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The truth shall make you free.—THE BIBLE.

The Big Gooseberry Season
AND
"Harry Lloyd."

I WAS standing on the curb waiting for a tramcar. A man was wheeling a handcart with a ladder on it in the roadway. To my surprise he took the wrong side of the road and pulled up close to me. Then, to my greater surprise, he said: "Mr. Foote, what about this Harry Lloyd?" "Well," I answered, "*what* about him?" "It isn't *our* Mr. Lloyd, is it?" the man continued. "*Our* Mr. Lloyd!" I answered again, "What on earth are you talking about?" "I mean," he said, "Mr. Lloyd our lecturer." Just then the car came up, and I hadn't time to give vent to my feelings; so I hastily assured the anxious inquirer that *our* Mr. Lloyd was all right and still going strong, and he wheeled off his cart and ladder with an air of great satisfaction.

Outside the car I had a little leisure, first to laugh at the anxious inquirer's muddle, second to laugh again at the stuff with which the glorious free press fills the hungry British public in the dull season, third to wonder how the world ever got any reputable history at all seeing how easily its bump of wonder is practised upon, and how the most absurd falsehoods are readily passed off and greedily swallowed. Absurd falsehoods, indeed, seem particularly grateful to the popular palate. "A mixture of a lie," Bacon says, "doth ever add pleasure." So it was three hundred years ago; so it doubtless was three thousand years ago; so it probably will be three thousand years hence. The progress made since Bacon's time seems rather backward than forward. The glorious free press, by pandering to public weakness for the sake of pence and halfpence, has been running the Churches pretty close. Hitherto it has been living (and lying) from hand to mouth; its efforts in mendacity have been unsystematic; but it is now pulling itself together, reducing falsehood to a fine art, and lying for calculated objects by steady and definite methods.

Could anything be more ridiculous than the columns of print devoted to the case of "Harry Lloyd"? We will suppose, as is possible, that the dead old man at Enfield, who turned out to be really a dead old woman, was indeed the Marie le Roy who used to be about the Hall of Science in the early seventies. What was there in this fact for all the fuss that was made? Had the lady Freethinker died as a woman the newspapers would not have given her a line. The sensation was in her dying as a man—and sensation is all the newspapers care about. Why should they trouble about the old Hall of Science, and Bradlaugh, and Austin Holyoake, and the Freethought movement of that day? Who wants to know about anything so serious and important? The whole interest of the newspapers and their readers in the matter was the confusion of sex. Here's a dead man, known to this district for many years, and the doctor looks at the corpse and says it is a woman's. Down swoop the newspapers on this tid-bit, and all London is agog for days over the subject. Marie le Roy as Marie le Roy would have attracted not a moment's attention; Marie le Roy as "Harry Lloyd" occupies the public mind (I beg the word's pardon) for the best part of a week. Such is the normal action of the glorious free press on Carlyle's "forty millions—mostly fools."

One evening newspaper telegraphed to its local agent to call on me at my private residence and ask whether "Harry Lloyd" was Marie le Roy. I told the agent that I had never examined either of them, and didn't know, nor did I think the problem worth the trouble of my investigation. I added that I observed the newspapers were writing history as usual.

I saw Marie le Roy at the Hall of Science in the early seventies. She was not a friend of mine, but rather an acquaintance. I knew her just as I knew many other persons about the place. Her appearance was very masculine; her figure short and squat, her features unfeminine, her hair worn short. That she gave lessons in French I understood. That she lectured at the Hall of Science is not a fact of *my* knowledge; I do not believe it,—and I was familiar with the place from its very opening, indeed I lectured myself there in the early seventies, and had taken the chair for Bradlaugh before that. Of course the object of the newspapers, when they got on Marie le Roy's track, was to make her out to be a considerable personage. She gave public lectures on Freethought,—that was the first step; she made the arrangements for Bradlaugh's lectures,—that was the second false step. Marie le Roy did nothing of the kind. Mr. R. O. Smith was the proprietor and manager of the Hall of Science, and he—and he only—arranged for all the lectures there, including Bradlaugh's.

Misstatements about Bradlaugh, about his connections with other people, and about other people's connections with him, literally swarm in this country. Their name is legion. Christians at outdoor meetings in London have been gravely suggesting—and their suggestions soon pass into assertions—that Marie le Roy was an illegitimate child of Bradlaugh's. This suggestion is quite worthy of people brought up on the Bible—with its wonderful arithmetic. Bradlaugh would be seventy-eight if he were living now. "Harry Lloyd" was seventy-four. Bradlaugh must therefore have achieved the unparalleled feat of being a father at four. We all know he was a hero—but was he equal to that?

My readers will remember that the *Daily Chronicle* stated with regard to the dead man-woman that "many years ago she used to attend Bradlaugh's lectures for 'men only.'" It will also be remembered that I invited the editor of that newspaper "either to prove from some public announcement that Bradlaugh did lecture to 'men only' or to withdraw the abominable statement." I have not observed any reference in the *Daily Chronicle* to my invitation. I presume the editor *has* taken refuge in Christian silence—as the only defence of a Christian lie. I have not been able to reach the myriads to whom the lie was sold (with other contents) for a halfpenny, but I have satisfied a few thousand people that Bradlaugh never lectured to "men only," and each of them ought to be able to tell several others, so that the contradiction will not be exactly lost.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Unthinkable God.

IT is interesting, as well as instructive, to trace the evolution of Jehovah until he arrives at his majority as the Christian Heavenly Father. As is well known, Jehovah was at first a tribal deity, whose most serious difficulty was to retain the undivided loyalty of the people who had chosen him. The Old Testament story is that the Israelites were perpetually hankering after "strange gods," such as Chemosh and Milcom. In Judges x. 6 we find the following indictment of the children of Israel:—

> "And the children of Israel again did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord [Jehovah] and served the Baalim, and the Ashtaroth, and the gods of Syria, and the gods of Zidon, and the gods of Moab, and the gods of the children of Ammon, and the gods of the Philistines, and they forsook the Lord, and served him not."

Such infidelity could not be tolerated; and in the violence of his anger Jehovah chastised his unsteadfast people by exciting the Philistines and the Ammonites to vex and oppress them for eighteen years. But no punishment succeeded in weaning the tribe from its polytheistic habits. Attachment to Jehovah was never a characteristic of the national life. Again and again is he represented as complaining that he was a forsaken and forgotten divinity. It is now indeed beyond a doubt that the Semitic tribes were originally Polytheists, and that all the gods were rivals, continually seeking to supplant one another in the affections of the people. It is equally certain that all the gods were believed to be real. Ashtaroth and Chemosh and Milcom were looked upon by Israel as being no less genuine than Jehovah. The Second Commandment, for example, does not declare other gods to be false, but only that in Israel Jehovah was to reign supreme. "It is difficult to say," observes Principal George Adam Smith, "when the sense of the reality of other gods died out in Israel." Then he adds: "Not till Jeremiah and the second Isaiah do we find language used of the idols which expresses unambiguously the writer's belief in their nothingness."

At length, however, Jehovah became for Israel the only living and true God, the one Creator and Sustainer of all existing things. As long as he remained a tribal deity his chief attribute was power, and his power was mainly manifested in the perpetration of horrible atrocities and cold-blooded massacres. But we are told that in the prophets we see God shining forth in all the glory of the noblest and most perfect moral character conceivable. It is true, doubtless, that the ethical development of Jehovah kept pace, on the whole, with that of the best people in the nation; but it cannot be denied that to the end he remained a jealous, revengeful personage. No one can read the fourth chapter of Amos and honestly maintain that the deity therein depicted is of an ideal moral character; and surely the god represented as speaking in the last chapter of Malachi is no improvement upon him. Not even in the concluding passage of Isaiah, universally pronounced the greatest of all the prophets, do we find any nobler conception. Here, also, Jehovah is the alleged speaker:—

> "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

Is that the speech of a morally perfect being? It is not worthy even of an average just and humane man.

The Bible is one of the most interesting volumes in the world; but the claim that it contains a supernaturally given revelation of an infinitely perfect Divine Being is almost too silly to be seriously considered. Regarded in relation to such a claim, the New Testament is on a lower level than the Old. The God who can sacrifice his only begotten Son, in order to repair his own damaged work, deserves the respect of no decent person. His existence is simply unthinkable. John iii. 16, 17 is the best known, and by Christians the most ardently admired, passage in the whole Bible:—

> "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God sent not his Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world should be saved through him."

But the moment we begin to examine it in the light of reason, which is the only light we have, we discover that a more cruel and savage passage could never have been written. It is quite easy to understand how these and similar verses appeal to emotionally excited people, "when monarch reason sleeps"; but it is impossible to conceive of their exciting in the morally normal mind any other emotion than that of indescribable horror and detestation. Let us face them calmly and without prejudice.

The assumption that underlies all such passages in the New Testament is that the human race is by nature in a lost and perishing condition. How it got into such a wretched state is the strangest story in all the world, and as incredible as it is strange. Paul's version of it, which was adopted and has always been upheld by the orthodox Church, is to the effect that, though God created them perfect "in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness," "our first parents, being left to the freedom of their own will, fell from the estate wherein they were created." This is the most calumnious and outrageous story ever invented. The very idea of an absolutely perfect Creator producing a faulty piece of work is inexpressibly absurd. More ridiculous still, if possible, is the statement that a creature made in the image and after the likeness of an all powerful, all-wise, and all-holy God possessed the ability to ruin, and actually did ruin, his own nature, with all the disastrous consequences so minutely described by the theologians. The fall of man, then, if there ever was such a thing, robs God of his good character, and brands him forever as the most gigantic fraud. What we confidently maintain is that a perfect God could have created only a perfect man, and that a perfect man once created could never have fallen into an imperfect and ruined estate through any fault of his own.

Now, even on the assumption that mankind is in a lost and ruined estate, how on earth could the sacrifice of God's only begotten Son become the means of raising it up and setting it right again? Of course, everybody, even the most omniscient street-corner evangelist, admits that this is an insoluble mystery. Paul, the first to foist it in any developed form on a credulous world, called it a great mystery, the mystery of God. But, while conceding that it was incomprehensible, that great apostle proclaimed it as a fact. He declared, with the accent of complete conviction, that God, for Christ's sake, was prepared to accept, forgive, and redeem the sinful sons of men, if they only confessed their lostness and unworthiness, and believed in the sacrifice which rendered their salvation possible. And that is the Gospel which has been preached, with innumerable variations, ever since. Nobody understands, but everybody preaches it in one or another of its thousand versions. But no sooner is the light of reason streamed upon it than it seems to be the most stupendous illusion that this foolish world has ever entertained. If Jesus ever lived and could return to life again, it would stagger him out of his senses to hear such a lying message delivered in his innocent name. It was never heard of in his day, nor did it ever enter into his heart to dream it into existence.

Preaching this Gospel in a crowded church the other day, the Bishop of London assured the young people in the congregation that they were "having great help from the scientists to-day." "When we were young men at Oxford," he said, "we had to believe, as we thought, against the voice of the science of that day; we were told in those days that nothing was real that you could not see and touch." A man who can talk like that must be either very simple or extremely unscrupulous. For one thing, no accredited scientist has ever taught

that nothing is real unless we can see and touch it. Then he continued thus:—

> "You young men and women of to-day have, then, a most extraordinary help in your belief to what we had. We had to hold on tight against science; now you have got the world of science on your side to-day."

The Bishop was expatiating on "Life after Death," concerning which he claims to be in possession of positive knowledge; but his lordship must be aware, if he ever even looks at science, that it has absolutely no message to deliver on the subject of immortality. But, though science is dumb about a future life, it speaks with the convincing authority of information as to the condition of primitive man. In a book written by Nature herself there is furnished ample evidence that the story of a Garden of Eden and of an originally perfect human race is a pure myth. Whatever may have been man's origin, it is a certainty that when Nature began to chronicle his history he was a savage, living in caves, and employing the rudest implements; and as we trace his subsequent career there is no sign or hint of any Supernatural Being taking the slightest interest in him. That in his ignorance and dread of the mysterious powers around him he inferred that they were alive and, on the whole, hostile to him, and that by degrees he began to clothe them with personal attributes, and to regard them as supernatural beings, detached from and controlling the powers of Nature—this is beyond a doubt. But, with the facts of evolution before us, with the history of the human race in our possession, the existence of such Beings, or Being, is utterly unthinkable. To speak of a God of love is to mock the world. The Christian Deity is a contradiction in terms—a literal impossibility—and until he is got rid of he will act as a clog on the wheel of human progress. What mankind need, above everything else, is self-knowledge, self-reliance, self-respect, and self-control.

J. T. LLOYD.

Freethought and Reform.—A Reply.

THE four articles on "Freethought and Reform" contributed to the *Freethinker*, were written in reply to letters that have reached me from time to time, and were intended to clear up certain points on which misconceptions exist. Generally speaking, judging from my correspondence, these articles have achieved their purpose, although it would, of course, be absurd to suppose they had done this in every case. I am, therefore, the more indebted to "Marxian" for his temperate and courteous criticism in last week's *Freethinker*, and in order to do this criticism justice I postponed replying in order to have greater space at my disposal.

"Marxian" commences by assuming that I have, consciously or unconsciously, followed Mr. Belfort Bax in a misunderstanding of what is popularly known as the "Materialist conception of history." I have certainly not done so consciously, and I do not think I have done so unconsciously; for without being able to claim more than a casual acquaintance with Mr. Bax's writings, I have noticed more than one passage in which he appears to feel the unsatisfactory nature of the theory I have been criticising.

Another general observation is, I think, necessary. "Marxian" appears to be under the impression that I believe the mental life of man to be absolutely independent of material or economic conditions. It should be needless to say that I believe nothing of the kind, and indeed said as much more than once in the course of my articles. From one point of view I agree, nay I assert, that *all* cosmic evolution rests upon a material basis. Potentially, the mind of a Shakespeare was in the primitive nebula, and if we take away this material basis everything disappears. And in proportion as we treat the mind as the function of an organic structure, we are still further driven to found mental phenomena on a materialistic basis. The mistake made by many is to assume that because this is so, we have nothing to consider but purely material forces and conditions. This, however, does not follow. In the order of evolution we see forces becoming more complex in character, and the later and more complex forms dominating the earlier ones. Thus, in the earliest stage of the history of the earth we have to deal with physical forces alone. Next, we have physical plus chemical forces. Then physico-chemical forces plus biological forces. And lastly, physico-chemical-biologic forces plus psychologic forces. Now, the primary form of my argument is that just as chemistry transforms physics, so psychology transforms biology, chemistry, and physics; not because the last form is independent of the earlier ones, but because it represents a dominating form to which the others have given birth.

But there is still a further step in my argument. In chemistry we are familiar with the fact that in bringing together two or more elements we give rise to a product that is different from the mere sum of the constituents. And my contention is, that in the congregation of individual minds, such as meet us in a social group, we have a similar phenomenon before us. The mingling of individual intelligences produce a result that can no more be obtained by adding them together than you can get a chemical product by adding together the qualities of the constituents. And it is this general product which I take to be the true social law with which we have to deal in studying social evolution. It is this law that I believe holds society together, that surrounds man at his birth, that operates on him at every stage of his growth, and in virtue of which, institutions—whether they be economic or religious or moral in form—exist. And my conclusion is, that because of this, we can only change social institutions by affecting the laws of their existence.

I can now deal with "Marxian's" criticism in a more orderly manner. He asks whether, in asserting gregariousness to be a psychic fact, I have not overlooked its origin? And, further, "Would Mr. Cohen assert that man became gregarious from some unreasoning instinct, or would he agree that man became gregarious because he thought that it was to his advantage to do so?" Well, I do not agree with the last clause in this sentence, and I do most emphatically assert the correctness of the first. Gregariousness is not a quality that man acquires—he starts existence, as man, with it. It is a heritage from his animal ancestors; and, so far as man is concerned, however much its expression may be determined by material and economic conditions, its existence is independent of them.

"Marxian" is of opinion that as man is not provided with strong weapons of attack to overcome natural enemies, he found it more advantageous to work in groups—hence gregariousness. This, however, is much like putting the cart before the horse. Naturally, group action offers an advantage over single effort, and, therefore, has a survival value in the struggle for existence. What "Marxian" fails to see is, that it is variation along the line of concerted action, and its superior value in warding off attack, or promoting it, that leads to a diminunition in the power of the individual in certain directions. In this connection, I may point out it is not true that the struggle to survive produces either markings or any other physical or mental quality. Natural selection *produces* nothing; it merely takes advantage of variations that appear from other causes.

I am asked "What produces the anti-christian in an environment where Christianty is general?" Is it a psychic cause, or is it a physical cause, *i.e.*, the perception of masses of people in a demoralised condition?

Now, I think these are questions that I might fairly put to my critic. On the basis of the theory criticised, it seems to me difficult to see how an anti-Christian is to be produced in a Christian environment. I know the economic Materialist contends that while the economic condition produces the religious idea it also produces the opposite. But on the theory that morals and religions are a reflection

of the material conditions, I must confess I do not see how this miracle is worked. But my reply to the query is, first, we have a variation in the mental output exactly as we have in the physical; second, we have the existence of classes within the State, each furnishing certain mental forms to the common stock; thirdly, we have the contact of any one society as a whole with other societies; fourthly, we have the mental heritage, common to all, of the literature, traditions, or teachings of the past; and last, but not least, we have the imagination and sympathy of every member of the group. These would, in my opinion, provide that clash of ideas which I contend underlies all the social and political revolutions of mankind.

Unconsciously, "Marxian" admits the truth of this; for in saying that the Freethinker is created by his perception of the evil condition of the masses of the people, he is giving a mental, not a physical, cause. It is because certain conditions affront his feelings and conflict with his ideas of what should be, that he works for reform. But this is not the economic condition giving rise to ideas that destroy it; were it so, the idea should arise amongst those who are its victims. It may be replied that the condition of this class *is* the physical medium that breeds the idea, but this is really saying no more than that the physical medium provides the objective of the idea and modifies the form of its expression. And this is a statement I should be the last to quarrel about; nay, I have asserted as much, more than once, in the course of my articles.

I quite agree with "Marxian" that physical force was used to establish Christianity—or, to be quite accurate—I would prefer to say, used to suppress opposition. True, also, it was largely for economic reasons that Christianity was backed up by vested interests—not entirely for these reasons, because one has to allow for the sheer love of exercising power over others. Still, my critic might reflect as to the inducements for people establishing Christianity, even for economic reasons. Observe it was not the establishment of Christian ideas that followed the economic condition, but certain ideas were established by force in order to establish and perpetuate the economic condition. In other words, "Marxian" admits that, in order to keep slaves in subjection, it is necessary they should possess the mental condition of which physical slavery is the concrete expression. On the theory that religious ideas are the outcome of the economic conditions, force should have been used to establish these, leaving the religious beliefs to follow as a matter of course.

Finally, would even the "support of powerful emperors and royal gangs" be able to establish a religion unless there were current, in the society in which it was to be established, ideas and beliefs to which that religion was akin? It is obvious that all that has been done, or could be done, in such cases, is for "economic might" to use its influence in perpetuating existing religious beliefs of a kindred character. "Economic might" could not establish religion in a society of Freethinkers, nor could it establish Freethought in a society of Christians. In the same way the possession of money and property enables present-day religion to linger longer than it could in their absence. But this is because it is enabled to silence much opposition, or to buy much support. In other words, there is the traditional religious beliefs into which children are born, and there is the closed circle of ideas in which, by more or less honorable means, many are kept through their maturity. Ideas as to the sacred right of Church wealth, of the necessity of supporting religion, ideas of the moral and social value of religious belief, all operate to maintain the particular economic force about which "Marxian" argues. It is for this reason, I believe, that an attack upon this circle of ideas is essential if we are to be assured of victory. As those who aimed at material subjection were induced to seek their end by achieving mental subjection, so I believe our work should be guided by the same principle, but with a different end in view. The idea of reform, either among the class to be reformed or among others, must precede the reform; generally, it arises among others. It is the man who is, by comparison, economically free who labors most for the freedom of others. It is the man who lives in a decent home who is most concerned about the habitations of slum-dwellers. It is the Freethinker who works for the emancipation of Christians. And this is so because man is emphatically not a being held in iron subjection to material conditions. He is a being governed by his sympathies and his ideas. It is the nature of these that makes one either a willing slave or a free man.

C. COHEN.

Social Influences of Buddhism.

IN a previous article we dealt with the *Atheistic* foundation and character of the Buddhist system, showing its title to be considered rather as a rationalistic philosophy than as a religion. The fact that it is always called a religion would appear to be partly due to the poverty of language. We do not possess any single term that will adequately express both a teaching and the inspirational effects of its influence—a defect which, in a measure, is supplied by the word "religion." The Personality of the Buddha, too, has always been such a dominant factor in the history of the faith that the word "religion" seemed eminently suitable to apply to such a system. But it differs radically and fundamentally from all supernatural religions. "Buddhist nations," says St. Hilaire, "may, without injustice, be considered nations of Atheists."

Now, according to the common Christian contention, those nations who have accepted this Atheistic creed ought to have become morally degraded and socially corrupt; and, considering that Buddhism is nearly a thousand years older than Christianity, it has certainly been given a sufficient period of time to work out these disastrous results. This contention in reference to Christian nations usually takes the form of a prophecy as to what will happen if Christianity is abandoned. But, unfortunately for this prophecy, in the case of those nations who are, and have been for centuries, blankly Atheistic, its fulfilment has not been verified. Indeed, as we shall show, according to many Christian apologists themselves, as well as other competent authorities, the effects of Buddhism on the social life of the nations who have accepted its teaching have been of a civilising and morally elevating tendency. To begin with, Father Huc, the French Catholic missionary, in his *Chinese Empire* speaks of the Mongols having been "humanised" by Buddhism; and this humane effect of its influence is fully borne out by other writers. E. Rehatsek, an Orientalist quoted by Mr. Jardine in his Introduction to Father Sangermano's *History of the Burmese Empire*, after ascribing the civilisation of the Mongols to their conversion to Buddhism, writes as follows:—

> "It is incomprehensible how the savage Mongols, who were accustomed to massacre whole populations in order to secure their rear from enemies, zealously submitted to a religion inculcating gentleness and kindness to all created beings, and how a nation that loved to raze cities to the ground, and to convert cultivated plains into deserts to obtain pastures, should have eagerly built temples, established convents, introduced useful institutions, and practiced religious duties."

And, adds Mr. Jardine, "the tendency of the religion must have been the same among other savage tribes." Speaking of the influences of Indian origin which powerfully affected the Burmans and the Talaings, from whom also the foreign civilisation spread to the Shans and other tribes connected with the Chinese, he says: "The greatest influence of all was, and is, the Buddhist Religion."

We have often enough been reminded of the marvellous results effected by Christianity in one of the South Sea Islands in converting the savages from a condition of nakedness to the wearing of tall

hats and other incongruous articles of European attire that took their fancy. And it has been retorted, with a good deal of truth, that with its doctrines of blood and sacrifice Christianity is eminently suited to the instincts and mental level of savage peoples. Certain it is that it cannot command the assent of the growing intelligence of more civilised communities. But the rigid demands of Buddhism, and the austerity of its ideals, had little to recommend it to peoples in a low stage of moral development. On the score of simplicity it had nothing in its favor; it appealed only to what was best and noblest in human nature. "He who runs may read" is a statement that could not be made in reference to the comprehensive doctrines of the Buddhist faith. The regeneration which Buddhism effected in the hearts and lives of men was not accomplished by merely repeating some mystic formula. There is no royal road to the attainment of moral superiority any more than there is to learning; and a teaching which resolved itself into "a system of intellectual and moral culture," if it did not possess the virtues of the religious magician's wand, neither did it attract proselytes by any ghostly illusions or fictitious rewards. The magnitude of the task that Buddhism set itself in the elevation of races in a low stage of civilisation may be gathered from the following remark of Mr. Jardine's:—

> "One must suppose that several generations passed away before the worshipers of ghosts and demons and tribal gods, people addicted to blood-feuds, and as ignorant of letters as the wilder Karens and Chins and Kachins of to-day, accepted a gigantic philosophical theory like that of Dharma."

And not only did Buddhism "humanise" and civilise many tribes that were in a comparatively savage state, but it exercised a most benign influence in India itself, as well as in other countries in a similar advanced condition of enlightenment.

On the other hand, Christianity, at the beginning of its career, while it might have possessed itself of all the results and advantages of the civilisations of Greece and Rome, set itself assiduously to eradicate every trace of their wonderful achievements. It not only destroyed the best elements of their intellectual culture, but it discouraged all effort in the pursuit of useful knowledge; it set up a false standard of morality, substituting for the ideal of human well-being and happiness, conformity to the supposed divine will of a God on the same level of moral ignorance as its own conceptions; and, after it had crushed all that was noble and promising in human life and thought, it exulted in the long reign of ignorance and superstition known as the Dark Ages.

It is worth while to note an altogether unique feature of Buddhism, compared with other religious systems, especially when we consider the marvellous extent to which it has spread among peoples who differ widely as regards nationality, characteristics, and development. The races among whom the Buddhist faith has spread, says St. Hilaire, are "the Singalese, Tibetan, Tartar, Mongolian, Chinese, Japanese, Burman, etc." And the "etc." extends, according to Sir Edward Arnold, as far as Swedish Lapland. "At the present day it has more adherents than any other religion on the surface of the globe." Rhys Davids gives their number as 500 millions. And the unique feature of the situation lies in the fact that it has never used any other means to influence acceptance of its doctrines than that of moral suasion. At the end of his chapter on "Buddhist Ethics" St. Hilaire makes the following significant remarks:—

> "We will conclude with a few observations upon the means employed by the Buddha to propagate his doctrine. His only method, which has also a moral side, was by preaching. It does not appear that the Reformer ever thought he could employ any other means. Upheld and protected by kings, he might have had recourse to force and persecution, means that proselytism seldom fails to use. But all the legends without exception are unanimous on this point. The Buddha found his only weapons in persuasion."

Commenting further upon this singular feature, he says:—

> "To rely on the power of truth and reason alone was indeed a just and noble idea of human dignity so often disregarded, and individuals, as well as nations, responded to the Buddha's appeal by virtues and refinements little to be expected at such a remote period."

In reference to this singular feature of Buddhism—its reliance upon the power of truth and reason alone—Mr. Rhys Davids remarks that in this respect it is unlike Mohammedanism and Christianity, which have sometimes used *other methods*. But to seek to gloss over the use of force and persecution by such an innocent phrase as "other methods," and to that extent rob Buddhism of the credit of more humane means, is surely unworthy of such an erudite scholar. If the means used to propagate Buddhism among the various nations was morally superior to those employed by Christianity, so also was its influence upon individual character and the social life of nations of a nobler and more elevating nature. Mrs. Judson, the wife of an American missionary, who, with her husband, officiated in Burma in the early part of last century, characterised the ethics of Buddhism as "pure but powerless, like an alabaster image, beautiful in all its parts but without life." And most of the apologists since have repeated the parrot cry that "Buddhism is a moral system, but not a moral power." One of the leading religious weeklies recently referred to the universal "weariness" of Buddhism. The following quotations will enable any fair-minded reader to judge the amount of truth there is in these charges. It so happens that the first chapter of *The Soul of a People* is entitled "Living Beliefs," and the whole of Mr. Fielding's book deals with just those beliefs which find their expression in the lives and daily actions of the Burmese people. How far their social life is permeated by the Buddha's doctrine and influence may be gathered from the following remarks:—

> "To hear of the Buddha from living lips in this country, which is full of his influence, where the spire of his monastery marks every village, and where every man has at one time or another been his monk, is quite a different thing to reading of him in far-off countries, under other skies, and swayed by other thoughts. To sit in the monastery garden in the dusk of the evening and hear the yellow-robed monks tell of that life, and repeat his teaching of love, charity, and compassion—eternal love, perfect charity, and boundless compassion—until the stars come out in the purple sky is a thing never to be forgotten."

If this testimony to the inspiring influence of Buddhism stood alone one might suspect Mr. Fielding of writing with too much feeling and sympathy. But even Bishop Bigandet, the author of *The Life or Legend of the Buddha*, effectively refutes the charge of Mrs. Judson. He says:—

> "The love and fervor with which Buddhists speak of the Law must be witnessed to be realised; in conversation regarding their faith they are sometimes *moved to tears*."

So much, then, for the Buddha and his moral system being "without life" and "powerless." Let us now introduce the reader to some glimpses of the "weariness" of this faith.

Mr. R. J. Johnston, F.R.G.S., in his recent book, *From Pekin to Mandalay*, writes as follows:—

> "A few years ago I wandered through the wildest parts of the trans-Mekong Shan States and Siam. I had no credentials, no guide, no servants, and no knowledge of the language spoken around me. I was received everywhere with the utmost kindness and the most open-hearted hospitality. In village after village I found myself an honored guest. I could give numberless instances of the tact and fine feeling constantly displayed by my hosts in their dealings with the dumb and unknown foreigner who seemed to have sprung upon them from nowhere.....During several memorable weeks I travelled through a fairyland of beauty, sometimes on foot, sometimes in a canoe, or on a raft. I saw much of the domestic and social life of the people, and so charming was all that I saw that I fear my pleasure

was not untainted with envy.....I felt that all my preconceived notions of what civilisation really meant had been somehow distorted, and must be pulled down and built up anew."

Speaking of "the vulgarity and brutality that comes of the sordid ideals of modern English life," he says:—

"Make a Burman a millionaire: he will build pagodas, he will entertain his friends lavishly, he will exercise a graceful charity unheard of in the West—and all these things he will go on doing until his money-bags are so empty that he can carry them on his back with a light heart.....He has discovered how to make life happy without selfishness, and to combine an adequate power of hard work with a corresponding ability to enjoy himself gracefully."

Another Eastern traveller, Mr. Scott O'Connor, says of the Burman that his religion of Buddhism, in which he sincerely believes, saves him from the drunkenness and vice which are such conspicuous features of Christian civilisation. The same writer gives a most charming description of the simple and ideal life of the Burman, in which we are informed that "he appears to have realised some of those maxims of the Sermon on the Mount which to most Britons are so puzzling." The word "puzzling" in this connection is very instructive; but as these maxims in Christendom have been mainly used to juggle with, it is exceedingly appropriate. The fact is we have *two* Christianities. One is the maxims of the Sermon on the Mount, and the other is the common Christian policy of making the best of this world—which, being interpreted, means accumulating as much material wealth as possible. Not long ago, at a Socialist meeting, we were comparing the social and moral influences of Christianity and Buddhism, and a gentleman in the audience alleged that we had made an unfair comparison, because, he maintained, the social and militarist conditions of Europe were wholly *anti*-Christian. But if this be so, what becomes of the boasted social influence of Christianity? The maxims of the Sermon on the Mount have never really influenced the social life of Christian nations; the ethics of the New Testament have been "a dead letter." But the teachings of Gautama have always been a mighty power, while the sublime influence of his wonderful life may be witnessed in the unselfishness, the gentle and hospitable manners, the kindness to all created beings, the extreme tolerance and the social happiness of the peoples who have accepted him as their moral guide and exemplar.

JOSEPH BRYCE.

Acid Drops.

King George has been talking a good deal about God lately. But it was unavoidable. He had to receive addresses of congratulation from religious bodies on his accession to the throne. It is satisfactory to know that his Majesty means to follow in his father's footsteps "by the help of Almighty God." At the same time, it appears to us that the statement involves a poor compliment to our new sovereign. We hope the help of Almighty God will not be too necessary.

When a man says "God help me!" he is generally doing very little for himself. When others say "God help you!" it means that his case his hopeless.

Cambridge hurried out a new Prayer Book on the demise of King Edward, with the royal names all in right order for the reign of King George. Now another Prayer Book has to be hurried out to include the new Prince of Wales. It would never do to leave him out of the Church prayers. Something dreadful might happen. He is safe now.

The Prince of Wales has been confirmed at the Royal Chapel, Windsor. It took one Archbishop and two Bishops (Canterbury, London, and Oxford) to do the deed—and they had to be assisted by the Dean of Windsor. Who would have thought that the good young gentleman needed so much confirming?

Rev. F. B. Meyer is shocked to learn that, during his visit to America, it has been reported that he "discouraged prayer for the Royal Family." Mr. Meyer says he has prayed for them every Sunday for twenty years. Perhaps he will now tell us how much good his prayers have done them.

When a certain type of religionist commences to compliment a Freethinker the compliment is almost certain to be an insult in disguise. Among the delegates to the Leicester Peace Congress was Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner. It was no doubt necessary for her to inform the meeting—probably there had been enough sloppy religion dispensed to call for a corrective—that she was "a person of no religion." But the *Christian Commonwealth* reporter, doubtless with the stupid notion that he was complimenting Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner, remarked that she "made a high-toned religious speech, despite her description of herself." The inaccuracy of the description is as flagrant as its bad taste. The friendliness of some religious people is even more unpleasant than their enmity.

America and Great Britain are the two greatest nations for missionary enterprise. Both spend vast sums of money in trying to convert the "heathen"! One would think, therefore, that both would be at the top of wise, just, and durable civilisation. But they do not appear to be so. America, at any rate, is not, if we may rely on Mr. W. Holt White, who has just written a biography of Theodore Roosevelt. "Dark days," this writer says, "are ahead of the United States. Things are rapidly shaping there towards a conflict in which Labor will wage war on Capital with dynamite, and Capital will respond with guns. When that hour of trouble comes America will need a man. She will find him in Theodore Roosevelt." We are not concerned with the prophecy about the "Bounder"—only with the light the first sentence throws on the value of Christianity. Roosevelt is to be the "savior" in the coming struggle. Jesus Christ is nowhere.

The great William J. Bryan continues his oratorical tour through Great Britain, and we hope he is suitably rewarded. He spoke at Glasgow on missions and missionaries, and was very severe, in his peculiar way, on the "sceptics," who, of course, were not present, and would not have been allowed to answer him if they were. "How dare you sceptics live," he exclaimed, "when you don't understand the miracle of life?" The orator was immensely applauded by the audience—which shows the intellectual level of both. We may add that sceptics don't consider life "a miracle." Bryan shouldn't put his own folly upon their shoulders. They won't carry it, anyhow.

"How dare you eat," Bryan continued, "when you don't understand what you are eating?" More intellect! And more applause! No wonder Christian missions were popular at that meeting. Bryan hadn't sense enough, or leisure enough, to see the obvious answer to his own question. The sceptic, just like the Christian, is not always sure of what he is eating. The butter may be margarine, the bread may be a bit chalked, the sugar may be a bit sanded, and the sardines may be sprats. But the sceptic, just like the Christian, is bound to eat something or die, so he takes his grub a little on trust rather than perish of inanition. Nobody, however, is under any urgent necessity of taking Bryan's religion on trust—except in places where they knock your brains out if you dare to exercise them. There, of course, you have to hurry up. But in more tolerant places a man may take all the time he requires to make his mind up. And why should he hurry? Surely not to please Bryan. Even if that gentleman tells you that God will give you hades if you don't embrace Bryan's religion, it is always open to you to reply that God (if he exist) may be a better gentleman than Bryan fancies.

The late Lord Salisbury knew more about missions than Mr. W. J. Bryan does. Lord Salisbury was a statesman, and was Prime Minister of Great Britain. Mr. Bryan is but a politician, and only wants to be President of the United States. Well now, Lord Salisbury in one of his speeches quoted an Eastern proverb: "First, the missionary; then, the consul; then, the general." Lord Salisbury added that this proverb expresses the actual relationship between the missionary and the political power.

Mr. W. J. Bryan told the Missionary Conference the other day there had been no progress among the non-Christian peoples during the last 1,500 years that was not traceable to the influence of the Christian religion. How much does Japan owe to Christianity? And what influence for progress has Christianity exerted in Abyssinia? Mr. Bryan

does not seem capable of any great power of thinking, but he ought to be able to remember a few facts.

Another speaker told the Conference that the great obstacle to the spread of Christianity in India is the absence of a "sin consciousness." The Hindu is "unaware of having anything special to cry for." Poor wretches. Now if they will only become Christians they are promised plenty to cry about.

Another Conference gem was furnished by Mr. R. Williams, M.P. He said that "Great Britain had won her position in the world by carrying the Bible." We were under the impression that our army, our navy, our traders and the like had something to do with the matter; but perhaps we were mistaken. We would advise Mr. Williams to take the earliest opportunity of making the House of Commons acquainted with his discovery.

A Worcestershire paper contains the following advertisement, addressed "to the inhabitants of Eckington," a little village on the Avon:—

> "Whereas a certain Mary Jane Dance, wife of John Dance, of the village of Eckington, has been repeatedly slandered in common talk and gossip as a witch, together with other false and injurious accusations against her character, whereby she has suffered grievously in mind and body and in the esteem and fellowship of her neighbors; any repetition of these offences will result in action being taken against the slanderer."

They must be very Christian in the village of Eckington.

The Education Committee of the London County Council were asked to sanction an arrangement, under the Peek Trust, whereby pupils who had been awarded a Bible or a Testament might select as prizes other books from those published by the Religious Tract Society. This was opposed by Mr. Sanders, who said that it was disgraceful to have old, out-of-date literature worked off as prizes on successful boys and girls. All the members present but two voted for referring the matter back to the Books and Apparatus Sub-Committee. Good!

A number of letters have been printed in the *Morning Leader* on the subject of Church-going. From this inane correspondence one would imagine that Atheists stayed away from church because of the fleas in the pew-cushions or because they are asked to place a coin in the plate.

The Rev. Dr. Smith says that a Chinaman is able to believe three contradictory things at one and the same time without any sense of absurdity. The average Christian can beat this small record without turning a hair.

The Master of Emmanuel College, Cambridge, has been getting into hot water over an act which, had it been done in the interests of Christianity, would have brought him nothing but praise. He circulated among the undergraduates a lecture by an eminent American Unitarian on "The Religion of the Future." The pamphlet stated that the religion of the future would not be based upon authority; it would have no worship of dead ancestors, teachers, or rulers, and no tribal, racial, or tutelary gods. It would be free from Hebrew anthropomorphism, and would decline to think of God as an enlarged and glorified man. The lecture also said that while "a paganised Hebrew Christianity had made much of personal sacrifice as a religious duty," the new religion will regard all sacrifices as unnecessary except those which love dictates and justifies. The pamphlet was accompanied with a covering letter, in which the Master of Emmanuel expressed the hope that the lecture would lead to people discarding "the ill-founded and superstitious elements which still survive in popular Christianity."

Now the circulation of literature on behalf of Christianity, together with other forms of Christian propaganda, is continuously going on in most of our public institutions. Far from Christians objecting to this being done, it is taken as evidence of great and admirable moral fervor. It is when someone ventures to disseminate ideas of a less orthodox character that people are shocked, and the propagandist is accused of abusing his position. For our part, while we do not believe in the Master of Emmanuel's "Religion of the Future" any more than we believe in his critic's religion of the past, we congratulate him on his action, and should be glad to see other unorthodox people follow his example. Perhaps when Christians receive reminders of this kind that other propaganda besides that of Christianity may be carried on by those in high places, Christians may develop a sense of courtesy and decency, and cease to thrust their religion on all people and at all seasons. Unorthodox people have submitted to this long enough without any adequate attempt to reply in kind.

What a miserable and mistaken economy is involved in Mr. Samuel's announcement that there is to be no penny postage between England and France in the near future! It won't pay! This is probably false. At best it is a shopkeeper's reason. Was it not Napoleon who called the English a nation of shopkeepers? He seems to have known what he was talking about.

Rev. Dr. Hodgson, of Edinburgh, says that "intuitively we postulate God." Who are the "we" who do such a thing? If Dr. Hodgson consulted *facts* instead of *theories*, his eyes would be opened, and he would learn that the belief in God only comes after long and tedious training and instruction from earliest childhood, and that the majority, if not all, of those who do not acquire it in the days of their youth, go through life without it. The belief in God is no more intuitive than skill in carpentry, or geographical knowledge. It is simply an *acquirement*, and an acquirement mankind would have been much better off without.

Rev. A. T. Guttery preached a sermon before the Primitive Methodist Conference, entitled "A Plea for a Narrow Faith." This was carrying coals to Newcastle with a vengeance.

The Bishop-elect also sees a providential design in the existence of disease, inasmuch as it calls forth medical and surgical skill. Quite so. The Lord sends defective eyesight to develop the skill of the optician, broken limbs to breed clever surgeons, ill-health that man may study medical science. He drowns hundreds at sea that we may learn to build better ships, and blots out a city by an earthquake that we may discover the type of building best suited to the locality. Last, but not least, he sends a plentiful crop of fools every year that the Bishop and his kind may be tolerably certain of a congregation. Verily, he doeth all things well, and wisdom is over all his works!

At their great Albert Hall meeting the ladies had a variety of mottoes. One was "God befriend us: Our cause is just." What touching simplicity! Even in political struggles the ladies trust in "God." Is it youthful training or invincible instinct? We hope it is only the former—for we want to see women Freethinkers. Meanwhile it will be to the advantage of women if more men become Freethinkers.

The Vatican has summoned a General Council in Rome of all the heads of the Spanish religious orders to formulate a plan of campaign against the measure of liberalism and toleration promised by the Spanish government. We doubt if the Council will be troubled by the Holy Ghost. It may be by the ghost of Ferrer.

The Divorce Commission's report, when it is published, will make a very interesting document. All sorts of people have given what is courteously called "evidence," from men of the world to religious fanatics. It is to be presumed, however, that the Commissioners will not discuss the *Christian* objections to divorce. They do not sit as theologians, but as practical men of affairs.

Bishop Gore, of Birmingham, was quietly but firmly pressed by Lord Gorell. The Bishop took the position that divorce ought not to be allowed at all "save for fornication"—that is, for adultery on the part of the woman; and that kind of divorce was really only separation, for re-marriage should not be permitted, because of the divine law "What God hath joined together let not man put asunder." Lord Gorell asked him why, in that case, married couples should be interfered with at all. This was a poser. The Bishop could only reply that he supposed there must be a limit to men and women making themselves intolerable to each other. But this was an evasion of the difficulty. You separate married couples, as Lord Gorell pointed out, and in doing so you create fresh conditions of misery. What do you propose to do for them in the way of relief? "Nothing"—that was the Bishop's answer. And the President made the "Nothing" stand out in bold relief, as expressing the Bishop's "High Church" do-nothing policy.

With regard to the Church of England's refusal to celebrate marriage with a deceased wife's sister, or between parties of whom one at least has been divorced for adultery two Bishops were driven to admit that the only solution of the problem was to make civil marriage obligatory on all,

and leave the religious ceremony to individual preference and responsibility. This is an unusual gleam of sense—for Bishops. Their proposal is, of course, the secular solution.

John Burns did well in opposing the religious census which Lord Hugh Cecil, and other Churchmen, wanted to tack on to the approaching National Census. The return would certainly be inaccurate and therefore misleading. Besides, what right has the State to make inquisition into the religious opinions of citizens? Other questions, also, are inquisitorial—such as "when were you married?" and "how many children have you?" We don't see why "sociologists" should have the public made to provide them with facts and figures, under penalties for non-compliance. One might inquire where this game of "questions and answers" is going to stop? Is it to move forward to the American humorist's suggestions—"Are you on good terms with your mother-in-law?" and "Does your meerschaum color?"

"I am a Primitive Methodist and on my way to heaven," said Mr. Enoch Edwards, M.P., addressing a huge open-air meeting on Mow Hill. Far be it from us to doubt this gentleman's veracity, or to wish to delay his reaching the end of his journey by a single hour. All the same, we fancy Mr. Edwards took his way to the House of Commons with far greater elation than he would receive a doctor's notification of his approaching visit to the celestial regions.

At the same meeting another M.P., Mr. A. E. Harvey, said his mother was a Primitive Methodist, and she was the "best woman on God's earth." Well, we should like every man to *think* this of his mother, but we confess to thinking little of the sloppy intellect that prompts a man to make such statements in public. And people who really feel that way towards their parents are not in the habit of talking about it. But one ought to expect humbug at a religious meeting. What a choice set of legislators we are getting in the House of Commons! If it goes on at this rate, a man with any concern for his reputation as a rational being will have to be careful and steer clear of Parliament.

A Christian hooligan of the name of Wooltorton, also known as "Mr. Percy," was promptly brought to book at the Lambeth Police-court the other day for disturbing meetings in Brockwell Park. He first attempted to disturb a "Theonomical Meeting," at which a form of religion was advocated to which this person objects. Having been ejected from this meeting by the park-keepers, he then, accompanied by a number of youths, paid the Secularists a visit. As he continued his riotous behavior, and declined to give his name and address to the park-keeper, he was taken to the police-station and charged under the Council's Bye-laws with unlawful disturbance. When Wooltorton was brought before the magistrate, Mr. Baggally, he informed the court that he belonged to the Church of England, "which I am very proud of." We hope the Church of England is equally proud of its supporter. In the end, the magistrate ordered Wooltorton to find a surety in £10 to keep the peace for six months. We are informed that, no surety being forthcoming, Wooltorton is spending twenty-one days where a thoughtful government has duly provided for his spiritual sustenance. We trust Wooltorton's fate will have its due effect on other defenders of the faith who are under the impression that, in the "cause of Christ," any kind of conduct is permissible.

Prebendary Reynolds is a whole-hogger on the question of religious education in day-schools. Speaking at the annual meeting of the National Society, he claimed that the Church should exercise supreme authority in this matter. His words, reported in the *Birmingham Daily Post*, are very significant:—

> "He did not think the rights of parents was the real basis to go upon. The parent had no inherent right to dictate what the teaching should be; it ought to be for the Church to say what it should be. Thousands of parents in London, if asked what religious teaching they wished imparted, would say, 'None'; they wanted the teaching of the Socialist Sunday-schools. He claimed that while this was a Christian country it was their duty to see that there was Christian teaching in all the schools, and they were not to harm children just because their parents were wicked people."

There is priestcraft for you in all its mediæval glory; but, happily, its teeth and its claws have been extracted. It can still bark, as of yore, but it can neither bite nor scratch. Prebendary Reynolds would have been in his element had he flourished twelve centuries ago; to-day he is an amusing anachronism, a discredited back number, an interesting fossil.

The Bishop of Birmingham has a marvellously subtle mind. It is a mind that enables its owner to say of a thing that it is true and not true at one and the same time. The good Bishop takes the story of the Garden of Eden, for example, and declares that "no amount of literary or historical criticism can ever destroy it." Every student knows, however, that literary and historical criticism has robbed it of every scrap of historicity; nor can his lordship be ignorant of the fact that orthodox Christianity is based upon its historicity. But this is how Dr. Gore meets the case:—

> "It was possible so to teach that story as not to leave in the minds of the children the absolute necessity of a literal man and woman, a literal garden, and a literal six days of creation. When a child asked, 'Was it true?' they should be able to say, 'Yes, it is true to the eternal facts of creation, to the great lessons it is intended to teach us, of man created in the likeness of God, and of the lesson of the Redemption.'"

If that is not juggling of the worst type, we should like to know what it is. The Bishop's principle is that what he calls the truths of the Bible must now be so taught "as to be in harmony with the ascertained results of modern science and modern criticism of the Bible." The thing is so absurdly impossible that we begin to wonder whether Dr. Gore was not just simply joking.

"One of our greatest difficulties, and, at the same time, one of our greatest opportunities, is the teaching of Bible truths, so as to bring them into harmony with the ascertained results of modern science and the modern criticism of the Bible," says the Bishop of Wakefield; and the statement is significant. In any other direction we should not talk of "difficulties" but of duty. We should not speak of difficulties, because in science, for example, the only desire is to teach what is true. In religion the question is, not what is true, but what will be believed. And therefore the difficulty is that of parading a convicted delusion as scientific truth, and the opportunity that of taking advantage of the want of knowledge of those over whom control is exercised.

A very optimistic person is the Bishop-elect of Edinburgh. Speaking upon the question of suffering, this gentleman observed that while unrelieved suffering is horrible, "suffering, as we see it in the home or in the hospital, seems to draw out the best that is in us; we become quiet and restrained, patient and humble. That is its effect upon us." Well, but what of the other poor devil? How comforting it must be for one who is wasting away in consumption, or experiencing the ravaging agonies of cancer, to learn that it makes others "gentle and sympathetic, patient and humble"! And what a wise and loving personage God must be to put one person on the rack for years in order to develop sympathetic feelings in those who are comfortably looking on!

Chicago has backslidden again. Some two years ago Gipsy Smith was reported to have converted it wholesale to the Lord Jesus Christ; but already the Lord Jesus is losing his hold of it, and it is rapidly slipping back to its former ungodliness. So there is to be made another gigantic attempt to re-win it for Christ. Dr. Wilbur Chapman and Mr. Alexander have just been engaged for the job. How very comical it all is. If there were a deity he would be highly amused by it. Does it never occur to these people that by these frantic, spasmodic efforts to make the world God's by God's own grace, they are practically demonstrating the non-existence of God and his grace?

"The Lord will provide," said Sir W. Robertson Nicoll while speaking on behalf of widows and orphans—"the Lord will provide; but he provides through us." That is only another way of saying that the Lord never does, and never can, provide. All the providence there is, or ever was, is human, God's providence being simply a pious delusion.

"A clergyman who suffered for witchcraft in the seventeenth century was John Lowes, who for fifty years had been vicar of Brandeston, in Suffolk. His fate illustrates the manner in which Matthew Hopkins, the witch-finder, worried his victims into confession. For several successive nights the poor old parson was deprived of sleep, then he was run about until he was breathless, and finally they 'swam' him at Framlingham. At this point he confessed to the possession of two imps, one of which he had sent to sink a ship at sea. He was then hanged, reading his own burial service before execution. One old woman gave the names of her imps as the lemauzar, Pyewackett, Pecke in the Crowne, and Griezzell Greedigutt. That was decisive, for these were names, Hopkins triumphantly argued, 'which no mortal could invent.'"—*Daily Chronicle.*

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

(Lecturing Suspended during the Summer.)

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURING ENGAGEMENTS.—July 3, Victoria Park.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: 1910.—Previously acknowledged, £222 11s. 7d. Received since :—W. C. Vale, £5.

Correction :—The list of subscriptions from Port Elizabeth Freethinkers, in our issue of April 17, should have included 5s. from C. I. We regret the omission.

SHILLING MONTH.—Percy Bowen, 1.

J. R. PLACE (S. Africa).—Glad you "look forward to the *Freethinker* every week and read it with the greatest zest." Postal order would be the best way of remitting.

G. LEADER.—Shall be attended to. Mr. Cohen, as you say, has "admirably filled the vacant chair." Thanks for your warm congratulations on our return.

C. TUSON (Port Elizabeth).—Very sorry you have had the trouble of writing again, but mistakes will sometimes occur, until editors and printers are all made of perfect human nature. There was a good deal of upset at the time when this mistake happened. Thanks for your kind letter. We will bear in mind your advice not to imitate Bradlaugh, if we can help it, in one direction,—that in which he "killed himself by working as if he was a steam-engine." Delighted to hear that a few of you remember Mr. Lloyd, and admire him, and regard his extra help while we were on the sick-list as "another reason why you should love the dear old *Freethinker*."

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for useful cuttings.

J. REID.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

F. E. RAYMOND.—Major Harris became a life member of the National Secular Society under Charles Bradlaugh's presidency—and Bradlaugh has been dead nearly twenty years. He repeatedly told us that he was not a member of any other Freethought Society. We knew he helped the Rationalist Press Association with donations, but he said that he had declined to become a member. Perhaps he was made a life member without his own application. That would explain the discrepancy. Major Harris informed us of the other circumstance you refer to.

PERCY BOWEN (Valparaiso).—Pleased to hear from an old member of the Liverpool Branch who doesn't go without his *Freethinker* even on the coast of Chile; also that you look back to, as "treats of your life," the lectures you heard us deliver at the windy city on the Mersey. They were probably not as good as you thought, but we are glad they were good enough to live in your recollection. We also appreciate your solicitude about our health. Happily the trouble is all over now.

J. C. GOODFELLOW.—Yes, the paper came to hand, for which we thank you. We are always pleased to receive newspapers containing items that our readers think may prove interesting, but those who send should always bear in mind that it is part of an editor's duty to select such paragraphs as he thinks of greatest interest to his readers and the cause that his journal represents. Those who send must therefore bear it in mind that a particular matter not being noticed implies no more than that, in the editorial judgment, other items have a greater claim upon the space at our disposal.

T. GLOVER.—We are gratified to learn that you have had "dozens of applications from Freethinkers all over the country" for the loan of Mr. Foote's old magazine, *The Liberal*. There is much in its pages that deserves disinterring and republishing in a more permanent form. The oblivion that overtakes good writing in serial publications is one of the disadvantages of that mode of publication. We can only console ourselves with the reflection that it has its good influence while it retains currency.

JULIUS ULLMAN.—We share your detestation of anti-Semitic writing, whether Goldwin Smith's or another's.

W. C. G. BETBELL.—No such statement ever appeared in the *Freethinker*. Neither has Mr. Foote ever said, in the *Freethinker* or elsewhere, that he intended to "write his name in blood." Those who know him will smile.

C. W. STYRING.—Glad in one way, sorry in another, that the *Freethinker* was sold out at Johnson's (Leeds). We don't supply him direct.

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.

Mr. Robert Blatchford returned in last week's *Clarion* to the finances of his paper. "The *Clarion* Newspaper Company," he says, "was founded fifteen years ago on a small capital chiefly raised by Thomson and myself, with a smaller contribution from my brother. It has never paid a dividend. It has since mopped up something like three thousand pounds of Thomson's and my outside earnings, and is paying us no wages. If any Socialist has been deceiving himself with the notion that the *Clarion* men were getting paid princely salaries, or were rolling in plutocratic dividends, that comrade may now cool his overheated imagination with the facts." We do not profess to understand this, at least while the *Clarion* was at the top of its circulation, but we are quite ready to take Mr. Blatchford's word for it. He knows the facts, and we believe he would state them correctly, if he stated them at all. And what he now discloses ought to make it absolutely clear to all who are interested in the matter that Mr. Foote must have had an almost supernatural task in maintaining the *Freethinker* for nearly thirty years. Mr. Foote is losing money still—that is to say, he not only gets no salary himself, but has to make up a deficit out of his own pocket. Those who subscribe to the Honorarium Fund are, therefore, to some extent supporting the *Freethinker*.

"Saints" in making their wills are apt to think that a legacy to the Secular Society, Ltd., meets the case of the *Freethinker*. But it does not. It provides for the general work of the movement, but the Articles of the Secular Society do not admit of the *Freethinker* being subventioned by the Directors, for the simple reason that it belongs to Mr. Foote, who is a member of the Society, and indeed Chairman of the Board. A legacy to help the *Freethinker* would have to be in favor of Mr. Foote personally. There is no reason why both the Society and the leader who bears the heavy burden of the paper should not be remembered together. This is not the pleasantest of matters to talk about, but it is foolish and futile to ignore the facts.

The Birmingham Branch of the N. S. S. has arranged for an excursion to Bewdley to-day (July 3). The price of the return railway fare is 2s. 6d. Those who intend joining the party may obtain tickets from the secretary, Mr. J. Partridge, up to 8.15 on the morning of the excursion. He will attend at Snow Hill Station for that purpose.

Mr. C. Cohen lectures to-day (July 3), afternoon and evening, in Victoria Park. East London Freethinkers will please note.

The next International Freethought Congress meets at Brussels on August 21, 22, 23, and 24. It will mark the thirtieth anniversary of the Federation. Only one question will be before the Congress this time—"Liberty of Conscience and its Guarantees in Various Countries." This is considered of vast importance in view of the assassination of Francisco Ferrer and the immense efforts that are being made by the reactionaries of religion all over Europe. There promises to be a great gathering of the friends of real religious liberty on this occasion. An incident in connection with the Congress will be the inauguration of a public memorial to Francisco Ferrer on the very spot in Brussels where two famous victims of intolerance perished in the sixteenth century—Counts Egmont and Horne. A special committee has been appointed to see as far as possible to securing suitable accommodation for delegates and visitors. The subscription to the Congress for groups is ten francs, and for individuals five francs. The card of membership thus secured will admit the holder to all the functions organised by the Congress. Of course the National Secular Society will be represented at Brussels. A further announcement on that head will appear in next week's *Freethinker*—after the N. S. S. Executive meeting, at which the matter will be dealt with.

"The Laureate of Pessimism."

[*The Laureate of Pessimism*, by Bertram Dobell. Price 6d. Published by the author, Charing Cross-road, London.]

AMONG the men of genius associated with the modern Freethought movement in England few are so assured of the recognition of posterity as James Thomson, the poet. For this reason a monograph on this sombre singer, from the pen of Mr. Bertram Dobell, is peculiarly welcome.

There is hardly a more pathetic story than that of James Thomson in the whole range of literature, though Savage, Chatterton, Villon, Poe, Paul Verlaine, and Oscar Wilde are among them. To be at once a genius and a drudge, to live in poverty and to die in a hospital, is as melancholy a lot as can be imagined. Nor would he deserve less pity if we denied his genius. His faults, whatever they may have been, injured himself alone; but genius he most certainly had. It was a genius of a morbid kind, and many circumstances of his life forbade its full development.

James Thomson was born at Port Glasgow in 1834, and died in a London hospital in 1882. There is an atmosphere of mystery about him. The very portraits of him have been described as unsatisfactory. So much is vague that whole chapters of his life are missing. His biographers are sometimes reduced to inference. There were two Thomsons, one the darling of the muses, the other the victim of melancholia. The Thomson whom the muses knew was an extraordinarily picturesque man. He wrote verse as an eagle flies. His prose is magnificent. His translations from Heine, and his superb satire, *The Story of a Famous Jewish Firm*, would alone have made the reputation of a lesser man. The sustained splendors of his masterpiece, *The City of Dreadful Night*, excited the admiration of all discerning judges, including the priceless praise of George Meredith, who "found many pages that no other English poet could have written."

Charles Bradlaugh, the Napoleon of the Freethought movement, met Thomson first when the poet was an army schoolmaster at Ballincollig, and it was in the pages of the *National Reformer* that *The City of Dreadful Night* first appeared. The masterpiece did not appear in book form until six years later, and two years afterwards Thomson died.

The City of Dreadful Night is the finest poem of its kind in the English language. The alchemy of the poet's genius transmuted pessimism itself into the fine gold of true poetry. His splendid verses go by wrapt in imperial purple in a great procession:—

> "The City is of Night; perchance of Death,
> But certainly of Night; for never there
> Can come the lucid morning's fragrant breath
> After the dewy dawning's cold grey air;
> The moon and stars may shine with scorn or pity;
> The sun has never visited that city,
> For it dissolveth in the daylight fair.
>
> Dissolveth like a dream of night away;
> Though present in distempered gloom of thought
> And deadly weariness of heart all day.
> But when a dream night after night is brought
> Throughout a week, and such weeks few or many
> Recur each year for several years, can any
> Discern that dream from real life in aught?"

This poem is a new note in literature, and very different to the pessimistic posings of earlier singers. It is common to speak of Byron as a pessimist, and Schopenhauer was fond of quoting the lines from *Euthanasia*:—

> "Count o'er the joys thine hours have seen,
> Count o'er thy days from anguish free,
> And know, whatever thou hast been,
> 'Tis something better not to be."

But this is the veriest "mouthing and coxcombry" when set beside the molten passion of *The City of Dreadful Night*, which, to use Rossetti's expressive phrase, "makes a goblin of the sun."

Thomson was a man of fine and noble sympathies. In one of his poems, *The Polish Insurgent*, he portrays a Pole ready to die for his native country, although he realises that his country must be defeated:—

> "'Tis so easy to go and die
> Where our country, our mother, the martyr
> Moaning in bonds doth lie.
> Bleeding with stabs in her breast,
> Her throat with a foul clutch prest,
> Under the thrice-accursed Tartar.
>
> But Smith, your man of sense,
> Ruddy, and broad, and round—like so,
> Kindly—but dense, but dense,
> Said to me: 'Do not go;
> It is hopeless; right is wrong;
> The tyrant is too strong.'
>
> Must a man have *hope* to fight?
> Can a man not fight in despair?
> Must the soul cower down for the body's weakness,
> And slaver the Devil's hoof with meekness,
> Nor care nor dare to share
> Certain defeat with the right?"

This is not popular writing, but it is worth a thousand "Recessionals."

Mr. Dobell suggests that Thomson's melancholia arose from an early love disappointment. We think that this is an error, and that the cause lay far deeper. Thomson was little of the amorist. In his poetry there are no love-songs. The most glowing sparkles of Thomson's muse in her fieriest moods pale before the glow of such passages as those of Romeo in the chamber of Juliet, or Wilhelm Meister with his beloved, while the moon whitened the poplars overhead and the music of the wandering minstrels came through the silent midnight. Of all poets of genius Thomson is the least successful in love poetry. He was not deficient in lyrical impulse; but his amorous excursions in verse will not stand comparison with his lines on the Polish patriot, or the tense vibration and strain of the music of *The City of Dreadful Night*, in which the poet sung to a larger music in a richer tongue.

Thomson was not, as a genius, in the first rank of poets simply because his range was limited. But within that range he was dangerously near perfection. If to write the finest pessimistic poem in the English language constitutes a claim on posterity, and we think it does, then James Thomson will occupy a certain niche in the Valhalla of Literature.

> "Poor splendid wings so frayed and soiled and torn!
> Poor kind wild eyes so dashed with light-quick tears!
> Poor perfect voice, most blythe when most forlorn,
> That rings athwart the sea whence no man steers,
> Like joy-bells crossed with death-bells in our ears."

MIMNERMUS.

Man in the Neolithic Age.

AFTER struggling through the incalculable periods represented by the Old Stone or Palæolithic Age, the progressive portions of the human family painfully emerged into that more highly evolved condition represented by the Neolithic Age. The majority of archæologists and anthropologists have been greatly impressed by the vast interval of time which seems to separate the two stages. The marked changes in the distribution of land and water; the extinction of earlier species of plants and animals, and the appearance of other species in their place; the important differences in climatal conditions, all render imperative the conclusion that the time interval was vast.

Great Britain and Ireland had long ceased to form part of the continent in Neolithic days. River courses which previously united our islands with the mainland had sunk below the level of the sea. The general configuration of Europe was substantially what it now remains, but the former land area of the Mediterranean had become submerged, thus causing the separation of Europe and Africa, the islands of Southern Europe being left as monuments of the former land surface. The woolly rhinoceros and the mammoth had disappeared for ever from the face of the earth; other animals had migrated to more northern or southern zones; the lion, lynx, and hippopotamus to tropical climes; the musk sheep to the

arctic regions. Many mammals, however, successfully adapted themselves to the modified environment, and the survivals embraced the wild ox and Irish elk. While the stone memorials of the Palæolithic period are found deeply embedded in old-time river gravels and in the deposits of caverns and caves, those of Neolithic date are discovered at the surface of the soil or at very superficial depth. These all-instructive witnesses of man's past history are found lying in camps, cave floors, kitchen-middens, lake dwellings, tumuli, and other burial-spots. And while prolonged and intermittent pauses disturb the evidence of man's presence in Europe beyond his cave-dwelling days, his history from the moment of the appearance of the earliest Neolithic races can be traced without a break to our own era. The marked climatal and geographical changes seem to supply sufficient explanation for the time-chasm that exists between Palæolithic and Neolithic humanity. But copious evidence has been brought to light which proves the unbroken occupation through these periods of the same human stocks in Europe and Asia. Moreover, these races were progressive; they steadily advanced in culture and civilisation, and evidently adopted all improvements that reached them from races who had developed further than themselves.

When all the available data are judged, the verdict emerges in favor of a peaceful blending between the Old and the Newer Stone Ages. The types of the flint implements merge one into the other, and the most primitive examples of bronze and copper tools and weapons are modelled on the shapes and patterns of the earlier bone and flint implements.

That man's needs had enormously increased in Neolithic times is demonstrated by the endless variety of the tools and weapons he employed. As Mr. Clodd says:—

> "A representative set of Neolithic implements would comprise, in addition to the celts, stone tools allied to picks, small hand-chisels and gauges, perforated axes, some sharp at the end, others shaped like adzes, saws, hammers and hammer-stones, grinding-stones, querns, sink-stones for nets, whetstones, scrapers, borers, awls, drills, and knives. The purposes to which these would be applied were as numerous as the needs of man. Modern savages use like tools for the purposes of cutting timber, scooping out canoes, dressing posts for huts, grubbing up roots, killing animals, and scraping the flesh from their bones. Then there are the implements required for domestic purposes, while for war and the chase there were daggers, javelin-heads, sling-stones, bolts, lance and arrow-heads, some of these last of exceeding beauty and finish. Bone lance heads, pins and needles, were also used, and staghorn was made into hammers and axes. The women's spindle whorls were of stone, and their personal ornaments, the simplest form of which was the button or stud, were of jet, shale, and amber. The antiquities thus briefly summarised occur in the upper layers of cave deposits, in peat bogs, coast-finds, refuse-heaps, and pile dwellings; in tumuli, barrows, and various stone structures such as cromlechs, dolmens, etc., scattered over the world."*

Before dealing with those astonishing pile dwellings discovered in Switzerland and elsewhere, mention must be made of the shell mounds known as "kitchen middens" which were once mistaken for natural formations on the beaches of inland seas. They now possess great scientific value as the memorials of ancient fishing and hunting settlements. These shell mounds are of various size, occasionally one thousand feet in length, with a breadth of three hundred feet, and are composed of refuse—incalculable quantities of oyster, cockle, and other shells; osseous remains of the roebuck, dog, stag, and other surviving animals. Among the bones of birds are those of the capercailzie, wild swan, and wild duck; while deep-sea fish are represented by the cod, herring, flounder, etc. The savage builders of the middens had apparently a great relish for marrow, as all the marrow-bones were split open. More certain tokens of man's presence were witnessed in his implements of bone, wood, and stone, with that most conclusive distinction between Palæolithic and Neolithic times, relics of coarsely-formed pottery, charred wood, and ashes of a burnt aquatic plant were unearthed, but there were no cereal remains. The flint implements were mainly of rude manufacture. The bones of our domesticated animals are represented by those of the dog alone, and this lends support to the view that our faithful canine companion was the first tamed tenant of man's primitive habitations. The bones of the deep-sea fish indicate that these pioneer hunters and fishermen had probably commenced that seafaring life which subsequently made the Danes the terror of the unprotected coasts of Europe.

The immense antiquity of the Danish kitchen middens is to be inferred by the fact that many of them are now far inland, which proves how greatly the land has encroached upon the sea since their abandonment. As Sir Charles Lyell pointed out in his *Antiquity of Man*, the oyster, except as a stunted survival, has practically vanished from the Baltic Sea, as a result of the great increase of fresh water, which deprives this shell-fish of the amount of salt essential to its full development. This proves that when the middens were formed freer communication existed between the Baltic and the Atlantic Ocean. The shell mounds of the great American river banks are equally eloquent as to man's previous condition; while the sea-boards of South Africa, Australia, and South America bear similar memorials of the past.

The study of the relics and ruins of the lake dwellings makes clear the fact that these settlements were inhabited by the same race for a period extending over thousands of years. Sometimes numerous enough to be designated villages, pile-buildings, erected on piles or on fascines over marshes, shallow waters of inland lakes, or along the margins of great rivers or estuaries, have been discovered in many lands. These structures were so common in the Gulf and Lake of Maracaibo, along the Orinoco, and in other districts of Venezuela, that the early Spanish explorers named that country "Little Venice." The dwellings of these aquatic communities were supported by lofty piles on separate platforms, or floors of split logs which communicated with one another by bridges similarly constructed. Each dwelling was formed by two rooms, "with floors of matting and low sloping roofs of thatch." Dug-out canoes carried the natives to their houses, which were entered with the aid of roughened step-logs. Practically identical, if more closely built, villages were discovered in New Guinea, on the Gold Coast, in the Central African lakes, the Celebes, Caroline Islands, and the Malay Archipelago.

Hippocrates and Herodotus, in the fifth century B.C., mention pile dwellings in their works. The former refers to lake villages built over the shoals of the river Phasis, and the latter to the Praconians, who erected their village on the bosom of Lake Prasias, to which a long narrow bridge formed the solitary approach. They were thus enabled to disdain Darius and his battalions—everywhere else triumphant—when he invaded Thrace. The platforms which sustained the weight of their dwellings were provided with trapdoors, which permitted the people to lower their baskets into the water and capture the fish. As an instance of survival, it may may be mentioned that Roumanian fishermen utilise wooden huts, similar in structure to the ancient dwellings, on the same lake to this day.

Numerous piles, apparently the result of human action, were observed in Lake Obermeilen in Switzerland in 1829, but their true nature was not established until the winter of 1853-4. That winter succeeded a summer of unexampled drought, and was so severe that many parts of the lakes were frozen to the bottom. The waters so far receded from the shores of the lake that an attempt was made to reclaim part of the lake's bed by the dwellers on its margin, and thus were revealed the habitations and relics of a stone-age race.

* *Primitive Man*, pp. 93, 94.

The most ancient lake settlement is probably that of Lake Mosseedorf, near Berne, which has furnished the most complete collection of the flint implement period of the pile-dwellers, up to the present, known. In company with many of the more recently erected villages, this settlement had been destroyed by fire; and to this we are indebted for the richly representative character of the relics left reposing in the lake-bed where it stood. Among the remains rescued from the deep were stone hammers, picks, chisels, knives, spear and arrow-heads of flint, saws toothed with flakes set in wood with asphalt, implements of bone and horn, fish-hooks fabricated from boars' tusks, and a skate made from the leg-bone of a stag. Rude but diversified earthenware vessels were abundant. The lake-dwellers had obviously reached a relatively high stage of culture, as such cereal remains as wheat, millet, flax-seed, barley; apples and other fruits, intermixed with the bone fragments of various domesticated quadrupeds, among which were sheep, horse, ox, goat, and swine, plainly indicate that they were both herdsmen and agriculturalists.

Another most interesting and instructive lake-village was discovered at Robenhausen, embedded in the bog of a former lake; because, while mainly a stone-period settlement, it was continuously inhabited through the stone into the age of bronze. It embraced an area of at least three acres, and was erected on 100,000 piles. An investigation of the character and contents of the relic-beds proved that though successively burned and rebuilt it yet betrayed evidence of almost unbroken occupancy. The lowest stratum pottery was similar to that of Mosseedorf—crude and commonplace. But the higher strata disclosed highly ornate examples of earthenware designed both for domestic use and æsthetic enjoyment. The greater abundance of bones of domesticated animals is also indicative of social advance.

From a single channel cut for a watercourse through the refuse-beds of this settlement more than five tons of animal bones and waste products were dug. Among the extraordinary variety of osseous remains were those of horses, asses, cattle, and sheep, pigs, goats, dogs, and fowls; and among untamed animals those of the wild European ox, the stag, elk, chamois, bear, fox, wolf, beaver, with numerous lesser animals, besides extensive remains of fishes and birds. Relics were numbered by thousands, and included trenchers, tubs, spoons, ladles, bowls, flails, and spindles of wood. "Floats and fish-hooks, matting coarse and fine, fishing-nets and cloths of great variety made of bast, flax, and wool were found, including skeins and balls of yarn, besides great numbers of stone tools and weapons.....Here also great stores of grain and several pounds of cake and coarse bread, charred and thus perfectly preserved, were secured."

Some of these prehistoric settlements had almost reached the age of bronze. A very rich deposit was that at Auvernier, in Lake Neuchatel, which yielded a marvellously varied assortment of implements in addition to a great variety of bronze ornaments in various fancy forms and styles. Pottery had become more abundant, and was finer in form and more varied in design than in the earlier stone period.

Within a stone's throw of this bronze-age settlement, and in the same lake, was the lake-dwelling of Marin, obviously related to the others but disclosing tools, ornaments, weapons, armor, etc., of usually well-tempered and singularly formed fibrous iron. The evidences of the presence of domesticated animals are more abundant than ever; and the superior art remains, as also the Roman and Gallic coins found in the settlement, prove that this lake habitation continued to be occupied down to the commencement of the historic period.

The dry, calm air of cave, cavern, and cliff retreats has preserved for unknown centuries the frailest art products of early savage man; the tranquil waters of the Swiss lakes have preserved the very food and raiment of their quondam inhabitants. But it is high time that this rude outline of the investigations and discoveries of archæologists and anthropologists came to a close. I trust that ample evidence has been advanced to prove to any reader previously unacquainted with the subject how deeply interesting and suggestive these studies are. For the successes of the pioneers in this branch of science will in all reasonable probability be completely eclipsed by the memorials, still lying hidden in our own and other lands, of man's lowly beginnings in his toilful pilgrimage towards the noontide splendor of humanity's future triumph.

T. F. P.

"Tom Paine's Jests."

I HAVE in my possession a very rare pamphlet of fifty-six pages, the title of which is as follows: "Tom Paine's Jests: being an entirely new and select collection of Patriotic Bon Mots, Repartees, Anecdotes, Epigrams, Observations, &c., on Political Subjects; by Thomas Paine and other Supporters of the Rights of Man.....London: 1794." The pamphlet is dedicated by the compiler "To the Swinish Multitude." I extract the following passage from the Dedication:—

> "It may be objected to the title of this pamphlet that Tom Paine is no Jester—that his works contain serious truths: but you I am certain will allow that they contain many good things; and even his enemies (both those formerly in power, and those received into favor and power for their opposition to his doctrines, even Mr. Burke himself) must confess that they contain *smart things*; for if these gentlemen placemen had not smarted under them we should not have seen the long list of prosecutions which have taken place against Mr. Paine and the booksellers who sold his works. In some of those prosecutions the juries have found the books to be libels, and in others the juries have found them not to be libels. This is what is called in that equitable place, Westminster Hall, the glorious uncertainty of the law."

As for the contents of the pamphlet, it may be said that they answer very well to the description of them in the second part of the title, but not so well to the first, since there are few "jests," as the word is understood. The booklet was evidently intended to promote the cause of political freedom, and, no doubt, the title was chosen to attract readers who might not have cared to purchase it had they known that the compiler had a serious purpose in view. It was an innocent artifice, since the work was sufficiently well worth the sixpence which was charged for it.

The few following quotations from the booklet will sufficiently indicate the character of its contents:—

> "Tom Paine says, truth hath this advantage over prejudice, that it cannot be unlearned."
>
> "The late Mr. Flood, once talking of the Irish pension list said, it might be compared to *death*, for it was the *wages of sin*."
>
> "Those who hold up to admiration the constitution of this country on account of the trial by jury, surely do not mean a *special jury*." [Because a special jury was then—what, of course, it never is now—the special instrument of a tyrannical government.]
>
> "Comparisons of drunkenness.—A man is said to be as drunk as an owl when he cannot see—as drunk as a sow when he wallows in the dirt—as drunk as a beggar when he is very impudent—as drunk as the devil when he is inclined to mischief—and as drunk as a lord when he is everything that is bad."
>
> "A successful resistance (says Mr. Wilkes) is a revolution, not a rebellion. Rebellion indeed appears on the back of a flying enemy; but revolution flames on the breastplate of the victorious warrior."
>
> "A country gentleman on hearing that several persons were punished for selling Paine's "Rights of Man" protested that he thought no punishment too great for those who dared to SELL the Rights of Man."
>
> "Notwithstanding the stretches that have lately been made as to libels it is certainly true, though it seems hardly credible, that a man was lately arrested in Dublin as a libeller, because he shewed a print of Mr. Paine to some people around him."
>
> "Put a country right (says Mr. Paine) and it will soon put government right."

At the end of the booklet a few passages, selected from famous authors, on politics, religion, and law are given. The two which follow are attributed to Shakespeare and Nat Lee:—

> "Priesthood, that makes a merchandize of Heaven,
> Priesthood, that sells even our prayers and blessings,
> And forces us to pay for our own coinage;
> Nay, cheats Heaven too with entrails and with offals;
> Gives it the garbage of a sacrifice,
> And keeps the best for private luxury."

> "Why seek we truths from priests?
> The smiles of courtiers and the harlot's tears
> Are truths to what priests tell.
> O! why has priesthood privilege to lie,
> And yet to be believed?"

The first passage is, I believe, wrongly attributed to Shakespeare. It is not at all in his style, and there is no reference to it in Mrs. Cowden Clarke's "Concordance." It is much more in Dryden's style than in Shakespeare's.

B. D.

What was Mark Twain's Religion?

FROM some unknown source "it developed" through the newspapers, just after the death of Mark Twain on April 22, that the deceased author had written a serious work on religion, entitled *What is Man?* and that it was published anonymously in 1906, and circulated privately to the number of two hundred and fifty copies. The account states that the friends of Mark Twain are explaining that he did not assume responsibility because the public preferred not to consider his writings as serious. The book, it is said, sets forth, in the form of a dialogue between an old and a young man, its author's notions of the hidden springs of human character. Its lesson was that religion was chiefly a matter of temperament and environment, that beliefs are acquirements while temperaments are born.

This is all very vague. Another newspaper story has it that Twain once wrote a prayer, which he submitted to a number of friends; that they all pronounced it blasphemous, and that he amended or suppressed the writing. We have an impression, which amounts to a conviction, that Mark Twain wrote on the subject of his religious views, and refrained from publication possibly because he was under a contract with the Harpers and could not conscientiously print anything which would affect the value of the contract by lessening the popularity of his work, or because his wife was religious and sensitive.

We received the impression that he might be composing something on religion from the nature of the books he ordered at the *Truthseeker* office, and the thought may have been stimulated by the hope that he would do so. His literary executor is understood to be Mr. Albert Bigelow Paine, editor of a department of the magazine *St. Nicholas*, biographer of Thomas Nast, the artist, and author of many books. Mr. Paine, it is also understood, will edit and complete the partially published autobiography of Twain, having done much of the work already, under the direction of the author.

It would be unfair to Twain's *Boswell* to suspect or to insinuate that the humorist's heresies are likely to be suppressed for either commercial or family considerations, and we therefore look for an answer to the question at the head of this article when Mark Twain's literary estate is administered upon. Freethought is no "tuft-hunter." It does not try to force its honors on the unwilling or the undeserving because they are eminent. It does not need to. Those who wish to join the company in which are registered the great names in history, science, and literature—the men who have been too large for any church or any creed or any system of religion—must signify their desire by applying themselves, or by such words and acts as make their position unmistakable. We were once asked if we had any test or obligation for "orthodox" Freethinkers, and could think of no other than that if one would be thought a genuine Freethinker, willing to support his convictions, he should subscribe for the *Truthseeker*. This condition was fulfilled by the late Mark Twain; and even if he had not been, as he was in all that we know about him, a credit to whatever movement had his sympathy, we could not deny him the name of Freethinker. Orthodox Christians do not subscribe for this paper. The molly-coddles sometimes read, often criticise, and never pay for it. Those who subscribe, read, and inwardly digest, are the plumbline Freethinkers.

Mark Twain was for a score of years the friend of Ingersoll. This would not indubitably fix his status, since Ingersoll numbered among his friends and admirers hundreds who were professedly Christians. Twain had Ingersoll's works in his library, the gift of a Connecticut Freethinker, and in accepting them he wrote, in the year 1900:—

> "I shall be very glad indeed to have the Dresden edition of my old friend's books in my library in this house. I knew him twenty years, and was fond of him, and held him in as high honor as I have held any man, living or dead."

In a letter to Miss Farrell, referring to the death of her grandfather, Colonel Ingersoll, he wrote:—

> "Except my daughter's, I have not grieved for any death as I have grieved for his. His was a great and beautiful spirit; he was a man—all man, from his crown to his foot-soles. My reverence for him was deep and genuine. I prized his affection for me and return it with usury."

One had to be in sympathy with the views for which Ingersoll was noted to write in that manner; and therefore we conclude that the religious views of Mark Twain, so far as they concerned the Christian system, were substantially those of Robert G. Ingersoll. We are told privately, by one having immediate knowledge of the fact, that Twain was less reverent than Ingersoll.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

Correspondence.

"SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—On June 18 there were thousands of happy children enjoying themselves in the Royal Botanic Gardens, Regent's Park, at a *fête* organised by the National Home-Reading Union to celebrate the Union's "Coming of Age." The sight of so many enthusiastically happy children would have been enough to cause the most misanthropical man to smile.

But how astonished I was, when standing near the main entrance, to hear a "gentleman," dressed in clerical garb and wearing a gold cross on his watch-chain, ask the gate-keeper, as he passed out, how many times the gardens were to be handed over to such a crowd. The door-keeper replied that such gatherings were very few, whereupon the clergyman said that the Society would not receive another subscription from him, and walked off in manifest ill-humor.

I have heard that one to whose teachings all clergymen are supposed to devote their life energies is supposed to have said: "Suffer the little children to come unto me"; but evidently this disciple of Christ would not have them come to the gardens of the Society of which he is a member. And some people wonder why the mass of the working-classes do not go to church, and why they instinctively dislike parsons. Perhaps it is because this particular specimen is a fair sample of so many of the others.

"DISGUSTED."

NO FATHER AT ALL.

The Rev. Dr. Boynton, a Congregational minister of Detroit, talked one evening at a meeting of working men held in the Detroit Opera House. The next morning, two Irishmen met on a street car.

"Och, Pat," said one, "ye should ha' been out last night to hear Father Boynton."

"Father Boynton," replied the other, "he's no father at all. He's a married man with seven children."

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, A. B. Moss, Lectures.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road, Kingsland): 11.30, a Lecture.

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.30, F. A. Davies, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford): 7, Miss K. B. Kough, "What Has Become of Hell?"

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers' Hill, opposite Public Library): 11.30, R. H. Rosetti, "Jesus Christ, the Unknown Jew Boy." The Green, Enfield; 7, L. Dawson, "Christianity the Enemy of Medical Science."

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

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

HUDDDERSFIELD AND DISTRICT BRANCH N. S. S. (Market Cross): 8, G. T. Whitehead, a Lecture. Saturday, at 8, G. T. Whitehead, a Lecture.

LAINDON, ESSEX (opposite Luff's Hairdressing Saloon): 7, R. H. Rosetti, "The Sabbath."

BUSINESS CARDS.

Short advertisements are inserted under this heading at the rate of 2s. per half inch and 3s. 6d. per inch. No advertisement under this heading can be less than 2s. or extend beyond one inch. Special terms for several continuous insertions.

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Hunting Skunks*, G. W. Foote; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 6d. per hundred, post free 7d. Special rates for larger quantities. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—N. S. S. SECRETARY, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President: G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary: MISS E M. VANCE, 2 Newcastle-st., London, E.C.

Principles and Objects.

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalise morality; to promote peace; to dignify labor; to extend material well-being; and to realise the self-government of the people.

Membership.

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

"I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects."

Name.....

Address.....

Occupation.....

Dated this.....*day of*.....*190*.....

This Declaration should be transmitted to the Secretary with a subscription.

P.S.—Beyond a minimum of Two Shillings per year, every member is left to fix his own subscription according to his means and interest in the cause.

Immediate Practical Objects.

The Legitimation of Bequests to Secular or other Freethought Societies, for the maintenance and propagation of heterodox opinions on matters of religion, on the same conditions as apply to Christian or Theistic churches or organisations.

The Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, in order that Religion may be canvassed as freely as other subjects, without fear of fine or imprisonment.

The Disestablishment and Disendowment of the State Churches in England, Scotland, and Wales.

The Abolition of all Religious Teaching and Bible Reading in Schools, or other educational establishments supported by the State.

The Opening of all endowed educational institutions to the children and youth of all classes alike.

The Abrogation of all laws interfering with the free use of Sunday for the purpose of culture and recreation; and the Sunday opening of State and Municipal Museums, Libraries, and Art Galleries.

A Reform of the Marriage Laws, especially to secure equal justice for husband and wife, and a reasonable liberty and facility of divorce.

The Equalisation of the legal status of men and women, so that all rights may be independent of sexual distinctions.

The Protection of children from all forms of violence, and from the greed of those who would make a profit out of their premature labor.

The Abolition of all hereditary distinctions and privileges, fostering a spirit antagonistic to justice and human brotherhood.

The Improvement by all just and wise means of the conditions of daily life for the masses of the people, especially in towns and cities, where insanitary and incommodious dwellings, and the want of open spaces, cause physical weakness and disease, and the deterioration of family life.

The Promotion of the right and duty of Labor to organise itself for its moral and economical advancement, and of its claim to legal protection in such combinations.

The Substitution of the idea of Reform for that of Punishment in the treatment of criminals, so that gaols may no longer be places of brutalisation, or even of mere detention, but places of physical, intellectual, and moral elevation for those who are afflicted with anti-social tendencies.

An Extension of the moral law to animals, so as to secure them humane treatment and legal protection against cruelty.

The Promotion of Peace between nations, and the substitution of Arbitration for War in the settlement of international disputes.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY
(LIMITED)

Company Limited by Guarantee.

Registered Office—2 NEWCASTLE STREET, LONDON. E.C.

Chairman of Board of Directors—MR. G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

THIS Society was formed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

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.

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up and the assets were insufficient to cover liabilities—a most unlikely contingency.

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The Society has a considerable number of members, but a much larger number is desirable, and it is hoped that some will be gained amongst those who read this announcement. All who join it participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest, or in any way whatever.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of not less than five and not more than twelve members, one-third of whom retire (by ballot) each year, but are capable of re-election. An Annual General Meeting of members must be held in London, to receive the Report, elect new Directors, and transact any other business that may arise.

Being a duly registered body, the Secular Society, Limited, can receive donations and bequests with absolute security. Those who are in a position to do so are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favor in their wills. On this point there need not be the slightest apprehension. It is quite impossible to set aside such bequests. The executors have no option but to pay them over in the ordinary course of administration. No objection of any kind has been raised in connection with any of the wills by which the Society has already been benefited.

The Society's solicitors are Messrs. Harper and Battcock, 23 Rood-lane, Fenchurch-street, London, E.C.

A Form of Bequest.—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators:—"I give and "bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £—— "free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by "two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary "thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the "said Legacy."

Friends of the Society who have remembered it in their wills, or who intend to do so, should formally notify the Secretary of the fact, or send a private intimation to the Chairman, who will (if desired) treat it as strictly confidential. This is not necessary, but it is advisable, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid, and their contents have to be established by competent testimony.

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