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I will accept nothing that all cannot have their counterpart of on the same terms.—WALT WHITMAN.

At Peace with God.

It is a curious thing that when Christians cannot stand a fellow Christian any longer they send him to God. This expression was long ago used by Stanley, the African traveller, who was on very familiar terms with "the one above." During his last expedition to relieve Emin—a sceptical gentleman who got along with far less bloodshed than the pious Stanley—he was troubled with "traitors"—that is to say, with black fellows who thought they had a better right in their own country than he had, and acted upon that opinion. This insolence threw Stanley into a towering rage. He resolved to teach the "traitors" a lesson. One of these was solemnly tried—by his executioners, and sentenced to be hung. A rope was put round his neck, and he was taken under a tree, which was to be his gallows. The poor devil screamed for mercy, but Stanley cried "Send him to God!" And he was sent. But the pious traveller's narrative did not state whether he arrived. That, indeed is always a moot point. Stanley himself knows by this time, if he knows anything, for he went to God some years afterwards; at least, he is supposed to have done so, and, as his widow is still living, we should be very sorry to dispute it.

"We were troubled with no more traitors," Stanley said, and we can well believe it. Stanley in front, as wicket-keeper, and his God behind, as long-stop, frightened the blacks from playing that game again. But what did he exactly mean by the expression, "Send him to God"? Did he mean that he was sending the "traitor" forward for God's judgment? In that case, it was rather rough to hang the prisoner before his proper trial. Did he mean that as the fellow wasn't fit for earth they were sending him to heaven? In that case, it was a poor compliment to paradise. We suspect that he was simply using a pious, impressive form of speech to overawe the spectators and let them see that he had as much traffic with God as any African mystery-man.

Stanley's idea, if he had it, of sending the "traitor" to heaven because he was not fit for earth, seems to be the working sentiment of England in relation to capital punishment. Some brutal, drunken, or passionate wretch commits a murder. He is carefully tried, solemnly sentenced, and religiously hanged. He is declared to be too wicked to live on this planet, but he is still a likely candidate for heaven, which apparently yawns to receive all the refuse of earth. He is sedulously taken in hand by the prison chaplain, or some other spiritual guide to glory, and is usually brought to a "better frame of mind." Finally, he expresses sorrow for his position, forgives everybody he has ever injured, delivers himself of a good deal of highly edifying advice, and winds up by swinging from the gallows straight into the kingdom of heaven.

The grotesque absurdity of all this is enough to make a cab-horse smile. Society and the murderer are both playing the hypocrite, and society is the

worse of the two, for it is acting deliberately and methodically, while the poor devil about to be hung is like a hunted thing in a corner, glad of any shift to ease his last moments and make peace with the authorities of the world to come. Society says he has killed somebody, and he also shall be killed; that he is not fit to live, but quite fit to die; that it must strangle him, and call him "brother" when the white cap is over his face, and devoutly hope that God will save his soul; and that while he is unquestionably too bad to dwell on earth, it trusts to meet him again in heaven.

Religion has not generated sense, logic, or humaneness in the mind of society, and its effect on the doomed assassin is simply horrible. He is really a less detestable figure when committing the murder than when he is posing, and shuffling, and twisting, and talking piously, and exhibiting the intense, unmitigated selfishness which is at the bottom of all religious sentiment. Personal fear, personal hope—self, self, self—is the be-all and the end-all of this disgusting exhibition.

Some years ago, there was a peculiarly bad case at Leeds. A fellow called James Stockwell outraged a poor servant girl, sixteen years of age, and then cut her throat. When he found he was not to be reprieved, and that he had to die, he took kindly to the chaplain's ministrations, and the day before his execution he wrote a letter to his father, mother, brothers, and sisters, in which he read them lessons in piety, and ended by "hoping to meet you all hereafter." It never occurred to him that it might be his fault if the meeting did not take place. His seat in heaven was booked. Any uncertainty related to the other members of the party. Religion made him a more contemptible scoundrel than ever. He said not a word about his crime—not a word about the poor girl whose life he had so horribly destroyed, extinguishing at one fell swoop all that she might have been—perhaps a happy wife and mother, living to a white old age, with the prattle of grandchildren soothing her last slow steps to the grave.

A murderer fit to match James Stockwell has just been sentenced to death. We refer to the unspeakable Dr. Crippen. When this callous wretch, whose self-control is simply a want of sensibility, was before the Quebec magistrates he stated that he was a Roman Catholic. A priest of that religion will take him in hand and prepare him for his last aviation. This is presumably what the Lord Chief Justice meant by some words he used in passing sentence on Dr. Crippen. "I implore you," he said, "to make your peace with God." Perhaps he meant it, and perhaps most of his hearers were of the same mind; but if they had stopped to consider the matter we fancy that Dr. Crippen is one of the last persons they really wish to meet again.

What has become of the murdered wife nobody knows. She was cut off, as they say, in her sins. She had no time to make peace with God. The murderer husband will have three weeks. She may be in hell. He has a chance of heaven. He may twang his hallelujah harp—if it is not a banjo. And if there is any truth in the story of Dives and Lazarus he may look down into the pit on his unfortunate wife and have the laugh over her for ever and ever.

G. W. FOOTE.

Teeth and Claws.

It is a peculiar feature of the life of modern Christian countries that along with a preaching of the blessings of peace, and an exaggerated laudation of the virtues of humility and forbearance, there should be proceeding a steady development of militarism, with lavish praise of the valuable qualities generated by a military life. Whatever may be the differences of political parties in this country, they exhibit a disagreeable unanimity on this point. None of them seem to possess the strength of character or clearness of mind to publicly protest against the aims and spirit of militarism. If any protest is raised it is on the score of expense; so that, presumably, could some extra terrestrial power present the nations of the earth with their military equipments cost free, protests would altogether cease. Or an apology is offered to the effect that we must be prepared to meet the military onerousness of other countries, without these apologists recognising that, as the politicians of other countries use exactly the same arguments, this merely spreads the question over a wider area. And as the people can only be induced to stand the financial drain of militarism so long as they are under the impression that there are considerable social compensations, the alleged social virtues of the military life are held up to public admiration. Meanwhile, those who stand up for the ideals of peace and orderly social development are treated as hopeless cranks who are unable to see life in its practical aspects.

The question of "The Teachings of War" was the subject of discussion at one of the dinners of the Authors' Club the other day, the guest of the evening being the well-known militarist writer, Professor H. Spenser Wilkinson. It was a very one-sided discussion, all the speakers being agreed upon the value of militarism and the necessity of developing our fighting capacity to the utmost degree. All the speakers, including one clergyman, agreed that it was the duty of Great Britain to thoroughly organise itself for war; although as other countries would, presumably, go on developing their fighting capacity, it is difficult to see what we gain by our exertions. Each country expends a steadily increasing amount of its resources—moral, intellectual, and financial—upon war and preparations for war, with the result that at the end they are in precisely the same relative positions as they were at the commencement. If our militarists had the courage to advocate the speediest possible development of our fighting capacity, with a subsequent subjugation of all nations to our rule, their position would at least indicate common sense. As it is they are like so many short-sighted spendthrifts squandering their resources, and trusting that the future holds in store some unknown bequest.

The psychology of the gathering, as of that of the militarist mind generally, was well illustrated in the speech of the chairman, Mr. H. de Vere Stacpole. With characteristic confusion—on which something will be said later—he asserted that war was a necessity of life, and illustrated this deliverance by a superb misunderstanding of one of Professor Metchnikoff's experiments. The Professor took a number of frogs in the embryo stage. Some of these were developed in sterilised water, and protected from all adverse conditions. The others were brought up under the usual conditions. The results were that some of the unprotected frogs died, but the remainder grew up into fine, healthy individuals. The protected ones all lived, but they were "miserable anæmic creatures," and would have been better dead—which, having prevented elimination by disease, and also the necessary education involved in securing food, etc., is precisely what anyone with a smattering of biological knowledge would expect. Accordingly Mr. Stacpole's conclusion was that if we yield to "the piping of the peace parties" and protect Great Britain from "all attack of foreign microbes" you would at "the end of a hundred years find English-

men in the state of Metchnikoff's protected frogs. That is to say, no d—d good."

Now, bearing in mind that we are asked to develop and increase the Army and Navy because it will secure the inhabitants of these islands from "all attacks of foreign microbes," it would follow that, being so protected, at the end of the hundred years all except the army would be, to use Mr. Stacpole's expression, "no d—d good" for anything. And, further, as it would be from this worthless stock that the Army would have to be recruited in the future, that too would deteriorate. The only escape from this disaster would be to expose all Englishmen to the attacks of "foreign microbes," in which case Army and Navy must not protect the homeland from invasion; or to argue that the mere sight of a large Army and Navy, coupled perhaps with lengthy descriptions of naval and military manœuvres in newspapers, will have so tonic an effect on the population that it will keep them up to the requisite standard of efficiency. Whatever may be Mr. de Vere Stacpole's qualifications as a writer, and of these I know absolutely nothing, it is evident that the felicitous application of scientific facts to life is not among their number.

For, under actual conditions, keeping to the merely biological aspect of things, the effect of militarism on English life is, so far as it is operative, the analogue of a too careful protection on Metchnikoff's frogs. If during war all the males of a nation engaged in conflict, it is probable that a healthy physical type would result—not so much because warfare would develop, but because it would eliminate. I am considering, at present, the physical consequences only, although, of course, there are mental and moral factors that also demand consideration. But war under modern conditions does not result in the biological elimination of the unfit over the whole of a people. Soldiers are, even with conscription, a selected class. The halt, the lame, the blind, the short in stature and defective in structure, are rejected. In this matter militarism, and particularly actual warfare, makes for the elimination of the biologically fittest. It has no effect whatever on increasing the physical stamina of the race. Soldiers are condemned to at least partial celibacy. In actual warfare they are killed. In this way war, in proportion to its frequency, and militarism in proportion to its opportunity, tends to withdraw from the task of procreation the physically fittest, and to throw it upon the physically least desirable. A process that thus exposes to destruction the finest physical specimens of a nation's manhood, and protects from destruction the least desirable specimens, can hardly be defended on the ground that it prevents a nation becoming weak and effete. Under such conditions, if wars were only sufficiently frequent the physical standard, even of the Army, would rapidly deteriorate. As it is, it is the infrequency of wars that enables the population to recover from the consequences of the drain upon its manhood.

Of course, it may be argued, and is argued, that we must maintain an Army and Navy in order to protect ourselves against aggression. With this argument I am not at present concerned; although it may be noted that this plea, as I have said, only expands the question without altering its moral, social, or intellectual aspect. Other countries use the same argument, and if it is justifiable in the mouth of an Englishman it is equally justifiable in the mouth of a German, a Russian, or a Frenchman. The argument of men like Mr. Stacpole and Professor Wilkinson is not merely that we are unfortunately compelled to embark on a course of military preparation, but that this carries with it important moral and social benefits, in the absence of which a nation deteriorates. How false and inherently absurd this position is, I hope to make clear.

Personally, I am very little impressed by the argument that the only way to preserve peace is to prepare for war. If it were true it would be a curious commentary upon the statement that warfare develops courage and chivalry. For what it amounts

to is, that one nation will be very slow to go to war with another so long as the chances of victory on either side appear equally balanced. But given a manifest and overwhelming superiority in men and armaments, then military courage and military chivalry will seize the first pretext of riding rough shod over a weaker nation. Mind, I am not arguing that this will not be so, but if that is what militarism produces the less we hear of its bracing qualities the better. Inside the State the personal aggrandisement of the strong by direct assault upon the weak is not usually treated as conduct that carries with it any striking moral benefits; and it is difficult to see why the same method should be more beneficial in international relations.

But the argument that preparations for war make for peaceful relations between nations is distinctly untrue. This might be the case if a select committee, which could by some miracle keep its preparations secret from the public, managed things. But this, obviously, cannot be done. To induce the public to spend money on warlike preparations it must be persuaded of the likelihood of war in the near future. Obviously we should not so cheerfully vote our millions for a war that might occur a century or so hence. And, to gain recruits for an army, the Army itself must be kept well before the public, and surrounded with all the barbaric glitter that appeals to those barbaric instincts upon which militarism lives. The truth would rather seem to be that talk of war, and preparations for war, makes both the professional fighting class and the general public less alive to the evils of war than might otherwise be the case. Numbers of Englishmen credit the story—probably without foundation—that German naval officers drink against “the day” when war will be declared against England. In this case, they can realise how the growth of a large Navy inspires German militarism, and leads inevitably to warlike acts. And surely the fundamental psychology of Germans and Englishmen does not differ so materially that conditions which make war easier with them will fail to have a like effect with us. The existence of a large military class creates an appetite for war. Success in war makes future wars easier. Give a boy a new pen-knife, and he immediately looks round for something to cut. Give a nation so costly and so glittering a toy as a large Army and a powerful Navy, and there is created a nascent desire to see its creation justified by setting it in actual operation.

Professor Wilkinson remarks that, while peace is a good thing, all peace comes at the end of war, and that when peace does come there are two parties—the conqueror and the conquered—and we ought to be able to make peace in the former capacity. The generalisation is a curious one, but its meaning is obvious. One portion of the world must be permanently in a position of dictating terms of peace to the other portion. And this means that while human nature is human nature the subjugated people, or those branded with the mark of inferiority, will be continuously striving to assert their equality or to demonstrate their superiority. We thus prepare for new wars in the very act of proclaiming peace.

C. COHEN.

(To be concluded.)

Incarnation.

SIR OLIVER LODGE is a first-class physicist, and when he writes or speaks on electricity or radium one feels that he is a complete master of his subject. As a scientist, pure and simple, he is an undoubted authority, and we sit at his feet with satisfying delight. But the moment he quits his own domain, and discusses alien subjects in an authoritative tone, he incurs the guilt of attempting to bamboozle the public. As an example of this we may take the paper he read before the recent meeting of the Liberal Christian League. The subject chosen

was “Incarnation,” and the language employed in the treatment of it may almost be described as theologically orthodox. All traces of the scientist are absent. Sir Oliver is here nothing but a wild and irresponsible theological speculator. He begins by making vast assumptions. He assumes that beyond its manifest history every existence must have “an infinite past and an infinite future.” That this assumption is not true he tacitly admits two sentences further on, when he implies a beginning to the existence of individuality. “Individuality,” he says, “once begun, shall not again completely cease.” It is true that “the experience and memory of the past survive in our very organisation,” or that “we are the product of evolution through the ages”; but this is a very different thing from saying that an individual existed before his birth and is destined to survive his death. And yet Sir Oliver Lodge clearly believes in the pre-existence and in the immortality of every human being. Birth, he declares, is an adventure, and so is death, but on whose part we are not informed. Are we to take the word “adventure” in its primary meaning, and say that birth and death are accidents? Or are we to adopt one of its secondary significations and regard birth and death as hazardous and striking enterprises, or as events that involve the encountering of risks? Sir Oliver practises the fine art of being beautifully vague and ambiguous on such points of difficulty.

Sir Oliver’s central contention is that “Incarnation is the right word for conception and birth.” This is how he puts it:—

“My message is that there is some great truth in the idea of Pre-existence; not an obvious truth, nor one easy to formulate—a truth difficult to express—not to be identified with the guesses of reincarnation and transmigration, which may be fanciful. We may not have been individuals before, but we are chips or fragments of a great mass of mind, of spirit, and of life—drops, as it were, taken out of a germinal reservoir of life, and incubated until incarnate in a material body.”

Somewhere, then, there exists “a great mass of mind, of spirit, and of life,” of which we are but “chips or fragments,” or a vast “germinal reservoir” which sends forth drops, or spiritual eggs, to be brooded upon or incubated until they become incarnate individualities. From this it follows that conception and birth are—

“an entering into flesh, a gradual incarnation, gradual accretion of terrestrial matter, gradual entering into relation with it. The soul may be said slowly to construct the body, and continuously to leak in and take possession of the gradually improving conditions. Constructing the body, I say, out of earthly particles—particles picked up in the first instance by plants and animals, then utilised by us, guided and arranged and compacted into a body, so as to represent our practical and terrestrial aspect—that is, such part of us as can be represented by what Tennyson calls ‘the house of a brute let to the soul of a man.’”

According to Sir Oliver Lodge, “the evolution of the human body was a momentous achievement, for thereby a terrestrial existence was rendered possible for beings at a comparatively advanced stage of spiritual evolution.” This means, if it means anything at all, that human beings existed at “a comparatively advanced stage of spiritual evolution,” before they ever had “a terrestrial aspect,” or before they emerged from “the germinal reservoir of life.” Now listen to this:—

“What happened before earth life we have forgotten. Our individual memory begins soon after birth. Before that we cannot trace identity. Perhaps we had none. Either we had none or we have forgotten. The latter is the more poetic mode of expression. It is not new. I am well aware that I am saying nothing new. The doctrine is old; Plato taught it before the time of Christ, Wordsworth taught it early in last century—the doctrine that when we enter into flesh we leave behind all memory of previous existence.”

Such is the doctrine of Incarnation as advocated by Sir Oliver Lodge, and it is needless to say that not a single fact can be adduced in support of it. Not one discovery of science contains even the least hint or suggestion of it. The “great mass of mind, of spirit,

and of life," or the "germinal reservoir of life," is a pure myth, the creation of a lively fancy. Surely there is nothing in physics to indicate the existence of such a mass or reservoir. The scientific students of life have never come across such a thing. "We biologists," wrote one of the most eminent of them seven years ago, "knowing the paralysing influence of such hypotheses in the past, are as unwilling to have anything to do with 'a vital principle,' even though Lord Kelvin erroneously thinks we are coming to it, as we are to accept other strange 'entities' pressed upon us by other physicists of a modern and singularly adventurous type." To call men, women, and children "fragments of the Great Spirit which is God" is to ignore the law of evidence, and to deal reason a violent blow in the face. Fancy the infinite Spirit cracking off tiny portions of himself and clothing them with flesh. But where has the flesh come from? Are the material bodies also chips or fragments of the Great Spirit?

Now, the question comes, why does "the Great Spirit which is God" cut himself up into bits and encase the bits in physical caskets? What purpose does he serve by such strange proceedings? For millions upon millions of years he has been thus mutilating himself. First of all there was the physical universe without a spark of life within it. How came it to be and why did it remain lifeless for countless millenniums? What object was realised by the existence and mechanical activities of huge masses of dead matter? Sir Oliver Lodge leaves this problem untouched because from his point of view it is insoluble. Could the material universe be spoken of as a series of fragments of the immaterial Great God? The first living chips of God were plants and animals. The lowest known animal was the moneron, an infinitesimally small, formless, colorless, slimy mass, all over the same, and necessarily without organs. Between the moneron and man there was an interval of untold myriads of years, during which fragments of God inhabited innumerable bodies of endless varieties. What were all the fragments of God doing during this interminable period? *Constructing the human body.* Until the human body was completed the chips did not know what they were doing; they had no individuality, no identity, no memory. As soon as this body was constructed fresh fragments were sent to indwell it, and these fragments are represented as asking, "Why do we exist? What are we here for? What does existence mean?" and as answering their own questions thus:—

"We are here to become worthy of our origin, to develop a character and a will, to become ripe for freedom. Freedom, power of choice—that is the dangerous gift that has been bestowed upon us as men."

But no sooner did these self-conscious bits of Deity realise their freedom than they disgraced themselves, and brought down upon themselves the wrath and curse of the very God of whom they were fragments. Then the whole of the Great Spirit, or as much of him as was left after the chipping processes (we are only using Sir Oliver's figures), entered a human body, in order to come to the help and rescue of the fragments. Sir Oliver Lodge says:—

"This is said to have literally happened; and as a student of science I am bound to say that, so far as we can understand such an assertion, there is nothing in it contrary to accepted knowledge. I am not testifying to it because it is a conventional belief. I am testifying because I have gradually found that it may be true—because I have become gradually assured of the possibility of such an Incarnation. The historical testimony in its favor is entirely credible. The Christian Churches have hold of a great truth. That is what I want people to realise distinctly and forcibly, and without any convention. Freed if possible from the blinkers of custom, it can be recognised as a reality."

It would be interesting to know what it is that binds Principal Lodge, as a student of science, to pronounce the Incarnation to be in harmony with "accepted knowledge." Does physical science possess any knowledge whatever of spiritual, unembodied beings, and can it point to any parallels to the incarnation of such beings? Of course, to a man who can calmly describe

all living things as embodied "fragments of the Great Spirit which is God," there will be nothing incredible in the further assertion that, in order to prevent the fragments of himself known as human beings from being destroyed by the awful consequences of their bad use of the dangerous gift of freedom, the Great Spirit himself became man, and suffered and died and came to life again. Such an account of the Incarnation renders it the most irrational and absurd thing ever invented, and presents God as an altogether impossible being. The highest and noblest thing science perceives is organised matter; and the sublimest known specimen of organised matter is man. Incarnate fragments of Deity, or the whole of Deity become incarnate in a specially begotten man, this is only the confused dream of the theologian; and it is only as a theologian that Sir Oliver Lodge promulgates such a palpable absurdity.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Lisbon Freethought Congress.

The President of the Republic Presides.

IN my article last week I stated that I was unable to say whether the National Freethought Congress, convened at Lisbon on October 13—Ferrer's day—had actually taken place. I naturally thought that the outbreak of the revolution, the flight of the King, and the struggle going on with the bomb-throwing priests, would be likely to upset the arrangements for the assembling of the peaceful hosts of Freethought in the Portuguese capital. It speaks volumes for the well-ordered condition of affairs in Lisbon, when its kings and priests run scarce, that the Freethought Congress actually took place at the advertised date, that its proceedings were conducted with intelligence and deliberation, and that for the first time in the history of modern Freethought the Congress had as its President the actual Chief of State, the titular head of the country where its sessions were held. It is this circumstance, unique in the annals of Freethought, that will lend lustre and lasting significance to the recent Congress at Lisbon. It was Dr. Theophilo Braga who, as a distinguished historian and one of the literary glories of his race and country, had the courage years ago, when the odious regime of Franco was in full swing—killing or banishing at its sweet will—to preside over the labors of the first National Freethought Congress in Lisbon, risking liberty—and even life—in order to testify his homage to the glorious principles of intellectual freedom. And now, having risen to the highest summit of political greatness, Theophilo Braga, the President of the Portuguese Republic, set the seal of his co-operation and sympathy upon the work of Portuguese Freethought by opening the proceedings of the recent Congress. The *Vanguardia* of October 16, which records this momentous gathering, was for me the most grateful and refreshing beverage of intellectual delight that it has fallen to my lot to drink in and enjoy for many a long year.

The inaugural session of the Congress, which opened on October 13, was dedicated to Ferrer. The vast hall was crowded with delegates and members of the various Freethought Societies. The galleries reserved for the public were crammed to their fullest capacity. Dr. Theophilo Braga opened the meeting amidst tempestuous applause, and pronounced what the *Vanguardia* states was one of the most exalted orations to which they have ever listened.

Dr. Braga commenced by saying that every native of Portugal was the victim of the late terrible regime to which the fair name of the Portuguese nation was imperilled.

He saluted the dawn of the emancipation of his people, and declared that the Congress deserved the thanks of the entire community because Freethought had been a powerful factor in the uplifting of his downtrodden country.

All the attempts that had been made for the liberation of the national mind arose from the Association for the Registration of Civil Marriages and from the Freethought Federal Committee.

He afterwards referred to the period of thirty hours during which Lisbon was under a hail of bullets, and bestowed his eulogy upon the heroes who poured out their blood to secure the advent of the Republic.

As a Portuguese, he congratulated himself on observing that peace had already been established.

The Freethought Congress—he declared—is at the same time a demonstration of homage to the martyrs of Freethought.

He referred to the crimes which religious fanaticism has perpetrated in all ages and in all countries—actions of sinister nature, performed, it would seem, in order to embarrass with difficulties the pathway of progress.

He bestowed the warmest praise upon the people of Lisbon for the brilliant lesson of good citizenship and honor which they have given to the world at large. At the moment when they were suffering hunger and want from the exactions of the monarchy the people refrained from appropriating even the most insignificant object of wealth, although riches in abundance were within their grasp.

To-day's gathering—he said—of Portuguese Freethinkers should not be taken merely as the opportunity of propagating Freethought, but should be utilised for the purpose of saluting the advent of the new regime, and to congratulate a people which had suffered and been enslaved for a long time.

To-day, as we celebrate the second Freethought Congress of this country, let us—he said—bear in remembrance the memory of the Freethinker Francisco Ferrer, shot by the reaction whose crime aroused a feeling of horror throughout Europe.

Francisco Ferrer died on the 18th of October, but he spiritually rose from the dead by the awakening protest which burst forth in every part of the world.

What was Ferrer's aim? It was to educate the young by modern and rationalistic processes, and to liberate the children from the degrading teaching of the reaction.

This remarkable speech, which contrasts with the Christian sentiment of the dethroned King when he wrote a year or so ago to King Alfonso imploring him not to spare Ferrer, was naturally greeted with warm applause.

On resuming his seat, Dr. Braga called upon the first speaker, Don Rodrigo Soriano, who spoke on behalf of Spain, who hails him as one of her finest orators.

The next speaker, D. Maria Clara Correia Alves, is one of the principal members on the staff of *A Vanguardia*. The intervention of women in the work of Portuguese Freethought is not only in accordance with the literary traditions of the national movement in the past; it marks one of the essential characteristics of its practical work in the Portugal of to-day.

Among the principles and affirmations adopted for discussion by the Congress, were the following:—

1. The justice and necessity for the abolition of the death penalty in all countries.
2. Complete rupture with the Vatican. Outside the exhibition of its symbols in churches and chapels, all manifestations of worship should be confined within the precincts of these holy places.
3. The means of securing to every citizen the full exercise of his civic rights, independently of all religious ceremonies.

[In connection with this item the Portuguese Government, a day or two ago, after the Congress closed, abolished the oath in all official proceedings, submitting the witness's word of honor for the invocation of the name of God.]

4. The means to be adopted in order to secularise acts of citizenship, such as the celebration of marriages and the naming of children, etc.

5. A resolution was passed calling upon the Ministers of War and Marine to rescind the order prevailing under the old regime whereby the soldiers and sailors were compelled to attend Mass on Sundays. The performance or non-performance of religious practices should be

made a self-regarding act. It was also insisted that confession in the armed services should equally be at the individual's discretion.

The above resolutions were submitted on the motion of Senhor Botto Machado, who seems to be not only a fine orator and a good Freethinker, but, judging from his speeches, a learned man to boot.

At the third session of the Congress, a long string of resolutions was brought forward by Senhor Gonçalves Neves, and subsequently adopted with acclamation. Some of these propositions seem to trench upon the ground covered by the Machado resolutions, principally by way of amplification or corollary. Of these new resolutions, I only intend to cite a few—all these citations, however, being made in order to afford to English readers some idea of the fact that "thorough" is written, in true Bradlaugh characters, on the face of Portuguese Freethought. Here are some of the resolutions:—

(a) The prohibition of all manifestations of external worship, such as processions, the viaticum, etc., "all of which have given rise to serious street conflicts and revolting persecutions." As we saw in the article in last week's *Freethinker*, imprisonment was frequently meted out, under the old regime in Portugal, for refusing to salute "the Host."

(b) The total abolition of religious oaths in Parliament as well as in the law courts, and in all civic and military acts.

(c) The revocation of articles 130 and 135 of the Penal Code and all its sections and subsections, founded on which, odious persecutions of Freethinkers and of individuals practising non-Catholic religions have hitherto been instituted.

In reference to this item, there is good ground for belief that the incubus of the Blasphemy Laws will be lifted from the shoulders of unbelievers earlier in Portugal than in England.

(d) The creation of crematories and the secularisation of all cemeteries.

This is a reform which would seriously wound the priests in the breeches' pocket.

(e) The abolition of the death punishment now figuring in the codes of justice relating to the Army and Navy, together with absolute prohibition of corporal punishment in both arms of the public service.

(f) Promulgation of a law admitting divorce.

(g) Total abolition of religious teaching and of religious and deistic morality in official and private schools,* for the reason that the right to give this species of education is, at most, the appanage of the children's families—if, peradventure, these have any desire to impart such teaching.

The final resolution, also carried with unanimity, is a masterpiece of drastic propaganda conducted on the time-honored lines of quartering the Freethought advocacy on the enemy's country. As a diplomatic piece of high policy, it deserves more than a passing notice. The resolution in question, put forward by Senhor Neves, runs as follows:—

"I propose that the Congress should not only fight against the principles of religion as destructive of science, free thought, and human reason, but should demonstrate, by means of the Bible—the so-called book of divine revelation—that the latter is shamelessly falsified by the Catholics, who invented seven sacraments, although their legendary Christ only founded two; that they have completely polluted the Ten Commandments written down in the 20th chapter of Exodus in order to organise the very idolatry which their Bible condemns; that not content with the pollution of the Commandments, they have invented five supplementary sacraments whereby the odious practice of auricular confession, the dogma of the immaculate conception, etc., were instituted by the contrivance of the Church. For these reasons, I propose the gratuitous distribution of pamphlets throughout the country setting forth the lies of religion and the contradictions of Catholicism with the Bible."

The ordinary Freethinker, nurtured in the lap of a spurious pseudo-Protestantism, is usually better

* This is aimed at the denominational seminaries which have hitherto managed to control, though unofficially, the educational life of the country.

equipped for warfare against the two hundred forms of religious dissent than against the Catholic who takes his marching orders from Rome. Certain it is that our methods of attack which win victory from the Protestant, with their infallible Bible bound in calf, will not avail, in most cases, against the Catholics with their supplementary Papal Infallibility bound in breeches. I know from the kind of pamphlets issued against Christianity in Catholic countries, that our English ways are not as their ways, nor our methods of attack as their methods. The foregoing resolution indicates a line of propaganda, abundantly used in France, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and South America, which deserves some consideration from Freethinkers redeemed from the quackery of Protestantism—that illogical halting place on the road from Rome to Reason. The Portuguese Freethinkers, as we have seen, do not mince their words or water down their principles in dealing either with the Catholic or the Protestant position, and this circumstance of whole-heartedness will, I think, entitle their line of policy to respectful consideration at our hands.

In its next number, *A Vanguardia* promises to give an account of the final proceedings of this Congress which history will remember as the first national Freethought gathering, dignified and acknowledged by the presence and active co-operation of the head of the State. For that brave act of homage to principle, all honor to Dr. Theophilo Braga. He only did his duty; but how rare it is to find men placed in such exalted positions as that of Braga willing to show the virtue of consistency.

History has its strange coincidences. On October 13, 1541, the Holy Inquisition was officially established in Portugal; King and Court, Throne and Altar, warming their cruel hands, in anticipation, at the consuming fires of the Holy Office. On October 13, 1910, the first anniversary of the last victim of the Spanish Inquisition of the Church in Portugal—after a long lapse of weary years trailed through blood and fire, bigotry and persecution—finds itself excommunicated by the awakened conscience of the country, and the first President of the Lusitanian Republic—a Freethinker of high virtue, learning, and renown—not only inaugurates a new regime of political liberty, but strengthens its foundations on the broad-based principles of Freethought. And thus the blood of the martyrs fructifies, and all the Ferrers slain in the evil past look down from the heights of their peerless immortality upon a world growing better and wiser because brave men dared to suffer and die.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

Acid Drops.

Father Vaughan has been telling a Leeds audience that Socialism is Atheism and that Atheism is Socialism. We deny both propositions. We also beg to observe that the Christian clergy are playing a double game in this matter. One section of them have practically nobbled the Socialist movement. The other section make use of Socialism as a bogey to frighten people from Atheism. These two policies are exactly opposite to each other. But that does not prevent them from being equally useful to the Christian Churches, which are always astute enough to know, and unscrupulous enough to follow, whatever roads lead to their own advantage.

It is perfectly true that some Socialists are Atheists, though we do not know a single Socialist leader who openly calls himself an Atheist. On the other hand, there are Socialist leaders who call themselves Christians. (We are speaking solely of England.) In the same way, some Atheists are Socialists, and some are not. Ingersoll and Bradlaugh, the two greatest Atheists of the second half of the nineteenth century, were both Anti-Socialists. Mrs. Besant accepted Socialism, but she abandoned it on becoming a Theosophist. There are Atheist leaders to-day who are not Socialists. They want many things that Socialists want, but that does not commit them to the doctrine of the nationalisation of all the means of production and distribution—with everything that this doctrine involves. There is

absolutely nothing in that doctrine to make the man who holds it an Atheist. Neither is there anything in Atheism to make the man who holds it embrace that doctrine. The two things belong to different planes of thought.

The utmost that can be said is this—that Atheists, who are accustomed to think, and who regard this world as the place where man finds his happiness or not at all, as Wordsworth expresses it—are more likely than Theists to take a scientific and humane interest in the affairs of this life, and to consider every proposal for promoting human welfare on its merits, irrespective of religious or other prejudices. That is to say, the Atheist has an open mind, and it is pretty certain to be on the side of progress, as far as he understands it. But to say more than this is both inaccurate and absurd.

People may be opposed to capital punishment on principle. They may also be opposed to it out of mere sentimentalism. Take the case of Luccheni, for instance, who has just found a happy release by death in a Swiss prison. He assassinated the Empress Elizabeth of Austria on September 10, 1898. It was an abominable crime, as utterly unreasonable as it was cruel; and if the assassin had been promptly executed himself the miserable episode might have closed. But he was not executed. He was condemned to rigorous imprisonment for life—a most horrible fate, which shows that the mercies of sentimentalists are cruel. If a murderer is not to be put to death, he should be treated with some regard to reason and humanity in prison. It was enough for the Swiss people to escape the shudder of killing Luccheni. They felt no shudder at the idea of the death in life to which he was condemned. The man lived the life of a caged beast. Year by year he became more dehumanised. News leaked out from time to time that he was gradually being tortured into madness. His agony lasted twelve years, and the end was obviously approaching. He had an attack of acute mania, and was afterwards confined in an underground cell. During the whole of the afternoon of October 19 the warders heard him singing. About six o'clock he was quiet, and when they visited his cell they found him hanging by a muffler from the grating—DEAD. So that tragedy is over, and some of us are sorry that it was not over long ago.

Luccheni committed a cruel crime, and Society committed a far more cruel crime in punishing him as it did. Is it not better to let capital punishment continue until Society is sufficiently civilised to substitute something that does not disgrace it still worse?

The China Emergency Committee, with Sir Robert Hart at its head, and Lords and Sirs and Bishops galore as Vice-Presidents, is appealing for £100,000 to "help China,"—the said "help" meaning to get her into the Christian penfold; for the money—if it rolls in, which is doubtful—is to be "distributed, without denominational preference, amongst the Protestant Missions of China." Sir Robert Hart professes to be fearful lest China should become strong through Western science and dangerous through want of principle. Now this is distinctly comical. It is the West that has shown a sad want of principle in its dealings with China. Take the opium traffic, for instance. Great Britain forced that traffic upon China at the point of the bayonet, and Christian missionaries were base enough to pretend that China's anxiety to put an end to it was a mere pretence. Yet the moment that China got her hands free to do it she went to work in the most resolute manner, and in a few years she has done wonders in that direction. What a hypocritical spectacle it is, then, to see Great Britain collecting £100,000 to assist in providing the Chinese with "principle"! Let the money be spent on providing Great Britain with that article. She wants it.

There is a Methodist manual, entitled "What to Pray For," designed to help missions in various parts of the world. Commenting on the last issue of this manual, the *Methodist Times* remarks that to make the production complete there should be a map of the world, showing the geographical distribution of the missions to be prayed for. To use an Americanism, there is "horse sense" about advice of this kind. A man who starts praying for the success of a mission without saying where on the world's surface the mission is has only himself to thank if his prayer is unanswered. Imagine the petition, "Oh Lord, please help the Rev. Blank in his missionary labors," reaching heaven. An answer would necessitate hunting up a record of all the mission stations and locating the proposed beneficiary. Were there a heavenly Dead Letter Office the petition would be returned marked "insufficiently addressed." With the proposed alteration in the manual, all that a good Methodist has

to do is to turn to the map, locate the mission he wants to help, and give the precise latitude and longitude, together with any additional facts in the shape of statistics he may think will be helpful. To answer prayers may be as much the business of Deity as Heine said was the forgiveness of sins; but it is making the occupation unnecessarily onerous to let him discover to where the benefits are to be directed. The *Methodist Times* reviewer is evidently a very business-like person.

The Principal of the Nottingham Congregational Institute says that the missionary movement is a great international problem affecting international politics, and that all intelligent persons ought to be interested in missions. We agree with both statements, although our agreement is reached from a different point of view. Missions have, and do, affect international politics, but chiefly for the worse. In China and India much of the trouble in the past has been created by missionary activity, and had Japan been as helpless as China, trouble would also have been created in that country. The missionary, who usually transports a much lower form of religious belief than we have at home, and is usually on a lower mental level than even the home clergy, may succeed in doing more damage in five years than statesmen can repair in a quarter of a century. His ignorant disregard of native customs, his equally ignorant attempt to force European customs on native races, has always been a prolific cause of evil. We suffer enough at home from attempts to force national life into accord with a narrow and ignorant Puritanism, and can therefore form some idea of what is likely to happen when a certain type of religionist is freed from the checks that do, to some extent, control his actions here. If only intelligent people would take an intelligent interest in missions there would be such a shrinkage in the sinews of war that missionary work would soon become a negligible quantity. When Mr. Lloyd George next feels inclined to deliver a lecture on National Waste, we commend to his attention the couple of millions sterling that is every year spent in Great Britain on this mixture of knavery and folly.

We see that *The Cape*, a South African paper, is indignant at a "gang of 'educated' American negroes" being allowed to exploit the "ignorant Fingoes," and calls upon the authorities to "stamp out the pest." Presumably the white missionaries are to have a monopoly of that sort of exploitation, and niggers ought to be kept from poaching on his betters' preserves.

The Johannesburg *Sunday Times* of September 25 published the following in its agony column: "Rom.—I do earnestly thank Dr. Macaulay, the Matron and Nurses of the Jumpers Deep Hospital, for their kindness towards my husband, who was near to the grave, through God's mercy. Their great goodness and attention have prolonged his life." The comicality of the gentleman's being near the grave through God's mercy is probably due to inaccurate punctuation.

Bad punctuation is almost as mischievous as false emphasis. A classic of the latter variety is a Biblical one. "And he said unto them saddle the ass, and they saddled him."

A writer in the *Daily News* "London Letter" draws attention to the fact that Sunday performances at the theatres in Shakespeare's time were very popular, double prices being charged for admission to them. Sunday was the favorite day for putting on new pieces, and the "first night" of many of Shakespeare's plays was probably on "the blessed Sabbath"—in spite of the growing Puritan opposition. The Lord Mayor of London, describing the fall of a scaffold during a Sunday afternoon performance at the Paris Gardens, Bankside, in 1582, called it "a well-merited judgment of Heaven for the violation and desecration of the Sabbath." A Puritan divine, named John Stockwood, preaching from St. Paul's Cross, declared that "a filthy play" would bring a thousand people together sooner than a sermon would bring a hundred, and that the theatres on the Lord's Day were as "full as possible they can throng." It would be nothing new, therefore, to have Shakespeare's dramas played on Sunday—as we hope before long they will be.

Mr. T. Wing, M.P., was one of the speakers on the subject, "Is the Church losing her hold on Men?" at the Congregational Union meetings. Membership of a church carries with it, he told his audience, self-sacrifice, and therefore there is a natural tendency for people to fall off. This is a remark often made by preachers, but it is totally devoid of foundation in fact. One may, indeed, lay it down as a general rule that people stand to gain—in the lower sense of the word—

by attending church, and lose by abstaining. Shopkeepers do not lose by attending; with many it is a profitable investment, and often abstention involves a certain loss. Public men—those that are elected to office—come under the same generalisation. There is not a candidate standing for municipal or political office that does not gain by connection with church or chapel. The way in which candidates woo these institutions, or avoid giving offence to them, is marked and notorious. And if sheer rascality be a person's object, there is no such serviceable cloak as that provided by a prominent identification with some place of worship. Poor people may gain from the charities of the churches by attendance, idle people gain socially, business men gain financially, swindlers gain by securing impunity, politicians gain in popularity. This is a plain statement of the facts; and that so many stay away from church is proof that, in spite of all these inducements, the pressure of civilisation is too strong for Christian beliefs.

Mr. Wing also remarks that the churches, by purifying the fare served up at places of amusement, have made it possible for "respectable" people to attend, and so drawn away from the churches. But theatres and music-halls are not open on Sunday, the day on which the religious performance is presented. And, really, a chapel service is not such a severe strain on the intelligence that a person religiously inclined, however great his thirst for amusements, might not bear up against it one day a week. A curious remark of Mr. Wing's was that the works of Bernard Shaw, Hall Caine, Galsworthy, and Maeterlinck, had given the theatre a prominence it did not occupy in days gone by. Oh, shade of Shakespeare! And Hall Caine and Maeterlinck! Ye gods, what a combination! As though one that could appreciate Maeterlinck could put up with the inflated and bombastic foolery of a Hall Caine!

Finally, the audience was reminded that although people did not come to church, yet the Church had exerted a great influence upon the nation, and had shaped the habits and sentiments of the people. We admit that this statement contains a considerable amount of truth; and, having admitted this, would ask Mr. Wing whether he really thinks the product of the influence, so long a rule of the Christian Church, is one that reflects credit upon Christianity? Consider one indication out of many. At the present moment, probably the most famous character in the British Isles is—Dr. Crippen. On a poll, it is safe to assume that a much larger number of people would be able to provide a biography of this gentleman than they would of any other person in the United Kingdom. This is not the expression of a healthy social reaction against murder so much as a morbid interest in a person accused of a frightful crime. The newspapers devote yards upon yards of its columns to reports of the trial—as they would to a divorce trial of an unusually nauseous character—and either do not report news of a really important character or dismiss it in a few paragraphs. And newspapers are fairly good indicators of the state of the public intelligence. There is no need to multiply instances; any thoughtful reader can supply as many as are needed. Only, again, we ask Mr. Wing, or anyone else, whether the state of the public intelligence to-day reflects credit upon a religion that has been moulding it, more or less, for fifteen hundred years?

The Bishop of Carlisle has been explaining why miracles have ceased. Miracles happened when they were wanted; they ceased when they were not wanted. But is not this the very opposite of the truth? Christian miracles, for instance, happened when the world swarmed with all sorts of miracles. It was very much like carrying coals to Newcastle. How much more striking and convincing they would be if they were wrought in this scientific and sceptical age! We suggest that the Bishop has got hold of the tail instead of the head. We also suggest that the real reason of the cessation of miracles may be found in the New Testament. Jesus could do no "wonderful work" in a certain place "because of their unbelief." It is unbelief that puts a stop to miracles. They are not the causes but the products of faith.

The Bishop enlightened his audience still further on the divine economy of the universe. He explained why Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer were not preserved in the flames like Shadrac, Meshac, and Abednego. It appears that their deaths would influence mankind far more than a miraculous preservation of their lives would have done. Does the same explanation, we wonder, apply to the women and children in a burning building—say a theatre or a church—for both have been destroyed by fire with hundreds of living victims? Here again the Bishop might explain his explanation.

Catholics are straightforward in the matter of miracles. They believe that miracles happen still. They believe that God still exists and is as busy as ever, and that human beings are just as much in need of divine help as they ever were. Protestants believe otherwise. All *their* miracles have an ancient and fish-like smell. They have none up to date. They think that the age of miracles is past. The Bishop of Carlisle goes beyond even that. He argues that special miracles are not necessary, as we are surrounded by ordinary miracles. If an ear of corn grew in five minutes it wouldn't be more wonderful than if it grew in the regular course of the season. Perhaps so. But that is another argument altogether. In the strict and proper meaning of the word, a miracle is an exceptional occurrence, or it is nothing. When you say that *all* things are miraculous you are simply asserting Theism—which may be held with an utter repudiation of what is commonly called the miraculous. Whitman said that a hair on the back of his hand was as great as any miracle, but the assertion of the general miraculousness of things did not make him believe in the supernatural and often childish miracles of the Bible.

The new Portuguese Republic is to be favored with special attention from the Religious Tract Society. The Lisbon agent of this paper-wasting organisation has written home asking for advantage to be taken of the present state of affairs, and the Society wishes to raise £3,000 to spread the gospel in Portugal. Well, the "glorious gospel" did precious little—except evil—for Portugal for centuries, and the R. T. S. is not exactly the kind of body that is likely to make headway against the Freethought element in the new Republic. It may succeed in capturing a few who give up the Roman Catholic Church without possessing strength of mind to embrace Freethought, but that will be about all.

The Archbishop of Dublin, in his presidential address at the Glendalough Synod, had a lot to say about Sunday observance. One of his remarks may be dealt with in our own columns. His lordship said:—

"I think it was Voltaire, the French infidel writer of the middle of the eighteenth century, who said, 'You will not get rid of Christianity until you destroy the Christian Sunday.' The leaders of the French Revolution later on in that century followed his advice."

We have noticed this statement about Voltaire more than once lately, and we have asked those who made it to oblige us with a reference. *Where* did Voltaire write that? He was not an orator, but an author, and he wrote many thousands of pages; consequently we are not going to say that he did not pen the statement in question; and we beg to repeat our request for a reference. Perhaps the Archbishop of Dublin will oblige. A person in his position does not, of course, talk as loosely as street-corner preachers.

While his Grace is supplying that reference, we may observe that his way of mentioning Voltaire is rather odd. "Voltaire, the French infidel writer," suggests that he was an unimportant personage, who needed strict identification; whereas he was probably the greatest man of letters that France ever produced. To say "Voltaire" is to say enough for all the world to know who is meant. No name is better known. It may be, however, that his Grace was talking to a narrow-minded, ill-informed audience, and had to accommodate himself to their limitations.

The Bishop of Winchester contributes a foreword to a new book, *Medicine and the Church*, which is a symposium on the subject by doctors and divines. The remarkable thing is that there is nothing in common between the medical men and the clergy except a dislike of Christian Science.

"Medical Science is the handmaid of God and His Church," says my Lord Bishop of Winchester. We fancy the handmaid has given "God and His Church" a month's notice.

The Church of Christ is always girding at "mammon"; but the clergy have no dislike to £ s. d. as such. Thirty-nine bishops of the Church of England, who died between 1856 and 1885, left fortunes amounting in the aggregate to over two million pounds. The spectacle is sufficient for "the Man of Sorrows" to burst into smiles.

Marie Coralli has been writing of *The Devil's Motor*. The possession of such a machine must add to the sorrows of Satan.

"Old Moore," of Almanack fame, like most other prophets, is an unconscious humorist. In his predictions for May

next, he says: "Many attempts will be made to destroy the Christian religion in Great Britain." This is the month when the open-air lecturers start work, and it does not require a prophetic vision to see as far as that.

The prophet is not so light-hearted in his November prediction. He says: "The head of the Established Church will call upon his colleagues to preach appropriate sermons encouraging young, strong, healthy people to marry, and to prove to them what a noble thing for the State it is to bring up and educate a family of God-fearing children." This is a hard saying, for critical people consider there is already a sufficiency of "kiss-in-the-ring" and "hunt the slipper" among the young folks in the churches.

Speaking at Dundee a week ago, the Rev. J. H. Atkinson, of Liverpool, referred to the intellectual awakening in China, characterising it as a distinctly religious movement. As reported in the *Scotsman*, he stated that "the Chinese were beginning to realise that the proverbial philosophy of Confucius was insufficient to satisfy their deepest needs," and that "they had had a glimpse of purer ethics, and desired it." Will Mr. Atkinson specify wherein the impurity of the Confucian ethics consists, or wherein the Christian ethical code excels it? We maintain that Mr. Atkinson is in error; that in its ethical teaching Confucianism is much manlier and wholesomer than Christianity, and that the wisest thing Mr. Atkinson and his friends can do is to cease to intermeddle, and let China have a chance to work out its own salvation in its own way.

Of course, Mr. Atkinson, like the Rev. F. B. Meyer, labors under the delusion that "there is absolutely no salvation for men but in Christ," or that "his name, and faith in his name, alone will make men whole." This delusion was offered by Mr. Meyer, in his sermon on behalf of the Baptist Missionary Society, as the supreme incentive to missionary zeal. Such is Christian egotism. Christians are the only people, and wisdom will die with them. But we know, from indisputable sources, how utterly false and foolish such a claim is, how ethically superior, in numerous instances, the Pagan world is to the Christian, and how tremendously anxious missionaries and others are that the terribly low moral conditions in Christendom shall be concealed from Heathen eyes.

The West Bromwich Coroner has had to reprove a foolish mother who carried her sick child two years of age a quarter of a mile to get it baptised by the vicar of the parish. The child was in convulsions. Had she carried it to a doctor, instead of the vicar, its life might have been saved. She was thinking of the *after-life*.

Last week's *Light*, a Spiritualist paper, devoted some paragraphs to the *Freethinker*. Our contemporary thought we were dead, which shows how profoundly it must have followed the course of events in this country. It admits that we are still "lively," and it adds that our "business still seems to be the exposure of the unchristian behavior of Christians, and the gibbeting of ancient orthodox atrocities—a sad occupation even though necessary." We suspect that our readers will hardly recognise this as a fair description of any number of the *Freethinker*. Perhaps our contemporary skipped all the leading articles, and only read the most pungent paragraphs in "Acid Drops." It is on the strength of those paragraphs that our contemporary says: "The worst of it is that the *Freethinker's* shots are nearly all deserved, and that they hit the mark every time." Well, that's something, anyhow. "But it is a sorrowful thought," *Light* concludes, "that its [our] readers are regaled only with the rotten walnuts of the Christian fields." We hope our contemporary will pardon us for saying that this observation is not a walnut, but a chestnut—and a venerable one too.

Matthew Arnold's description of Oxford University as "the home of lost causes" has been amply justified. The mere fact that a text-book like Paley's *Evidences of Christianity* was in use in that University for over a century is proof enough. One of its most recent vagaries was the conferring of an honored degree on William Booth, the "General" of the Salvation Army.

The propagation of the gospel among the cannibals has its humorous side. Just imagine a number of "livery" heathen singing "There is a fountain filled with blood" after dining off roast missionary!

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, October 30, Town Hall, Birmingham: at 3, "The True Heaven and Hell" at 7, "Charles Bradlaugh: After Twenty Years."

November 6, Shoreditch Town Hall; 13, Liverpool; 27, Shoreditch Town Hall.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—October 30, Queen's Hall, London. November 6, Birmingham; 13, Canning Town; 17 and 18, Debate at St. Pancras Public Baths; 20, Shoreditch Town Hall. December 4, Manchester; 11, Liverpool; 18, Abertillery.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—November 6, Fulham; 13, Shoreditch Town Hall; 20, Manchester; 27, Leicester. December 4, Battersea; 11, Rhondda; 18, West Ham.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1910.—Previously acknowledged: £256 17s. 1d. Received since:—Dundee Friends, per Robert Stirton (quarterly), £1 13s. 6d.; W. A. Yates, 3s.; W. Leeson, 5s.; D. Winterton, 2s. 6d.; H. Hopkins, 1s.; J. Ainge, 5s.; W. Wilbur, 2s.; Horace Weston, 1s.; —Glanville, 1s.; J. K. Harris, 5s.; J. T. Jones, £1 1s.; Rank-and-Filer, 5s.

EAST-ENDER.—Yes, it is astonishing how some people admire courage in Spain who counsel cowardice in England. A shadow of danger would soon show them in their true colors.

V. EFFEL (S. Africa).—We hope we have your name correctly, but signatures are often difficult to decipher though every word in the letters over them is perfectly clear. You will see that the cutting is noticed in a paragraph.

A. INNES.—Pleased to learn that our old friend Dr. Mortimer introduced you to the *Freethinker*, and that you "thoroughly delight in the trenchant and outspoken articles therein." We have made a note of your suggestion, but you must not expect to see the article for some time, as we have a lot of arrears to deal with.

T. W. HAUGHTON.—See paragraph. Thanks.

G. BRADFIELD.—Glad to see report of your successful Ferrer meeting in such a sleepy hollow as Cheltenham.

J. R. C.—Our *Bible Handbook* is out of print. A new edition is preparing. Pleased to hear from such an old reader.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

ROBERT STIRTON.—(1) Thanks to the Dundee subscribers, and especially to yourself for all your trouble in the matter. We wish your example were widely followed. (2) Ask your Christian friends—"How can social and philanthropic work, of that kind, be conducted on a purely secular basis, in the present state of things?" Christians themselves take care that such a basis, if it exists, is soon subverted. Girard College, a famous American institution, was founded and endowed by a Freethinker, who actually ordered that no minister of religion was ever to set foot within it on any pretence whatever; yet the Christians, being in the majority, have monopolised the trusteeship and actually set up a chair of divinity in the College. We can say no more in this column. The subject is one, as you suggest, for fuller treatment.

W. A. YATES.—Sorry that illness prevented you from going over to hear Mr. Foote at Manchester. We have not heard that Mr. Cohen's debate with Mr. Gun is to be published. Glad you think our *Flowers of Freethought* "a rare treat, and quite a Freethought education in themselves."

KHALID SHELDRAKI.—You are far from "boring" us. We are very pleased to receive your charming letter. We are glad to know that liberal-minded Mohammedans, as well as liberal-minded Brahmans and Buddhists, read and appreciate the *Freethinker*. It is good to have your thanks for our rebuke from time to time of the Christian apologists who so recklessly calumniate Musulman countries; also to learn that you always open your copy of this journal "with a sense of exhilaration."

J. K. HARRIS.—Thanks for the suggestion, but we have tried most things. Glad you think this journal "splendid every week."

G. D.—We will consider by next week whether it is worth while noticing the man's sorry display.

CLARA GUNNING.—We referred to that case before. Thanks all the same.

F. ROBINS.—Thanks for letter. It is impossible to answer your question. We cannot tell what persons in your locality may be buying this journal through newsagents.

H. SMALLWOOD.—We will consider your suggestions. Thanks.

T. AINSITT.—Too late. In our next.

SOME correspondence stands over till next week for want of space.

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.

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote delivers two lectures to-day in the big Town Hall at Birmingham. His afternoon subject is "The True Heaven and Hell," his evening subject is "Charles Bradlaugh: After Twenty Years." By the conditions of the granting of the Hall by the Lord Mayor, admission is free to all seats, but a collection will be made at both meetings, and Freethinkers (at least) should come prepared to be generous rather than otherwise when the collecting apparatus is being handled. Visitors from a distance will find tea provided for them at a small charge per head in a large anteroom of the Town Hall between the afternoon and evening meetings.

Mr. Foote's lecture on "Charles Bradlaugh: After Twenty Years" drew a crowded audience to the Secular Hall, Leicester, on Sunday evening. For an hour and a half he held the unflagging attention of the meeting. Nobody moved—not even that man near the door with the train to catch. Mr. Sydney A. Gimson, the Society's president, occupied the chair, and in inviting questions and discussion he took the opportunity of referring to "Mr. Foote's magnificent lecture." The report in Monday morning's *Leicester Daily Post* noted "the large attendance."

East and North London Freethinkers should do their best to get the large Shoreditch Town Hall filled on the four Sunday evenings in November, when Freethought lectures are to be delivered under the auspices of the Secular Society, Ltd. Mr. Foote starts the course, and his subject (by special request) will be "Charles Bradlaugh: After Twenty Years." A good many who failed to obtain admission at the Queen's Hall on September 25 are going to hear this lecture at Shoreditch. Mr. Cohen and Mr. Lloyd follow Mr. Foote in this course of lectures, and he follows them in winding up the course.

Miss Vance will be glad to receive the names and addresses of friends who will undertake the distribution of small lecture slips announcing the series of meetings at Shoreditch Town Hall. She will also be pleased to send posters to anyone who can exhibit them.

London "saints" will please note that Thursday (Nov. 3) is the date of the next "social" under the auspices of the National Secular Society's Executive. It will be held at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet-street, and will start at 8 p.m. Members of the N. S. S. are not only free to attend (without payment) themselves, but also to introduce a friend—on the same conditions. Non-members who are unable to be so introduced can obtain a free ticket of admission by applying to the N. S. S. secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, 2 Newcastle-street, E.C. Mr. Foote, as President, will "say a few words" in the course of the evening. Mr. Cohen, Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Moss, Mr. Heaford, Mr. Davies, and other well-known N. S. S. men are expected to be present. There will be a little dancing, as on the last "social," as well as the regular musical program.

The Kingsland Branch closes a very successful season's open-air propaganda this morning (Oct. 30) with a lecture by Miss K. B. Kough, after which the Branch will devote its energies to promoting the Shoreditch Town Hall meetings.

Mr. Lloyd delivered a fine lecture at Queen's Hall on Sunday evening, which was worthy of a larger audience. Not that it was a bad audience; we only say it should have been larger than it was. The Queen's Hall course winds up this evening (Oct. 30) with a lecture by Mr. Cohen. There will be vocal and instrumental music before the lecture.

We are able to report as we go to press that the Queen's (Minor) Hall has been engaged for Sunday evening Freethought lectures during January, February, and March.

No less than 24,006 marriages were celebrated in London last year at places of worship connected with the Established Church. There were also 1,801 Nonconformist marriages, 1,451 Roman Catholic, 1,247 Jewish, and 15 Quaker. Civil marriages, at registrar's offices, are steadily increasing. The number last year was 9,690.

Archdeacon Hare hoped Shelley would humble himself and "receive the spirit unto him." Shelley begged Ollier, his publisher, to ask Hare "what he means by getting the spirit into me; and (if it is really any good) how one is to get at it."

The Evolution of Marriage.

THE theory that ancient paternal or patriarchal government was the sole foundation for the social and legal institutions of modern civilised states has suffered severely from the shocks of recent anthropological research. This concept constituted the vertebral column of Sir Henry Maine's interesting and thought-inspiring volumes on the growth and development of the social organism. But this theory of the patriarchate has been completely invalidated by more modern inquiries into the customs and beliefs of savage and barbarous peoples. These investigations clearly indicate that the tracing of ancestors or descendants along the maternal line, rather than along that of the paternal line, was in the past, and is largely in the present, the recognised system throughout the world.

Many of the great historic civilisations preserved traditions of a time when marriage was unknown to their ancestors. The establishment of this custom was usually ascribed to some eminent legislator or philosopher. This distinction was conferred upon Cecrops by the classic Greeks, upon Menes by the ancient Egyptians, upon Svetaketu by the early Hindoos, and upon Fo-hi by the archaic Chinese.

Surrounded by social circumstances which are the outcome of countless centuries growth, modern man naturally assumes that the ties of family relationship which he daily witnesses around him are precisely the same in principle as those that governed his least civilised ancestors through the ascending stages of social evolution. But in earlier and ruder epochs of social life two far-reaching phenomena have conspired to render impossible any prehistoric counterpart of prevailing systems of patrilineal kinship.

Many will express amazement at the suggestion that in all probability aboriginal man seldom or never associated what we almost instinctively recognise as the natural processes of procreation with the appearance of infant life. Nevertheless, very numerous customs, traditions, and beliefs, garnered from all our leading ethnological provinces, make probable, or render imperative, this seemingly startling deduction.

The other factor which materially contributed to the evolution of the mother-right was the extreme difficulty in rude and barbarous societies of justly apportioning to any particular father the paternity of the offspring. These two important factors are not, as some anthropologists appear to think, mutually exclusive in their nature. They may be safely regarded as complementary, and each has played its part in the development of ancient and modern systems of monogamy. It is not for one moment contended that existing savage races do not generally regard the act of sexual congress as necessary to the production of children. That the physiological ideas of numerous extant savage races are crude to a degree goes without saying; many uncivilised peoples possess nothing that approaches a rational theory of human conception; certain of the native tribes of Australia do not, to this hour, realise the causal connection of the act of coition with the birth of children. The artless nescience of these savages doubtless survives as a vestigial remnant of the originally universal physiological ignorance of primitive humanity.

Various contemporary savage peoples never dream of attributing death to what the civilised races term natural causes. No matter how enfeebled by penury or old age the defunct savage may have been, his decease is ascribed to physical violence, or to the devilish machinations of some wickedly inclined god, sorcerer, or ghost. Religion and magic are employed to exorcise, punish, or appease these baleful powers of nature.

Centuries rolled away before the evolving social institutions of prehistoric man rendered necessary an understanding of the problem of paternity. Numerous rude and barbarous races continue to trace their ancestral tree by the aid of the maternal branch alone. The term Matriarchate or Mother-

right has been employed to describe this phenomenon since the publication of Bachofen's *Das Mutterrecht* in 1865. Volumes would be required to adequately portray the curious and suggestive customs and observances of the races among which this matrilineal system prevails. The Caucasian, many Mongolian and Semitic stocks, derive their descent and estimate their degrees of kinship through male and female ancestors alike. But these races aside, it is broadly true that mother-right directly or indirectly exercises sway wherever the human family has wandered. With many originally matriarchal peoples, paternity is now traced along the male line; but even where this advance has occurred, relics of the past mother-right continue to linger. The accumulated data of half a century's anthropological research amply justify the conclusion that mother-right antedated father-right throughout the world.

The universality and comparative stability of this institution indicate an immense antiquity. It arose among savage peoples far more primitive in thought and environment than any now extant. Considerable light is thrown upon mother-right by the system of beenah marriage. This mode of matrimony was carefully studied in Ceylon, where its workings were observed at first hand. Under beenah regulations the male partner is reduced to a relatively insignificant position in his wife's family. He usually justifies his presence there by performing useful services to her kindred. The children of the union are the exclusive property of the wife's relatives, and the husband is utterly lost to his own family and people during the time he remains a beenah husband. In New Zealand, where this system likewise prevails, the husband's individuality is so completely effaced that in times of strife he is sometimes forced to fight against his own blood kindred.

The right of property in children, revealed by the beenah law, is to be found in the still ruder marital system in vogue among the Nairs of Malabar. A group composed of the nearest relatives forms a joint family who hold their land in common, the eldest male controlling the various interests involved. The fully evolved Nair family consists of a woman with her mother and brothers and the children. The brothers of the mother, and uncles to the children, are the guardians and protectors of the offspring. The wife possesses no visible husband; there is no recognised father in this primitive family. The system of polyandry prevails; the wife has various husbands who visit her in rotation. The utter impossibility of determining specific paternity is only too obvious in such circumstances as these. No astonishment need, then, be expressed at the maintenance of the matriarchate.

The form of polyandry current in Tibet marks some slight advance. Among the Nairs, the husbands may be strangers to each other; the Tibetan husbands, on the other hand, are usually brothers; the eldest exercises greater control over the wife, he is acknowledged as the head of the family, and all the children are alleged to be his.

As human societies became more stable the power of the male tended to increase. As previously intimated, there is every reason to suppose that the various races of Aryan culture and speech have all passed through the more primitive stage of mother-right. Apart from the blank ignorance of primeval humanity concerning the physiology of reproduction, ample explanation of matrilineal descent is afforded by the universal irregularity of pairing arrangements which prevailed among primitive mankind. In communities where the mother and children never depart from the maternal home, or after a possible absence return to it, the wife retains and her progeny receive the name of her gens or clan, and her nearest male kin naturally become their guardians and protectors.

Evolving from, and reigning concurrently with, the system of beenah marriage is to be seen the practice of bride purchase, under which the bridegroom receives the bride into his own community and becomes entitled to their joint issue. When all the available facts are weighed, the cogent and logical

result arrived at is that the earliest acknowledgment of blood relationship between father and child finds its firmest foundations in the male's proprietary rights over the female, and consequently over the offspring of their union.

The evolution of marriage is likewise to be discerned among the ancient Semitic races. Beenah marriage is at once recalled by the legends of the early Hebrew chiefs. Jacob entered into a beenah contract with the family of Laban. His father Isaac appears to have submitted to beenah regulations when he espoused his partner, Rebekah. Samson's marriage with a daughter of Canaan was governed by similar restrictions; and it is to be inferred from the first recorded scriptural marriage (Gen. ii. 24) that the beenah system was well known shortly after the alleged creation. The details of Jacob's polygamous experiments indicate a period when the originally inflexible beenah observances were undergoing transformation. Laban, the father-in-law of Jacob, exercised the right of permitting his daughters to depart to their husband's country. And it is to be observed that the bridal gifts (bride's price) given in exchange for Rachel were not paid to Laban, her father, but to her mother and brother. The evolution of the patriarchate was not yet complete; Laban was not fully recognised as the head of the group, but was regarded as a secondary member of it. The system of matrilineal descent still lingered; the mother remained the head of the family, and her daughters belonged to her and her blood relations.

The matriarchal polity, in which property passes either to the mother or her nearest kindred, and in which the ancestry of the tribe or clan is traced along the maternal line, is still in operation among the North American Indians. Their social arrangements were carefully studied and described by the ethnologist Lewis Morgan, in his valuable work on the *League of the Iroquois*. The mother-right remains to this day with the South African Damaras, the Congo races of West Africa, and the inland negroes of the same continent. It is still extant in India with the Kasias of Bengal, the Polynesian Tahitians and Tongans, and the Hovas of the island of Madagascar.

A further remarkable phenomenon is presented in the widespread savage regulations which are generalised under the terms Endogamy and Exogamy. The law of exogamy prohibits marriage between members of the same community; the law of endogamy, on the other hand, forbids any male member of a given clan to enter into marital relationship with any save members of his own kindred. Endogamy has been practised by peoples in a relatively advanced condition of culture; and, conversely, it is known to be operative in races of a lowly developed order, although in these unmistakable relics of an earlier exogamic system continue to linger. As a matter of fact, exogamy has prevailed at one period or another in every race and clime.

Unquestionable cases of the primitive custom of wife-capture are extremely abundant. The mock wife-capture customs which contemporary savage or semi-civilised races still observe constitute a playful reminiscence of a past grim reality. The earliest written laws of the Teutonic peoples—the Germans, Scandinavians, Anglo-Saxons, and others—prove that at the dawn of history the purchase of brides (*Bräutkauf*) was the normal marriage form; but wife-stealing (*Frauenraub*) was still recognised as a legitimate marriage, in any case after the customary penalty—a specified number of horses and cattle—had been paid.

After the patriarchal system had been firmly established among the Semites of old, the husband became the supreme ruler of the family and his wives declined to the level of chattels. It has been truly said that men and women rise or fall together, bond or free. Exalted or degraded family characteristics almost wholly depend upon the position occupied by the weaker sex. Few considerations are more suggestive than the circumstance that, with the Israelites of the patriarchal and polygamous periods, the hus-

band is called *baal*, the wife *beulah*. The man is the lordly owner, the woman the chattel or slave. Similar marriage modes were fashionable in old Arabia. The husband purchased his wife, and she became his property. As Professor Benzinger says:—

"The mohar paid by the ancient Hebrews as by the ancient Arabs, and by the Syrian fellahin at the present day on betrothal, is simply the purchase money paid to the former proprietor—the father or guardian. With the payment of the purchase money the marriage becomes legally valid, and all rights over the bride pass to the purchaser.

The matrimonial undertakings of savage, barbarous and civilised humanity were, and continue to be, weird and wonderful. Is the woman of the coming generations likely to guide and counsel the lords of creation in mankind's departure from the wilderness of unreason to the woods and pastures of liberty and enlightenment.

T. F. P.

Pseudo-Criticism.—IV.

(Continued from p. 685.)

WE come now to the grand crux, set by Sir Robert Anderson for the mystification of uninformed infidels, which crux is to utterly demolish all adverse criticism of the Pentateuch. He says (p. 11):—

"One of the 'assured results' of pseudo-criticism is that the Pentateuch is a Jewish work of a comparatively late date. But, as we have seen, a really strong case can be shattered by a single fact; and even if the Critics' case against the Mosaic books were as complete as it is faulty, there is one fact that would explode it: and that fact is the Samaritan Bible."

There is no getting over this fact, I am compelled to admit. The sacred writings possessed by the Jews in ancient times included all the books of the Old Testament, besides many others now called Apocryphal. The sacred writings of the Samaritans, at a certain period, were limited to the so-called five "Books of Moses." It is therefore an undoubted historical fact that the Samaritans had a Pentateuch; but this fact, Mr. Anderson says, will blow to smithereens all hostile criticism of those five books, and "it is as definite a bar" to the "sane and reasonable views" of Dillman, as to "the criticism *pour rive* of the Graf-Wellhausen Apostasy." The fact of the Pentateuch being "the sacrosanct Scriptures of the Samaritans" is, he says, a bar to every view save the old traditional one. And such being the case, it is not surprising that he goes on to say:—

"And yet Critics would have us believe that the Scriptures which these men [*i.e.*, the Samaritans] held in such special reverence were literary forgeries, written by Jews after the Ten Tribes had separated from them, and a considerable portion of which dated from after the return of the Babylonian Captivity. The reader will demand perhaps, 'What answer do the Critics give to this?' The Critics give no answer whatever."

The latter is indeed a sad state of things; the critics ought surely to find space for an answer to such a simple question. The reason of their silence, I take the liberty to suggest, is that they do not think it worth while to notice a mass of assumptions. If Mr. Anderson could advance some good and cogent argument in support of his contention, a reply, I feel sure, would be forthcoming. But he does not. His argument is nothing but assumptions from beginning to end. He assumes, in the first place, that the Hebrew alphabetic writing was known and in use in the time of Moses; he next assumes that the Pentateuch was written in those Hebrew characters by Moses; he assumes that the five "Books of Moses" were in existence through all the periods of Old Testament history (after the Exodus), and that when the ten tribes separated from Judah and became a separate kingdom under Jeroboam, copies of the Pentateuch were taken with them, and were used in their worship until the Babylonian Captivity, to be replaced by similar copies after the return.

But, as a simple matter of fact, we have no evidence that the five "Books of Moses" were known,

or were in use, in Canaan before the Exile. On the other hand, the internal evidence proves that prior to the eighteenth year of king Josiah, the Israelites had but one short code of laws—the "Book of the Covenant" (Ex. xx. 22—xxiii.)—and that in that eighteenth year the book of Deuteronomy, which had never been seen by anyone before, was "found" in the temple (2 Kings xxii.).

Mr. Anderson says that "the attack upon the Pentateuch rests entirely on critical theories and inferences, without a single fact to support it" (p. 13), and he quotes in corroboration a paragraph from Professor Driver's "Introduction." But the most important statement in the Professor's book he ignores. That statement is the following:—

"On the authorship of the books of the Old Testament, as on the completion of the Canon of the Old Testament, the Jews possess *no tradition* worthy of real credence or regard, but only vague and uncertain reminiscences, intermingled often with idle speculation."

There being no doubt whatever as to the truth of this statement, rational critics have absolutely nothing to guide them as to the date and authorship of the Hebrew sacred books but the internal evidence which those books contain—save, in a few cases, some historical or external evidence derived from inscriptions. And this internal evidence, in nearly every instance, is against the Mosaic authorship.

It is quite true, as Mr. Anderson states, that the Samaritans held "in special reverence" the five books of the Pentateuch which they possessed. But at what period in their history did they first obtain them? As far as we know, there were no Samaritans, properly so called, until after the return from the Exile, and no Samaritan Pentateuch until some 200 years later. And, if such be the case, the fact of the Samaritans having copies of the Pentateuch can be no bar to either of the critical views which Mr. Anderson has mentioned. To make this matter clear I must briefly refer to the events which led to the Samaritans having a Pentateuch of their own.

In the year 588 B.C. some 50,000 Jews, chiefly of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, returned from exile in Babylon, and took up their residence in Jerusalem and Judea. Shortly after their return we hear for the first time of the Samaritans, that is to say, "the people of the land" to the north of Judea, called by the returned Jews "the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin" (Ezra iv. 1). These men, hearing that the returned exiles were about to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem, came and offered their services, saying that they worshiped the same god and offered sacrifices to him, since the days of Esarhaddon. This offer was contemptuously rejected by the Jews, with the result that the Samaritans became bitterly hostile, and "weakened the hands of the people of Judah, and troubled them in building..... all the days of Cyrus king of Persia, even until the reign of Darius." Later on, in the days of Nehemiah (444 B.C.) a new generation of Samaritans attempted to stop the rebuilding of the walls around Jerusalem.

During the period between the return from exile and the appearance of Alexander the Great in Palestine (334 B.C.) there had been in authority at Jerusalem six Jewish high priests who, from father to son, had held the high priestly office in succession. These were, Jeshua, Joiakim, Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan and Jaddua, who thus represent six generations of Hebrews—the last named being contemporary with Alexander. The fact that all six are named in the book of Nehemiah (xii. 10, 11, 22) shows the late date at which some of the Old Testament "history" was written. And now we come to the main cause of the enmity between the Jews and the Samaritans. The high priest Jaddua had a brother, Manasseh, who, from his family and position, was allowed to take part in the temple service; but, in an evil hour, he took to wife the daughter of Sanballat, the governor of the province of Samaria. When this marriage became known, Jaddua and the chief men among the Jews called upon Manasseh to divorce his wife, and, until this was done, forbade him to officiate as a priest at the altar. In this dilemma,

Manasseh took counsel with his father-in-law, which resulted in Sanballat building a temple to the god Yahveh on Mount Gerizim in Samaria, of which the son-in-law became high priest. Moreover, many of the priests and Levites of Jerusalem who had married non-Jewish wives, and who had no desire to put them away, took refuge at this time in Samaria, and joined Manasseh. Now was the fat in the fire. There were two rival temples in Palestine, within about 25 miles of each other, each dedicated to the worship of Yahveh, each having a reputed lineal descendant of Aaron as high priest, and each served by a small army of priests and Levites, as commanded in the "Books of Moses." One thing only was needed for the temple in Samaria—a copy in Hebrew of the Jewish sacred books containing "the Law"—that is to say, the Pentateuch—and this was forthcoming. Whether Manasseh brought a copy with him from Jerusalem, or one of the priests who joined him in Samaria possessed a copy, is uncertain; but from this date (333 B.C.) the Samaritans had copies of the Pentateuch, and there were no Samaritans, properly so called, before. The ten tribes that separated from the others and were known collectively as the kingdom of Israel (930 B.C.) were never called "Samaritans," though incidentally one of their kings built Samaria and made it his capital instead of Shechem, the old capital; neither did the priests of this northern kingdom possess, or have in use, copies of the Pentateuch.

At the time when Manasseh set up a rival temple to that in Jerusalem, all the sacred writings possessed by the Jews were written in the old Phœnician (or Hebrew) character, and the copies of the Pentateuch which Manasseh procured for use in Samaria were also in that character. Later on, however, at some unknown date, the Jews introduced and employed a squarer form of letter; but the Samaritans remained faithful to the more ancient form. Needless to say, the Moabite Stone and Pool of Siloam inscriptions were in the older Phœnician character, now generally called the Samaritan.

With regard to the fact that the critics are agreed that the Pentateuch, as a whole, dates from after the return from the Exile, Mr. Anderson says:—

"That a book which originated at such time should have been adopted by the Samaritans as their Bible is quite incredible."

This is the only real argument advanced by Mr. Anderson upon this subject, and, at first sight, it certainly appears plausible; but there are many circumstances to be taken into consideration. In the first place, the completion of the Pentateuch is said to date from the time of Ezra (468 B.C.), so that it must have been the law book of the Jews for 125 years when adopted by the Samaritans. The crucial question, therefore, really is, How came the whole Jewish nation to receive the Pentateuch as the Word of God almost as soon as it was written? Here it must be borne in mind that the people were densely ignorant and superstitious, and that only a favored few had any knowledge of reading or writing. Besides, the Jews had some literature before the Exile—the Book of the Covenant, the Yahvistic and Elohistic narratives of Genesis, the Book of Deuteronomy, and some Psalms, Proverbs, and prophetic writings. Many writings had, no doubt, been lost during the sixty years captivity. What Ezra professed to do was merely to make new copies of the old laws, and to combine and put in order the earlier "history" of the nation, as we have it now in Genesis, Judges, Samuel, and Kings. That compiler, we are told, "was a ready scribe in the law of Moses" and had "set his heart to seek the law of the Lord.....and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments" (Ezra vii. 6, 10). Here we have the man and his work. He *did* teach new "statutes and judgments" in Israel, and no other man in his day could say with certainty that he had done more than rearrange and rewrite all the old laws which tradition had ascribed to Moses. To the new legislation, it is true, Ezra prefixed the words "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying"; but this was a mere

matter of form, employed to give the commands that followed greater authority. The writer, no doubt, believed that he was doing "the Lord" a service, and that his action would meet with the approbation of that deity. In the apocryphal 2 Esdras (xiv. 21-48) we find an account of Esdras and five scribes re-writing, under the inspiration of "the Most High," all the Hebrew laws, which, he says, had been burnt. Though this is a silly fiction, the account was probably suggested by a tradition that Ezra *did* reproduce old laws—or what were supposed to be old laws—of which no one then living had copies.

In conclusion, I may say that the only matters proved by the Samaritan recension are: (1) That the Jewish Pentateuch had been written prior to 333 B.C., and (2) That the text of the so-called five "Books of Moses" was then substantially the same as we have it now: "this, and nothing more."

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

Correspondence.

PLAGUING THE DYING.

[The following letter is a long one, but we think it will be interesting to our readers. It was written to Mr. Foote.—EDITOR.]

SIR,—I intended coming to hear you at Manchester to-day, as I and my brother have done several times. But alas! the fates have decreed otherwise. Instead of having the pleasure of again hearing you, we are to-day interring my dead brother, who passed away last Wednesday. And if you will excuse me troubling you—but I thought you would be interested to hear what I am about to tell you—it is concerning my brother's death I am going to write. In the first place, let me explain that I am a Freethinker and also a Spiritualist, but not the less a great admirer of your courageous stand for truth, and great ability. My brother was a Freethinker, but not a Spiritualist. "He died as he had lived" in the face of great odds. Perhaps you wonder what I mean by the last part of the above sentence. I will explain.

According to Christians, all Freethinkers recant on their death-beds. It is all right to live with, but they turn cowards at death. These stories are chiefly told about Freethinkers of great intellectual standing. My brother—with all due respect to him—was not a Freethinker of any particular intellectual ability. He had become a reader of your paper through it being introduced to him by myself, and, being possessed of good sense, the result was he rejected all Christian superstition. Apart from that he had no further interest in the cause of Freethought, although I tried to get him more deeply interested; but he was not built that way. So he lived his life, which some people would describe as gay, if not worse; but he was sound at heart, he was generous to a fault, and would not have done an unkind action if he had known it on any account. He was manly and fearless, with a fair sense of honor. He would not stoop to little things. He was independent and possessed of moral grit. He would not kneel, but stand by his principles under any circumstance. And he died like an hero, surrounded by Christians, who, not contented with being his nurses, wanted to be his priest also. They tried their very best to turn him. They sent for the Church parson, but he would not see him. They wanted to pray with him, but he told them he did not wish to hear them. As he told me last Sunday, they pestered him to death with their religion and made him worse, because he was too weak to reply to them.

When I went to see him on the above Sunday there were three or four of his nurses in the room, and their conversation was on religion, which I knew would be irritating him. After I had been in the room a little while one of them, knowing my opinions on religion, commenced to talk at me, in the course of which she picked up the *Freethinker*—there were one or two lying about the room—and she said nothing was too bad to do to you for publishing a paper like that, and it ought to be suppressed. You can take it from me I told her off fairly well, and I gave her to understand what I thought of their taking such an unfair advantage of their position. Then I was charged by some members of our family with arguing in the sick room, and things nearly ended in a row.

On Tuesday night my sister, being determined that my brother should die a Christian, brought a praying-man to see him, and, without telling him what was the man's intentions, asked him upst:ars. He asked my brother if he could

pray with him, and he said No—that he did not wish to hear him; but as he insisted, my brother, although now very weak, plugged his ears with his fingers and commanded him to go. What do you think this meek and mild Christian had the audacity and brutality to say to him then? He said: "Young man, if you won't have my religion and go to heaven, then you must go to hell." That individual can thank his lucky stars that I was not at hand, or things would have happened.

Because they could not force Christianity down his throat they are now circulating the lying tale that he died a horrible death, cursing and swearing, and that I stood by the bedside, saying, "That's it, lad, stick to thee guns!" People are pointing the finger at me now as the monster responsible for it all. I do not mind that; it is a consolation to me that "he died as he had lived."

The facts concerning his last hours are these: On Wednesday morning he became worse. My mother and his nurses, realising the end was drawing nigh, summoned all the members of the family hastily to the bedside. I was the last to be sent for, although I lived the nearest. They sent for me at his request. I was working on nights, and had just got to bed; but, on being informed they thought my brother was dying, I quickly dressed and ran as fast as I could to see him. He recognised me immediately I entered the room, and held out his hand to me. I took hold of it, and asked him if he had any pain, and he answered, No—by a shake of his head. I said to him, "Be brave, my lad, you will soon be better." I stayed with him over two hours, during which time he had his eyes fixed most of the time on me. Several times he tried to speak to me, but he was unable, being too weak. Feeling very tired, I thought I would go and procure a little rest, and I told them if there was any change to let me know at once. After I had gone, one of his nurses, my sister told me (not the sister previously mentioned), lifted him up in bed and wanted to pray with him; but he waved her away, and said, No, no! At 3 o'clock he had another turn for the worse, and became unconscious. I was at his bedside again, and stayed with him till he passed away, calmly and peacefully, with no horrible death-bed as stated, or any recantation either. He died as he had lived.

Now, if Freethinkers of my brother's intellectual capacity can meet death calmly and serenely under such circumstances, how absurd the stories of recantation of such giant intellects as Bradlaugh, Paine, Voltaire, and many others seem.

Of course, the nurses were very kind in other respects; it was their Christianity which made them take an undue advantage of their position. He had a Christian burial; they captured his body, but his soul they could not capture.

Wishing you and the cause of which you are such a brave and able leader every success,

I remain, yours truly,

S. L.

P.S.—I have since learned that my sister asked him if he was prepared to die in the opinions he held, and he said: "Yes, certainly; and I shall do." He died of consumption, his age being only 26 years.—S. L.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY RE ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—May I ask space to call the attention of Branch secretaries to the following resolution passed at the Annual Conference?—

"That the N. S. S. Executive shall insert in the *Freethinker*, once every three months, the names and addresses of Branch secretaries, with places and times of meeting."

As no such information has yet reached me, I shall be glad if, after seeing this notice, they will at once send me the necessary particulars, so that I may be in a position to carry out the resolution.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

WELL-GROUNDED FAITH.

"Yaas, I b'leaves in prayer, I does," said the old colored man as he rested during his window-cleaning job. "'Deed I does. Once when I hadn't any meat for a long time I begin a prayin' fer some, but no meat come. Every day I kep' prayin' fer some kin' uv meat.

'O Lord, do sen' a chicken to me!' No chicken.

Den I 'membered what the Good Book says 'bout faith without works, so den I prayed, 'O Lord, do sen me to a chicken!' an' de vary nex' day we had de nicest potpie for dinnah."

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.

INDOOR.

QUEEN'S (Minor) HALL (Langham-place, W.): 7.30, C. Cohen, "Is Death the End?"

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Public (Minor) Hall, Canning Town): 7.30, F. A. Davies, "Words—Including the Word of God."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Fountain): 3.15, W. J. Ramsey, "Charles Bradlaugh."

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, F. A. Davies, a Lecture.

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner): 12 noon, S. J. Cook, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road, Kingsland): 11.30, Miss K. Kough, "Woman and the Bible."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, a Lecture; 3.30, a Lecture.

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers' Hill, opposite Public Library): 11.30, a Lecture. The Green, Edmonton: 7, J. Rowney, "Holy Moses & Co."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Town Hall): G. W. Foote, 3, "The True Heaven and Hell"; 7, "Charles Bradlaugh: After Twenty Years."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): J. M. Robertson, 12 (noon), "Imperialism: Old and New"; 6.30, "The Influence of Religion on Art."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Dr. Astley V. Clark, M.D., "Manufacture and Application of X Rays." With lantern illustrations.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. Arnold Sharpley, "The Secularist Butterflies."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): Wm. Heaford, 3, "The Triumphs of International Freethought"; 6.30, "Francisco Ferrer: A Memorial Tribute." Tea at 5.

RHONDDA BRANCH N. S. S. (Parry's, late Danix's, Temperance Bar, Dunraven-street, Tonypanyd): 6, W. Morgan, "Free-Will."

BUSINESS CARDS.

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

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Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

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

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

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

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

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

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of not less than five and not more than twelve members, one-third of whom retire (by ballot) each year,

but are capable of re-election. An Annual General Meeting of members must be held in London, to receive the Report, elect new Directors, and transact any other business that may arise.

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

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President: G. W. FOOTE.

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

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

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

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