but it isn't nearly as clever as the argument of Tertullian, who said he believed Christianity because it was absurd and embraced it because it was impossible. There seem to have been better Chestertons seventeen hundred years ago.

Sir Oliver Lodge says that there is no infallibility to be found on earth. We are glad to hear it. We were thinking that he made one exception.

"Caister men never turn back!" That was the answer of old James Haylett, the lifeboat man, when asked whether the lifeboat, on a certain occasion, was not returning, because it was impossible to reach the distressed vessel. For sixty years old Haylett had been connected with Caister lifeboats, which, during that period, had saved some twelve hundred lives. Three of his sons were lost, and now the old man himself has gone to his last rest. When he appeared before the King in 1902, and was presented with a gold medal and a cheque for £25, he said something which threw a flood of light upon his motives as a lifeboat man. "There is always one thing," he said, "that gives me courage. When I see the poor fellows in the rigging of the wreck I always put myself among them, and say, 'What would I not give to see a lifeboat coming to save me?'" He put himself in the other man's place. This is a natural act, not a supernatural one, and the feeling it involves is the basis of all morality. We may call it a fellow-feeling. It is sympathy, compassion—call it what you will. Where it exists morality follows; where it does not exist morality is impossible. It is a case of cause and effect.

Shelley, the divine poet with the divine nature (poet of poets, and purest of men, as James Thomson called him), understood the principle of human action which old James Haylett, the lifeboat man, expressed so artlessly. In the magnificent *Defence of Poetry*, which is one of the glories of English prose literature, Shelley wrote: "The great secret of morals is love; or a going out of our nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own. A man, to be greatly good, must imagine intensely and comprehensively; he must put himself in the place of another and of many others; the pains and pleasures of his species must become his own." James Haylett could not write like that, and probably could not think like that; but he had the practical root of the matter in him by nature, and when he beheld his fellow men in distress, he saw himself amongst them, and thus was bound to help. No doubt the clergy will talk a lot of nonsense about him; they always do when they get the chance; but it was not Christianity, or any religion, that nerved the old lifeboat man to his work—it was a sound, honest, and kindly human nature, with imagination enough to kindle it into the necessary flame.

A Yarmouth friend of ours, Mr. J. W. de Caux, who knows lifeboatmen as well as anybody, tells us that they are real heroes. Some of them may not be Sunday-school models, some of them may be a bit too fond of a social glass, and some of them are capable (when put to it) of using language that might boil a kettle; but when the call of duty comes, when they have to plough through roaring seas, with a yawning grave in every hollow, to save man, woman, or child from death, they go not reluctantly but gladly, with nerves that know no tremor, and hearts that pulse a steady challenge to the howling of the storm. They are grand fellows when their hour arrives; and, after all, a man is to be judged, chiefly, by what he will do then. Yet these men have to suffer grievances as well as hardships. For saving life they want no money—and no man ever tackled such a job for mere cash; but when they save property they want to be properly paid for it, and a nation that denies them this duo

reward is unworthy to count such heroes amongst its citizens.

The *Belfast Evening Telegraph* publishes an illuminating letter to one of its contributors from the Rev. Thomas Prichard, vicar of Rhos, Johnstown, Ruabon. The reverend gentleman is unable to assure his correspondent that the fruits of the Welsh revival are permanent. "Although," he says, "a good number of the converts are remaining faithful, still it is with sadness of heart I am obliged to admit that very many have fallen away, and the fervor you witnessed in the services is to a great extent a thing of the past." Of course it is. It was bound to be. Revivals are simply excitement, and the effects last just as long as the cause.

Mr. Prichard says that the prime cause of this falling away is drink. "Drink," he exclaims, "is the damnation of church, Sunday-schools, and parishes in our land." The Holy Spirit is no match for the publicans' spirit. The former is all right when the cork is first drawn, but is apt to go flat afterwards; while the latter holds out to the bottom of the bottle.

"What is wanted is the courage of truth in the pulpit; it is suffering from the dry-rot of 'make-believe.'" So says the Rev. J. Fleming Shearer, of Dovedale-road Baptist Church, Liverpool. We quite agree with him. But he has not made a discovery. The dry-rot, the make-believe, and the cowardice of the pulpit are an old story. Mr. Shearer himself does not display "the courage of truth." He shouts for the old God, the old Christ, and the old Bible. There is not much courage in that. It is the frenzy of despair. Christianity is being found out. Mr. Campbell recognises the fact—Mr. Shearer doesn't. That's all the difference.

A batch of twenty-six Passive Resisters appeared before the "beak" at Sheffield the other day. A reverend gentleman who acted as spokesman for the rest plied the magistrate with conundrums. He wanted to know, for instance, what they were to do now that they had sent good Nonconformists to the House of Commons, who had carried a nice Education Bill, which was murdered by the House of Lords. The Stipendiary declined to be drawn into a fantastic political discussion, but he ventured to remind them that more than one party could play at Passive Resistance. We have said so too, but the Nonconformists don't seem to understand it. Why? Because it does not occur to them that anybody has a "conscience" but themselves.

Rev. Charles Williams, a well-known Baptist minister, fell from the platform into the area of the Free Trade Hall, Manchester. We hope the reverend gentleman will refrain from falling into areas in future. One performance of that kind ought to be sufficient for an ordinary man of God.

Mr. George Meredith has just passed eighty. England, of course, is not agitated by the news. It takes more interest in footballers and "suffragettes" than in men of genius—or women of genius either. Still, something is to be done. We see by a press paragraph that "a committee of gentlemen have arranged that in honor of the birthday of Mr. Meredith, he shall"—what?—"be presented with the Freedom of the City of London." There now! Mr. Meredith has got his apotheosis at last.

Mr. Justice Grantham was nearly an hour late in opening the Winchester assizes. He had been to church with Mr. Justice Darling and was delayed by a long service. Subsequently, in dealing with a perjury case, Mr. Justice Grantham deprecated such prosecutions, unless in very serious cases; for the lives of the judges were too short to try all the cases of lying which took place in the courts. What a tribute to the morality of the "most Christian nation" in the world!

Rev. T. Cutts, of Hucknall, has been having a cut at the Rev. R. J. Campbell. A correspondent has sent us a report of his utterances in the local *Dispatch*. But it seems to us that the noble Cutts ought to have been called Comic Cuts—a penny plain, twopence colored. We are quite unable to find anything in the reverend gentleman's sermons worthy of our attention. But we may just notice his reference to "chilling infidelity." We don't find it chilling, but we dare say we should if we were in the reverend gentleman's profession. It is a "chilling" thought that your business is threatened, and that the time may come for you to mourn that your occupation's gone. Yes, that *must* be chilling; and in this respect the reverend gentleman has our compassion.

Dr. Torrey has been holding successful revival meetings in Ohio, and the *Tribune* pays to have the important news wired from New York. No less than 780 persons professed conversion at one meeting in Cleveland. Possibly. But how many times had they been converted before? Ask the London churches where Dr. Torrey's converts are now? He won't come to England again in a hurry. The exposure of his Paine and Ingersoll slanders settled his prospects here.

Last week's *Christian Commonwealth* contained a full report of the last Thursday morning sermon by the Rev. R. J. Campbell before going off for his holiday in Cornwall. In the course of it he referred to "that very sincere and able thinker and writer, Tom Paine." Barring the "Tom," which may, however, have been only a colloquialism, these words do Mr. Campbell much credit, and we congratulate him on his candor and courage. Whatever else he may be, he is certainly not a Torrey. But no one would expect him to be *that*. His face contradicts the supposition. Torrey's face was a true index to his bigoted insolent, and vindictive mind. He looked the part he played.

Mr. Campbell will pardon us for telling him that he is mistaken about the "Goddess of Reason" incident during the French Revolution. The Goddess was not "typified by a Parisian harlot." If he will look into the matter he will find that the "harlot" is an orthodox invention.

Kaiser William has been preaching again—this time in connection with a deputation from the Silesian Knights of Malta. His Majesty told them that, as true knights, he was sure they would "struggle against the misanthropic spirit of Infidelity." *Misanthropic* is good! The Kaiser is so *philanthropic*—and looks it. Modesty and good nature are written upon his features.

The Christian way of life, which the Kaiser recommended to the Knights of Malta, is "compassionate with neighborly love." We suppose it was neighborly love which prompted the Kaiser, in that palace balcony speech, to talk of riding down everybody that got in his way.

Some very "respectable" Freethinkers—especially amongst those who have just courage enough to bring up the rear of the Grand Army, at the point where there is no fighting to be done and sometimes things to be picked up—profess to believe that the war against superstition is really over, which is not surprising, as they were never in the firing lines and don't know practically whether the war is so much as begun. Now we don't want to argue with these people; few of them are worth it; but we will just point to one big fact. During the year ending Easter 1906 the Church of England alone raised £7,768,410 9s. 10d. as voluntary offerings towards its work. We need not go into the figures of the other religious bodies. That one figure is enough for our case. When one Church raises nearly eight millions a year in England alone, it is easy to see how much truth there is in the cry that the battle of Freethought is over. With the people who say that the battle of Freethought never began.

Lieut.-General Sir Ian Hamilton, who was with the Japanese Army in Manchuria, has just published the second volume of his *Staff Officer's Scrap-Book*. And from what he says of the Japanese character, which he studied so closely for so many months, it is easy to judge of the value of missionary stories about the awful wickedness of the heathen. He pays a high tribute to Japanese politeness. Politeness in Europe, he says, is a mere veneer, but it is far otherwise in Japan. "To say that a Japanese gentleman would die," he observes, "sooner than be impolite is inadequate. He would rather die a thousand deaths." Then they are so modest. "I cannot call to mind," Sir Ian Hamilton says, "one single occasion of a sober Japanese making a consciously swaggering remark, even in the triumphant reaction immediately after a victory." Contrast this with the behavior of Germans, French and British after a successful feat of arms.

Much has been said about the superiority of the Japanese in military tactics and equipment, but Sir Ian Hamilton assigns another reason for their brilliant victories. "The more I think," he says, "the more certain I am that it was not strategy or tactics, or armament or information, which won the battle of Liaoyang for Oyama, but that it was rather the souls of the Japanese troops which triumphed over the less developed, less awakened, less stimulated qualities of the Russians." The superior souls belonged to the Heathen; the inferior souls belonged to the Christians. What a farce it is, after this, to talk about the divine origin of Christianity!

Russia has been Christian for a thousand years. Yet the "souls" of her people are still markedly inferior to those of the heathen Japanese.

The American *Forum* contains an article by Mohammed Barakatullah on the awakening of China. This is how he pictures John Chinaman addressing the Western Christians:—

"Yes, it is we who do not accept it that practise the Gospel of Peace; it is you who accept it that trample it under foot, and—irony of ironies!—it is the nations of Christendom who have come to us to teach us by sword and fire that the Right in this world is powerless unless it is supported by Might. Oh, do not doubt that we shall learn the lesson. And woe to Europe when we have acquired it. You are arming a nation of four hundred millions—a nation which, until you came, had no better wish than to live at peace with itself and all the world. In the name of Christ you have sounded the call to arms: in the name of Confucius we respond."

We said something of the same kind in our review of Mr. W. J. Bryan's book a few weeks ago.

Before going to America as Great Britain's Ambassador at Washington, Mr. Bryce advised all students of the theory and practice of moral training to look to Japan. This advice was given in a Christian country—and Japan is a heathen nation. What a remarkable tribute to the ethical superiority of the Christian religion!

Bishop Welldon says that "the existence of war as a means of determining international disputes is a shame to Christendom." It is. But what a long time the clergy have been in finding it out. Here, as in other cases, the "infidels" were before them.

Mr. Justice Warrington has decided, in the Marston St Lawrence case, that school managers have no right to take the children from school to church during the hours prescribed by the council for secular education. This is another set-back to clerical impudence.

The Yarmouth Board of Guardians, some fifteen months ago, refused to appoint another chaplain to the workhouse, and decided to leave the spiritual wants of the inmates to be supplied by voluntary ministrations on the part of the Churches. This does not satisfy the Vicar. He says that voluntary effort is inadequate; the poor men of God being overburdened with their regular work already. He demands the appointment of a Church of England chaplain, even if a Nonconformist chaplain has to be appointed to keep him company—and prevent his getting an undue share of corpses for the consecrated side of the cemetery. We think the Vicar will not get himself appointed to the job; neither will he be able to get his nominee appointed, and thus gain the cheap services of an assistant in the parish work outside.

Rev. Thomas Holmes Micklethwaite, rector of Little Casterton, near Stamford, having been convicted by a Consistory Court on three charges of drunkenness, has been deprived of his living and all emoluments. This only proves that Christianity did not keep him sober.

Rev. T. G. Sampson, of St. George's, Perry-hill, London, S.E., who presumably has a large and unprecarious income, was turned on by *Lloyd's* last week to do the sermon "Against Worrying." The text he selected was, "Take no thought for the morrow," and he occupied most of his space in arguing—right in the teeth of the context about eating, drinking, and clothing—that the words only meant "Don't worry about the morrow." Leave it all to God—as Mr. Sampson does, over and above his salary. "Such things as God thinks fit to give us," said the preacher, "we shall have, and He will be sure to give us just so much and of just such a kind as is best for us to have." What callous and colossal impudence! A comfortable parson addressing destitute, suffering people in this way is worthy of the Chamber of Horrors.

The newspapers report that a party of Salvationists knelt down on the deck of the sinking steamer, the *Larchmont*, bound for New York, and sang "Nearer, my God, to Thee." This was making a virtue of necessity. Certainly it does not prove the efficacy of prayer.

Rev. Forbes Phillips, vicar of Gorleston, says that a threat of invasion would be a real tonic to the country. Apparently he thinks the Sermon on the Mount a back number.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, February 24, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, London, W., at 7.30., "England's Real Grand Old Man—George Meredith: a Study of a Great Writer and a Great Freethinker."

March 3, Glasgow; 17, Manchester.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—February 24, Birmingham Town Hall. March 10, Forest Gate. April 14, Glasgow.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—February 24, Camberwell. March 10, Birmingham; 24, West Stanley.

R. J. HENDERSON.—Thanks for your suggestion. Cleanliness, temperance, exercise and fresh air, are the principal conditions of a healthy life, and we do not neglect them; but special risks are run in lecturing and travelling, particularly after the terrible breakdown we passed through five years ago, after twenty-five years of ceaseless activity. As it is, you say you cannot imagine how we get through all our work. No doubt, as you say, we might have made plenty of money long ago if we had carried our energies into another market. But we are better satisfied as it is. At the finish we shall have *lived*. Glad you were so delighted with the Bryan articles.

J. T. SHARLES.—Churches are not directly endowed by the State. The question is far more complicated than that. But all the property of the Church of England is held on the strength of laws involved in its State establishment. Tithes, for instance, have clearly no other than a State origin; and when they are enforced they are enforced by State machinery. Get the *Legacy to Parsons*, by William Cobbett. It is a little book and puts the whole case in a nutshell.

D. JONES.—Thanks for your good wishes. Pleased to hear that you enjoy the *Freethinker* very much and "pass it on to friends every week."

THE JOSEPH SYMES FUND.—Previously acknowledged, £284 14s. 11d. Since received: M. Buetow, 2s. 6d.; John Latham, £10; A. McMillan, 2s.

Per *Mrs. Vance*—Mrs. Shuffelbottom, 2s. 6d.; R., 8s.; G. F. Finn, 10s. 6d.; Mountain Ash Branch, 5s.; Friend (Mountain Ash), 1s.
Correction:—"A. W." acknowledged last week as 5s. should be 1s.

G. HULL.—We have made use of the cutting. The Methodist minister's sermon is sheer drivel.

J. LUCAS.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

P. W. M.—Thanks for enclosures. The anonymous magazine is mere rubbish; the other items are welcome.

H. ALLEN, in sending on cuttings, writes: "I see by the answers to correspondents that another reader of your paper does not appear to appreciate your writings on the position in France. I am very sorry to see this.....But my object in writing is to add my small quota of thanks to you for the honest and outspoken view you have given your readers.....I believe you should regard your almost, if not quite, unique position in this matter as the proudest time in your strenuous life."

B. EVANS.—See "Sugar Plums." Glad to hear that you and your comrades admire the *Freethinker* for its "stalwart and unflinching attitude," and regard it as "a weekly intellectual treat."

W. VENTON.—We have not reviewed *When It Was Dark*. We glanced through it and thought it a very trashy book.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for your ever welcome cuttings.

ALLEN DYSON.—We thank you for the good feeling you display, but you would not be able to help us with copy for the *Freethinker*; moreover, we have quite as much as we can use at present.

J. BROUGH.—The general idea is a good one; as far as it affects us personally, we shrink from it. The matter might be differently viewed if it were entirely in other hands.

J. PEARSE.—Nobody knows the date of the birth of St. Paul or the date of his death. There is a chapter on St. Paul in our *Bible Heroes*.

J. ELLIS.—We did not keep your letter, so cannot deal with it now.

E. E. TAYLOR.—May be useful. Thanks.

J. T. HILL.—Eusapia Paladino is a medium who has had many adventures. Some would call her an adventuress. And elderly men are peculiarly liable to be imposed upon by clever women. Nor is there any magic for us in the word "professor." Some amiable old gentlemen bearing that name are more easily deceived by "occult" performers than is the ordinary man in the street. The proper persons to test these performers are men like Mr. Maskelyne and Mr. Stuart Cumberland.

R. SEWELL.—The statement in the *Catholic Times* that M. Littré, the great Positivist, came to the Catholic Church with full conviction before his death, is absolutely false. The whole matter is dealt with in our *Injidel Death-Beds*. The simple truth is that, when Littré was dying and quite unconscious, Madame Littré, who was a Catholic, brought in a priest to go through a

religious mockery at her husband's bedside. We regret to say that we believe this is well-known to the *Catholic Times* people.

T. H. ELSTOB.—Pleased to hear that Mr. Lloyd's lectures at Newcastle gave such "great satisfaction."

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.

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote delivers the last of the present course of Queen's Hall lectures this evening (Feb. 24), and is going off the beaten track for his subject, which will be "England's Real Grand Old Man—George Meredith: a Great Writer and a Great Freethinker." It will be remembered that Mr. Meredith has just turned eighty. Mr. Foote will deal especially with the aspects of Mr. Meredith's genius and teaching, which are treated either gingerly, or with absolute silence, by the ordinary critics. There ought to be a large audience on this occasion.

Mr. Cohen delivers two lectures at Birmingham to-day (Feb. 24), and the Branch has been able to secure the Town Hall for the meetings. As "saints" may be coming in from distant places, the Committee are arranging for tea between the lectures for all who require it.

Our old friend Mr. M. Christopher, of Wolverhampton, sends us a cutting from a local paper, but does not give us the name of it. We judge it to be the *Midland News*. There are some strong paragraphs in it, under the heading of "Random Remarks" from the pen of "Roderic Random." The writer points out what a bigoted, intolerant thing religion is. "A man," he says, "may be a sound scholar, a brilliant thinker, a credit to his age and nation; but if he is an unbeliever all his talents will not weigh against his heresy with the multitude." Another paragraph will much please our own readers—so we reproduce it in full:—

"If a man publishes a journal made up of cant, floundering, and the principles of his own particular creed, it is welcomed in the libraries of the people. If another man prints a journal expounding the views of the unbeliever, it is expelled from the libraries and its publisher is denounced with all the force and eloquence of orthodox religion. His journal is declared to be a thing of evil, a blasphemous utterance, an invention of the Devil. The question of whether he is right or wrong is not considered; it is sufficient that he is wrong in the eyes of the religious, and as they are in the majority and therefore the stronger, they may do with him as they will. A few centuries ago he would have been racked and executed; to-day he is reviled and insulted and looked upon as a social leper. That is the penalty he pays for daring to have an open mind on things unknown."

We are delighted to hear a voice like this in the Midlands.

Mr. John Latham, who was on a visit to England a few years ago, when we had the pleasure of making his acquaintance, sends us £10 for the Symes Memorial Fund from East Rand, South Africa, with a letter in which he says some very nice things of Mrs. Symes. "Your readers," he says, "may not fully realise that hard as Mr. Symes worked Mrs. Symes worked harder. She was hardly known to get a breath of fresh air except that which streamed in through the walls of the crazy old printing office. Among her duties were all the household work, the charge of all the printing, minding the shop whenever Mr. Symes was out, and a host of minor and ever-recurring worries. In short, Mrs. Symes worked as only a woman can, and it is no discredit to Mr. Symes's memory to say that in the matter of work he was bound by the limitations of our sex and could not hope to rival the inglorious and unapplauded energy of his wife."

Mr. Latham worked with Mr. Symes for eighteen months from August, 1898.

Carducci, the great Italian poet, whose death has just taken place at Bologna, was a pronounced Freethinker—indeed, an Atheist. Few of the English newspapers have said anything about this side of his genius. For a wonder, however, it was noticed in the *Daily News*, which called him "poet, freethinker, and révolté." Further on the writer of the notice said, in reference to Carducci's famous *Hymn to Satan*, that it "provoked a storm of indignant protest from his contemporaries, and in its blatant impiety and license proclaimed the writer to be an avowed rebel against all accepted law and authority, human or divine. It was qualified by an indignant critic at the time as a 'colossal aberration' and reprehended as a veritable 'intellectual orgy.' In a defence, remarkable for its outrageous and shameful blasphemy, Carducci boldly defended his position by asserting that he 'took his stand on the collective reason of humanity.'" What a violent, yet roundabout, way of saying that Carducci—like Milton, Goethe, and Byron—could not help seeing more in Satan than in Jehovah. But the violence of the *Daily News* writer only serves to emphasise the fact that Carducci was a wicked Atheist.

"Blatant impiety and license" are simply nonsense as applied to the *Hymn to Satan*. Carducci no more believed in moral license than Mr. George Cadbury does. Calling him blatant and blasphemous only shows that the born revolutionist frightens the sham revolutionist. One recalls the great bold image that Victor Hugo employs in his magnificent book on Shakespeare, who was too exuberant, virile, and prolific for the poor critics:—"The stallion is over-demonstrative; there are jack-mules passing by, to whom this is displeasing."

Carducci's funeral on Monday was a great affair—in spite of his Freethought, or perhaps to a large extent in consequence of it. The Count of Turin represented the King of Italy, the Presidents of the Senate and the Chamber were present, and more than five hundred societies, with their banners, followed the procession. All shops were shut on the line of march, and the street lamps lighted and veiled in crêpe. It is calculated that a hundred thousand people participated in the obsequies. When will Englishmen turn out in that way to honor a poor man of genius—a poet? Evidently the Italians are ahead of us in some things.

There has been for some time a Secular Society formed of Post Office employées in London. We are now pleased to hear of the formation of a Manchester Telegraphists' Secular Society. It consists at present of a few more than twenty members, and it expects to grow rapidly, for the members are all full of propagandist zeal. They are throwing all their debates open, and each member brings along as many non-members as possible. They hope to imbue the minds of the younger telegraphists with Freethought principles. We understand that they would value a few words of advice and encouragement from us. Well, we hardly feel able to advise them, for advice, to be worth anything, must be based upon a thorough knowledge of the details of the case; but as for encouragement, we beg to offer them a full measure. They have our best wishes for their success—which, we believe, is certain, if they keep on working without expecting too much progress in too little time; and we shall always be glad to advise them on any special point on which they may think our opinion valuable.

We have been asked to give the reference to the Shakespeare quotation in last week's *Freethinker* motto. The passage will be found in *Coriolanus*, Act II., scene iii.

"It gave me very great pleasure," a correspondent writes, "to pay a visit last Sunday evening to the meeting of the Plymouth Rationalist Association, where one of the most stalwart standard-bearers of Freethought in that historic port opened a discussion on 'The Right to Punish.' Almost every person present (including one very thoughtful medical doctor attached to the Royal Navy) joined in the brisk questioning and discussion; and I was not a little interested to note that the amount and variety of intellect displayed were quite out of proportion to the size of the rather small audience. Bigger towns than Plymouth would be very fortunate to possess an equally sturdy band of Freethinkers. They have only just begun to advertise in the local press and to receive public recognition; but there is no reason why this society should not do big things in the immediate future. For the enthusiasm is tremendous." Our correspondent was only visiting Plymouth; otherwise he would have known that the leading spirits of the movement he praises were old Secularists.

The Growth of Roman Catholicism in Great Britain.

WE are not of the number of those who look for the speedy extinction of Roman Catholicism. We have, indeed, sufficient faith in the power of reason as against superstition, and of truth as against fiction, to regard the ultimate destruction of the Papacy as inevitable. But the Roman Catholic Church has survived so much, and her powers of recuperation are so marvellous, that the day is probably far distant when a liberated humanity will be able to inscribe *Hic jacet* over the tomb of the last Roman pontiff. We are fully aware that the strongest minds and the brightest intellects are steadily forsaking Roman Catholicism; but when did the Papacy depend for its real power on the intellectual capacity of its adherents? The material which the Papacy kneads and moulds to its will is of very different consistency, and as yet there is no conspicuous dearth of supply. Hence it is we deprecate any of that foolish optimism which regards the Roman Catholic Church as a moribund and almost negligible institution. Her doom may, indeed, have gone forth, and the handwriting may be visible on the wall; but there remains a great deal of work to be done by Freethought sappers and miners ere the entire structure of Roman ecclesiasticism can be brought to the ground.

The Roman Church in Scotland is at present rejoicing over the progress it has made during 1906. Certainly, if continued increase in the numbers of the clergy and of the religious orders be considered evidence of progress, then Roman Catholicism is making headway in Calvinistic Scotland. It might be urged, however, that an increase merely in the parasitic attendants on an organism is not usually regarded as symptomatic of a healthy condition of the latter. We could wish that the Church of Rome would honestly tell us whether she is going backwards or forwards as regards the laity. But her methods are too subtle for that. There are a good many things she prefers to keep dark. We have official statistics before us for the year 1900 with reference to the archdiocese of Glasgow. We are not impressed by finding a considerable increase for 1906 in the number of baptisms. Infants have very little choice in the matter of religion. What becomes of these infants, or such of them as reach the adult stage? From our knowledge of the number of those of the present generation who have practically severed their connection with the Church, we more than suspect that even the extraordinary fecundity of the Irish immigrant will shortly be fully taxed to keep the actual membership at its present level. What is of much more significance than any increase in baptisms is the comparatively small increase in the number of confirmations.

The Catholic population of Scotland is set down roughly as 520,000—say perhaps about one in nine of the total population. If the method whereby the above total is arrived at be similar to the method employed in estimating the Catholic population of the Glasgow archdiocese, the result is not to be depended upon at all. The method is speciously fair, but the result is entirely fallacious. The number of births is assumed as coinciding with the number of baptisms, which so far is fair enough, as obviously the baptisms cannot exceed the births. Then the total Roman Catholic population is estimated on the basis of allowing the mean proportional average of population for each newly-born child. But this method, while legitimate enough when dealing with the entire population of a country, is misleading when applied to any religious body; because it is assuming that all the relatives of the newly-born and newly-baptised infant are adherents of the Church. And this, as things go nowadays, is a very large and gratuitous assumption indeed. Doubtless, readers will see the point without any elaborate explanation. In a country like Scotland there are many mixed

marriages, for instance. Though the child of such a union may be baptised in a Catholic church, all its relatives on the side of one of its parents are non-Catholics. And even when both parents are members of the Church, what guarantee have we that the uncles, aunts, cousins, etc., of the baptised child are still within her communion? Yet the method of calculation we are criticising counts all these in.

All things considered, those who contend that the Roman Catholic Church has not really held her own numerically in Great Britain save through the constant stream of Irish immigration are quite correct. But though this be so, and though defections on the part of the laity are numerous, the Church is undoubtedly growing more powerful on the ecclesiastical side. As we have said, churches, monasteries, convents and clergy are multiplying fast ("although there is no such rule in all their stern arithmetic"), and everyone knows what that means. It means the steady acquisition of property, and the possession of property means the wielding of a vast influence and the building up of vested interests. It is from that point of view that the development of Roman Catholicism in these countries is dangerous.

Of course, the accumulation of money, land and property in the hands of a Church ultimately leads to its own undoing. It waxes fat and vicious, and degenerates. Still, in the interval, and in the full glory of possession, incalculable injury may be done by a wealthy Church to a community.

We said above that the Roman Catholic Church is expanding rapidly on its ecclesiastical side in Great Britain. This expansive movement has been largely assisted during the past few years by the exceptional influx of clerics from the Continent. Here we may observe one unfortunate result to us of the repressive policy pursued towards the Catholic Church by the French Government. In the religious sphere, as in the commercial sphere, our policy of the open door makes our country the dumping-ground for everything that the Continental nations do not want. It is far from desirable to revive the vulgar cry of "No Popery." Like many a higher-sounding battle-cry, it has led in the past to so much shedding of tears and spilling of blood that one would fain bury its memories in oblivion. But it would be sheer folly on the part of Freethinkers to shut their eyes to facts. And the growth of clericalism of the Roman variety in Britain is an unquestionable fact. To recognise the exact condition of affairs is the best preliminary to dealing effectually with it. Since the law dealing with religious associations in France was passed there has been a large exodus of monks and nuns from that country. A considerable proportion—if not the major share—of these have found a domicile in Great Britain. Now without going to the extreme of advocating the abrogation of the right of asylum—a right, or rather a privilege, until recently so long and so honorably extended by our nation to those who have made themselves politically obnoxious to foreign governments—we must not ignore the probable consequences of this inflow of clericalism.

Without being unduly alarmist, there is reason to fear that these refugee monks and priests and nuns must constitute a strong reinforcement of the already sufficiently large army of obscurantists and reactionaries in our midst. It must be borne in mind that—rightly or wrongly—these people will unhesitatingly lay the responsibility for their expatriation at the door of French Freethought and French Atheism. It is not difficult to conceive what their attitude will be towards all advanced thought, and every forward movement in this country that is tinged with the secular spirit. It will assuredly be one of uncompromising hostility.

For a long period, the wealth and the power of the Roman Catholic Church in England and Scotland were so meagre and inconsiderable that the pretensions of the Papacy could be treated with comparative indifference, but this condition of affairs has been slowly and surely altering. We are now once more

witnessing the unobtrusive, but nevertheless steady growth and development in our midst of an ecclesiastical system which—like all other ecclesiastical systems—must inevitably range itself on the side of privilege, monopoly and established authority of the most conservative type. This is what ecclesiasticism has always done, and one may safely prophesy will always do, because it is itself an embodiment of privilege, monopoly and conservatism. And in saying this we are not unaware that many in the lower ranks of the clergy are sympathetic enough towards the common people. Such well meaning individuals, however, are powerless to interfere with the traditional policy of the Church. Moreover, the cleric's first duty is to his Church, and the Catholic priest, above all, never forgets that.

One most important aspect of the situation is that so many of the religious orders of the Catholic Church in Britain are engaged in the education and rearing of children, or in the training of lads and girls who are afterwards to act as the teachers of children. The tendency on the part of the clergy is more and more to place the elementary schools under the charge of nuns. Naturally they find it leads to the "best results" from their point of view. We know what it is to be schooled at the hands of nuns, and we commiserate children in like circumstance, unless where the school training is healthily counteracted by home and family influence. Even yet it is difficult to preserve evenness of temper when we think of the manner in which our head was stuffed with the most egregious supernatural nonsense while we were kept in almost criminal ignorance of the most elementary and necessary physical knowledge. And there was no one to supply a wholesome corrective. Roman Catholic schools may win eulogistic reports from the government inspectors. These latter are mainly concerned—and necessarily so—with what lies on the surface. But our experience is that a purely religious training, unless largely neutralised by rational and happy home life, has a pernicious effect on children. But all this is another story.

Our purpose at the outset was to drive home the lesson that, while there is no call for undue pessimism in contemplating the present position of Roman Catholicism in Great Britain, it would be foolish to err on the side of optimism. Figures could be given to show the remarkable increase of clergy and members of religious orders during the last twenty years, but such figures are superfluous for the increase is not disputed. What must be our policy in face of this condition of matters? It goes without saying that anything savoring of intolerance or oppression must be studiously avoided by Freethinkers. Our principles forbid such conduct towards those who differ from us. That is the supreme consideration. But if there be any who think that at times principle may be advantageously sacrificed to expediency, it may be pointed out that even as a matter of policy it is a huge blunder to attempt to forcibly suppress a religion. Roman Catholicism has always thriven on persecution, and it is poor tactics to play into the enemy's hand. Our policy must ever remain what it is now—a policy of permeation. Rationalists and Secularists must continue leavening the mentality of the masses of the people, and disseminating the principles of Freethought and Secularism. Time, as we all know, is on our side. Meanwhile we must persevere in our efforts to reach the raw material that the Catholic Church so successfully works upon. Every Catholic whom we can induce to read, listen and think, is lost to the Church almost inevitably. By operating on these lines we are gradually cutting off the supplies of the Church, and to cut off the supplies of an enemy is the most effectual method of compassing his defeat.

GEO. SCOTT.

If a person's religious ideas correspond not with your own, love him nevertheless. How different would yours have been had the chance of birth placed you in Tartary or India!—*Shelley*.

The Dead Know Not Anything."

A CURIOUS fact!—When death arrives
And people lose their precious lives,
And relatives and friends deplore
Their comrade who is now "no more,"
Whoever cries, whoever groans,
Whoever sheds the scalding tear
On losing friend so fond and dear,
Whatever grief or agony
Possess the friends of he or she,
The dear deceased has ne'er been known
To heave a sigh, emit a groan,
Or indicate by word or sign
That he has reason to repine,
That he regrets the mighty change,
Or finds his new condition strange,
Or undesirable or sad,
Or that he's bartered good for bad.

Ah! no. The dead, of all our race,
Ne'er murmur at their state or place,
Ne'er manifest the least desire
From their condition to retire,
Or to return to whence they came,
Or to regain their "vital breath"—
Once stopped by th' icy hand of death.

The dead are dead, nor grief nor pain
Can e'er invade their heart again.
Whatever fibs the priests may tell
Of Heaven's joys or flames of Hell,
Of ghostly lands beyond the tomb,
Of souls in light, or souls in gloom,
Of spirits wrapped in ardent fire,
Of "saints" amidst "the angel choir,"
Of earthly fools transferred to Heaven,
Of darkest crimes through Christ forgiven,
Of men whose lives were black and grim,
Blood-washed by Christ through faith in him,
Now singing hallelujahs loud
Amidst the "blood-besprinkled crowd"—
The silent dead all this deny
And stamp such priestly cant a lie.
No joys await the "saintly dead,"
Their baseless hope with life are fled.
Their dust is like the dust of swine,
Or dust of dogs—no more divine
Than mud in crowded road or street,
Splashed here and there by myriad feet.
Their substance, once their life has flown,
Decays and rots; their skin and bone,
Their flesh and nerves, their brain and blood,
Soon turn to common dust or mud,
Or turned to gases foul and read,
As poison-odors rise and spread;
And all their hopes and visions vain
Dissolve, no more to form again.

The fate of those the clergy curse
Is just the fate of saints—no worse;
The unbelievers die no more
Than those who God and Christ adore.
What haps to them's the common doom
Of lord and bishop, king and groom,
Of bee and drone, of flea and fly;
For all that live are bound to die.
And death's the utter end of all,
Whether in palace, slum, or hall.
The sceptic man, the faith-filled slave,
Rest both alike when in their grave;
Their thoughts and sentiments are dead
As th' hair that once adorned their head.

Lie fiery Saint and Atheist
Lie side by side in grave or cist,
They'll lie till dissolution come
Dead as their tomb and quite as dumb;
And when their gases rise and blend,
Or off through hole or cranny wend,
No strife or enmity they show,
No difference of creed they know.
And when their solids turn to dust—
As in the flux of time they must—
No fight ensues, no quarrels come
To agitate their peaceful tomb;
For both are dead, as dead as clods,
As dead as demons, ghosts, or gods,
As dead as Hercules or Zeus,
As dead as Satan or the Deuce,
As dead as Yahveh, God or Lord,
As dead as Christ, the famous Word.

Ay! when we're dead we know no more
Than what we knew in times of yore,
A million years our birth before.
All knowledge ends when Death has done
His office on the fated one;
All life and thought and feeling go
When we receive the fatal blow.
And hence it is the dead ne'er sigh,
And ne'er complain, or weep, or cry.
Naught can affright or make them flee,
In dying they *have ceased to be*.

Nov. 6, 1906.

JOS. SYMES

The Devil.

Who questioned his Creator's right
To rule the roost in realms of light,
And thought of putting God to flight?
The Devil.

Who 'gainst his Master did rebel,
And fiercely fought, but failed and fell
From highest heav'n to lowest hell?
The Devil.

Who—"out" on "ticket"-leave—became
His Maker's partner—save in name—
To bear, for God's mistakes, the blame?
The Devil.

Who worked with God when God began
To make the universe and man,
And helped the Lord to spoil his plan?
The Devil.

Who educated Adam's bride,
And snake-like walked and talked and tried
To show—and proved—that God had lied?
The Devil.

Who called on God, at God's request,
And treated Job, at God's behest,
To ruin, scabs, and rinderpest?
The Devil.

Who egged a king to carry out
A census—wisest act, no doubt,
Of Israel's loathsome, lyric lout—?
The Devil.

Who caught his half-starved God alone,
And said: "If peckish, take a stone
And change it to a roll or scone"?
The Devil.

Who stuck "the Savior" on a spike,
Whereon to perch no bird would like,
And said: "Jump off! no stone you'll strike"?
The Devil.

Who set his Maker on a height
Which brought our planet's day and night,
And kingdoms, into instant sight?
The Devil.

Who speaks the truth in Jah's old book,
And more sense show's, where'er you look,
Than Jah or any other spook?
The Devil.

Whom love the priest and parson well,
The double-dealing rogues who sell
Their godly lies of heav'n and hell?
The Devil.

Who is it whom we all admire—
As foe of Christ's immoral sire—
And whom to meet we all desire
With earth's best worthies round his fire?
The Devil.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

He who is afraid to know both sides of a question cannot think upon it. Christians do not, as a rule, want to know what can be said against their views, and they keep out of their libraries all books which would inform others. Thus such Christians cannot think freely, and are against others doing it. Doubt comes of thinking; the Christian commonly regards doubt as sin. How can he be a free thinker who thinks thinking is sin?—George Jacob Holyoake.

Correspondence.

THE LORDS AND SECULAR EDUCATION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—The *Daily Mail* is never weary of singing the praises of the House of Lords. This profound philosophic journal considers that the House of Lords is an assembly containing all that is pre-eminent in business and the conduct of affairs. "It embraces experts on almost every subject: finance, education, war, science, commerce. Its members are men of wide education, of generous sympathies, of broad views. Few, if any, have axes to grind, or personal interests to serve." Marvellous! There are experts amongst the Lords admitted. But do they predominate? Is there a philosopher amongst them? Many of them are merely sons of their fathers and are not necessarily born legislators. Is the House of Lords as at present constituted ever likely to assent to a purely secular and ethical curriculum in the schools, the only possible permanent and just solution of the existing impasse?

There was a good deal of talk about "watering the Peerage" when the proprietor of the *Daily Mail* was made a Peer. He seems to be very pleased with his company, judging from the fulsome flattery his journal has indulged in ever since. Some people are born flunkeys.

Consistency has never been a feature of the *Daily Mail*. Not long ago, in its Literary Supplement, the writers of books on evolution were politely referred to as "louts." Now the other day it published a really admirable review of a book of essays dealing with the Public Schools, in which it spoke of the desirability of certain reforms, the problem to be dealt with philosophically on evolutionary lines. The article was in every way excellent. But would the *Daily Mail* have published it as a leading article in place of the sorry rant it frequently prints now when dealing with religion, to the amusement of those who know that those who write the leading articles in Conservative journals write like barristers with a brief. Freethought and old-fashioned Conservatism are as poles apart. The *Daily Mail* is on the horns of a dilemma. It will be interesting to watch how it deals with the difficulty. It should be remembered that the proprietor of the *Daily Mail*, now a Peer, has a large commercial interest in the sale of religious journals publishing exploded ideas as though they were facts. This does not prevent him from accepting large sums for fraudulent advertisements such as of "electric" belts which are worthless. It would be interesting to have one Peer's definition of the word "unscrupulous."

J. A. REID.

Pleasant to the clerical flesh is the arrival of Sunday! Somewhat at a disadvantage during the week, in the presence of working-day interests and lay splendors, on Sunday the preacher becomes the cynosure of a thousand eyes, and predominates at once over the Amphitryon with whom he dines, and the most captious member of his church or vestry. He has an immense advantage over all other public speakers. The platform orator is subject to the criticism of hisses and groans. Counsel for the plaintiff expects the retort of counsel for the defendant. The honorable gentleman on one side of the House is liable to have his facts and figures shown up by his honorable friend on the opposite side. Even the scientific or literary lecturer, if he is dull or incompetent, may see the best part of his audience slip quietly out one by one. But the preacher is completely master of the situation; no one may hiss, no one may depart. Like the writer of imaginary conversations, he may put what imbecilities he pleases into the mouths of his antagonists, and swell with triumph when he has refuted them. He may riot in gratuitous assertions, confident that no man will contradict him; he may exercise perfect freewill in logic, and invent illustrative experience; he may give an evangelical edition with the inconvenient facts omitted—all this he may do with impunity, certain that those of his hearers who are not sympathising are not listening. For the press has no band of critics who go the round of the churches and chapels, and are on the watch for a slip or defect in the preacher to make a "feature" in their article: the clergy are, practically, the most irresponsible of all talkers.—*George Eliot*.

The desire to be for ever as we are; the reluctance to a violent and unexperienced change, which is common to all the animated and inanimate combinations of the universe, is, indeed, the secret persuasion which has given birth to the opinions of a future state.—*Shelley*.

A Prison Dialogue.

Scene: Prison Cell.

Characters: 1, Convict; 2, Prison Chaplain.

P. C.: "Good morning. What shall I read to-day from the 'Good Book'?"

Con.: "Anything you like." (Chaplain opens book and reads a chapter.)

P. C.: "Did you enjoy that?"

Con.: "Yes. Would you mind reading it again?"

P. C.: "With pleasure." (Reads chapter again.) "There now! I must go now and visit my other friends."

Con.: "Don't go, sir. If it ain't asking too much, would you read the chapter once more?"

P. C. (astonished): "Yes, I will, providing you tell me why you wish it for the third time."

Con.: "Well, sir, before I came in here I was a heavy drinker. It ain't exactly the Scripture that's touched me, but your breath smells like heaven."

Gnats and Camels.

The folk who hold the "New Theology,"

And, from the Faith, by reasoning, ramble,
Yet shrink from scouting all Godology,

"Strain at a gnat, and swallow a"—*Campbell*.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

WHEN REUBEN CAME TO BABYLON.

When Deacon Hiram journeyed from
His little town of Tyre,
He found the price of things at Thebes
Was just a trifle higher—
They left his whiskerines to him
And blessed his dear old soul!
If Reuben went to Babylon
I'll bet they got his roll.

The world's not greatly changed, you know
'Twas really much the same
When Adam took the pippin and
Made Eve take all the blame;
'Twas just as tricky in the days
When Egypt beat the Jews,
Or when Delilah dropped the dops
In Mister Samson's booze.

And when the Tower of Babel rose
To greet the mocking skies
The chief contractor's sudden wealth
Produced profound surprise;
When Cartagena's wandering boys
Got rather flushed with wine
The bar-keeper gave them wooden change
In dear old Palestine.

When Egypt's daughter plausibly
Found Moses, on the strand
The sewing circles straightway raised
A question in that land;
When Pharaoh boosted Joseph to
A job exceeding high,
Some Lincoln Steffens hollered "Graft!"
And "Graft!" is still the cry.

And when the Tuscan shepherd lads
"Excursioned" down to Rome
On Circus Day, they found some crooks
They'd never seen at home;
When Jason from the rowdy West
Came romping back to Greece
Some Athen's broker sold him stocks
And got Jay's golden fleece.

When Uncle Hiram journeyed from
His county seat at Tyro
The gold-brick men of Nineveh
Would meet the dear old squire
And fill his dear old carpet bag
And bless his dear old soul!
When Reuben went to Babylon
He always dropped his roll.

—*American Exchange*.

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.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham-place, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "England's Real Grand Old Man—George Meredith: a Study of a Great Writer and a Great Freethinker."

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (North Camberwell Hall, New Church-road): 7.30, J. T. Lloyd, "Secularism or Christianity: Which?"

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, 27 Romford-road, Stratford): 7.30, H. S. Wishart, "Immortality and Immorality."

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Town Hall): C. Cohen, 3.15, "Some Barbarisms of Civilisation"; 7, "The Plight of Faith: An Examination of the New Theology of Sir Oliver Lodge and Mr. R. J. Campbell."

EDINBURGH BRANCH N. S. S. (Masonic Hall, 11 Melbourne-place): 6.30, Mr. Gerrard, "The Bible and the Sun-Gods."

FALLSWORTH SECULAR SUNDAY SCHOOL (Pole-lane): 6.30, Fred Morgan, Recital.

GLASGOW BRANCH N. S. S. (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): Joseph McCabe, 12 noon, "The Scientific Religion of Sir Oliver Lodge"; 6.30, "Medicine in the Middle Ages." With lantern illustrations.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Allen S. Walker, "The Ethical Aspect of Food Reform."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road): 6.30, Councillor George Linfoot, "Religion and Progress."

NEWCASTLE RATIONALIST DEBATING SOCIETY (Lockhart's Cathedral Café): Thursday, Feb. 28, at 8, J. Bryce, "Human Nature."

PLYMOUTH RATIONALIST SOCIETY (Foresters' Hall, Octagon): 7, a Meeting.

SOUTH SHIELDS (Captain Duncan's Navigation Schools, Market-place): 7.30, Lecture arrangements and Conference.

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