

THE Freethinker

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He who thinks, and thinks for himself, will always have a claim to thanks; it is no matter whether it be right or wrong, so as it be explicit. If it is right, it will serve as a guide to direct: if wrong, as a beacon to warn.—JEREMY BENTHAM.

Goldwin Smith.

THE death of Professor Goldwin Smith has been widely noticed in the English press. Most of the leading newspapers have devoted special articles to the subject, and they have certainly given him all the praise he merited. It seems to me that his distinction was more due to his longevity than to anything else. He survived from a time of giants and bore a reflection of their greatness. There is not a single volume in the list of his writings which, in my opinion, is likely to live—except, perhaps, his little book entitled *Shakespeare the Man*, which may continue to interest Shakespeare students as showing the view of the Master's mind and character entertained by a solid and patient scholar. His conclusion was that Shakespeare was a Freethinker and a Humanist, without theology, and without belief in a future life.

Goldwin Smith's style seems to me to have been overpraised. It was scholarly yet simple, and singularly lucid; yet it lacked color, and never rose to any great elevation. It reminded one of some extremely well-bred people whose impeccable manners are less due to self-restraint than to an absence of strong emotion.

The interest of Goldwin Smith to Freethinkers lies in the fact that, even in Canada, which is probably the most religiously bigoted part of the British Empire, he could not help confessing a very considerable measure of heresy. It is really doubtful if he ever was orthodox. The Catholic reactionaries at Oxford were balanced by decidedly heterodox thinkers, and Goldwin Smith kept them company even if he did not proclaim sympathy with their opinions. In his old age he felt impelled to speak out. Heresy had spread, toleration had grown, the danger of avowing disbelief in Christian dogmas had diminished. All that was necessary in declaring oneself to be an Agnostic, or something near it, was a judicious flattery of the Christian religion on other grounds than its truth—and this the Toronto professor was easily able to accomplish. He said what he wished to say, and saved himself by burning his pinch of incense on the popular altar. It was not very heroic, but it was better than silence, and his age as well as his position gave an extra weight in the public mind to his scepticism.

Goldwin Smith's last volume, published in 1909, entitled *No Refuge But in Truth*, contains his final views on religious questions. In the introduction he noted the "complete revolution" that had taken place in his lifetime. "Sixty years ago," he said, "professors of geology were struggling to reconcile science with Genesis. Orthodoxy is now struggling to reconcile Genesis with science." Even the clergy must be affected, for "they are learned, they read, they meditate," and "many of them must, by nature, have open minds." But they are bound by tests.

The Catholic Church allows no mental freedom at all to its priests, and Protestant Churches expect their ministers to preach "the old, old story." Yet, as Goldwin Smith observed:—

"It is impossible to imagine that men of intellect and culture, men who think and whose ears are open, though they may belong to a clerical order, can believe that all that those in Holy Orders are ostensibly bound to uphold, all the miracles, all the creeds, among them the Athanasian Creed which consigns to eternal perdition whoever doubts that of two co-eternal beings one proceeded from the other."

To which Goldwin Smith shrewdly and slyly adds, that "It is not to be supposed that all of a certain nation could be by conviction Anglicans, all of another nation and province Calvinists or Lutherans." Emphasis in this passage must, of course, be laid on the words "by conviction." When the clergy all profess one set of ideas in one district, and another set of ideas in another district, it is obvious that other motives than conviction prevail.

It is difficult, Goldwin Smith says, to measure the full force of scepticism:—

"Orthodoxy has still social hold enough to exert a good deal of suppression. Political motives also come in. There is fear of disturbing what is supposed to be, and probably has to a considerable extent been, a security for social order. I have seen this feeling carried to the extent of the building of a church by one whom I knew to be a most pronounced unbeliever. Nor is the fear of social disturbance which imposes reticence, if not hypocrisy, unfounded. There can be little doubt that belief in the present state of things as a divine ordinance, and in future retribution, dim as it may have been, has had considerable influence in reconciling the suffering classes to the present order of things."

Quite so; that is what it was meant to do. Nietzsche well calls Christian ethics—the ethics of the New Testament—slave morality. Gibbon said the same thing, in his fine manner, when he remarked with reference to Constantine's adoption of Christianity as the State religion of the Roman Empire, that "The throne of the emperors would be established on a fixed and permanent basis if all their subjects, embracing the Christian doctrine, should learn to suffer and to obey."

Goldwin Smith did not build a church, to show an Agnostic's social love of Christianity, but he helped to maintain one. "Like my late friend Mr. David Chamberlain," he says, "I continue to attend a Church as a centre of Christian communion." This is very pretty, no doubt, but a hundred years ago he would not have been admitted to any Christian church; two or three hundred years ago any Christian church would have cheerfully burnt him alive; but a learned professor is welcome now in many Christian churches, even if he rejects every doctrine preached from the pulpit; for it enables them to say to the world at large, and to scoffers in particular, that the great professor so-and-so is still a Christian.

There was probably some truth in Goldwin Smith's statement that he remained in the Church for a good motive. But was it the whole truth? Was it not, to some extent, of the same character as his frequent praise of "the Christian ideal" in "which we still have a rule of life"? "With the civilisation of Christianity," he says, "no other civilisation can compare." Not even the Mohammedan civilisation in Spain, we suppose, with the Christian civilisation which extinguished it in blood and brutality! Nor

even the civilisation of Heathen Japan with the civilisation of Holy Russia! But worse even than this is the statement that "The moral principles and aspirations of good Freethinkers or Positivists remain still essentially Christian." The distinctive part of Christian morality is the part founded upon Christian beliefs; the rest belongs to the common stock of human morality, which is the same throughout the world, and without which human society could not last twenty-four hours. Freethinkers accept the common morality of the race, just as Christians do; on this point, and on this point only, they are in agreement; they are at variance in all that regards the differentia of Christianity. On subjects of such importance as marriage and divorce—to say nothing of minor subjects, such as the observance of the Sabbath—Christians and Freethinkers are bound to differ—at least while they are honest. It is nonsense to call a Freethinker's morality "essentially Christian" simply because he agrees with the Christian's keeping his hands out of his neighbors' pockets. The real truth is that the Freethinker's morality relates entirely to this world, while everything distinctive in Christian morality relates to another world primarily and to this world only incidentally.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

Freethought and Reform—IV.

(Concluded from p. 371.)

To some it may seem that I have gone a long way round to justify the Freethought position, or even that the original question has been lost sight of altogether. Neither conclusion, however, would be correct. For the original questions at issue were, it will be remembered, whether mental or moral phenomena were the mere reflections of the material and economic environment, or whether the true social forces were not psychic in character, conditioned in their expression by the material environment. And the only way in which this issue could be decided was to form some conception of the real nature of the social forces. If social life rests on a strictly material and economic basis, and if, at any stage of its development, it merely expresses this fact, then they are right who argue that any attack on opinion is useless; what has to be done is to alter the economic conditions. If, on the other hand, social life really begins in the creation of a common mental life, and this in turn expresses itself in institutions, in religion, in morals, etc., then an endeavor to modify this common mental life is the true road to social reform. Always, of course, bearing in mind, that as the individual mind does not exist, save as the functioning of an organism, so there will exist a relation between the mental life of a society and its material organisation.

So I have argued that social life rests primarily upon the mental fact of gregariousness, and that each individual is a member of a social group only as he enters into the common, psychical group life. A common necessity to eat, or to be clothed, does not constitute a social group, and does not create one. Non-gregarious animals have the necessity for food and shelter, with man, but this does not make them social. It is the cement of a common stock of feelings, and of a common mental outlook that binds human beings together in a social bond. Destroy this, and society disintegrates. Deepen it, broaden it, develop it in all directions, and society progresses. It is in a consciousness of kind that social life begins, and by a strengthening of this consciousness of kind, social life develops.

Further, it may be pointed out, that it is the play of this psychic life on material conditions that is the source of improvement and which tends to exert a growing control over the most obvious of material phenomena. All the instruments, weapons, and inventions, by means of which man guards himself

against enemies, protects himself against extremes of temperature, increases and develops his food supply, all the institutions by means of which civilised life are carried on, are so many translations into a material form of human intelligence. They are mental products. And it is, in the main, these stored up and inherited products of human intelligence that make the modern man the superior of the man of antiquity. The sailors on a modern battleship are not of necessity individually the superiors of the men who manned an ancient Phœnician war galley. But the accumulated knowledge represented by a single modern man-of-war would enable it to destroy with ease the united navies of the ancient world. So, in numerous other directions that might be instanced, it is to the transforming power of the human mind that we are forced to look even for improvement in purely material conditions.

Or consider the significance of the following facts. If there are two things that would be taken as absolutely indispensable and inseparable factors to human life, they are the need for food and the attraction of the sexes. Yet even here we see the same force at work. For as man increases in culture, æsthetic qualities begin to exercise their power in so gross a matter as feeding. Civilised man not only desires food, he requires it cooked in a particular manner, served up in a particular way, and demands almost innumerable little æsthetic accompaniments. And this serves very materially to affect the production, the distribution, and the consumption of food, to say nothing of the people who live by ministering to these requirements.

A still more striking illustration meets us in the sphere of sex. The perpetuation of the species is secured by the fact of sex—by the attraction of one sex to the other. But does it, therefore, follow that in the mating of man and woman there is nothing more than the fact of sex? By no means. Added to the mutual attractions of male and female there are the additional factors of beauty of form, of dress, graces of mind and manner, various mental and moral qualities, all of which assume increasing importance as civilisation develops. So powerful do these added elements become that eventually they are the decisive factors as to whether particular individuals shall or shall not marry and perpetuate the species. That is to say, we have the primary biologic fact of sex determined in its operation by an added—and non-essential—psychological factor. How far back in the history of man's pre-human ancestry this factor goes is of no importance to the point now at issue. It is enough that it does operate, and that it operates with increasing force as civilisation develops.

The same truth meets us in any broad and comprehensive view of social phenomena. An army may fight, expecting pay or plunder, and may refuse to fight when neither is obtainable; but the efficiency of an army is maintained by neither, but by appeals to the honor of the flag, the glory of the country, the reputation of the regiment, or by the ideal of personal courage. In the same way we see how the appeals to patriotism, military greatness, commercial supremacy, etc., are continually modifying the social structure, initiating new departures and perpetuating old institutions. Again, when one school of economists speak of man as though the only motive force in human society was that of material gain, and so argue that if we withdraw this the impetus to work is destroyed, the reply is made that men work for other things than mere gain, or from other motives than the desire to avoid poverty. It is pointed out, and with truth, that the best work in the world never has been done, and is not being done, because of the desire of material profit, but from the desire for fame, love of knowledge, or from a sheer unselfish wish to benefit one's fellows. But this plea, often urged by those who place chief emphasis on the influence of economic conditions, is an admission that the inspiration to social work really comes from the psychological, and not from the economic, side.

The truth is that desires, and not needs, are the great motive forces of human nature; and a further truth is that desires create needs that are almost as imperative as the need for food. Man needs, in common with all living creatures, food; but he desires social intercourse, æsthetic, literary, and scientific gratification, and to satisfy these desires he will do more and dare more than he will even to get food, imperative and inescapable though that need be. As these desires become more general, they take their place as social needs, to be reckoned with more surely in the development of social life than even the necessity for food and clothing.

So when a writer like Gumpłowicz says, "It is not man himself who thinks, but his social community; the source of his thoughts is in the social medium in which he lives, the social atmosphere he breathes," I agree with him, only we must clearly realise in what the social medium and the social atmosphere consists. This social medium, I have tried to prove, consists essentially in the common mental life of the group, and in a mental heritage that increases in volume with the passing of each generation. A close study of human history will prove, I think, that from the earliest period man is dominated by this common mental life, and that all social change is by reason of its modification. Social anthropology supports this by showing how leadership, chieftainship, and kingship, with the numerous institutions to which they give rise, rests, not upon material subjugation or economic dependence, but upon primitive ideas of magic and ghost-worship. Later history shows how material subjugation and economic dependence is maintained by keeping alive these primitive ideas and appealing to these primitive feelings. And every advance or improvement in the social state drives home the lesson that it is only in so far as a people or a class are receptive of changed ideas and ideals that genuine reform is accomplished.

With a great deal that may be said concerning the difficulty of getting new ideas accepted in bad material conditions I quite agree. If the right ideas are to be maintained, conditions conformable to them must exist also. But this does not conflict with anything that has been said. Those who imagine that it does overlook two important facts. One I have already indicated, namely, that of the effect of one class of society upon another. But another important fact is that the heredity of each human being is so complex that no two individuals bring the same mental endowment to bear upon their environment, and in individual endowment there is still another source from which the necessary stimulus may come. If it is argued that one social class is so placed that their material environment prevent the play of desirable ideas, it is at the same time admitted that in the absence of ideas reforms do not occur. In the very act of attacking the position, those who do so are forced to admit its invulnerability. It is admitted that to the process of reform the conception of its possibility and desirability is an indispensable pre-requisite.

The Freethinker does not ignore the influence of purely material agencies on the individual's mental and moral life. Nor is he blind to the obvious social truth that the sty may make the pig. He is simply alive to the complementary truth that the pig may as often make the sty. He quite recognises that bad trade may drive individuals to join the army, but he also sees that it is the survival of the barbaric virtues of militarism and insular patriotism that provides an army for him to join. The Church may be used or supported by individuals for economic reasons, but it is the survival of primitive ideas about gods, ghosts, and souls that provides them with this weapon of economic warfare. The Army, the Church, the Throne, class, caste, government, all our institutions, in short, are only the material things that condition the expression of the psychologic fact. And it is by way of attack or defence of the psychologic fact that social improvement is effected.

Not, then, because he is careless of social reform, but because he aims at this end, does the militant

Freethinker attack religion. He sees how every material injustice rests finally upon a mental foundation. It is the psychic life of one class that gives another class in the State its power. It is the frame of mind induced by a less enlightened past that gives tyranny and injustice their opportunity. And because of the enormous power of religious ideas in primitive society we are forced to recognise the immense influence of religion in shaping social institutions and in perpetuating false views of things. "Man is what he thinks" may be taken as expressing a much greater measure of truth than the once famous "Man is what he eats." As a social being man is a being that is dominated by his ideas, and to modify those ideas is the surest method of modifying the social structure of which it is, certainly to a preponderating extent, the expression. C. COHEN.

Christian Experience.

IT has recently been asserted that non-Christians have no right, being devoid of the necessary qualification, to criticise Christianity. This means that Christianity is above criticism. In making such an assertion, however, the divines forget that their uniform practice belies their precept. The very claim that Christianity is the only true and perfect religion carries with it the tacit condemnation of all other religions under the sun. If a Buddhist may not criticise Christianity, what right have Christians to criticise and reject Buddhism? If a Secularist is not competent to sit in judgment upon the merits or demerits of Jesus and his Church, by what authority do the disciples of Jesus denounce Secularism as a debasing philosophy of life? The truth is that Christians, by claiming immunity from criticism for their religion, virtually demonstrate the fact that they are in mortal terror of criticism. While freely exercising the right to pronounce judgment upon every Pagan religion, they are yet convinced that the interests of their own cult can only be safeguarded by shielding it against unprejudiced criticism. And they are by no means mistaken. Christianity cannot endure honest criticism. The late Mr. Gladstone wrote a book in defence of the Bible, and called it *The Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture*; but long before that work was published the so-called "Impregnable Rock" had been blown to atoms by the dynamite of scholarship. What is true of the Bible is, of necessity, equally true of Christianity. Once the cannons of criticism begin to play upon it, it is seen to be quite as vulnerable as the religions of ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome; and this is the root of the Christian's objection to having his religion critically examined. The only criticism he can permit must be baptised with piety and reverence, which is no criticism at all.

One of the most favorite devices to disarm criticism is to represent Christianity as a religion the truth of which becomes manifest only in experience. On purely intellectual grounds it may be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to defend it; but in the holy of holies of experience it is absolutely unassailable. Recently, a young man spoke thus:—

"I confess my inability to meet the arguments against the Bible, the Virgin Birth, and the miracles generally; but I know that the Cross possesses saving efficacy, because it has saved me; and I know that Christ rose from the dead and went to heaven, because I live in daily communion with him. In an argument a clever Atheist could easily floor me; but here (pointing to his heart) I am utterly invincible."

Many there are to-day who regard this as an impregnable position. In reality, however, it is nothing of the kind. You have a friend who has gone out to India; and clearly fellowship with him now is possible only in imagination. If neither letter, nor telegram, nor living messenger puts you into touch with him, you have no means of getting at him at all except through the fancy. You remember what he was, and imagine what he is. You do not know even

that he still lives. But even if he has died you can still hold imaginary communion with him. You have a picture of him engraved upon your memory, and you can get into fancied fellowship with him by means of that. Now, it is readily granted that communion with Christ is practicable in precisely the same way. Theology has painted various portraits of him, and you may take any one of them you like and enjoy a make-believe interview with it. Or, if you simply rely upon the witness of the Four Gospels, your communion will be modified accordingly.

Is it not now beyond all doubt that, as evidence of the truth of the Christian religion, experience is of no value whatever? The most palpable thing about religious experience is that its character is always determined by the beliefs that make it possible. The experience of Unitarians is radically different from that of Trinitarians, and the experience of Trinitarians varies in proportion as their theories of Christ's person and atonement vary. To some of the New Theologians, communion with Christ means nothing more than fellowship with their own higher selves. Thus there is nothing in religious experience to prove that Christ is alive and acts as an omnipotent and omnipresent Spirit. That is an assumption without the slightest foundation in fact, an inference justified by no premises. The appeal to experience is as ineffectual as it is cowardly. It is a psychological blunder of the worst kind. Communion with Christ, in so far as it is genuine, is of the same nature as communion with Shakespeare or Milton or Wordsworth by means of their poetry. No other communion with the dead is either possible or desirable. That they still live is a mere dream of the fancy.

In the secular life experience signifies the impression which the past has produced upon the organism. A man of experience is a man who bears the stamp of much life. But in religion experience denotes the effect which certain beliefs have upon the feelings. That is to say, if you verily believe that God exists and that Christ lives, you will feel as if they really did. If you believe that there is a Heavenly Father who loves and cares for you, that he provided a Savior like unto himself to deliver you from all your sins, and that there is a Holy Spirit whose one anxiety is that Savior and sinner should be brought into vital contact, you will have an experience, a sense, a feeling of the truth of your beliefs, and great will be your joy; but your emotional excitement is no evidence whatever that there are any objective realities behind those beliefs. Whatever we profoundly believe, however intellectually absurd and unthinkable, is, for the time being, absolutely true to us, in the same sense as dreams are true while they last. This is a point which the theologians never see, although it is the most essential of all points in this connection. Tennyson saw it, but without realising its true import, when he said:—

"We have but faith: we cannot know;
For knowledge is of things we see."

Here is another point of immense significance. If supernatural beliefs were objectively true the resultant experience would be irresistibly potent. If Christians were in communication with an actually existing God of love, and with a personal Savior of the world possessing infinite power, is it conceivable that the world could be in the lamentable condition in which we find it to-day? Is it thinkable that the Church could be in its present state of hopeless impotence and "lingering languishment"? The belief is that in answer to fervent prayer the saints shall be imbued with power from on high, the power of the Holy Ghost; but at no period of Christian history has prayer produced anything like miraculous results. No supernatural Being has ever proved his existence by interfering in human affairs. Christians have never been either better or worse, on the average, than other people. Dr. Horton "suggests that one of the reasons why the Church was losing her power, and why the work for Christ appeared to halt, was owing to the modern habits of the people in civilised countries, who were losing the habit of protracted prayer." But a God who only does his

work in answer to "protracted prayer," or a Savior that must be persistently coaxed into accomplishing his saving mission, thereby proves himself to be a worthless myth, a creature of man's imagination only. And this conclusion is confirmed by the fact that so-called Christian experience is, after all, but a form of self-indulgence, and often proves highly injurious. Take such amatory hymns as "Jesus, Lover of my soul," and you will see how large a place the sexual element fills in religious experience, and how its insistent and unsatisfied yearnings find expression and assuagement in endearing and caressing terms addressed without restraint to an imaginary spouse. Many a prayer-meeting degenerates into a perfect orgy of emotional licence. It opens quietly enough, then the emotions begin to stir, the voices rise and multiply, the excitement becomes more and more intense, the noises more and more deafening, until before the end the assembly is characterised by wild and dissolute revelry, the whole scene reminding one of a bar-room when most of the company are beside themselves with drink. Surely, it cannot reasonably be claimed that such experiences conduce to the elevation and ennoblement of the moral nature of those who enjoy them. Their whole tendency is rather lowering and degrading. And they involve a culpable waste of emotional force. There is the waste of affection on an imaginary Divine Lover, and the waste of enthusiasm in the service of fanciful causes.

Supernaturalism, *as such*, has never done any good, but it has wrought incalculable mischief. It has always tended to impoverish the natural life. All the wealth of emotion that we possess ought to be utilised in the development of society, in the cleansing and sweetening of our relations with one another as citizens of this world, in the promoting of social welfare. If the powers that have been wasted on purely religious enterprises had been devoted to the study and application of social science, the world would have been much more advanced to-day than it is. For many ages otherworldism choked this-worldism, and prevented it from growing. How glad, therefore, we ought to be that the day of theology is closing and shall never know another opening, that the forces wasted for so long in spiritual love-making are at last beginning to be spent in the higher service of humanity, and that already there are convincing indications that the cause of morality is gaining strength in proportion as the cause of Christianity is losing it.

J. T. LLOYD.

Yahveh alias Shaddai.

THERE is one matter, not yet noticed, which has a most important bearing upon a large number of the later narratives in Genesis. This is, the name by which the Hebrew deity is said to have been known from the time of Abraham to that of the alleged Exodus from Egypt.

In Exodus vi. 2, 3, we read (according to the Authorised Version) the following remarkable statement:—

"And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name *Jehovah* was I not known to them."

What are we to understand by this somewhat cryptic statement? Are we to take it that the Jewish tribal god had been masquerading under four different names prior to the time of Moses? Well, no; that deity in this passage confesses to but one alias—"El Shaddai," which is translated "God Almighty." To render the passage clearer we have but to note the Hebrew proper names, as under:—

"And *elohim* spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am *Yahveh*: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, as *El Shaddai*, but by my name *Yahveh* I was not known to them."

Here we have but two appellations of the Hebrew deity—Yahveh and El Shaddai. The word *elohim*

is not a proper name at all; it denotes simply one or more of the genus *deus*, and is applied in the Old Testament to *any* member of that imaginary species, as may be seen from the following examples:—

Exodus xxii. 20.—“He that sacrificeth unto any *elohim*, save unto Yahveh only, shall be utterly destroyed.”

Judges viii. 33.—The Israelites “made Baal-berith their *elohim*.”

Judges xi. 24.—“Wilt not thou possess that which Chemosh thy *elohim* giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever Yahveh our *elohim* hath dispossessed from before us, them will we possess.”

1 Samuel v. 7.—“The ark of the *elohim* of Israel shall not abide with us: for his hand is sore upon us, and upon Dagon our *elohim*.”

The meaning of the statement in Exodus vi. is thus quite clear. Prior to the time of the supposed Exodus the god of the Israelites had appeared to men and had given commands under the assumed name of El Shaddai; now he deemed it right to inform Moses (and the nation he was about to take under his protection) that his real name all along had been Yahveh; whence it is implied that by the latter title only was he to be invoked for ever after. This circumstance, as already stated, is perfectly clear; but when we turn to the Bible “history” of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, we find that the name Yahveh was known to all three patriarchs. For proof I need but cite the following passages:—

Gen. xxiv. 3. (Abraham to his servant):—“I will make thee swear by *Yahveh*, the god of heaven and the god of earth, that thou shalt not take a wife for my son of the daughters of the Canaanites.”

Gen. xxiv. 12 (Servant at the well):—“And he said, O *Yahveh*, the god of my master Abraham, send me, I pray thee, good speed this day.”

Gen. xxvii. 20.—“And Isaac said unto his son, How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son? And he said, Because *Yahveh* thy god sent me good speed.”

Gen. xxvii. 27 (Isaac blessing Jacob):—“See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which *Yahveh* hath blessed.”

Gen. xxviii. 16.—“And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, Surely *Yahveh* is in this place; and I know it not.”

The foregoing extracts prove beyond all possibility of doubt that the three patriarchs named knew the god whom they worshiped by the name of “Yahveh.” Consequently, the statement in Exod. vi. appears to be a big, big—terminological inexactitude. The question now arises—Is this really the case? We shall see.

Now, if we turn to some of the other narratives in Genesis, we shall find that the three patriarchs referred to knew their god by the name of El Shaddai.

Gen. xvii. 1.—“And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, *Yahveh* appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am *El Shaddai*; walk before me, and be thou perfect.”

Gen. xxviii. 3.—The patriarch Isaac says to his son Jacob: “And *El Shaddai* bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee,” etc.

Gen. xxxv. 11.—After changing Jacob’s name to Israel, “*elohim* said unto him, I am *El Shaddai*: be fruitful and multiply,” etc.

Gen. xlvi. 3.—In Egypt “Jacob said unto Joseph, *El Shaddai* appeared unto me at Luz in the land of Canaan, and blessed me,” etc.

What, now, shall we say is the solution of the enigma? Did the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob speak of their god by the name Yahveh or El Shaddai? The answer is the simplest in the world. In the narratives by the Yahvist writer these patriarchs invoked their deity by the name Yahveh; in those by the Priestly writer they knew him by his assumed name El Shaddai. The statement made in Exod. vi. 2-8 was by the Priestly writer, who was there referring only to his own narratives of the three legendary patriarchs. This writer, in speaking of the Hebrew god, had uniformly employed the common name “*elohim*”; but when on a few occasions he was obliged to use the proper name of the deity, he gave this as El Shaddai. But why, then, it may be asked, has he introduced the name Yahveh? The reply is, that he has done so for the simple reason

that he intended to employ the latter name himself in his subsequent compositions, and he wished to identify this name of the Hebrew god (Yahveh) with that which he had already ascribed to the god of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (El Shaddai). Consequently, having announced the new name of the Jewish deity, he commences to use it at once, and consistently employs it throughout the remainder of his priestly narratives instead of *elohim* and El Shaddai, as may be seen from the following extracts:—

Exod. vi. 10.—“And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying”—

Exod. vi. 12.—“And Moses spake before the LORD”—

Exod. vi. 13.—“And the LORD spake unto Moses”—

Exod. vii. 1.—“And the LORD said unto Moses”—

In the foregoing (and other passages in which “the Lord” is printed in small capitals) the Hebrew name is Yahveh. The Priestly writer, having no prophetic knowledge, did not know that at some later period his compositions would be combined with those of the Yahvist and the Elohist, and that of the six books thus formed, five would be attributed to a mythical legislator named Moses, and the sixth to a legendary military leader named Joshua.

ABRACADABRA.

Acid Drops.

The superstition of royalty is as debasing as all other forms of superstition. For one thing, it makes people lose a proper sense of their relationship to each other. One would think, both from the way in which they are addressed, and the way in which they talk of themselves, that every one of the crowd of “royal” personages in England were composed of a special kind of human clay. Even the Queen Mother still talks (she does it in her last letter to the Lord Mayor of London) of her “terrible bereavement,” her “overwhelming grief,” and her “irreparable loss.” Only a life-long training in egotism could suggest such language from one human being to others. Every woman who loses her husband sustains the same “irreparable loss” as Queen Alexandra. Poor women, who lose the breadwinners of their families, suffer a far more “terrible bereavement” than she does. One wonders, indeed, why the word “terrible” should be applied at all to a bereavement occurring in the ordinary course of things. For the truth must be told, that King Edward was nearly seventy, and had enjoyed a fairly long innings in the game of life—and Queen Alexandra with him. As for “overwhelming grief,” one can only observe that the adjective is exaggerated, as the Queen Mother is reported to be in excellent health.

“May God help us each to bear our heavy cross.” Thus ended ex-Queen Alexandra’s telegram to Lady Butler. We understood that the Queen Mother was a Christian. Her husband, therefore, is not really dead, but “gone before”—and she will soon rejoin him in paradise. If this be true, the “heavy cross” is another exaggeration. But perhaps it isn’t true, and ex-Queen Alexandra, like a good many other Christians, only believes that she believes it.

Roosevelt has left our shores, and sensible Britishers breathe more freely. One of the first things he should do on settling down home again is to correct that old printed description of Thomas Paine as a “dirty little Atheist”—which combines three lies in three words.

Buffon was asked what he thought of the definition of a crab as a red fish that walks backwards. He replied that a crab was not red, it was not a fish, and it did not walk backwards; with those three exceptions the definition was admirable. Something similar might be said of Roosevelt’s description of Thomas Paine.

Roosevelt’s blunder in the epithet “dirty” is extremely gratuitous. It is well known that Thomas Paine was some inches nearer six feet than Roosevelt reaches. On this point it is so easy to be accurate. Perhaps the inaccuracy—to give it the mildest possible name—is due to a malady called swelled-head, which makes a man fancy there is such a lot of his stature above his optics.

“Providence” mistook one of its own houses at Trefoglwys in Central Wales. During the recent heavy thunderstorm

the ancient church there was struck by lightning. The special object of attack was the ornamental cross crowning the spire, which was ripped out of its socket. Johnny Kensittes, and other true-blue Protestants, may see in this a "judgment." Those who have to bear the cost of repairing the damage will probably take a different view of the matter.

Another church struck by lightning was St. Peter's, Canterbury—the chancel arch being considerably damaged. Divine service was going on at the time, which makes the negligence of "the One Above" all the more remarkable. Of course the congregation were greatly alarmed. None of them were in any hurry to go to heaven.

We haven't given the "poor" clergy a turn for several weeks, but we see that they are still going strong. Looking at the "Latest Wills" in a morning newspaper, we notice that the Rev. Edward Crow, who lived in this miserable vale of tears till he was ninety-seven years old, and died at Cheltenham, left £36,800. Oh what must it be to be there! "There" means the sultry establishment he has gone to if the gospel he preached is true.

An evening paper of the same day reported the case of the Rev. C. B. Hutchinson, of Croydon, who left £27,719. "Blessed be ye poor! Woe unto you rich!" Such is the text—and these wills are the sermon, telling us more eloquently than words how much sincerity there is in modern Christianity.

The London *Evening News* would hardly give two lines to anything sensible, but it devotes a whole column to a fatuous display of religious fanaticism at Emmanuel Hall, a small mission room, carried on by a Mr. W. Hutchinson, at Bournemouth. It appears that the pastor astonished his congregation by uttering a lot of sounds which they couldn't understand. Nor could he. But when he was seized with an attack of "the tongues" the next Sunday morning, a lady visitor from London explained that the unknown tongue was the voice of the Holy Ghost, and the meaning was that the second coming of the Lord was near at hand, and it behooved them to prepare. The pastor and his flock were filled with joy at the news. They were so delighted that they forgot to ask why the Holy Ghost paid a special visit to their little tabernacle, to the neglect of all other tabernacles in the kingdom. As for "the Lord is coming," it is enough to say that he has been "coming" ever since Paul (or whoever it was) wrote that old epistle to the Thessalonians.

A wild scene of religious excitement took place lately in the parlor of Sion College, on the Embankment, London. It was at a meeting of the Pentecostals, who yielded to "the spirit" in all sorts of extravagant ways. Considering how they carried on, some of their prayers were really gratuitous. One man from Brazil cried: "Lord make us nobodies; save us from natural understanding. Empty us, Lord." We are afraid that even the Lord would find this an impossibility. Nature seems to have anticipated him.

A paragraph in our April 10 number was devoted to Mr. George Grossmith, the well-known entertainer, who had told a cock-and-bull story in his autobiography of how he took the cheek out of Ingersoll at an American hotel, where Irving also happened to be staying. The story was false on the face of it, and must have sprung in equal parts from Mr. Grossmith's vanity and what may be politely called his imagination. As the *Freethinker* goes every week into the Ingersoll household we are not surprised at receiving the following letter from a member of that household who is well-known in all advanced circles in America:—

"117 East Twenty-First-street,
Gramercy Park,
New York,

MY DEAR MR. FOOTE,—

May 30, 1910.

In reply to the quotation from Mr. George Grossmith, published in a recent number of the *Freethinker*, I wish to say that my brother-in-law, Colonel Ingersoll, never had the pleasure of meeting Sir Henry Irving, and Mr. Farrell, who, as you know, always travelled with the Colonel, has no recollection of his having met Mr. Grossmith. We are quite positive that the conversation reported by Mr. Grossmith as having occurred between Colonel Ingersoll and himself is pure fiction. With kindest remembrances from the entire family.—I am,

Always sincerely yours,

SUE M. FARRELL."

Poor Mr. Grossmith! Why on earth didn't he stick to his proper business and leave heretic-smashing alone? Imagin-

ative Christians of his type (and Torrey's) would do well to remember that the editor of the *Freethinker* is still alive and kicking and is pretty sure to give them trouble.

We are pleased to see Mr. Philip Snowden pointing out, in connection with the proposals of the Education Settlement Committee, the peculiarly sectarian character of that body. He says:—

"The committee began obsessed by an idea which has dominated all the education controversies since 1870. They assumed, as if it were an unquestioned and natural right, that it is the business of the religious bodies to settle this education difficulty. This idea is responsible for all the trouble, and so long as it prevails it will prevent any satisfactory settlement of the question."

This is well and properly said and re-echoes what we have always pointed out. Piety is nearly always impertinent in practice, and right through the education controversy Christians have acted and talked as though no one but Christians were worth considering. It is really time that this impertinence ended and Christians were made to realise that they are, in this world, only a section of the population, however largely they may bulk in the next.

Mr. Snowden is also correct in saying that "the not inconsiderable proportion of the population which is opposed to religious teaching of any sort in the schools," has shown a wonderfully tolerant spirit in these controversies. But when he describes this attitude as a "Christian and tolerant" spirit, we beg to differ. You cannot marry the one word to the other. They have been tolerant because they have not been Christian. Had they been Christian, tolerance would have been conspicuous by its absence. We would suggest to Mr. Snowden that in the discussion of such subjects the air would be greatly cleared if the practice of taking Christians at their own valuation was dropped in speech as well as in fact. The fault is, that people have been *too* Christian. Otherwise, the education difficulty would have been settled long since.

The *Guardian* declares it is not alarmed by the "bogey" of Secular Education. Its reason is that, "with the exception of a few extremists, nobody wants a secular system. Well, a complete reply to this is that *everybody* has not yet been asked whether they want it or not. Church and chapel, of course, do not; but it is part of the insolence of the religious world to assume that no one outside these organisations need be consulted. At any rate, the Trades Union Congress, the largest non-religious organisation in the country, has declared with practical unanimity for Secular Education. And if statesmen had the courage to appeal to the people on this issue, we have every confidence that they would receive a "mandate" to clear the parson for good out of the State schools.

Sir C. F. Dyke-Acland writes to one of the religious weeklies defending the scheme of the Educational Settlement Committee. He says that "the child, the teacher, and the parent all had to be protected and provided for." But this is precisely what the scheme fails to do. It does not protect the teacher, because in practice the religious test will remain. It does not defend the ratepayer, because it forces everybody to pay for the religion of somebody else; the only "protection" being that, after paying for religious instruction, the conscientious objector is permitted to go without it. Least of all does it protect the child. He (or she) will be saddled with religious speculations as absolute truths, and crammed with beliefs that its maturity is far more likely to disprove than confirm. One of the queerest notions of what is our duty to children is that which assumes that we must put before them as unquestionable truths teachings which adults admit, one to the other, are called into question by a growing number of intelligent men and women. The physical exploitation of childhood is almost at an end; how long will it be before the mental exploitation will be ended likewise.

The *Christian World* says, "The love which exists between parents and children among the working classes of Japan is a very touching and beautiful trait. Respect for old age is a deep and universal feeling; the children look upon it as a privilege to support their parents when they are past work." It also adds, in a regretful tone, that hitherto "religion to either man or woman of the working classes has meant very little." Well, they seem to have got on very well without it, and it is difficult to see what they have to gain by the introduction of Christianity amongst them. There cannot be much wrong among a people when the family relations are as described by the *C. W.* And such a people are not likely to look upon the treatment of his

parents by the Jesus of the Gospels with any great degree of admiration.

One of the missionaries home from Japan to attend the Edinburgh Conference admits that the outward signs of Christianity's progress among the Japanese is not very marked. Mr. E. W. Clement, the gentleman in question, says that, with the spread of Western learning, the old religions are rapidly losing their hold on the people,—which we can readily believe,—and the educated classes are relapsing into Agnosticism and Materialism. Still, Mr. Clement is hopeful, and thinks that the Gospel is silently making its power felt, and that the next few years may witness "a great national movement towards Christianity." We have heard of this great movement before, and are not deceived by it. People may not develop into Freethinkers, but once they have reached that stage they do not go back. You may keep a man superstitious, but once he is freed nothing short of a miracle can restore his superstition. And miracles do not happen.

Toleration is growing in Spain. The Government has obtained the King's sanction to a decree abolishing the prohibition against public ceremonies in connection with non-Catholic religions. Eventually, we presume, it will be recognised that not only non-Catholics, but non-Christians, have natural rights. Meanwhile a repetition of the crime of those who murdered Ferrer is still possible.

Prussia is the only German State where cremation is forbidden by law. During a recent debate on the question in the Prussian Lower House, cremation was hotly opposed on the ground that burial was authorised by Christ and his Apostles, and if cremation was practised a heavy blow would be struck at the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. We admit it is difficult to see how the resurrection is to be accomplished when only a handful of ashes remain. But the body disintegrates quite as surely when it is buried. And the question of degree hardly enters into the belief of the miraculous. A miracle is a miracle, and if one can swallow a single specimen, an addition to the number ought not to give any trouble. But the worst of Christians is that they cannot be consistent—even in their folly.

The Holy Synod of Russia has refused to sanction the proposal that divorce should be granted on the ground of certain mental ailments. We agree that this would be—from the Church point of view—a dangerous step. Idiocy is no bar to entering heaven—rather a recommendation, in fact—why, then, should it be a bar to matrimony? Besides, one can hardly expect a Christian Church to welcome a test of mental fitness. It might produce some embarrassing developments.

Dr. Horton says that in the East Indies there are 35,000,000 Mohammedans, nearly all of whom have been won since Christian people entered the islands. Dr. Horton is not a man whose statements are to be taken without verification; but, if the above be correct, one wonders what becomes of the power of the conquering Cross?

The holiday season is at hand, and Christians, in common with other people, will be leaving their homes for the country or the seaside. We wonder how many Christians will ask their minister to pray for the protection of their empty houses, in preference to giving notice at the local police-station? Burglary insurance companies, we believe, insist on notice being given to the police that a house will be unoccupied. They say nothing about the value of prayer in keeping burglars at bay. And they are usually keen on any matter that affects their business. "The Lord watches over this house" may be placed in every room, but the companies insist on the supreme value of the policeman outside.

The Rev. W. Cuff, of Shoreditch, speaking at the recent anniversary services at the Clarence-road Baptist Church, Leigh, Essex, said the Gospel of Christ "was suited to the man in the gutter." Some Old Testament stories are pre-eminently suited to the gentleman in the lowly position indicated.

Mr. A. K. Langridge seems to have an extremely limited acquaintance with Freethought arguments. Talking at Leigh-on-Sea recently, he said "a good life would convince any Agnostic or Atheist." Dear brother Langridge might reflect that even if a man possessed all the virtues attributed to the deceased Edward VII., it would not necessarily guarantee the truth of "Jonah and the Whale."

In a recent police case tried at the Essex Quarter Sessions at Chelmsford, a lady palmist stated that she earned £17 weekly, and had even taken as much as £36 in a week. Dear, dear! Palmistry pays nearly as well as Christianity.

Ober-Ammergau is not the only place where God and Mammon run in double harness. At Southend-on-Sea many of the pious tradesmen open their shops on Sundays. The local Free Church Council makes its annual protest to save its face, and things go on as before.

The "cheek" of Christians! A memorial tablet was recently unveiled at Browning Hall by Mr. George Cadbury recording—

"gratitude to God for the national movement which sprang, and was directed, from Browning Hall, and which secured, as a first instalment of its demand, the Old Age Pension Act, 1908."

Those who are responsible for this may actually believe that the demand for Old Age Pensions originated from the Browning Settlement. The parochial nature of some people's information has ceased to surprise us. All the same, we beg to inform Mr. Cadbury and the Browning Settlement folk that the pioneer of a State Old Age Pension scheme was Thomas Paine, and that from Paine to Ruskin the teaching was constantly "in the air," long before it became a matter of "practical politics." Not that we imagine this protest will prevent the myth of its Christian origin gaining currency.

We are glad to see the Rev. J. R. Roberts, of Manchester, pointing out—in a Christian paper, too—that "the cause of economic Socialism was pleaded at first by many so-called Atheists." We quote this, not because we wish to champion in these columns either Socialism or Individualism, but merely to emphasise the general truth that in all reform movements it is the Freethinkers that play the part of pioneers. Christians only come along when the movement has gained sufficient foothold to make it tolerably "respectable." We do not know what Mr. Roberts means by "so-called Atheists." There is no doubt whatever about the Atheism of the founders of the Socialist movement. When a man like Robert Owen described all the religions of the world as "so many forms of geographical insanity," his Atheism does not leave much room for doubt.

A writer in *Foi et Vie* rejoices in the fact that in the British House of Commons there is a slight sprinkling of Christian believers. Among the 670 members there are, perhaps, twenty who are not ashamed to make a public profession of their faith in Christ. Wonder of wonders, "the present Liberal ministry numbers among its members not a few convinced believers, men who publicly profess their faith." Here comes a perfect gem of a statement: "Among other Liberal Ministers we may number as believers John Burns, Lord Morley (who, though not a Christian, is a true idealist), Sir Edward Grey, Mr. Runciman, etc." We should like to know when John Burns found his way into the fold, and how he likes it. But, seriously, the facts disclosed in *Foi et Vie* are so utterly heart-breaking, from a Christian point of view, that a believer ought to be too ashamed even to mention them. And yet this is the twentieth century of the vaunted reign of the all-conquering Christ!

Lord Radstock is in high glee. Writing from Paris, he informs us that "the Lord is drawing Roman Catholics to himself in a way English Christians do not seem to realise." Does that mean that God will have nothing to do with Roman Catholics until he draws them to himself through an evangelist of Lord Radstock's type? Or are we to infer from it that only Protestants enjoy Heaven's approving smile? Christians are the funniest people in existence. They not only try to force their own religion upon all non-Christian races, but each little section of them does its level best to convert all the other sections to its own eccentric way of thinking. Indeed, it is difficult to escape the uncomplimentary conclusion that all religious sects are but so many slightly varying forms of insanity.

The Rev. Silvester Horne has been speaking at Rochford in a disparaging strain of Thor and Venus, and extolling the Nazarene who had neither the beauty of Venus nor the strength of Thor. Apart from the fact that Brother Horne wears a frock coat and a silk hat instead of a dress like Father Christmas, there is much resemblance between the various superstitions associated with the three deities.

The Rev. A. J. Waldron recently won a five shillings prize in a *Tit-Bits* competition. This great and good man

shares the honor with a hundred others, so he must not think he is "the only pebble on the beach."

A stupendous attempt is being made to revive the rapidly dying zeal of the Churches for Foreign Missions, by holding what is grandiloquently called The World Missionary Conference at Edinburgh. For a long time the press has been doing its utmost to kindle some enthusiasm in the hearts of the people throughout the country, but with very small success. In point of numbers the Conference itself will doubtless be spoken of as a glorious triumph for Christ; but we are bold enough to prophesy that it will do nothing, or infinitesimally little, to retard the steady decay of Christianity in general, or of the interest in Foreign Missions in particular. It is true that superstition dies hard; but let us be of good cheer, *it is dying.*

In Scotland there has been no lack of churches and clergymen for many centuries. It used to be the boast that Scotland was the most religious country in the world. It is a certainty that no country has done more, if as much, for Christianity than "Caledonia, stern and wild." The question is, however, what has Christianity done for Scotland? No less a personage than the Right Rev. Moderator of the United Free Church supplies the answer. In his closing address at the General Assembly he is reported to have said:—

"So far as Scotland was concerned there were areas of their population so darkened by sin, so degraded by vice, so environed in temptation and down-dragging influences, that compared with them the fields of Livingstonia and Calabar were white unto the harvest."

What a testimony. And yet it is this religion, which has so signally failed at home, that they are so anxious to force upon India, China, and Japan, as well as upon uncivilised races.

Some critics are passing surprised at the success of *Chantecler*, which will be produced shortly in England. Birds should be popular in England where the population worship a God who was once seen as a dove.

That paradox of paradoxes, the Primrose League, was named after the supposititious favorite flower of a Jewish nobleman, and the organisation is used to bolster up the Christian religion. Let us hope that the most Jewish portions of the Bible are not read to the Primrose "buds" under the age of sixteen years.

The Bishop of Birmingham is depressed to find that there is only one clergyman to every four thousand of the population in South London. We daresay that is as many as the population can stand. There is a breaking-point to every one's good humor. Besides, those that are there are not overburdened with congregations. Why, then, agitate for more?

One zealous New Theologian, the Rev. G. W. Thompson, has a marvellously tolerant and comprehensive theology. He is even prepared to welcome the Materialist into his fold, admitting that he "has a truth." The Materialist, however, will have none of Mr. Thompson's theology on any terms; he does not wish to join any Church wherein supernaturalism holds sway. Men can only meet as men after they have parted with every shred of otherworldism.

Men of God never speak of the non-religious man without telling deliberate lies about him. The Rev. Dr. Newton Marshall, in the *British Weekly* for June 9, slanders him in the most shocking fashion. He says: "The non-Christian asks himself, How can I best please self? but the Christian must say, How can I please God? The natural man plans to buy for himself rare, beautiful, and comforting objects, but the saved man must ask, first of all, how he can use his money to make gifts to God." That description of the natural man is generically as false as it can possibly be, as also is that of the Christian. Taken as a class, Freethinkers are not less unselfish and generous, to say the least, than their Christian neighbors. Many of them find their highest pleasure in serving others. Either Dr. Marshall has never come across such people, or he is telling Munchausen tales about them. In either case, he must be held guilty of the crime of false-witnessing.

Dr. Marshall's conception of the true life is exceptionally grotesque. Before a man can live for the welfare of society, he says, he must "substitute for self, God." How on earth can anybody do such a thing? No sensible fellow wants to get rid of himself and become somebody else, and such an

exchange is as impossible as the idea is idiotic. And surely there can be no harm whatever in pleasing one's self, unless it is done at the cost of inflicting injury upon others. This perpetual talk of the pulpit about hating self, doing away with self, or crucifying self, is the silliest and most nauseating cant imaginable. All that self needs is wise training, that it may develop on the right lines.

The late Sir George Newnes was no doubt an excellent man in his way, and he made a lot of money by publishing. But his "services to literature," so lauded by the newspapers in their obituary notices, can hardly be proved by the fact that he started *Tit-Bits* and the *Strand Magazine*. We quite believe, however, that "what he gave to the public was pure and harmless"—especially harmless. Nor do we dispute his "sincere religion."

Most men, as Swift said, have religion enough to make them hate each other. Germany is greatly upset by the latest Papal encyclical. Protestants say that it wounds their feelings, and call it "provocation." Catholics, however, are quite satisfied. Even in the Prussian Diet, when the Premier raised a discussion on the matter, the clericals took no part in the debate beyond stating that they "declined to criticise any action of the Holy Father." A happy family is the household of faith!

Rev. Forbes Phillips, of Gorleston, is guilty of a "howler." He replies seriously, even savagely, in the *Yarmouth Mercury* to a letter signed "Mrs. Harris" which he ought to have seen was written ironically. The reverend gentleman, who thinks it is the mildest form of controversy to call his opponent a monkey, denounces the God of "Mrs. Harris" in unmeasured language. But the God of "Mrs. Harris" is simply the God of the Bible, whom she called upon Mr. Phillips to stick to or else cease calling himself a Christian. Mr. Phillips, however, prefers to run a God of his own, and insists on bringing him up to date. We are glad to see, in the same column, a dose of common sense from the pen of the veteran J. W. de Caux, winding up with a beautiful passage from Ingersoll, which ought in itself to sell out every copy of that number of the *Mercury*.

The Psalmist says that "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him"; but we have never met anyone who could tell us what the secret is. A million preachers have waxed eloquent in the attempt to get at it, but not one of them has ever succeeded. No one knows, no one ever shall know, the secret of the Lord, for the sufficient reason that no one knows, and no one ever shall know, the Lord.

Dr. Horton says that the presence of God requires a lot of time to "soak itself into the soul." Are God and his presence two different things, or are they one and the same? In either case, the soaking process must be a most astounding and arresting spectacle!

Christian priests are never tired of asserting that the Christian superstition abolished the gladiatorial contests. These hypocrites never mention that the same "religion of mercy" substituted the rack and the *auto-da-fé*.

A sceptic was talking to a parson in a railway carriage. "I cannot understand any man being so ridiculous as to deny that there is a God." "It is not so strange," replied the sceptic, "as to believe in two gods and a ghost."

For some years *Lloyd's Weekly News* has had a weekly sermon from the pens of prominent clergymen. For poverty of ideas and general imbecility it would be difficult to match these effusions. After reading them one understands Tennyson's terrible sarcasm: "The English view of God is that of an immeasurable clergyman."

Someone exclaims that "Jesus Christ saw a mate in every human soul." What an idiotic idea. Jesus Christ, if he ever lived, was a Jew who denounced his own countrymen, and was, in turn, rejected by them. His mates were few and far between, even at the best. And to-day the people who pretend to find a mate in Jesus Christ are a dwindling minority.

At the Annual Meeting of the Chief Constables' Association several members complained of the evils of street trading. The Chief Constable of Lincoln retorted that far more trouble was given by Sunday-school children gambling after school hours. Another proof of the value of religious instruction!

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

(All early dates cancelled until further notice.)

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—June 19, Victoria Park; 26, Parliament Hill. July 3, Victoria Park.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: 1910.—Previously acknowledged, £215 2s. 7d. Received since:—J. Barry, £1; R. Wood, 5s.; W. W., 10s.; B. Coleman, £1; W. A. Snell, £1 1s.; Rev. U. Dhammaloka (Buddhist; 2nd sub.), 10s. *Per Miss Vance*: G. Ehrmann, £1 1s.

W. A. SNELL (S. Africa), subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, after wishing Mr. Foote complete restoration to health again, says: "I always look forward to the arrival of the *Freethinker*, and appreciate it much indeed; for its sanity amongst other virtues."

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

W. W.—We quite understand that subscribers to the President's Honorarium must remit at whatever time of the year is most convenient. Pleased to know you are so "heartily glad" that Mr. Foote is better again.

J. H. LEWCOCK (Birkenhead).—Pleased to receive your congratulation on "the wonderful ability of your speakers in proclaiming their message" at the Conference evening meeting. Mr. Cohen does not, in his "Freethought and Reform" articles, argue that work for the improvement of economic and industrial conditions is unnecessary, nor does he deny that bad material conditions prevent a desirable mental and moral development. He is arguing against those who believe morals and religion to be a simple reflection of material conditions, and that therefore the Freethought attack is waste of time. Against this it is pointed out that the direct line of development really lies in breaking in upon a closed circle of ideas, and thus providing a motive power for reform. Whether one devotes one's energies to the land question, or to an attack on religious beliefs, must be taken as an indication of personal choice. The wish that Mr. Foote would devote more of his time to literary articles is one that is shared by many of our readers. Perhaps repeated expressions of this desire will have its influence.

J. A. SEALE.—We have not seen the book you name, but will take the earliest opportunity of doing so, and if suitable will write on the matter.

R. H. WELLING.—We have no space this week to notice the speech you send. It may be commented on in next issue. Mr. Foote is picking up rapidly, and is as pleased to be using his pen in the *Freethinker* as readers are to see it once more in evidence. He will shortly be in full editorial control again. We take the will for the deed in the other matter to which you refer.

T. M. MOSLEY.—The fallacy in the argument is in the sentence "the universe contains mind." If the universe "contains mind" in the sense that a tin pot contains water, then you can no more explain mind by referring to the physical constitution of the universe than you can explain water by referring to the pot. But if the universe "contains mind" as it contains heat or gravity, then, when we have explained the conditions under which mental phenomena occur, we have given all the explanation possible. Those who ask for more either cannot or will not understand the real nature of the problem. Those who put the difficulty in the way stated are, consciously or unconsciously, begging the question by assuming the point at issue.

A. NIMMS.—The establishment and disestablishment of a church is a purely governmental matter, and the precise steps in either case depend upon the wisdom of legislators. The story of Voltaire dying a Christian is, to put it plainly, a pious lie. You will find the question dealt with at length in Mr. Foote's *Inidel Death-Beds*. Your last question would take up too much space to be answered fully in this column, and to answer it in a sentence or two might easily lead to a misunderstanding.

DISGUSTED.—Your experience on Parliament Hill is not an uncommon one at outdoor meetings. We have pointed out over and over again that so long as Secularists leave their own meeting to exercise themselves in bantering Christian speakers, their own speakers suffer. Until Freethinkers develop a keener sense of duty, and exercise greater self-control in such matters, we do not see how the condition of things is to be bettered.

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.

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

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

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

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

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Rev. U. Dhammaloka, of the Tavey Monastery, Godwin-road, Rangoon—the secretary of the Buddhist Tract Society—sends a second subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund. In the accompanying letter, he says he is "exceedingly sorry" to hear of Mr. Foote's illness, and hopes and trusts he will "soon be all right again." He also asks whether he may translate the *Bible Handbook* into Burmese; no part of it will be printed in English except the Preface. Our reply is "Yes, certainly." Let it be translated, if possible, into every language through which the Christian missionaries seek to propagate their superstition. All we want is the pleasure of knowing that the work of these missionaries is being counteracted.

Mr. Thomas Hardy, having received a copy of last week's *Freethinker* sent to him by Mr. Foote, does him the honor of acknowledging it in the following letter, dated June 12:—

"Dear Sir,—I am much obliged to you for sending the copy of the *Freethinker*, in which I have read with much interest the article entitled 'Views and Opinions,' and the generous appreciation it shows of my own defective writings. The letter to the Humanitarians to which you refer was hurriedly written (so much is hurriedly written nowadays, I am sorry to say) or I should have expressed a deeper sense of what is being done in the cause of humanity by the more thoughtful of mankind. And though, of course, you are to be included among the 'few people' who urge such questions, I fear that such ones do still remain few in proportion to the vast mass of people who never think of the subject. Yours very truly, THOMAS HARDY."

It is very kind of Mr. Hardy, and so like him, to write in that way. The generosity is all on his own side, and "defective" is a term which he only has a right to apply to his writings,—comparing them with his own lofty ideal of perfection.

The Secular Education League has in the press, and will shortly issue, a manifesto dealing with the reactionary proposals of the Educational Settlement Committee. The manifesto has been most carefully prepared, and, besides demolishing the proposals of the Committee, serves the purpose of bringing the Secular Solution before the public notice. We hope that an effort will be made by all interested in the question—and all Freethinkers ought to be—to disseminate this leaflet in all quarters where it will be likely to do good. Those desiring copies must write to the secretary of the League, Mr. Harry Snell, 19 Buckingham-street, Strand, London, W.C.

Some time since we started the practice of sending, free, six consecutive numbers of the *Freethinker* to any address sent us by subscribers. We are pleased to know that this plan of propaganda was the means of getting a number of new subscribers, some of whom have written expressing their pleasure at being brought into touch with this journal. We take the present occasion of reminding our readers that this offer is still open, and our shop-manager has instructions to send specimen copies to all addresses that are sent him. This plan does, to some extent, serve to break down the boycott from which the *Freethinker* suffers.

Mr. F. R. Glover, of 34 Polo-street, Nottingham, has lately become possessed of twelve numbers of Mr. Foote's old monthly magazine, the *Liberal*. He has been so delighted with the contents of these numbers that he offers to send them, on loan, carriage paid, to any Freethinker who would like to read them, the only condition being that the carriage is paid on the return journey. Doubtless many of our readers will be only too pleased to avail themselves of Mr. Glover's generous offer.

The Latest "Immortal."

"Yet, Freedom! yet, thy banner, torn but flying,
Streams, like the thunderstorm against the wind."

—BYRON.

M. EUGENE BRIEUX, the renowned French dramatist, was recently received among the "immortals" of the Academy. His name will be known to many in England who saw and admired his play, *False Gods*, at His Majesty's Theatre. They can now have a chance of reading several of his works, which have just been translated into English. The preface has been written by Mr. Bernard Shaw, who speaks of M. Brieux as "the greatest writer that France has produced since Moliere," and adds: "since the death of Ibsen, M. Brieux appears as the most important dramatic author in Europe." This graceful compliment from the Prince Rupert of the Army of Progress is not undeserved, for M. Brieux does bulk largely upon the literary horizon. In Paris the author of *False Gods* is called the Apostle. And a most modern apostle he is; one who still carries the fiery enthusiasm of youth in spite of his fifty-two years of age. M. Brieux has written a number of plays. He is a disciple of Herbert Spencer, and the influence of the greatest philosopher of modern times is traceable in all that he writes. Especially is this noticeable in his play, *False Gods*, which brings before us the eternal struggle between reason and faith through the medium of human passion and emotion.

The English title of *False Gods* is, in reality, a concession to Goddess Grundy. The original name, *La Foi*, should have been retained, for faith is the subject of the discussion. It was, however, too much to expect that an actor manager, who had bowdlerised Shakespeare, would openly flout the clergy, and the title was modified as a sop to the clerical Cerberus. Fortunately the subject matter was spared, and the British public witnessed the rare spectacle of a play with an Atheist as a hero, which was a welcome relief to an order of things to which they had become inured by custom.

The scene of *False Gods* is ancient Egypt, and the annual sacrifice of a maiden to the gods is at hand. Yaouma, the beautiful, is hoping that she may be chosen. Then comes her Atheist lover, Satni. The girl is chosen, and the battle between reason and faith begins. Satni's arguments are ineffective with his beloved. There are no gods, he insists. She answers that they are stronger than love; "You, who were all the world to me, are now as nothing." He appeals to her intellect. Men made the gods; there is no heaven or hell. The Nile will rise whether she die or live. He threatens to use force to save her, and she tells him that if he does so she will hate him and kill herself. Yaouma is saved by a mere accident. The Atheist is credited with a miracle in spite of his bitter denials. Finally he rouses all by his vehemence. Why do priests prate of gods? Because men are poor and miserable. It is to keep men in slavery and to prevent revolution that they are promised happiness in another world. Religion is all lies. The people are stirred at last, and smash their gods. Only one of Isis is left, and a pathetic farewell is given by a worshiper to the last of the gods: "O thou who didst not heal, but didst console me." It is a palpable hit, and explains present-day religion in a sentence.

Mr. Brieux is always serious, and uses his art for propagandist ends as much as Voltaire or Zola did. His play, *La Robe Rouge*, is an indictment of French criminal practice; *Les Bienfaiteurs*, a denunciation of false philanthropy; *Les Trois Filles de M. Dupont*, a revelation of the dulness of middle-class life; *La Petite Amie*, a fulmination against the tyranny of the marriage "dot." *La Foi* is far the most serious, and concerned with the deepest problems of life. The message is Gambetta's "Clericalism—that is the enemy."

Mr. Bernard Shaw, in introducing this brilliant author to the reading public in an English dress,

cannot resist a characteristic ironic note. He is astonished that the Parisians "are going to make M. Brieux an Academician, instead of letting him die of starvation and then putting up a statue to him." It is precisely because France values her "intellectuals" that she is so great as a nation. In honoring M. Brieux she not only rewards a distinguished author but sets the seal of approbation upon a writer who most worthily carries on the intellectual traditions which have made her sons the vanguard of Progress.

MIMNERMUS.

Unique Features of Buddhism.

THE comparative study of religions has brought to light the fact that the beliefs and ceremonies which were regarded as the specially distinctive features of Christianity are to be found in nearly all the religious systems of the world. What were considered as its most cardinal doctrines, and supposed to be of divine origin, were found to have their parallel in those religions it was pleased to term "heathen"; while its highest moral teaching was also found to be contained, in almost identical language, in the ethics of other, and much older, systems. These resemblances, particularly in respect to its ethical doctrines, have been more especially noted in reference to Buddhism, and undoubtedly the parallels are very striking. But, notwithstanding this general agreement between the doctrines and beliefs of the various religions, there are certain unique features in the system and teaching of Buddhism which distinguish it from every other form of religion, and entitle it to be regarded rather as a rationalistic philosophy.

The first of these distinctive characteristics which may be noted is its *Atheistic* foundation and nature. And in view of the fact that a theistic interpretation of the universe is insisted upon by Christian apologists as an indispensable basis of morals and of society, this peculiar feature of Buddhism is one that is worthy of being emphasised, especially in relation to its admitted beneficent results. It is true that Mr. Fielding, in one of his books, says that the Buddha was no Atheist, but it is apparent that he uses the word in the sense and with the ugly signification which a third-rate C. E. lecturer invariably attaches to it. But we want no other evidence than that supplied by Mr. Fielding himself to convince us that the Buddha was really and truly an Atheist in the philosophical meaning of the word as accepted by modern Freethinkers. In common with all the great authorities, he agrees that the system of Gautama is wholly "without God," that this great teacher discarded the very idea of a Supreme Being, for both scientific and moral reasons. We will quote first the testimony of St. Hilaire, the author of *The Buddha and His Religion*. He says:—

"We were accustomed to suppose that the notion of God was never completely wanting to human intelligence. Well, here is a great doctrine, the result of the deepest and most sincere meditation, a system of philosophy which, if not profound, is at least very consistent and very extensive; a religion accepted and practised by innumerable nations, in which this essential idea, which seems to us indispensable, is utterly wanting. It is an undeniable fact that in the whole of the Buddhist system there is not a vestige of the idea of God. It does not precisely deny, nor does it contest, the idea of God: it completely ignores it."

But this indifference of the Buddha to a belief in a Divine Being was the natural result of the practical nature of his teachings. The impotence of the gods, and the futility of prayer, were two things that impressed themselves very strongly on the mind of Gautama. Sir Edwin Arnold, in *The Light of Asia*, makes him say:—

"For which of all the great and lesser gods
Have power or pity? Who hath seen them—who?
What have they wrought to help their worshippers?"

How hath it steadied man to pray, and pay
Tithes of the corn and oil, to chant the charms,
To slay the shrieking sacrifice, to rear
The stately fane, to feed the priests, and call
On Vishnu, Shiva, Surya, who save
None—not the worthiest—from the griefs that teach
Those litanies of flattery and fear
Ascending day by day, like wasted smoke?"

We are all familiar with the malicious allegation that Atheism leads to immorality, and that Atheists are necessarily immoral persons, but it is a most noteworthy fact that the growth of the modern social and humanitarian spirit has developed in proportion to the spread of this so-called injurious belief. And in the system of Buddhism, which has held its sway over the hearts and minds of countless millions for centuries, we have the means of testing the results of this Atheistic doctrine. The boundless compassion of the Buddha for the sufferings of humanity, and the gentle spirit that he has been able to infuse into his followers, are in themselves a sufficient answer to the lugubrious forebodings of the Christian apologist. That disinterested devotion to the well-being of mankind, which has been designated as "the enthusiasm of humanity," probably found its highest expression in the noble and exalted life of the Buddha. His rejection of the idea of God was based upon the knowledge that such an alleged existence was utterly irreconcilable with the facts of nature and of life. Again Arnold makes him say:—

"I would not let one cry
Whom I could save! How can it be that Brahm
Would make a world and keep it miserable,
Since, if, all powerful, he leaves it so,
He is not good, and if not powerful,
He is not God?"

And all the theologians in the world have never been able to satisfactorily reconcile the existence of a beneficent Deity with the evils and the miseries of life.

As St. Hilaire has said, Buddhism is a wonderfully consistent system, and so we find that this scepticism indicates also its attitude towards the supernatural in general. Doubtless some very striking parallels exist between the stories that have gathered round the wonderful life of the Buddha and those which are accepted as a fundamental part of Christianity, but these are not an inherent part of the Buddhist faith. If we take away the supernatural from Christianity, Christ loses all the glory with which he has been invested: the attempt to construct a purely human Jesus has always been an utter failure. But this is not so with the Buddha. Says Mr. Fielding:—

"To the supernatural, Buddhism owes nothing at all. It is in its very essence opposed to all that goes beyond what we can see of earthly laws, and miracle is never used as evidence of the truth of any dogma or of any doctrine. If every supernatural occurrence were wiped clean out of the chronicles of the faith, Buddhism, to the least understanding of its followers, would remain exactly where it was. Not in one jot or tittle would it suffer in the authority of its teaching. The great figure of the Teacher would even gain were all the tinsel of the miraculous swept away from him so that he stood forth to the world as he lived—would gain not only in our eyes, but also in the eyes of those who believe in him."

The young men who see visions and the old men who dream dreams, to which Christianity attaches such a lofty spiritual significance, are types of character that under Buddhism find a very different psychological estimate of their religious worth. It would class an evangelical visionary as a pathological subject to be treated as a person who was mentally deranged. As we pointed out in a previous article, one of the vows of the Buddhist monkhood expressly forbids them to make any claim to supernatural power or sanction. It is no part of their office to act as mediators between gods and men; they are neither a "royal" nor a "spiritual" priesthood; they are, as Mr. Fielding says, "simply men who are striving after good." They see no necessity for any religious or supernatural sanction for leading a moral

life; to them virtue is its own reward, and spiritual satisfaction is to be achieved, not by forgiveness or pardon for an evil life, but by the constant performance of good deeds. Moral actions are governed by an inevitable law of sequence, and man's character is formed according to the nature of his thoughts and actions.

This brings us to another feature of Buddhism even more remarkable, and which not only differentiates it from every other religious system, but shows how fully it has anticipated the results of modern science and the Rationalist philosophy of modern thought. As remarked by the author of *The Soul of a People*, it is a wonderful fact that more than two thousand years before Darwin's day the Buddha saw the rule of Law everywhere. Buddhism, like Science, knows no Personality, only Law. Everything in the Cosmos is subject to eternal change and transformation. And what perhaps is more remarkable still is the perception that this Law is not only absolute in the physical realm of Nature, but obtains with equal certitude and inevitableness in the domain of mind and of morals. "The dewdrop is formed, and the heart is tranquillised, and the practice of virtue is rewarded by means of causes that are alike in the manner of their operation." It will thus be seen that in the system of Buddhism there is no room for the occurrence of any phenomena of a miraculous nature; it recognises that every effect must have an efficient natural cause. Any residuum of psychological facts which it was unable to adequately explain would never be referred to any superstitious or spiritual influence. Faith in the care and guidance of Providence, or belief in the efficacy of prayer, it would class with such absurdities as fortune-telling or divination. Such a thing as the history of a conflict between science and theology could not be written in reference to Buddhism. It has no theology to defend, and no dogmas that could possibly conflict with scientific knowledge.

It is not a little surprising, in view of this utter absence of any "spiritual" element, that those Christian apologists who have enlarged upon the "defects" of Buddhism have never disputed its title to be classed as a Religion. But perhaps there was wisdom in not seeking to apply their own definition of religion to this system destitute of supernatural beliefs. It would not have been politic to admit that a system which had as its founder one of the greatest moral geniuses, and one of the greatest living influences the world has ever seen; a system which "supplies the mind with ideas of vastness and solemnity, not without elevating effect"; a system which inculcates "respect for family ties, veneration of parents, consideration and esteem for women" in a manner unexampled in any other religious system—it would not have been politic to emphasise the fact that these excellent characteristics belonged to a purely secular philosophy. It is indeed a wonderful thing that a royal prince reared under the conservative influences of a kingly court, nurtured in all the mystical theology of Brahminism, should have succeeded, nearly three thousand years ago, in arriving at conclusions closely akin to the results of modern science, and have been able to sweep away the whole fabric of supernaturalism, and build up a system of morality and virtue on a purely secular and humanitarian basis. And the Christian apologists, viewing human nature through the doctrines of total depravity and original sin, were unable to credit the philosophy of Buddhism with the beneficent results they have been obliged to acknowledge it has effected, without identifying it in some way with their magic word "religion."

But these fundamental differences between Buddhism and other religious systems are not the only unique features it possesses. As we hope to show in a later article, it differs also in the wide extent of its influence, in the methods of its propagation, and in its effects upon individual character and the social life of nations.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

Religion and Sexual Morality.

"It seems to me that with regard to sexual relations between unmarried men and women Christianity has done little more than establish a standard which, though accepted perhaps in theory, is hardly recognised by the feelings of the large majority of people—or at least of men—in Christian communities, and has introduced the vice of hypocrisy, which apparently was little known in sexual matters by Pagan antiquity."—PROFESSOR EDWARD WESTERMARCK, *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas*; 1908; vol. ii., p. 434.

"It is not the fear of God that has a moralising effect, as is most clearly shown by that period, replete with the fear of God on the one hand and of moral horrors of every kind on the other, which we call the Middle Ages; on the contrary, moralisation must be looked for in the general refinement of customs and of social habits and of views of life in general."—PROFESSOR LUDWIG BUCHNER, *Force and Matter*; 1884; p. 485.

"Thus the mystic always regards his unregulated wishes as divine revelations, his random impulses as heavenly inspirations. He has no law but his own will; and therefore, in mysticism, there is no curb against the grossest licence.

The existence of that evil which, knowing the constitution of man, we should expect to find prevalent in mysticism, the experience of all ages has shown following, dogging its steps inevitably. So slight is the film that separates religious from sensual passions, that uncontrolled spiritual fervor roars readily into a blaze of licentiousness."—REV. BARING GOULD, *The Lost and Hostile Gospels*; 1874; pp. x.-xi.

"Don Juan is the imagination of the West. No Japanese Don Juan—no Chinese Don Juan—ever existed or could exist. He is a common type at home."—LAFACDIO HEARN, *Life and Letters*; 1906; vol. ii., p. 114.

A SERIOUS obstacle to the progress of Freethought is the belief—in which the vast majority of people are trained to believe from childhood—that morality is indissolubly bound up with religion, and that when religion is destroyed morality will disappear with it. Pietists argue: "If people did not believe in a God who would punish them for living an immoral life, they would straightway practise a life of sensuality and depravity." It is a poor view of human nature to believe that it is only fear of the rod of some monstrous schoolmaster above the skies that prevents us leading a depraved life.

Heine flashed the keen illumination of his brilliant satire on this view of the case. One beautiful starlight night he stood with the philosopher Hegel at an open window. Heine was young, he had dined well, and spoke with enthusiasm of the stars, calling them abodes of the blest. But the master muttered to himself: "The stars! H'm! h'm! the stars are only a brilliant eruption on the firmament."

"'What!' cried Heine; 'then there is no blissful spot above, where virtue is rewarded after death?' But he, glaring at me with his dim eyes, remarked, sneering: 'So you want a *pourboire* [a tip] because you have supported your sick mother and not poisoned your brother?'"

It is more particularly in sexual matters that believers think they cannot be virtuous without a belief in God; some of the baser minds going so far as to charge Freethinkers with wishing to discard belief in a God so that they may lead an immoral life. It is sufficient answer to these to point to the lives of Freethinkers like Darwin, Clifford, Tyndall, Huxley, and hosts of others whose purity of life equals the highest examples of believers that can be brought into comparison.

Moreover, we can point to the lives of earnest believers in the existence of a God who have lived sensual and depraved lives. Jean Jacques Rousseau is a case in point. Rousseau was fanatically religious; he quarrelled with Voltaire because Voltaire mocked at religion, and he was, says Morley, "the only power who could make head against the triumphant onslaught of the Voltaireans.....he beat back the army of emancipators with the loud and incessantly repeated cry that they were not come to deliver the human mind, but to root out all its most glorious and consolatory attributes."* Rousseau declared that Atheists should be banished. No one acquainted with the writings of Rousseau can doubt for a moment that he fervently and whole-heartedly

believed in a Supreme Being; yet we find, says Mr. Francis Gribble, that his narrative of his life in Venice "is mainly the relation of his adventures among the Venetian courtesans, whom he visited because he had been assured that 'there were no others of equal merit in the world'"; and he adds: "Decency requires that a veil should be drawn over many of the details which he discloses. The pleasantries which he exchanged with Rahab may have appeared appropriate to the occasion, but are quite unfit for repetition." And we learn further that he and his friend Carrio "actually bought a little girl of eleven years old from her mother, intending that she should be their joint mistress!"*

M. Jules Lemaitre, in his study of Rousseau, explains the contradiction between the actions and professions of Rousseau. He says:—

"Jean Jacques, convinced of his own goodness, judges himself according to his sentiments, not according to his actions. And this is extremely convenient. Briefly, this is a profane misinterpretation of the pure love doctrine of Molinos and Mme. Guyon, a doctrine according to which *actions are of no consequence provided one loves God.*"†

Chateaubriand is another example of a devout voluptuary; another proof that it is by no means necessary to give up belief in God in order to indulge in the lusts of the flesh. His apology for Christianity, *Le Génie du Christianisme*, was received with the utmost enthusiasm. Napoleon—who recognised the mutual interests of Church and Throne—helped to circulate the work, and we learn from a contemporary account that when the work was published, "In Paris, that day, there was not a woman who slept. We snatched copies out of each other's hands; we stole them." Yet at the very time he was writing his work on the Genius of Christianity, says Mr. Francis Gribble—who has made a study of the love affairs of the French romantics—"he, a married man, with a wife in Brittany, was living with a divorced woman [Pauline de Beaumont] while expounding the beauties of the Christian creed."‡ Madame de Stael—who knew of Chateaubriand's private life—"was moved to laughter by the chapter 'On Virginity in its Poetical Aspects.'" After Pauline de Beaumont, he lived with the beautiful Delphine de Custine. Nor was this all. Before his famous pilgrimage to the tomb of Christ he arranged to meet a lady, at the end of his journey, in the Court of the Lions at the Alhambra; and this lady was not Delphine de Custine, but Natalie de Noailles-Mouchy—"a light of love," says Mr. Gribble, "whose levities had provoked criticism even in that tolerant age." And there were others!

Madame Dudnevant, the French lady novelist who wrote under the name of George Sand, was another who combined a devout trust in God with the utmost disregard of the marriage vow. A married woman, she lived with Jules Sandeau, Alfred de Musset, Dr. Pagello, and Chopin, among others. When throwing over Alfred de Musset for Dr. Pagello, his successor, she writes to the latter: "None but God can say to me, 'You shall never love again.' And I feel that he has not said it—that he has not withdrawn the celestial fire from my heart."§ When she tries to regain Alfred de Musset's love, says Mr. Gribble, "she appeals to God, and even proposes a bargain. If God will give her back her lover, she will go to church regularly for the future—she will wear out the altar steps with her knees."

In one of her novels, *Jacques*, Jacques' wife, Fernand, has forsaken him for Octave. "Oh, my dear Octave," she exclaimed to her lover, "we will never pass the night together without first kneeling down and praying for Jacques."

As Mr. Gribble remarks:—

"Certainly it shocks one's sense of humor—to look at the matter from no higher point of view than that—to

* *Fortnightly Review*, August, 1908.

† Lemaitre, *Jean Jacques Rousseau*; 1908; p. 75.

‡ Francis Gribble, *Chateaubriand and His Court of Women*; 1909; p. 89.

§ Francis Gribble, *George Sand and Her Lovers*; 1908; p. 97.

* John (Viscount) Morley, *Rousseau*, p. 206.

find the Christian God represented as the tutelary deity of the adulterers, and the suggestion put forward that those about to profane the marriage tie should open their proceedings with prayer for those whom they despitely use. It is a proposal which seems even to pass the limits of farcical extravaganza." (P. 316.)

And, as he further remarks, her writings and life alike had justified the cynic's remark that "in George Sand, whenever a woman wants to change her lover, God is always there to facilitate the transfer." (P. 160.)

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

The Making of a Freethinker.

A MINOR NOTE.

Mr. Foote surely excelled even himself in his beautiful manly article in the *Freethinker* for June 5. He struck all the chords of harmony possible to his theme. His passing reference to the fact that the world would still keep moving even if he wrote no more was a necessary note to prevent misconception in the minds of the many who read him regularly but do not yet understand him. His intimate public may be smaller even than he thinks—while it may also be larger—but those elect few are valuable to themselves and to the world. They are not blind followers of a Mahdi or a Christ, but men who are being taught to stand up to their own full height without fear or favor. Many of us find in Mr. Foote a great exemplar; but perhaps his main excellence lies in his ability to focus and define and present to his readers, with power and beauty, the essential teaching of all the sages of the past and of the present. And so, in the force and dignity of his noble prose, and with mind uplifted in the serene heaven of a great and constant ideal, he sweeps along to the noble climax of his subject, lightly but scornfully touching as he goes the mummified institution of kings and all the little, petty, brief authorities springing from the master myth of the King of kings. He touches them, and in the minds of thoughtful men they crumble into dust. And herein is the germ of a true prophecy in the hearts of the few that will spread to the mind of the multitude in the inexorable processes of time.

I am almost inclined to envy his correspondent the lucky aptness of his letter telling how he used to walk home from his meetings, "his feet in the gutter and his head amongst the stars." While I lived in Paisley I used to attend the Glasgow lectures, and walked home in the evening (six miles) in a state of exquisite happiness and glowing enthusiasm, my spirits fresh, light, and buoyant as the wind that fanned me in the darkness, my brain and heart the while as clear and bright as the calm, benignant stars that, past the ragged cloud-edge, transmitted their serene, far-distant smile into my solitary Pagan soul! Nor was this intellectual impetus confined to his individual lectures only. His lieutenants could also enthuse me, and I became familiar with the firm-set, matured expression of face of such men as Messrs. Turnbull, Black, Baxter, Tom Robertson, big-hearted Davie Watt, etc.; and so for the time, at least, each listener could not fail to have his spirit borne high on a great wave of incentive to happiness and humanity.

In the beginning—when, as a wanderer from the infinite, I became cognisant of this mortal scene—it was amid rather crude surroundings, but with much of a refining influence floating in the cruder atmosphere. It had come to pass that I had a mother of very special qualities of heart and mind, one whom Christianity adorned, or rather who adorned Christianity, and a brother of very unusual calibre. The latter, with no artificial external aid or suggestion whatever, suddenly burst through his thick-walled cell of religion, and emerged in the full light of day. Swiftly he turned about and, with titanic scornful fury, kicked his late tonement into a thousand pieces. And alas! "All the king's horses and all the king's men couldn't lift Humpty Dumpty up again." Through the peepholes in my particular incrustation I beheld his proceeding with awe and horror. My brother was a man of very strong moral and intellectual fibre; had it not been for such fact it is questionable if I should ever have become reconciled to his attitude. He had been reading the Bible (a very large one, with commentaries by those two reverend lumbermen, Scott and Henry), reading it right through, commentaries and all—an appalling task. He read on, respectfully curious at first, later doubtfully, and finally closing with a bang the ponderous tome, the noise and concussion thereof being in very truth the snapping of 'he last shackle that bound his soul to superstition, and rushed upon my sight too quickly for me to realise in thought

that, to me then, unthinkable being an Atheist. What a boundless vision of thought we were about to explore on the frail, rude barque of our rustic philosophy in the search for the golden isles of a new ideal. So far as we were aware at the time—

"We were the first that ever burst
Into that silent sea."

But, indeed, this was no ordinary man. I can only compare him, in one sense, to Thomas Paine, and in another to the Gilliat of Victor Hugo. He had all the clear, strong, mental vision of the former with all the reticence, courage, and deathless perseverance of the latter. In due time I felt inclined to ship with this new Columbus. His outstanding goodness and constancy triumphed over the deep-seated religious scruples of my deeply religious nature. The uncompromising conviction expressed by his characteristic shrug met and repelled each returning wave of religious emotion. He neither asked for, nor desired, converts, but I hung on to him, as it were. Tolerant, magnanimous, sympathetic, painstaking, he showed me all the points of the compass, and the way the wind blew in the actualities of life. Still I argued and strove with him on countless occasions in a kind of querulous mutiny, but the steady purpose, the clear conviction, the calm demeanor, the shrug, were there, and the ready disclaimer, "Oh, there may be fifty thousand gods for all I know, but they are nothing to me, and I don't owe them anything." "The gods" gave him poor bodily health, but, on the other hand, they committed suicide by giving him a brain of abnormal depth and penetration.

It is given to few of us to reach the happy isles of the heart's desire, but the heroic amongst us can rejoice in this patient, grim, exultant strife. The hand grows firmer on tiller, the eye more alert and keen. We can share the admiration of Burns for those lines of Addison's hymn:—

"For though on dreadful swirls we hung
High on the broken wave."

Yet we believe in no benignant genie of the storm, no "ever-lasting arms" in the gulf below; we believe in Nature and her inexorable laws, but also in her compensating gifts—sunshine, fresh air, and fearless hearts, the smiles and wiles of the woodland or the waste, the mighty, but as yet comparatively inarticulate, power of human love. No religion, no philosophy, is capable of affording undiluted raptures. Therefore, in later years, when I listened to Mr. Foote when leading a forlorn hope in the Tannahill Hall in Paisley, some vague remains of mysticism still clung about me, some undefined notion of an august ruler in a country beyond the grave. As I listened to the masterly statement of the case for Freethought my heart fell, and heaven seemed far away. My wishes were all for heaven, though I could never stomach its infernal obverse; but reason, fully awake and definite at last, shattered for all time the last faint traces of my wistful human dream. In these early years I was very much troubled about the other world and the *post mortem* fate of the human race—I was far from selfish in my solicitude—to-day I find mere worldly obligations are as much as I can tackle. Around me are many and varied sources of delight, and had I just a little more of that yellow metal the clergy preach for and die leaving in their wills I should be as happy as, say, the most specially conducted tourist to mansions in the skies and kingdoms in the far-off milky way.

ANDREW MILLAR.

CAN'T PLEASE EVERYBODY.

The manager of an asbestos mill in the West conceived a novel idea for New Year's announcements. He had them printed on thin asbestos and enclosed in envelopes of the same material. As he was uncertain of the correct addresses of some of the stockholders, he ordered his stenographer to write on each envelope, "Please forward."

The idea was clever, but one may appreciate the feelings of the widow of one of the stockholders when she received an asbestos envelope, addressed to her late husband, with the inscription "Please forward" beneath the address.

REFORMED TOO SOON.

An eminent speaker at the Congregationalist meeting in the First Congregational Church, East Orange, was telling, the other day, of a Westerner's opinion of the East.

"This man," said the speaker, "was a prominent churchman and had occasion to visit New York, where he remained for a few days. In writing of his experiences to his wife in the West he had this to say: 'New York is a great city, but I do wish I had come here before I was converted.'"

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain) : 3.15 and 6.15, C. Cohen, Lectures.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park) : 3.15 and 6, Lectures.

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner) : 12 noon, Walter Bradford and S. J. Cook. Newington Green : 12 noon, J. J. Darby. Clerkenwell Green : 12 noon, H. King and T. Dobson. Finsbury Park : 3.30, Arthur B. Moss, "The Riddle of the Universe." Highbury Corner : Saturday, at 8, H. King.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road, Kingsland) : 11.30, J. Marshall, "Christian Infirmity."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields) : 3.30, W. J. Ramsey, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford) : 7, W. J. Ramsey, "After Death—What?"

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers' Hill, opposite Public Library) : 11.30, Miss Kough, "What Has Become of Hell?" The Green, Enfield : 7, Mr. Evans, a Lecture.

WOOLWICH BRANCH N. S. S. (Beresford-square) : 11.30, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

LAINDON, ESSEX (opposite Luff's Hairdressing Saloon) : 7, R. H. Rosetti, "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?"

NEWCASTLE BRANCH N. S. S. (Town Moor, North-road entrance) : 11, F. A. Davies, "The Bible and Common Sense." Military Sports Grand Stand : 7, "Christianity and the Labor Movement."

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Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

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The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

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