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In this world, if you do not say a thing in an irritating way, you may just as well not say it at all, since nobody will trouble themselves about anything which does not trouble them.—GEORGE BERNARD SHAW.

The Three Lord Shaftesburys.

THIS is an age of cheap literature. Whether it is an age of wide thinking is another matter. But books are cheap; that is undeniable; unless you want books that only specialists and students read, and then you have to pay more than ever. Evidently the demand for *such* books does not increase. Reprints of more or less famous books, however, are amazingly cheap. Perhaps one ought not to say "famous," but well-known and much-talked-of. For the really famous books, the world's masterpieces, have long been obtainable at a low figure. It is the second and third-rate books, of the last fifty years or so, that are now swarming in cheap editions. And let us hope that it represents something more than publishers' enterprise; let us hope that it represents a real desire for serious and thoughtful reading on the part of the thousands of purchasers.

One of the most excellent of these modern cheap series is the shilling one of Messrs. Nelson, and perhaps the most notable volumes in this series are Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* and *Literature and Dogma*. These books did their work, as far as they could do it, amongst the class of people that their author addressed, in the eighteen seventies and eighties. They are now placed within reach of the general public. But what their value is now is rather difficult to determine. One might say that *Culture and Anarchy* will always have a certain medicinal value to the British philistine temperament. The case of *Literature and Dogma* is more doubtful. There are fine things in it, and it is beautifully written throughout, in a style that must astonish readers who only know of religious discussion through the works of modern divines, which are the most arid stuff that ever came up from the literary kitchen. But somehow or other the book seems now to lack actuality. Religious controversy has in some degree gone beyond it. Arnold was really as much an Atheist as Bradlaugh was, though he called himself a Christian, and professed himself a member of the Church of England. He did not believe in a personal God, nor in the immortality of the individual soul, nor in inspiration in anything but the natural and human sense of the word, nor in the miracles of the New Testament any more than those of the Old, nor in any speciality in Jesus except the "sweet reasonableness" of his teaching. Arnold was really a Positivist in philosophy, a Humanist in ethics; and it is wonderful that he did not see that pouring the new wine of modern thought into the old bottles of the Christian Scriptures was a strange and dangerous proceeding. To rob the Bible of its supernatural character, and then to imagine that it would remain the great, unique source of moral culture; to rob Jesus of his divinity, and then to imagine that he would remain the world's great, unique moral teacher; to rob Christianity of its pretensions to divine origin and support, and then to imagine that Christianity

would last for ever, with the Church of England as its grandest institution; all this shows a certain fantasticality in Arnold, unless it is explained by his birth, education, and surroundings. All his interests, and all his tastes, were bound up with the old order of things. He wished to preserve it in substance, though his intellect was far too clear to accept the ideas on which it was based.

The appeal of *Literature and Dogma* is rather to trembling Christians than to vigorous unbelievers. Those who believed in the Bible, and loved it, were invited to consider the danger there was of losing it altogether, in consequence of the growing disbelief in the doctrines it was said to reveal. Miracles would have to be entirely abandoned, Arnold argued; they are fairy tales of the world's childhood; but the Bible must be retained as *the* book of "righteousness," the incomparable guide to conduct, which is three-fourths of life; in brief, the Bible should henceforth be regarded, not as dogma, but as literature. Its emotional, metaphorical language was not to be taken as so many logical propositions, but as poetry; poetry dealing in general with one subject, the relation of man to "the eternal not-ourselves that makes for righteousness."

One can conceive this book doing good to Christians, and one wishes they would read it. It is calculated to help them in the transition stage from Theology to Humanity. But except as one admires good writing, and likes reading Arnold, it is of little interest to Freethinkers, who have left its main objects behind them.

My own object in writing this article is to draw attention to a curious thing in connection with Arnold's book. The shilling edition—which, by the way, is admirably printed on nice paper, and actually bound in cloth—contains the original Preface and an extract from the Preface to the popular edition published in 1883, ten years after the original edition. Now present-day readers, with the extract from the Preface to the cheap 1883 edition before them, will be considerably puzzled. They will read that Arnold dropped out a page of the original edition because it had "given pain," but they will have no idea whatever of the nature of the omitted page. Their curiosity will be whetted—and unsatisfied. Which is a pity—and scarcely fair—and rather cruel. Arnold gave the explanation to readers who, if he had said nothing, would have seen nothing to explain. Why did he go out of his way to tease (or torment) them in that fashion? The truth is that he had something to say, and nowhere else to say it; so he said it where he could, and trusted to its getting abroad in the newspapers; for it had become associated with a certain famous trial before Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, in which the peccant passage in the first edition of *Literature and Dogma* had been cited. I was the defendant in that trial, and the whole story connected with that peccant passage is worth telling. At least I think so—and I am going to tell it.

In the course of my trial for "blasphemy" in 1883, before Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, I had occasion, in addressing the special jury, to quote passages as "blasphemous" as any in my indictment from the writings of Huxley, Maudsley, Spencer, Mill, Lord Amberly, the Duke of Somerset, Shelley, Byron, Thomson, Swinburne, Matthew Arnold, and other

authors; and I urged upon the jury that the only real difference between these passages and the incriminated parts of my paper consisted in the different prices at which they were published. Why, I asked, should the "blasphemers" who wrote for the *classes* be petted by society, and the "blasphemers" who wrote for the *masses* be made to bear their sins and driven forth into the wilderness of Holloway Gaol?

Lord Coleridge, in summing up, told the jury that some of the passages I had read—the one from Mill, for instance—displayed quite a religious spirit in their iconoclasm, but others were of a very different character. The following are his lordship's words:—

"With regard to some of the others from whom Mr. Foote quoted passages, I heard many of them for the first time. I do not at all question that Mr. Foote read them correctly. They are passages which, hearing them only from him for the first time, I confess I have a difficulty in distinguishing from the incriminated publication. They do appear to me to be open to exactly the same charge and the same grounds of observation that Mr. Foote's publications are. He says—and I don't call upon him to prove it, I am quite willing to take his word—he says many of these things are written in expensive books, published by publishers of known eminence, and that they circulate in the drawing-rooms, studies, and libraries of persons in position. It may be so. All I can say here is—and so far as I can answer for myself—I would make no distinction between Mr. Foote and anybody else; and if there are persons, how ever eminent they may be, who use language, not fairly distinguishable from that used by Mr. Foote, and if they are ever brought before me—which I hope they never may be, for a more troublesome or disagreeable business can never be inflicted upon me—if they come before me, so far as my poor powers go they shall have neither more nor less than the justice I am trying to do to Mr. Foote; and if they offend the Blasphemy laws they shall find that so long as these laws exist—whatever I may think about their wisdom—they will have but one rule of law laid down in this court."

Will the reader please note, in passing, the extraordinary care which Lord Coleridge took to guard against the slightest offensiveness to me? He was indignant at the way in which I had been treated by Mr. Justice North—a bigoted and vulgar Roman Catholic; he was shocked to find that I was imprisoned for twelve months like a common thief, and he determined to rectify the balance as far as possible. He had looked carefully at several numbers of my paper, he had watched me in court, and he knew quite well that I was speaking the plain truth when I told the jury that I was a soldier of Free-thought, with but one interest and one ambition—the victory of the cause for which I fought. That appealed to him, for he was a gentleman by nature as well as by training. Never shall I forget the lofty humility—if I may use such a paradox—with which, after an expression that might be thought to reflect on me personally, he paused to correct such an impression. "I mean no offence," he said, "to Mr. Foote. I should be unworthy of my own position if I insulted a man in his." A golden sentence! I fell in love with the utterer of it on the spot. And if ever it had been in my poor power to do him the slightest service, I would have gone to the ends of the earth to do it.

Now one of the passages I had read to the jury, and incidentally to Lord Coleridge, was the three Lord Shaftesburys passage from *Literature and Dogma*. Arnold had been telling the Protestants that they gave themselves gratuitous airs of intellectual superiority over the Catholics. They called the doctrine of the mass "a degrading superstition." But it was *not* degrading, and it was no more a superstition than their own doctrine (say) of the Trinity. And the apostle of Culture went on, in his sly, witty, and malicious way, to present their doctrine of the Trinity under an apologue of the three Lord Shaftesburys:—

"In imagining a sort of infinitely magnified and improved Lord Shaftesbury, with a race of vile offenders to deal with, whom his natural goodness would incline him to let off, only his sense of justice will not allow it; then a younger Lord Shaftesbury, on the scale of his

father, and very dear to him, who might live in grandeur and splendor if he liked, but who prefers to leave his home, to go and live among the race of offenders, and to be put to an ignominious death, on condition that his merits shall be counted against their demerits, and that his father's goodness shall be restrained no longer from taking effect, but any offender shall be admitted to the benefit of it on simply pleading the satisfaction made by the son;—and then, finally, a third Lord Shaftesbury, still on the same high scale, who keeps very much in the background, and works in a very occult manner, but very efficaciously, nevertheless, and who is busy in applying everywhere the benefits of the son's satisfaction and the father's goodness;—in an imagination, I say, such as this, there is nothing degrading, and this is precisely the Protestant story of *Justification*."

Arnold must have enjoyed writing that passage. He must have known it was an excellent piece of writing. And it must have cost him something to drop it out of his book.

Why did he drop it out? He gave the following reason in the Preface to the (1888) cheap edition of *Literature and Dogma*:—

"The sole notion of *Literature and Dogma*, with many people, is that it is a book containing an abominable illustration, and attacking Christianity. It may be regretted that an illustration likely to be torn from its context, to be improperly used, and to give pain, should ever have been adopted. But it was not employed aggressively or bitterly; on the contrary, it was part of a plea for treating popular religion with gentleness and indulgence. Many of those who have most violently protested against the illustration resent it, no doubt, because it directs attention to that extreme license of affirmation about God which prevails in our popular religion; and one is not the easier forgiven for directing attention to error, because one marks it as an object for indulgence. To protesters of this sort I owe no deference and make no concessions. But the illustration has given pain, I am told, in a quarter where my deference, and the deference of all who can appreciate one of the purest careers and noblest characters of our time, is indeed due; and finding that in that quarter pain has been given by the illustration, I do not hesitate to expunge it."

One must do Arnold the justice to allow that he did not *unsay* the omitted passage. He sacrificed it because it had given pain to someone that he least wished to pain. And I have no doubt that the someone was Lord Coleridge, for he and Arnold were close personal friends, and his lordship answered the high description.

Arnold's words about the three Lord Shaftesburys passage having been improperly used and torn from its context (by me, of course) are all nonsense. I quoted the passage accurately and *in extenso*, and I used it for a legitimate purpose,—to show that Arnold could be as "blasphemous" as I when he was in the humor. I called it ridicule of the Protestant doctrine of the Trinity, and if it wasn't that what was it? What else was it meant to be?

I cheerfully admit, on the other hand, that Arnold alluded to me in that popular Preface in a far more gentlemanly manner than Huxley did. Having a good position and a good income to keep up, and enjoying the honor of a Privy Councillor, Huxley was always anxious to let it be known that he had no sympathy with vulgar Freethinkers like Bradlaugh and Foote. Arnold had too much sense of humor for that. A sense of humor, if a man possesses it, keeps him from doing things that would make him laugh at himself. Arnold, therefore, merely explained that *Literature and Dogma* was not an attack upon Christianity, nor even upon the errors of popular Christianity. But he added that—

"Those errors are very open to attack; they are much attacked already, and in a fashion, often, which I dislike and condemn; they will certainly be attacked more and more, until they perish."

I could find no fault with that allusion to my prosecution, trial, and defence. Arnold had a right to his own position, as I had a right to mine. He had a right to think me extreme, as I had a right to think him fastidious. But I do not see that he could have expressed himself more considerately, and it was honorable on his part to hint that the errors of

popular Christianity, which I and others had attacked, would continue to be attacked in spite of my imprisonment, and would be attacked until they perished. There was no uncertain note in that sentence.

Yet I am sorry that Arnold dropped the three Lord Shaftesburys passage. Having written it, he might have dropped it; but having published it, he should have let it stand. There were critics who did not hesitate to suggest that he was frightened. The editor of the *Freethinker* went back from Lord Coleridge's court to prison, and served out the remainder of his savage sentence. The author of *Literature and Dogma*, with the "blasphemous" passage dropped out, came in for a Civil List pension of £250 a year.

G. W. FOOTE.

Environment.

ONE of the necessities for clear thinking, as was pointed out by Oliver Wendell Holmes, is the depolarisation of leading words. In the course of their history certain words get associated with particular meanings—sometimes quite illegitimate meanings—and so acquire a rigidity that is fatal to that quality of adaptation which is as essential to right thinking as it is to right living. At this stage words become a hindrance instead of a help to thought. They do not so much disguise thought as they stereotype or misdirect it. Man is carried along at the mercy of the words he uses; an unconscious servant in a sphere where he should be a purposeful master. Politics and religion offer numerous examples where particular words, because of their associations, exert a power over numbers of people who would find themselves quite unable to tell precisely what the words mean.

Another danger that besets leading words is over-emphasis. It is found that certain forces in life have been over-emphasised, and the words used to denote them have acquired an exaggerated value. By a natural and inevitable reaction a necessary emphasis is given to the neglected factors and a contrary tendency established. But as human nature—whether orthodox or heterodox—is human nature, it not uncommonly happens that the over-emphasis, necessary at first as a corrective, dominates certain minds, with the result that the original mistake is repeated in an opposite direction.

Among the words that illustrate both the fault of polarisation and of over-emphasis is that of "Environment." Christian spiritualism made so much of the human organism, with its unscientific doctrines of Free Will and Predestination, that little or no allowance was made for the action of environmental influences. The growth of scientific habits of thinking brought into prominence the truth that life is always a question of adaptation, and as one factor in this process of adaptation had already been more than sufficiently emphasised, stress was laid upon the neglected one. In social matters, particularly, the power of the environment was dwelt upon, in some cases—as in that of Robert Owen—to the practical exclusion of the reaction of the organism. Almost the only allowance made for the action of the organism on the environment was of a passive character. Different results were produced because the environmental influences varied. Good or bad influences affected different individuals in different ways in much the same manner that soils vary in their capacity for absorbing water. The environment was the positive, the organism the negative, factor. This conception was strengthened from the philosophical side by the now discarded psychology which taught that the human mind was a blank page on which experience inscribed its lessons.

Although this was a mistake that practical biologists were not likely to make, their work bringing them into close contact with the reactions of organ-

isms on their surroundings, yet the popularisation of the conception of evolution served to still further spread this particular error. For the action of the environment was obtrusively evident. It was easy to see that the quantity and quality of food, the action of air and light, of more or less moisture, and, in social life, education, social groupings, companions, etc., all had important influences on development. In the plant world, the lower animal world, and the human world it was observed what great power was exercised by a change of environment, and in this way what I may call the objective aspect of the environment monopolised the attention of many. By some the environment was so restricted as to include only purely physical forces. Others, with a more accurate perception of the significance of the world, quite properly enlarged it so as to cover the more psychical factors. Thus Mr. Robert Blatchford, in defining environment, says:—

"By environment we mean everything that develops or modifies the child or the man for good or for ill.

We mean his mother's milk; the home, and the state of life into which he is born. We mean the nurse who suckles him, the children he plays with, the school he learns in, the air he breathes, the water he drinks, the food he eats. We mean the games he plays, the work he does, the sights he sees, the sounds he hears. We mean the girls he loves, the woman he marries, the children he rears, the wages he earns. We mean the sickness that tries him, the griefs that sear him, the friends who aid and the enemies who wound him. We mean all his hopes and fears, his victories and defeats; his faiths and his disillusionments. We mean all the harm he does, and all the help he gives; all the ideals that beckon him, all the temptations that lure him; all his weepings and laughter, his kissings and cursings, his lucky hits and unlucky blunders; everything he does and suffers, under the sun."

So far as this is taken as a description of what I have called the objective view, it is admirably done. But if we regard human conduct as simply the product of all these forces operating on the organism we shall be merely repeating the old error. For if what I do on any occasion is merely the united result of all these influences it does not seem possible for me, as an active participant in the sum of events, to come in. And I cannot escape the conviction that I ought to come in somewhere in a different capacity to that of merely representing the total in an environmental calculation. I am left with no other function save that expressed by a billiard ball pushed over the surface of a table by rival players. Of course, the force exerted by the players could not be expressed if the ball was not there, but being there, what it does is wholly determined by the skill and force of the players.

Now the place of the organism in the sum of influences is clearly not that of the billiard ball in a series that commences with a stroke and ends with a pocket or a cannon. Were it the same, the word "organism" would be devoid of significance. Granted that in both the case of the billiard ball and of the organism how each acts is the result of determinable forces, granted also that both express the sum of the forces operating at that moment, that and no more; still, the relations of the ball and the organism to their respective surroundings are not in character identical. In the case of the billiard ball, whether it be struck by John Roberts or by the present writer, provided it be struck in a particular way, the result will be the same. But with the organism, this is not so. External factors may be identical in any two selected cases, and yet the results will differ materially. A temptation that overpowers one person leaves another quite unaffected. Exactly the same conditions of parentage, food, residence, education, and social acquaintances, produce widely different results on two different people. And these are not results that occur late in life, but are to be observed from the very earliest stages.

These different results, it is plain, must be due, not to the forces that strike, but to the object that is struck. To return to our illustration, once we know the size and weight of a billiard ball, the ball

remains a constant factor in a problem in which the blow represents the varying factor. In the case of the organism, we are dealing with two sets of forces, neither of which are constant. In other words, we have to consider not merely the action of the environment on the living being, but the reaction of the living being on the environment—a reaction that, in practice, amounts to a transformation.

It may be replied that, whatever may be the reactive power of the organism, it is covered by the fact of heredity. I grant that the factor of heredity does cover it, but I am afraid that adequate allowance is not always made for its operation. For if the meaning of environment is so enlarged as to cover all that contributes to a definite result,—whether it be the character of a Shakespeare or of a Charles Peace,—the distinction between organism and environment is needless. Indeed, there seems left nothing for the environment to operate on, and certainly there is no room for the reaction of the organism itself. Or, if we do make any real allowance for the modifying power of the organism, we must frame our description of human conduct and animal conduct so that it will cover the action of both organism and environment, while allowing for the positive action of the human factor in the problem. Conduct is a sum to which both organism and environment contribute, but with the transforming and controlling power of the organism becoming continually greater.

And this within the lines of the strictest and straightest Determinism. For, while the qualities of the objective environment remain the same, the organism represents the cumulative, and so continuously changing, qualities of human nature that is handed on by heredity. Whether acquired characteristics are transmitted or not is an open question; but, in any case, capacity is hereditary, and Natural Selection will move along the line of favoring the most serviceable quality. And this increasing capacity can express itself in no other way than in that of a greater ability to mould external forces to its own necessities. It is thus that capacity, expressing itself in artistic, mechanical, or other forms, is continuously transforming environment, even while its expression is conditioned by the environment itself. Each mechanical invention, for instance, is dependent upon other inventions that have preceded it, and upon contributions from various sciences; but it is the transforming power of human nature that at each stage gives these inventions and discoveries a summarised and concrete form.

Man's heredity is thus expressed in a capacity that is represented by the potentialities possessed by a definite organic structure. This is one factor in the problem of conduct. And the other factor is the environment in which this particular structure is placed. But, as civilisation develops, this environment becomes, in an increasing measure, made up of the ideas, the beliefs, the literature, and the art of preceding generations. Once the bare material necessities of existence are met, these mental products become the most powerful forces with which man has to deal. And in dealing with them, in the power of modifying or rejecting them, even more than in overcoming material obstacles, man demonstrates the creative powers of his nature.

C. COHEN.

"Doubt and its Source."

It is generally conceded that the present age is not an age of faith, but an age for which the most appropriate patron saint would be the Apostle Thomas, the Doubter. Even so great a theological authority as Dr. Henry Van Dyke declares that the Gospel must now be adapted to "An Age of Doubt," whose crest is an interrogation point, and whose motto is Query. The Rev. J. D. Jones, of Bournemouth, ex-Chairman of the Congregational Union, in

a sermon just published on "Doubt and its Cure," makes the following candid admission:—

"Thomas, in our day, has multiplied himself a millionfold. Doubt is in the air. We breathe an atmosphere of unbelief.....All men are agreed that this age is not an age of faith. Men do not find it easy to believe. Those who bear witness to the unseen and the eternal have a hard time of it."

Further on Mr. Jones observes:—

"Think of the growing neglect of public worship. The vast majority of our people are outside all the Churches. In every street and road in Bournemouth there are people who never think of going up on the Sunday to God's house. We speak of Bournemouth as a church-going town, and by comparison with other towns we do so with justice; but I daresay, if we knew all the facts, we should find that even in favored Bournemouth the church-goers are outnumbered by the non-church-goers."

Having also referred to the "increasing disregard of the Sunday," Mr. Jones proceeds to emphasise the truth that the Sunday and public worship are being growingly neglected because those who neglect them "have ceased to feel the need of religion, and have to a large extent lost faith in it." Then he significantly adds:—

"The facts themselves are serious enough, and they argue a widespread, I was almost going to say universal, loss of faith in religion. The unseen and the eternal does not seem to interest the average man of to-day. His unbelief is not reasoned and articulate—but it is none the less real on that account. He shares in the 'spirit of the age,' and the spirit of the age is that of a good-natured, half-contemptuous Scepticism. He does not rail at religion, but he does not think there is anything in it.....Doubt is prevalent, widespread, atmospheric. If neglect of religion is a fair test, then the bulk of our people have no faith in religion."

That true utterance fell from the lips of a Christian minister occupying an orthodox pulpit. When a similar statement happens to be made on a Secular platform it is at once pounced upon and characterised as a gross misrepresentation of the case.

At this point Mr. Jones passes on "to speak of some of the roots from which our modern doubt springs." According to him, doubt is mostly dishonest. The only "honest" doubt is "the doubt that fights and wrestles for some foothold of belief." Any doubt that fails to discern such a foothold is of necessity dishonest, unscrupulous, wicked. Such is the honesty displayed by the Christian pulpit in the discussion of modern doubt. But Mr. Jones does not stop at this ineptitude. He goes on to say that "doubt in any case is an enfeebling and crippling business." His authority for this wild assertion is James i. 6 8. And yet in thus quoting the "Lord's brother," he does him an injustice. What the apostle teaches is that a doubter should never pray. He may be good enough at other exercises, in which he believes, but at praying, in which performance he lacks faith, he is bound to be an ignominious failure. It is probably true that the secret of the last Napoleon's failure was instability of mind; but that does not justify the preacher in declaring that "doubt always means that—weakness, impotence, failure." Why, one of the strongest men of his generation was Charles Bradlaugh, the Atheist; and in spite of persistent, cruel, and iniquitous persecution, hurled at his head by professing Christians, his life was a magnificent success. Mr. Jones informs us that "people do not call themselves Atheists in these days," that the word "Atheist" has come to be reckoned a trifle vulgar, and that "they speak of themselves by the milder term Agnostic." But this is a complete and glaring error. There are, to our own knowledge, thousands of avowed Atheists in Great Britain, while in France there are at least as many millions; and, as a scholar, Mr. Jones must be aware that, etymologically, Agnostic is not one jot milder than Atheist.

Mr. Jones exhibits his Christian humility by sneering at unbelievers in general, and calling them all manner of opprobrious names. Because they profess to be adherents of what is called advanced thought, because they believe that Christianity is

quite as superstitious as any of the religions which he himself disowns, because they aver that the scientific culture of the age carries with it the rejection of all forms of supernaturalism, the reverend gentleman "looks down superciliously upon them," and says of their attitude that "it is all very silly and very weak and very wicked." If that is not the speech of the "superior person," pray, what is it?

Mr. Jones devotes a fairly long paragraph to the vulgar task of irresponsible mud-flinging. "The abandonment of faith," he says, "is, in case after case, followed by disintegration of morals. The surrender of belief issues in the collapse of the moral life." How woefully ignorant of the manner of life lived by the majority of unbelievers Mr. Jones must be! How many doctors, how many lawyers, how many scientists hold the Christian faith? According to Mr. Jones's own admission, only a very small minority; but is he prepared to affirm that the moral life of the majority of our cultivated and refined unbelievers has suffered collapse? Were Darwin and Spencer and Huxley and Tyndall and Bradlaugh and Swinburne and Meredith, to mention only a few, moral degenerates? The next observation in the sermon is that "immorality issues in Scepticism." "Men sin against the moral law, and then they try to persuade themselves that no moral law exists. They give the rein to passion and lust, and then they abolish God and Heaven and Hell out of their Universe." In this same connection, Mr. Jones tells his congregation that he "came across a Secularist lecturer, not long ago," who "had once been a Christian minister," who "was going from place to place trying to persuade the people to turn their backs upon Christ and Christianity," but who also "had ruined a woman and broken a wife's heart." Now, when Mr. Jones "came across" such a monster, was he not in duty bound to expose him to his face, and then preach to him the Gospel of repentance, and do his utmost, with God's help, to restore him both morally and spiritually? It is so easy to abuse anonymous, imaginary people; and also so cowardly!

Mr. Jones speaks of unbelievers as if they disbelieved everything. As a matter of fact, the majority of Freethinkers are gigantic believers. Freethought is a system of faith, a philosophy of belief. Mr. Jones seems to think that Atheists do not believe "that it must be right to do right." The only difference between him and them on that point is that they believe the right can be done without belief in God. No sensible man goes about the country asseverating that there is no God, for no sensible man pretends to be in possession of any knowledge whatever on the subject; but there are scores of men and women who, ignoring the alleged but unproven fact of God, undertake to teach that the highest sanctions and authority of morality are to be found in the necessities of existing human relationships. Mr. Jones must know that faith in God has never yet succeeded in making the world, or even the Church, moral. Until recently the clergy were the most immoral men on the planet. Anyone who knows Gibbon, Lecky, or even Milman, can be in no doubt on this point. These writers, and many others, make it clear beyond the shadow of a doubt that the most loathsome vices flourished side by side, and often in the same persons, with the most radiant faith and the most transporting rapture. But while some of the most eminent saints have been profoundly and consistently wicked, it is also true that some of the most ardent Freethinkers of the last hundred years have abounded in good works.

Nothing is more natural for Mr. Jones to do than to recommend a remedy for modern doubt. In intellectual defence of the Christian faith he utters not a word. He takes it for granted that supernaturalism is true. Indeed, he acknowledges that "an intellectual solution of our difficulties, perhaps, we shall never find"; but we maintain that any other solution of them is illusory. If Christianity cannot be intellectually proved to be true, then its truth must

remain forever incapable of verification. "But," says Mr. Jones, "the final and infallible cure for doubt is to put Christ to the test. Try him, and you will not long remain in doubt." Well, millions have put Christ to the test and tried him with innumerable tearful appeals, but their doubt remains. There is, in reality, no possibility of testing Christ at all. The Church has often accomplished excellent work, and it realises marvellous results to-day. This we frankly admit. Our claim is that there is no evidence whatever that the work done, however admirable, is performed by Christ; and this claim has never been discredited. What we disbelieve, and challenge theologians to establish, is the presence and activity in the Church of a supernatural person or power making for the moralisation of human life. There is another thing that requires statistical demonstration—namely, that the vast majority of people who are admittedly outside all the Churches are, on the average, less noble-minded and good-hearted than the few found inside. Until this demonstration is scientifically made the Church has no right to pose as the Divinely appointed custodian of the morals of the world.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Few More Words on Secular Education.

JUST before I left England I noticed that the *Guardian* was indulging in a paean of triumph over the result of the referendum recently held in Queensland, Australia, on the question: "Are you in favor of Bible teaching in the State Schools?" I will frankly admit that at first I did not think the majority would have voted in the affirmative; but when newspapers and private letters showed the herculean efforts put forth by the clergy and their friends, and the almost total disregard of the question by the supposed advocates of "free, secular, and compulsory education," I was astounded to find the "No" vote so large. Some idea of the work done by the professional religionists is given by the *North Queenslander* :—

"Those who have undertaken the task of organising in the interests of the question of the Bible in State Schools have succeeded in enlisting the sympathies and arraying shoulder to shoulder in their cause the most widely separated creeds, till to-day we doubt if any Christian body of any importance really stands aloof from this widespread movement. The whole matter has been methodised in a manner so highly successful as to overshadow practically every other movement ever originated in Queensland of a similar description."

The *Guardian* states that one of the "sad" features of the election was that the Catholics voted with the secular-educationists. My information, however, does not bear out this statement, nor does the pastoral letter issued by Dr. Duhig, the R. C. Bishop of Rockhampton.

"Having once recognised the principle that religious instruction should be given in the schools," says the Bishop, "the Government should make us a fair allowance for results in secular education.....A principle that the people and the Government are now asked to endorse is, religion in education. How can the Government satisfy that principle and drop from its consideration the only schools that have held to it through all these years?.....We cannot see how the Government can then logically or consistently deny State aid to our schools."

There is the whole case *against* religion in the State schools in a nutshell, and every fair-minded man will agree with this Roman Catholic prelate. The referendum figures sent to me show—

Yes	68,107
No	50,849

Surely the fact that the "No" vote, obtained without any pressure from organised bodies of professional men, was so nearly equal to the "Yes" vote procured by the methods outlined above, confirms in a marvellous way the general satisfaction given by the existing system. However, the result ought to be an

object-lesson to Freethinkers in the value of organisation and that "eternal vigilance" which is said to be "the price of liberty." For we cannot hope that Christians will be fair; we must keep sapping the creed itself.

Another thing that I noticed just before leaving London was that in one of the municipal secondary schools in England last year the subject for instruction in Old Testament history was the Book of Joshua. Three-quarters of an hour was to be devoted to this Book every week for one school year. There are twenty-four chapters in Joshua, and eleven of these are mere lists of names of the various tribes and of the towns and villages of ancient Palestine. Near the beginning is the story of "Rahab, the harlot," whose vocation meets with no sort of condemnation. On the contrary, she alone is saved. It would be interesting to know if the little boys and girls were told what a harlot is, and if the teacher explained to them that the estimate of her calling now is different from that of ancient times. Next, the walls of Jericho fall at the sound of the trumpet. Was this taught as historically true or false, or was it "explained away"? Our readers—even those who have not studied the Old Testament for some time—will remember at least the trick Joshua played with the solar system that he might continue the good work of slaughtering the Canaanites, whose chief offence was that they were defending their own homes. In the *Odyssey* Homer makes Athene stop the sun for the sake of Ulysses, and in the *Iliad* he makes Herò hasten its course to save the Greeks; but when boys are reading these old epics they are encouraged to smile at poor Homer and the primitive guesses at the cause of day and night. And the story of the conquest of Canaan is just as true historically as the Homeric account of the siege of Troy. Well, we are next told about Achan, who stole the Babylonish garment and took some of "the devoted things, and the anger of the Lord was kindled against the Israelites." But how was the culprit found out? By means of a lottery held under the authority of Jehovah. And what was the penalty? "Achan and his sons and daughters, his oxen, asses, and sheep," were all stoned to death. And then? "Jehovah relented." Truly, an inspiring story to put before boys and girls for twelve months! Is all this included in Dr. Clifford's "simple Bible teaching"?

The "explanation" usually given in the schools of such absurdities, and of the immoralities attributed to deity, is nearly always lacking in honest conviction and is sometimes tinged with false suggestion. Thus in the second book of Chronicles is the report of the "lying spirit" put by God into the mouth of the prophet. I remember one "explanation" used to be that God did not directly sanction lying, but allowed the prophet to deceive so that the wicked king might be punished. No doubt there are others equally convincing—and honest.

A curious objection brought by some advocates of "simple Bible teaching" against "systematic courses of moral instruction" is that it is a bad thing to "preach at" children. I am inclined to agree; and I wish they would always bear that in mind. But they need not build up a straw man for the pleasure of knocking him down. No one ever suggested that a lot of abstract, formal, moral twaddle should be meted out to school-children by abstract, formal, moral people. The personality of the teacher, the general atmosphere of the school, the nature of the lessons selected—all such matters are part and parcel of the morals of a school.

A. D. MCLAREN.

All creeds—even the most erroneous—die hard. Very often—after an erroneous one has been attacked, and is apparently overthrown, it is found that only one of the outposts has been stormed, and few of its defenders been worsted in the fray, while its citadel has not even been entered. It is extremely easy to expose the error in a defective creed; but, when exposed, it is not so easily dislodged.—*Prof. W. Knight.*

Acid Drops.

The great Catholic demonstration at San Sebastian did not come off, after all. The Papists were overawed by the military preparations of the Spanish Government—in spite of the fact that four Countesses had declared their readiness to die for the Holy Father. The organisers of the demonstration cancelled all arrangements, in the pretended interest of peace and order. And the latest news is that the Vatican "recognises the reasonableness of readjusting ecclesiastical matters in Spain." All this is within twelve months of the murder of Francisco Ferrer, who gives the Church more trouble now he is dead than he did when he was living.

The religious trouble in Spain is not between Protestant and Catholic. A "Spanish Liberal" in Monday's *Times* pointed out that out of a population of 19,000,000 in Spain only 8,000 are Protestants. "Spaniards who have lost the Catholic faith," he says, "have not adopted Protestantism in any of its forms; in one leap they have passed to Rationalism and Agnosticism." This is usually the case in Catholic countries.

The writer of that *Times* article says that all efforts made by the Bible Societies in Spain have been fruitless. The 8,000 Protestants are nearly all foreigners. "On the other hand," he says, "the Spanish towns contain hundreds of thousands of Rationalists and Freethinkers, professing a kind of philosophic theism, without any positive faith, and rejecting any idea of a God, Creator and Governor of the Universe." In Spain there are "only Catholics and the enemies of all positive religion, standing face to face.... Hence the present conflict is not one between various creeds feeling their way towards a kind of 'Peace of Westphalia,' but a war to the death between Rationalism and the Church of Rome. Hence the number of excited meetings held on both sides; hence the fury aroused by the shooting of Ferrer."

Crippen spent a whole evening in his cell reading the Bible and the Lives of the Saints. Perhaps he expects to be one of them. And you never can tell.

Pathologists will not be surprised to learn that Crippen and Miss Le Neve are very particular in religious matters. On Sunday last Crippen, with an armed guard on either side of him, attended divine service in the Roman Catholic chapel of the gaol, and "appeared to listen devoutly," the Reuter telegram says, "to the sermon." Miss Le Neve raised some objection to joining the Protestant service, and was allowed to remain in her cell.

Sabbatarians are groaning over Mr. Graham White's flying on Sunday. Do other flying things keep still on Sunday? If God made them, and meant them not to fly on Sunday, he would have taken the necessary precautions. There is clearly no Sabbatarian law in nature. Why should there be in human nature?

"Adjutant" Shee, of the Salvation Army, claims the right to hold forth when and where he pleases on the beach at Hastings. The authorities are of a different opinion. They have prosecuted him under the by-laws for preaching on a prohibited part of the beach, and the magistrates have fined him six shillings and costs, or seven days. He declared he would not pay the fine, but the magistrates allowed him a fortnight to think the matter over. We shall see—what we do see. But this is certain. It is intolerable that Blood-and-Fire orators should hold forth on better spots than those allowed to other citizens.

What Christianity does for people without civilisation is apparent from an August 3 Reuter telegram from Constantinople. The Druses, whose faith is largely made up of doctrines from the Old Testament and the Gospels, attacked three mixed Christian and Moslem villages in the Bosra-Ekioham district, and slaughtered 100 men, women, and children. They pillaged the murdered people's dwellings. Of course!

Reuter's Agency sent an astonishing telegram from Peking. It was to the effect that the China Inland Mission refused to accept the compensation offered by the Chinese Government for the losses sustained by the Mission during the late outbreak at Changsha. This was incredible magnanimity. And it was soon "corrected" by Reuter's Agency. The telegram should have announced that the Mission had been refused

compensation by the Chinese Government. So the world goes round as before.

British officials and missionaries used to say that China was not in earnest in her protests against the opium traffic being forced upon her by the British-Indian government. They said that she was playing the hypocrite, and making capital out of the pretence of a virtue that she did not possess. But they have all to admit now that China is making heroic efforts to stamp out the opium vice. She is doing her utmost to destroy the opium habit within her midst during the next few years. And what is Great Britain doing? She promised three years ago to decrease the export of opium from India by ten per cent. per annum. And has she done so? Nothing of the kind. She actually increased the amount by 100,000 lbs. in 1908, and the same in 1909. It is Christian Great Britain, not Heathen China, that is the hypocrite.

What we have been saying for thirty years in the *Freethinker*, and in our own books and pamphlets, and thereby earned the reputation of a vulgar blasphemer—which only means that we were before our time—is now being said by scholars and divines within the Churches, and paraded by the New Theologians as a brand-new discovery of theirs. The great bulk, if not the whole, of the story of Jesus Christ in the New Testament is not real history, but religious romance. When we have been asked how fiction could look so much like actuality, we have replied that this is the very first characteristic of the best fiction. Every boy is perfectly sure that Robinson Crusoe went through all the experiences related in Defoe's great masterpiece, though they never happened except in Defoe's pictorial imagination. Things don't happen in nature as dramatically as they do in art, because nature carries on her dramas amidst the diffuse general life of the world, while art extricates them from that infinite network and presents them in isolation. All the affairs of Venice, at home and abroad, were going on during the five acts of *Othello*, but they are only referred to just where it is necessary for the progress and development of the play. Now this vital law of artistic composition has always been followed. It is instinctive with the artistic genius. And that the Life of Christ should look as real as the play of *Othello* or the adventures of Robinson Crusoe is exactly what a person who understood the matter would expect.

Here is the Rev. T. K. Cheyne, a D.D. of Oxford, writing in the last issue of the New Theology weekly, as follows:—

"It is clear that the Crucifixion story has a remarkably life-like appearance, and that events related at an earlier point seem to lead on to it. Still, this appearance of history may be fallacious. It was not beyond the power of a circle of thoughtful writers to produce it, and for producing it there was a fully sufficient motive; such an appearance of history was absolutely essential to the success of their work."

Exactly so. "An appearance of history was absolutely essential to the success of their work." That is the complete explanation. If you tell a story that didn't happen, you must tell it as if it did happen—if you want to be believed.

A man writes to the New Theology weekly saying that if Milton were alive to-day he "would be found standing by Mr. Campbell." Fancy! We rather think that whenever John Milton lived he would be found standing by himself.

Rev. J. H. Freeborough, the new President of the Wesleyan Reform Union, startled his fellow members by expressing the belief that the Roman Catholic Church would be the great agent for bringing about the unity of Christendom. No other Church, he said, would be able to do it. There we agree with him. We have always thought it likely that the Roman lion might lie down some day with the Protestant lambs inside.

Dr. Edward Renshaw, of Sale, Cheshire, uttered a long jeremiad at the Catholic Congress held lately at Leeds. England, he said, was a very sad and unhappy country. Outside the Catholic Church there was simply chaos. England was suffering from a great upheaval of Paganism. Even female nurses in men's sick chambers showed there was something rotten. Outside the Catholic Church, he repeated, selfishness was the object in life. Anglicans and Dissenters would do anything to get congregations. They turned their meeting-places into concert-halls. The pessimistic speaker forgot to say that, if Catholics had all the virtues, they still contributed an abnormally large proportion of the inhabitants of English prisons.

Mr. Will Crooks talks a great deal and sometimes talks nonsense,—but why should it be reported all the way from

Sydney? "When you have a message," he has just been saying out there, "and know how to deliver it, people will come and listen." Is that why he lost his seat at the last general elections? Moreover, Mr. Crooks professes to be a Christian, and he may remember Christ's lament over Jerusalem, in which he refers to it as "thou that stonest the prophets and killest them that are sent unto thee." How about the prosperity of those messages? The real truth of history, as well as of present experience, is that the number who listen to you will (in the main) be in proportion to the wisdom or folly of your message; the wisdom will limit your audience, the folly will increase it. That is why the greatest of men have usually been but as voices crying in the wilderness.

More "Providence." A typhoon on the Amur, near Nikolaievsk, capsized a large number of fishing boats and drowned 200 fishermen. "He doeth all things well."

God's Open Doors is the title of a little volume by the Rev. T. Rhondda Williams. We are almost tempted to look into it, to see whether "God" keeps a public-house or a bank.

"While we look at the seen, let us also look at the unseen." This ridiculous sentence is from a sermon by the "great" Dr. J. H. Jowett, printed in last week's *Christian World*. It is fairly characteristic of the "great" sermons of the present day. Mr. Jowett seems able to see the unseen—as they say that pigs can see the wind.

Rev. F. C. Spurr, who left South London twelve months ago for a more lucrative job at Collins-street Baptist Church, Melbourne, keeps the *Christian World* well posted up in his successes out there. "Mr. Spurr," we read, "has found a congenial sphere for his energies in combating the somewhat old-fashioned but disquieting secularism and materialism that is being widely preached and listened to in the Commonwealth. Both in pulpit and press Mr. Spurr is already becoming known as a powerful *fidei defensor*." How the reverend gentleman blows his own trumpet! And what a characteristic touch that is about "old-fashioned" Secularism. Christianity, of course, is *not* old-fashioned.

The Rev. Macartney Wilson says that artists have lost their belief in God, and, of course, that they need to recover it. Does it not strike Mr. Wilson as highly significant that all classes of the community—including many parsons—are shedding that belief as both needless and intellectually untenable? Such is the present trend of evolution.

It is curious how hopelessly contradictory preachers are in their descriptions of God. Though they call him our loving Heavenly Father, they yet regard him as an object of dread. Dr. Parkes Cadman, of Brooklyn, now supplying Dr. Campbell Morgan's pulpit, tells a story about Horace Bushnell and Dr. Twitchell. Dr. Twitchell is known as Mark Twain's pastor, though it is now an established fact that Mark Twain was a Freethinker. The two divines were in the White Mountains, living mostly in the open air. One night they lay together "under the canopy of the trees, and on the soft, perfumed grass," when Horace Bushnell engaged in prayer. He was supposed to be enjoying a familiar interview with the God of love; and yet such was the effect on Twitchell's nerves that he said afterwards, "I was afraid to stretch out my hand into the darkness, for fear I should have touched God." Fancy being afraid of touching, or of being touched by, an all-loving Father. After all, the belief in the love of God is only skin deep.

Dr. R. F. Horton is, we believe, the Nonconformist preacher who suggested that Atheists should be swept off the face of this planet. We see that he has been turning his attention to Roman Catholics—in company with his Nonconformist friend, the Rev. Joseph Hocking. These gentlemen have just completed a book on *Shall Rome Reconquer England?* The book is to be published by the National Free Church Council at the Memorial Hall. We don't expect to learn much from it, but we will glance at it when it appears, and give our readers the benefit of any facts and sense it may contain.

Symposium on the Transcendent yet Immanent God is the title of a little pamphlet sent us by the author, Mr. Francis Haydn Williams, minister of Flowergate Old Chapel, Whitby. Mr. Williams is a stormy gentleman, and he keeps up the character in this production. We don't see any price on it, but copies are obtainable (somehow) from the author at 4 Wellclose-terrace, Whitby. Mr. Williams is very severe on the New Theology oracle, whom he calls "Reggie Johnny

Campbell," and alleges that he gets a thousand a year—which we believe is under the mark. Adopting some lines of Tennyson's, he refers to the City Temple illuminator as follows: "He never takes the name of Christ in vain, makes him his catspaw, and the Cross his tool, and Christ the bait to trap his dupe and fool." John Page Hopps is also accused, in extremely personal language, of sliding backward on the orthodox road, partly for popularity's sake and partly for a weaker reason. Mr. Williams appears to have grown lately into an Atheist. "We are," he says, "*without God* (*atheoi*—see Ephesians ii. 12) but *not* 'without hope in the world.'" With regard to the Bible God, Mr. Williams says: "It is impossible to *insult* a MYTH. Jehovah is a myth, and it is surely a relief to know that there *is* no Divine animal to bear the discredit of all that has been attributed to that Semitic folk-lore deity." Paul is described in language borrowed from Nietzsche as "a pernicious blockhead," his talk about the resurrection is derided, and of the dead it is asserted that "their whole being has ceased, except for their influence on survivors." It will be seen that Mr. Williams is a "lively cuss." His congregation must find him entertaining.

"I regret to say," Prebendary Carlile, of the Church Army, writes, "that, from one cause or another, our receipts from subscriptions and donations have been of late somewhat seriously affected." We are glad to hear it. The decline of bodies like the Salvation Army and the Church Army is a sign that England is advancing. The money spent by these bodies is worse than wasted. It is sham philanthropy in the service of false and foolish religion.

France has expelled the unauthorised religious orders, and Spain will have to tackle the same problem seriously. The following passage is from a long leading article in the *Daily Telegraph* of August 2:—

"Certain it is that the Church, and especially the religious orders, against which the attack has been principally directed, are still possessed of powers in Spain which all the other great Catholic countries have long since found intolerable. The influence of the Bishops and the Church dignitaries in the Cortes is similar to that which they wielded in this country five centuries ago. Spain literally swarms with religious orders, especially since their expulsion from the Philippines and from France, and these orders are actually absolved from the obligation of paying taxes, just as were the French nobles before the Revolution. Many of them are immensely rich, while the poor parish priest, dependent upon a meagre stipend paid by the Government, often rivals in his poverty the poorest of his flock. Everywhere the complaint is the same, that the orders own the best lands, the best houses, and the best cattle, that the peasantry are fast-bound in the toils, and that the orders actually use their privileged position of paying no taxes in order to organise industries which can easily undersell their competitors. Catholic or Protestant, the day for such a condition of things is past. The modern spirit finds it intolerable, and it is undeniable that its continuance is entirely incompatible with modern ideas of national prosperity."

These religious orders are like great wens in the body politic. The organism must get rid of them or perish itself.

The Rev. Dr. Sallade, of Philadelphia, is dead; and when his six-year-old daughter Ruth was told what had happened, she said, sobbingly, "If I was Jesus I would ask him to get up and walk." So she would, no doubt, poor child; but, then, she isn't Jesus, and Jesus isn't she. Furthermore, Jesus never does anything that anybody, young or old, thinks he ought to do. Besides, if little Ruth had been naturally and healthily trained, she would not have dreamed that Jesus, any more than Dionysus, either ought to or could perform such a miracle. All this trashy superstition is due to a false system of education.

The New Theologians are still very busily engaged on what they call "The Quest of the Historical Jesus." Some of them think they can catch vague, undefined glimpses of him through the dense mist of tradition. Others are not even quite sure that there ever was such a person at all. Still others conclude that if he did ever live, it is now impossible to discover what he was really like. They are all agreed, however, that it does not matter whether there was a historical Jesus or not, because they have succeeded in evolving the Eternal Christ out of their own inner consciousness. It is this slowly evolved Christ, this wholly imaginary being, that is indispensable, not the Jesus of the Gospels. Wondrous wisdom!

Newspaper correspondence is generally an imposture. The letters are so nicely selected. Freethinkers know this only too well. Their letters are nearly always burked or cooked. Any folly gets in if it is only well on the editor's side. The *Daily News*, amongst its Dickman correspondence, printed a

letter from a gentleman with a very foreign name, denouncing hanging as a "barbarous" method of execution, and suggesting laudanum. But as long as capital punishment lasts hanging (really breaking the spine) is by far the least barbarous method of execution. There is a minimum of pain, and no infraction of physical identity as there is in the ghastly method of guillotining. Laudanum would, of course, be a very merciful executioner—if the victim knew nothing about it. But as he does know it becomes infinitely horrible. He would naturally fight against it, and it would take a Victor Hugo to describe his frightful mental tortures while the battle between himself and the drug went on.

Bishop Gore, before he *was* a Bishop, wrote a book on the Sermon on the Mount—with its maxims about taking no thought for the morrow. Now he attends the "annual" of the Ancient Order of Foresters and praises thrift and laying up for a rainy day. His lordship has taken thought for the morrow himself since he wrote that book. He has also taken the new Bishopric of Birmingham and some £4,000 a year. Isn't the farce enough to make a cat laugh?

Jim Jeffries' father, who is in the clerical business, predicted that God would enable Jim to win in that game of fisticuffs. Jack Johnson's black friends laughed. They knew that they had arranged with the Almighty that Jack should win. And it turned out that they were right. Even the Rev. Alexis C. Jeffries has to yield to the evidence. But as he can't admit that his boy was fairly and squarely licked by a nigger, simply on the merits of the combatants, he gets up the comforting theory that God *made* Jim lose, in order to teach him a lesson and bring him back to his Maker. One doesn't hear, though, that Jim has come back, or is coming back. He did so well financially by losing that he yearns to lose again. And there are fools enough to pay him well for doing it. So the Lord can wait.

Gladstone used to refer to the wonderful and fatherly way in which Providence had fitted up the earth for man's habitation. Just look at India. Wild beasts kill about 25,000 inhabitants every year, and snakes settle about 25,000 more. That is how Providence has fitted the country up for the mild Hindu. Plague, also, gets worse instead of better. There were 175,000 deaths from it in 1909, while 374,000 died in the first six months of this year. Rats and fleas are supposed to be chiefly responsible for this slaughter. Between five and six millions a year fall a prey to malaria. This is supposed to be due to mosquitoes. Oh, yes; Providence has fitted India up beautifully for people to live in with comfort and safety.

Mr. Watts-Dunton is, in our opinion, a terribly overrated person. In the long run, what fame he enjoys will be due to his friendship with Swinburne, who lived with him for many years. But it seems to us that Mr. Watts-Dunton's notions of friendship are rather peculiar. We all know how, being Swinburne's executor, he allowed an Isle of Wight parson to mumble pious words over the dead Atheist's body in its coffin. That was a positive betrayal. Now we learn that he has sold Swinburne's manuscripts for a considerable sum of money. We understood that Mr. Watts-Dunton was very well off. Couldn't he then have devoted some of the manuscripts money to bringing out an accessible edition of Swinburne's writings? That would have been real friendship.

Swinburne's writings are at present only accessible to millionaires. The collected edition of the poems and plays costs between three and four pounds. There are about a dozen volumes of prose besides, at various prices from six to fourteen shillings. Think of the cash! Think of the shelf-room! How are ordinary book-buyers to spend the best part of £10 on one author? How are they to find him several feet of shelving? We repeat that an accessible Swinburne is badly wanted. We know there is a volume of "Selections" on the market, but the less said about it the better.

Mr. Bottomley is to be thanked for asking the Postmaster-General that question about the lottery in connection with the Dominican bazaar, Wicklow, and another lottery in connection with the new Church of St. Patrick, for Ringsend, Dublin. Why were circulars relating to those lotteries allowed to pass through the post? Mr. Herbert Samuel coolly replied that it was the practice of the Post Office to stop lottery circulars, but the lotteries referred to were not interfered with because they did not "come within the mischief aimed at by the Lotteries Act." That is, there are lotteries and lotteries, and the Post Office is to decide which are permissible. Thus the law is set at naught by Government officials in the interest of "religion."

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

September 4, 11, 18, 25, Queen's Hall, London.
 October 2, Glasgow; 9, Manchester; 16, Queen's Hall;
 23, Leicester; 30, Birmingham.
 November 13, Liverpool.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND: 1910.—Previously acknowledged, £240 15s. 7d. Received since:—Edward Jones, 10s. 6d.; W. J. May, 10s. 6d.; Fred Collins, 5s.; T. Stringer, 1s.; Robert Stirton and Friends, Dundee (quarterly), £1 14s. 6d.

BRUSSELS DELEGATION FUND.—Previously acknowledged, £4 6s. Received since:—G. Smith, 2s. 6d.; Well Wisher, 3s.; F. Smallman, £2; T. Stringer, 2s.; R. Taylor, 2s. 6d.; John Capon, 5s.; Richard Johnson, £1 10s. *Per Miss Vance:* J. E. T., 5s.; H. L. Fisher, 3s.; Mrs. Forrer, £1; H. H. Hicks, 10s.

E. RAGGETT.—You cannot have read one of the papers you mention very long. For the rest, you did not know Joseph Symes, and we did. That makes all the difference.

W. STEWART (Wood Green).—Why will you always send too late?
W. BEETON.—Thanks for the picture-card. It is good to find a young Freethinker in love with a writer like Meredith. That fact gives added value to your appreciation of our own work.

T. STRINGER.—We quite understand that the *Freethinker* is not a paper to be pushed easily amongst young soldiers; still, as you say, one may often do good without knowing it,—the beneficial effects being only perceptible in after years.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.
R. D. VOSS.—We had already noticed it in our columns. Thanks, all the same.

JOHN CAPON.—Glad you were so pleased with our last week's article.

RICHARD JOHNSON.—Thanks for generous subscription and good wishes. We hope, with you, that there will be a good show at Brussels.

G. SMITH.—The verse you have taken the trouble to copy out and send us seems to be very crude in every way. It is poor as composition, and the satire is little better than calling names. We never heard of the author before.

E. B.—Thanks for cuttings.
EDWARD JONES, subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, does so as "a small token of appreciation from one who has much to thank you for."

WELL WISHER.—You will see that the lectures will not take place at St. James's Hall, after all. Fortunately, another hall has been secured.

FRED COLLINS.—We could have told you where to get the book, if you had asked us, and saved you the three years' search. For some time we have thought of printing a popular edition of it and selling it at a few pence.

F. SMALLMAN.—It was good of you to "give a little fillip" to the languishing Brussels Delegation Fund. We hope your example will prove contagious.

FRANK JONES.—Couldn't you have sent before Tuesday morning? We have strained a point out of civility to Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner.

W. OWEN.—Tuesday is late; we have had to shorten.

ROBERT STIRTON.—Thanks for all your trouble in the matter. Subscribers come and go, like other persons and things, but the stream of them continues. You will probably find a new one to fill the place of the old one who has left the city, and perhaps the "tired" one will recover. With regard to your friend's question, we will answer it, or have it answered, if he puts it more explicitly. Does he mean purely social work, or what?

F. B. VAUGHAN.—Indignation against Christian cruelty does not make a post.
E. J. J.—Will deal with it next week.

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.

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.

We hoped to make a gratifying announcement this week concerning the new course of Sunday evening lectures at St. James's Hall during September and October. Unfortunately the announcement we have to make is anything but gratifying. We deeply regret to state that the Hall will not be available. St. James's Hall is going to be closed altogether—at least for the present. The Company that had been carrying it on has lost a lot of money, and being no longer able to stand the drain has decided to throw up the lease; and as there is no other tenant in view the place is shut up until the advent of better days. We wish the Freethought millionaire would come along and buy the place for the movement. Meanwhile it must be admitted that the Secular leaders have made the most of the opportunity while it lasted.

London being the very worst place in the kingdom for available public halls, Miss Vance has scoured the "great wen" for a suitable sized substitute for St. James's Hall, and scoured it in vain. We have fallen back, however, on the Queen's (Minor) Hall again. Our Sunday evening lectures, it will be remembered, used to be delivered there for some years before we went to St. James's Hall. It is a smaller place, of course, and not so new and handsome, but it will serve the purpose, and we are lucky to have secured it.

Miss Vance is having convenient little printed notices of the Queen's Hall lectures got ready at once, and will be happy to supply applicants with them for judicious distribution. We hope there will be many applicants. Freethinkers might do more than they have been doing to advertise these Sunday evening meetings in London.

Mr. Foote addressed the jury himself during his trials for "blasphemy" in 1883, but two young barristers were briefed to watch his case on points of law. These were Mr. Cluer, senior, and Mr. Avory, junior. Mr. Cluer has long been a distinguished London magistrate, and Mr. Avory has just been made a judge of the King's Bench Division.

The Failsworth Secular Sunday School holds its Annual Services to-day (Aug. 14). The lecturer will be Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner, whose afternoon subject is "Thomas Paine in 1909," and her evening subject "The Influence of Religious Belief on Morals." Hymns and Choruses will be sung by the Choir and Children.

The £30 we asked for towards the expenses of the N. S. S. delegation to the International Freethought Congress at Brussels is still a long way from being realised. This is the last time we shall trouble the "saints" with this appeal. We hope there will be a larger number of subscriptions rolling in during the next few days.

Mr. H. Percy Ward went over to America to lecture for a so-called Church of Humanity, started by a curious gentleman named Kerr, who had made the astonishing discovery that there is no God and no future life. With this brand-new brace of truths he was going to revolutionise the world. He was to be the brain—and the treasurer—and Mr. Ward was to be the platform apostle. But the world refused to be revolutionised. Even the city of Kansas refused. Mr. Ward therefore tried going round "on his own." He reached Chicago and lectured in the Garrick Theatre, which is Mr. Mangasarian's new pitch, and was so appreciated that he was engaged to lecture there on Sundays during the whole of Mr. Mangasarian's summer holiday.

We are delighted to see that Mr. George Macdonald has recovered from his two months' illness with rheumatic fever and is seated once more in the editorial chair of the New York *Truthseeker*. He justly acknowledges his indebtedness to Mr. James F. Morton, who has been editing the paper for him during his absence. Mr. Morton wields a fluent and able pen. Nature has given Mr. Macdonald something more—a vein of humorous originality which he works too little; or, rather, he has worked it too little since the death of his brother Eugene, which saddled him with editorial responsibilities.

The *Blue Grass Blade* (Lexington, Kentucky) reproduces our article on "God and Jeffries" with regard to the late great prize-fight. *Secular Thought* (Toronto) reproduces "Mimnermus's" article on "A Neglected Poet." Both reproductions, of course, are made with due acknowledgments. We thus find readers, if not subscribers, in America.

Survivals of Paganism in Modern Britain.

THE writings of Thomas Hardy furnish striking illustrations of pre-Christian survivals in the traditions and customs of his well-beloved and closely observed Wessex kinsmen. Pagan and heathen undercurrents are not, however, confined to the romantic country which constituted the ancient kingdom of the West Saxons. The myths and legends of the British Islands, as a whole, span the long centuries that intervene between that partial suppression of, and compromise with, the older Celtic and Saxon religions, which we sometimes term the triumph of the Christian faith.

Albeit that the present generation catches but fiftful glimpses of the customs and observances that are fast fading away, three forms at least of the ancient faiths persisted into quite recent years. The ante-Christian solar or agricultural festivals were celebrated at the equinoxes of spring and autumn as well as at the solstices of summer and winter. The second survival displayed itself in the burning of effigies by peasants who had not the faintest conception of the primitive significance of their festivals. They merely imagined that they were maintaining a picturesque observance, and never suspected that their "guys" were the inanimate symbols of the earlier human victims that were offered as burnt sacrifices to the gods. An attached survival was the practice of sacrificing animals with the object of driving away the cattle disease or transforming ill-luck into good. The third group of surviving superstitions is composed of the still extant local adoration and worship of the earlier universally supplicated sacred stones, wells, trees, and animals.

The pre-historic Celtic creed commenced to crumble in Britain at an earlier period than in Ireland. The first steps in religious reform were taken by the humane, if stern, Pagans from old Rome. The wholesale human holocausts which the Druids demanded as an appeasement of the divine anger, revolted a military race by no means sickly or sentimental in their views. A celebrated passage in a work attributed to Tacitus describes the destruction of the greatest stronghold of the Druids. The sacred groves of the Island of Mona (Anglesea) were cut down, their altars levelled to the dust, and the officiating priests put to the sword.* The enlightened, freethinking, and humanitarian Pliny congratulates his Roman countrymen "on having put an end, wherever their dominion extended, to the monstrous customs inspired by the doctrine that the gods could take pleasure in murder and cannibalism" (*Natural History*, Book xxx). In whatever part of Britain Roman civilisation penetrated, Druidism, with all its attendant horrors, was suppressed; and before the final recall of the Roman legions, in the fifth century, religious barbarities had been extirpated everywhere, save among the savage Picts and Scots.

The introduction of those forms of Christianity which succeeded the Roman rule completed the overthrow of the remaining outworks of Celtic mythology. Unlike their Roman predecessors, who were animated by motives of justice and humanity, the Christian missionaries were inspired by those sentiments of fanaticism and zeal which dominate the actions of men who are firmly persuaded that they, and they alone, are the sole custodians of theological truth. By the sixth century a monkish chronicler, Gildas, makes complacent reference to the religion of the Britons as a defunct faith.

But to the north of the Tweed, and across the Irish Channel, the power of the Christian priests could not be supplemented by the secular arm. Consequently, the conflict between the rival religions of Paganism and Catholicism was longer maintained, the battle being fought on terms of greater equality.

According to sacred tradition, the holy St. Columba, in Scotland, and the blessed St. Patrick, in Ireland, were the faint and shadowy personages who defeated the Druids and their divinities. Adamnan, a seventh-century abbot of Iona, alleges in his *Life of Columba* that this very shadowy and uncertain saint carried the gospel in the previous century to the Picts:—

"Their king, Brude, received him contemptuously, and the royal Druids left no spell unuttered to thwart and annoy him. But as the power of Moses was greater than the power of the magicians of Egypt, so Columba's prayers caused miracles more wonderful and convincing than any wrought by his adversaries. Such stories belong to the atmosphere of myth which has always enveloped heroic men; the essential fact is that the Picts abandoned the old religion for the new."

History or romance repeats itself in Ireland. Before the advent of St. Patrick, the heathen god of the country was the recipient of human sacrifices annually offered. "But St. Patrick faced the gruesome idol; as he raised his crozier, the demon fell shrieking from his image, which, deprived of its soul, bowed forward to the ground."

Wherever the deeper strata of animism and magic, which underlie the surface-shows of religion, are examined, at once becomes patent the fact that countless superficial cults have come and gone, but the primitive superstitions of the race abide with us for ever. The images of the gods may be broken, but their mystical influences survive. When the worshipers are driven from the temples they assemble in secret amid the shadows of the tombs. The designations of the devils and divinities, saints and martyrs, goblins and ghosts, undergo change, but the emotions and beliefs concerning them are preserved by the uncultured right down the centuries.

That these conservative instincts are not special to Celtic and Teutonic Europe is proved by the manner in which the modern Greeks have treasured the myths of classic Greece. Old Charon, the son of darkness and of night, who ferried the souls of the dead over the waters of Acheron and Styx; the soulful but seductive Sirens; the Lamias, those demons that assumed the forms of beautiful women; the Nereids, charming sea-nymphs in constant attendance upon the old sea-god, to this day form part of modern Greek religion. The Italians of the old Papal and Tuscan states still believe that the ancient Roman and Etruscan gods and demi-gods continue, as spirit forms, to wander among the woods and pastures.

Thus was the memory of the nature divinities of the Celts preserved through the united influences of custom and tradition. The fairy pictured by the peasant at the present day scarcely departs from the deity defined by our semi-historic ancestors. The fairies of Ireland and Wales took their rise from a common source. Both haunt the hills, although the Welsh watersheet sometimes occupies the position of the fairy's mound. Alike they quarrel and marry among themselves, and live lives of inordinate length. All manifest a gipsy like desire to seize the little children of men, luring them from their cots and cradles while replacing them with their own preternatural babes; they all revel in music and the dance. These visionary creatures of the northern imagination find their most finished literary realisation in myriad-minded Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

But semi-immortals cannot endure for eternity. The increasing applications of exact knowledge, as materialised in the form of motor conveyances, aeroplanes, railway trains, and steamships of giant speed, conjoined with the vastly improved processes of agricultural and arboricultural science, are slowly but surely banishing these fantastic fairies from our once-enchanted islands. The delicate and graceful fairy, and the uncanny and ugly bogle, survive on terms of sufferance alone.

But long after the gods are forsaken, the rites and ceremonies that were dedicated to them in their

* *Annals*, Book xiv., Chap. 30.

* Squire, *Mythology of the British Islands*, p. 401.

prime adapt themselves by a process of selection to the disillusionments wrought by the mighty wand of science.

The earlier races of Britain were close watchers of times and seasons. Their religious observances and beliefs were centred upon the four outstanding days of the year which coincide with the dawn, progress, and decline of our sire the sun, the giver of all good things to the children of earth. The first of these festivals, which was known as Beltaine, was celebrated when the foot of May was on the flowers. The second, Midsummer Day, commemorated the triumph of sunshine and vegetable and animal life. The declining point which the sun reached in August was chronicled by the Feast of Lugh, while the sad and wistful Samhain denoted the period when he bade farewell to power and splendor and suffered eclipse under the nocturnal forces of winter and gloom.

From their attenuated remains, the nature of the rites celebrated at these ancient festivals may be inferred. In a modified form the ceremonies associated in the past with these sacred days have lingered to our own times. May Day, St. John's Day, Lammas, and Hallowe'en are religious or semi-religious festivals still.

Outstanding features of these observances furnish conclusive proof of the primitive nature of the ceremonies of which they are the travesties and relics. Each festival is inseparably associated with a bonfire kindled on the most conspicuous hill, and the heath-fires are at the same solemn hour relighted. They are all in large measure devoted to frolic and fun. But an uncanny feeling seems to haunt the air; the witches are at these periods most active and dangerous; the fairies are now most prone to mischievous trickery.

Pennant, the antiquary, has left on record the fact that so recently as the eighteenth century it was customary at the May Day celebrations in numerous Highland vallages to offer cakes and ale, not only to the "spirits" who watched over the flocks and herds, but also to untamed animals such as the fox, eagle, and the dreaded "hoodie crown." The modern Hallowe'en, which corresponds to the Celtic Samhain, was signalled by the native custom of pouring offerings of ale for the refreshment of a water-god named Shony, in order to induce him to send seaweed to the shore.

In their more primitive form these harmless bucolic merry-makings were saddened by the dark shadow of human sacrifice.

"At the Highland Beltaine, a cake was divided by lot, and whoever drew the 'burnt piece' was obliged to leap three times over the flames. At the midsummer bonfires in Ireland all passed through the fire; the men when the flames were highest, the women when they were lower, and the cattle when there was nothing left but smoke. In Wales, upon the last day of October, the old Samhain, there was a slightly different but still more suggestive rite. The hilltop bonfires were watched until they were announced to be extinct. Then all would race headlong down the hill, shouting a formula to the effect that the devil would get the hindmost. The devil of a new belief is the god of the one it has supplanted; in all these instances, the custom was no mere meaningless horseplay but a symbolical human sacrifice."*

Attention is also drawn to the fact that a most horrible custom lingered in France until its legal suppression in the reign of Louis XIV. At the Christian celebration of St. John's Day, wooden cages containing living cats, wolves, and foxes were cremated upon the bonfires, "under the auspices and in the presence of the sheriffs or the mayor of the town." It is likewise mentioned that Cæsar recorded the custom of the Druids in Gaul and Britain of constructing wicker-work images which they filled with living men doomed to be burned alive. And the logical inference is drawn that the animals sacrificed in France were the ceremonial substitutes for the original human victims.

Numerous quite recent examples of cattle sacrifices have been collected in Yorkshire, Cornwall, Northamptonshire, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and the Isle of Man. Mr. Laurence Gomme's important contribution to the science of man, *Ethnology in Folk Lore*, is a mine of information on this and kindred topics.

"Within twenty miles of the metropolis of Scotland a relative of Professor Simpson offered up a live cow to the spirit of the murrain."*

So late as 1859, an Isle of Man farmer offered up a young cow as a burnt sacrifice near Tynwald Hill, to appease the ghostly dweller of a grave that had been desecrated. The registers of the Presbytery of Dingwall of 1856 and 1878 record the slaying of kine on the site of an ancient temple to secure the good graces of an alleged Christian saint whom some named "St. Mourie," although others, suspecting his Pagan paternity, mentioned him as "ane god Mourie."

The reverence and worship of sacred beasts, trees, water, and stones remain for brief reference. The various races speaking an Aryan tongue paid divine honors to their running waters. The River Dee was revered as a goddess of carnage. Myths were related of the British rivers, as legends were narrated of the sacred streams of Greece. The Dee pronounced oracles concerning the chronic conflicts between the border dwellers of England and Wales. When the waters of the stream encroached upon the Welsh or the English shore, those favored with the higher river current received certain assurance of victory.† Noble watercourses such as the Tweed were credited with human offspring; surviving traditions abundantly prove that the streams received human sacrifices in all the aqueous areas of the British Isles.

Fading legends of river-worship are not so common as those that relate to the worship of wells. Mr. Charles Squire, in his delightful volume on Celtic Mythology, states that so plentiful are "holy wells" that several monographs have been specially devoted to them. "In the case of well-worship," writes Mr. Gomme, "it may be asserted with some confidence that it prevails in every county in the three kingdoms."

By the side of the sacred well flourished the sacred tree, on whose spreading branches rags and suchlike humble offerings were hung. These mean tributes were the withered relics of the departed glories of a less secular age. Sacred stones were venerated as fetishes or gods. A passage from Lord Roden's *Progress of the Reformation in Ireland*, summarised by Mr. Squire, contains the following curious information: In 1851, the Island of Inniskea, off the coast of Mayo, possessed a sacred well named Derrivla, with a sacred stone called Neevougi, which was carefully preserved in flannel and exhibited on various occasions for public adoration; these appeared to be the only deities known to that lone Atlantic island's three hundred inhabitants. This may seem incredible, but ample evidence exists of very recent stone-worship in far less remote districts of the British Isles.

The immense antiquity of the superstitions which have persisted to our own era among the most cultured races of Europe should caution us against the optimistic assumption that the cause of reason has finally triumphed in its warfare with theology. The danger against which rational humanity can never sufficiently entrench itself lies in a possible recrudescence in more tangible form of those demoralising and dehumanising illusions which still lie latent in the blood and marrow of the overwhelming majority of the social units that comprise modern civilised States.

T. F. P.

I do not believe even eye-witnesses when they tell me things opposed to common sense.—*Voltaire*.

* *Mythology of the British Islands*, 410, 411.

* Gomme, p. 137.

† Rhys, *Celtic Britain*.

Eliminating the Devil.

BY KARL M. TEIGEN.

POOR Devil! In Sweden he is having a hard time of it to elude the eminent savants who now are after him. Physicians, professors, and even preachers have, for more than a year, gone for his tail, hoofs, and horns, for his personality and existence, with hammer and tongs, intent upon exiling or undoing him permanently by "undeveling" the education of their country. And they are well along with their job. In Stockholm, Upsala, and Gothenburg he is reduced to a foolish myth, a perfect nobody, and even the jingles are turning against him. He may have little hiding places yet in rustic nooks or royal closets, but his reputation, his public influence beyond a joke are gone in Sweden. And it all came about gradually thus up to the present climax:

For some generations the good Swedish people have been swearing, not by him, but at him; cordially and liberally, thereby making him ridiculous and despised, although the clergy have stood loyally by him, backed up by law and learning, court and crown. "We need him for our peasant-hall!" exclaimed formerly Bishop Sandberg. "It will never do to uphold him, though!" exclaimed a farmer's wife hotly at sacramental confessions, when she made the Devil, and the clergyman himself, responsible for her sinning. "Right, Hulda! Take me seventy-seven million devils now, if it ain't!" swore her husband loyally after the communion, and they didn't. But famous Freethinkers of progressive Sweden now go for his Satanic Majesty, including such scientists as Drs. Anton Nyström, I. van Bratt, Olof Kinberg, E. J. Ekman, B. Gadelius, Professor H. Jalmar Ohrvall, Rev. Nils Hannerz, and many other eminent Stockholm "blasphemers"; and they have him on the run, their fight against him being in reality won.

It began to a finish last year, on February 4, when Dr. Anton Nyström got up a meeting of "the Alliance of Freedom" in Stockholm to discuss "Christianity and Freethought," at which gathering he punted Swedish diabolism hard before a large, applauding audience, which passed strong resolutions against the Church's and King's old Devil in all prayer-books and school books of the realm, and demanded the removal from them of all allusions to the Devil, hell, eternal damnation, and torture—in brief, that the Lutheran State Church of Sweden be at once "undeveling" and sound science given instead.

This demand from the meeting, too large and illustrious to be ignored, resulted in an "enquete" from the Stockholm *Daily News*, to ascertain from a number of prominent Swedish men, "What do preachers believe about the Devil and hell?" Several pastors refused to answer. Waldenström, the Talmage of Sweden, replied angrily, "If I have anything to say, I'll write myself!" Others, such as the Rev. Fries, Hallberg, and many others, granted interviews or sent written replies, as did the scientists, Bratt and Kinberg, Santesson and Ohrvall.

These various opinions set Stockholm on end. Its press was almost choked by the deluge of contributions which now flowed in from everywhere concerning the Devil, wherefore Dr. Nyström arranged on March 5, following, another public meeting, to investigate Swedish diabolism further. Eight preachers participated in the hot debate, seven upholding and one opposing the Devil. That lone divine was the popular Rev. Nils Hannerz of the Stockholm Hospital, who declared frankly that "in my religion I have no place for ideas of the Devil." By a vote of about 600 against 75, the gathering, after midnight, resolved:—

- (1) That preachers who do not believe in hell and the Devil should quit preaching and teaching them; leave the State Church and come out openly for modern ideas, and help to 'undevel' classical Christianity.
- (2) That preachers professing this Christianity and teaching its diabolism, which is a disgrace to modern civilization, in conflict with science, and but a remnant of

ancient ignorance, its promoters should no longer be salaried by the government treasury.

- (3) That the Swedish government and legislature, providing some State religion must be had, should be made to provide ways and means for deciding by a competent church convention what is henceforth to be considered as Christianity, or to replace the present so-called pure Evangelic-Lutheran confession with an undevel creed, as requisite preliminaries towards liberating the people from present church superstitions."

The climax of this debate was Rev. Hannerz's repudiation of the orthodox Devil. It swelled into a sensation when this popular pastor, so kind and considerate to religious patients at the City Hospital, presently explained in the *Daily News* that the Swedish State Church never had, and has not now, any fixed tenets on diabolism, such as Dr. Nyström presumed. He also volunteered to prove this to the Doctor before the Consistory, providing Dr. Nyström would formally report him for, and accuse him of, heresy. In a private letter to the Doctor he urged this gentleman to act rather than talk, concluding thus: "My proposition (to report and accuse me) should satisfy your scientific method of inquiry, which considers experiment the only reliable way to truth. Again, then, I renounce all belief in the Devil, and I now expect you to show up the consequences thereof."

Dr. Nyström refused to accuse, yet sent a report on in writing to the Consistory; also an exposition of the whole matter to the Stockholm press, in which he showed diabolism to be the core of Christianity, that the two are inseparable, that the dogmas about hell, the Devil, and eternal damnation in a fire-pit are Christian dogmas, and can by no means be removed from historical or dogmatic Christianity. He proved it, too, by references to royal ratifications and Swedish-Lutheran hymns on hell-fire and torture everlasting in Satan's furnaces for sinners, but he refused to accuse Mr. Hannerz of heresy, advising this gentleman to do so himself.

The Consistory tabled the matter for two weeks, thereupon began discussing, not the existence of the Devil, but whether or not the Consistory had anything to do with all this! At interviews later, Rev. Primarius Hahl expressed as his private opinion that, if anyone formally accused Rev. Hannerz of heresy, he might be warned, and possibly warned again; whereas Rev. Fries opined that "it will be difficult to depose him. My firm conviction is that Rev. Hannerz is safe in all kinds of weather."

And so it eventually turned out. The Consistory declined to investigate, and Rev. Hahl explained why thus:—

"Dr. Nyström cannot complain. If he is moved by love of truth, and desires light concerning the Devil's existence, let him consult his spiritual advisor, who will not refuse to speak. But nobody, not even his royal majesty, the King, can compel the Consistory to utter itself in this case, even if Dr. Nyström appeals from our decision."

"But, supposing Dr. Nyström goes to his pastor and gets one answer; then moves next day to another congregation and gets an opposite answer from his new spiritual guide?" persisted the interviewer.

"He cannot get more than one answer. We priests have all sworn fidelity to the same confession and cannot answer in more than one way—in accordance to the Bible," declared Primarius.

Nevertheless, the Consistory took at this session yet another step, by making out and signing a "certificate of orthodoxy" for the Rev. Mr. Nils Hannerz! Such certificates are given in Sweden to clergymen for good behavior, and only to those preaching pure and correct doctrines. Mr. Hannerz had applied for this certificate, and he got it, although his written repudiation of the Devil lay on the table of the Consistory when its members issued and signed that orthodox commendation.

After all this, what was now the diabolistic attitude of the twelve gentlemen of the cloth in the Stockholm Consistory? Was it all-right Luther-

anism to disbelieve in a personal Devil, or had the Consistory acted merely from formal motives, standing ready at any time, as the Primarius assured the public, to prosecute Hannerz for heresy as soon as sufficient evidence to convict was at hand?

To obtain, if possible, definite information, an associate editor of the *Daily News*, Mr. Anton Karlgren, undertook to formally report the heresy of Hannerz to the Stockholm City Consistory, since the suspected heretic had no objections, and Dr. Nyström would not do it, though willing to assist Hannerz financially, if he landed—like Professor Wicksell for “blasphemy”—in the State’s prison. Mr. Karlgren’s lengthy document showed the Consistory plainly that Hannerz had in fact uttered the aforesaid sentence about the Devil, that it was heretical according to Swedish religion and law, and that the Consistory had better get a move on itself by trying and disciplining this heretic criminal.

Professor Dr. Gadelius of the Stockholm Hospital confirmed, in a private letter, the truth of the above allegations, but commended the heretic for excluding “this barbaric Devil’s doctrine” from his creed and from his spiritual cares of the sick, since orthodox hell-lore is depressing and injurious to many feeble-minded patients.

Mr. Karlgren’s complaint concluded by showing the Consistory that the main thing in Rev. Nils Hannerz’s Christian work at the hospital consisted in his cheering up the patients by removing their fears of the Devil’s hell fire, and that such kindness is in conflict with Luther’s catechism, also a plain heresy, a punishable crime, according to Swedish Church laws.

At its session on April 20, the Consistory first postponed the case two weeks; secondly, started talking about it.

Primarius Hahl was unable to imagine that anyone could entertain doubts regarding the Devil.

Rev. Landquist would cling to the Word of God, because its teachings concerning the Devil are indisputable.

Rev. Larsson said Mr. Hannerz had not observed pastoral decorum.

Rev. Ohman argued that Hannerz had violated Holy Writ and the authority of Christ.

Rev. Eklund declared that diabolism is, beyond all question, part and parcel of Swedish religion. To confer upon Hannerz a certificate of orthodoxy was, in his opinion, cowardly weakness.

Rev. Montell, a Finn, did also consider the Devil doctrine as good Scripture truth. To repudiate the Devil was to throw overboard the New Testament.

Six of the Consistorial members expressed themselves in favor of action, three kept mum, and three would probably vote for dismissal, namely, Storzell, Strandell, and Fries.

At next meeting, on May 4, the Consistory sent Mr. Karlgren’s communication to Rev. Hannerz, and received on the 6th this reply, thus:—

“To the Consistory of Stockholm City:

In compliance with your resolution of the 4th I have noted the complaint of Lic. A. Karlgren against me to the Consistory on the grounds of ‘Abnegation of the pure Lutheran doctrine regarding the Devil,’ to which I respectfully beg to explain to you.

Partly, that upon aforesaid occasion I used exactly these words, ‘In my religious views I have no place for any ideas of the Devil,’ and

Partly, that these views of mine do not conflict with Swedish Church doctrines such as formulated by our C. L. [Church Laws] in chap. i., par 1, when compared with particularly paragraph 8 of the Formula Concordia, and since they are fruits of my studies which, according to chap. xxv., par. 8, of our C. L., must rest on historical and psychological grounds by presupposing ideas of the world akin to those marked by such names as Copernicus, Newton, Kant, and Darwin.”

On May 18 the Consistory took the case in hand, its twelve members being all present. The outcome was a surprise. For, after a short discussion, Rev. Strandell moved to table it; was seconded, and his motion carried by a vote of ten, even Primarius Hahl being one of these! Only two were consistently

opposed, five explained their votes, and five kept clam-shut silence.

The report was a lengthy document of suppressed waggery in a grandiloquent style, its essence being that the Consistory did not want anything to do with Rev. Nil Hannerz’s views about the Devil. And whosoever did not like this result might either lump it or appeal!—*Truthseeker* (New York).

(To be continued.)

Correspondence.

THE LATE HERMANN VEZIN.

TO THE EDITOR OF “THE FREETHINKER.”

SIR,—The following reminiscent note may be of interest to readers of the *Freethinker*.

Some two or three years ago I was in the smoking-room of the Queen-square Club, when I saw Hermann Vezin sitting on the wide-topped, old-fashioned fireguard, enjoying a cigarette. I asked one of the members, a Secularist doctor, if he would introduce me to Mr. Vezin, as I had long understood that he was in sympathy with our movement. My friend said, “Introduce yourself, my boy; he will be only too pleased to know you.” Overcoming my natural shyness (please don’t laugh, reader) I addressed Mr. Vezin, expressing my belief that we were both interested in the Free-thought cause. He received me at once with almost affectionate warmth, and for half-an-hour we conversed entirely upon the subject that united us. I gathered that he had never taken an active part in organised Secular propaganda, but it had been his practice for many years to copy on type-written slips extracts from Ingersoll’s lectures, and to circulate these in letters to his friends and others. He showed me some of these slips, which consisted of his favorite passages in the Colonel’s lectures. Mr. Vezin was much interested in everything connected with the movement, and asked me many questions concerning those with whom I had worked. At his request I sent him a copy of my *Atheist at Church*, and later I received from him a letter expressing too kindly appreciation.

The matter of this note is sufficiently meagre, but it is conclusive evidence that in the great actor who recently passed away we Secularists lost a friend and comrade.

GEORGE STANDRING.)

NO LIES TO CHILDREN.

Never teach a child anything of which you are not yourself sure; and above all, if you feel anxious to force anything into its mind in tender years, that the virtue of youth and early association may fasten it there, be sure it is no lie which you thus sanctify. There is always more to be taught of absolute, incontrovertible knowledge, open to its capacity, than any child can learn; there is no need to teach it anything doubtful. Better that it should be ignorant of a thousand truths, than have consecrated in its heart a single lie.—*John Ruskin*.

Obituary.

It is with deep regret that I record the death of one who has been long associated with our work in Glasgow. Mr. David Prosser, while on holiday at Crinan, died suddenly on the morning of Thursday, July 21. His trouble was one of the heart, and had been brought on through strain nearly ten years ago, while endeavoring to save a fellow workman from serious injury. Though thus living in the very shadow of death for so many years, the indomitable will, so characteristic of him, kept him always cheerful and courteous to friend and foe alike; and, to those of us who knew him well, he gave no sign of the tragedy enacting within. He died as he had lived, an Atheist, at the comparatively early age of 55. Mr. Prosser directed his energies into many fruitful schemes for the betterment of his fellow-men, and his work in his Trade Union, Building Society, and other working-class organisations was noteworthy, and will long be remembered by those with whom he was associated. By his wish, the funeral was a Secular one, and Mr. Thos. Robertson read the Secular Burial Service. Much sympathy is felt for Mrs. Prosser by their many friends, in the very tragic circumstances of her husband’s death. She, too, is one of the Old Guard, and as kind, staunch, and true as was her husband.—W. O.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

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

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

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner): 12 noon, Walter Bradford and S. J. Cook. Newington Green: 12 noon, J. J. Darby, a Lecture. Clerkenwell Green: 12 noon, H. King and T. Dobson. Finsbury Park: 3.30, W. J. Ramsey, "By their fruits shall ye know them." Highbury Corner: Saturday, at 8, T. Dobson, H. King, and James Rowney.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road, Kingsland): 11.30, Miss K. B. Kough, "Christianity and Progress."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.30, Debate between A. B. Moss and Mr. Fry, "The Old Faith and the New."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford): 7, F. A. Davies, "The Testimony of the Infidel."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers' Hill, opposite Public Library): 11.30, a Lecture. The Green, Enfield: 7, Mr. Smith, a Lecture.

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

FAIRSWORTH (Secular Sunday School, Pole-lane): Annual Services—Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner, 2.45, "Thomas Paine in 1909"; 6.30, "The Influence of Religious Belief on Morals."

OUTDOOR.

Huddersfield and District Branch N. S. S. (Kirkburton): 8, G. T. Whitehead, "What Christianity Has Not Done." Market Cross: Saturday, at 8, G. T. Whitehead, a Lecture.

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