

THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

It has been repeated often enough that vice leads to misery; will no man declare that misery leads to vice?

—LANDOR.

The "Why?" of Ethics.

SECULARISM finds motives to righteousness in human nature. Since the evolution of morality has been traced by scientific thinkers the idea of our moral sense having had a supernatural origin has vanished into the limbo of superstitions. Our social sympathies are a natural growth, and may be indefinitely developed in the future by the same means that have developed them in the past. Morality and theology are essentially distinct. The ground and guarantee of morality are independent of any theological belief. When we are in earnest about the right we need no incitement from above. Morality has its natural ground in experience and reason, in the common nature and the common wants of mankind. Wherever sentient beings live together in a social state, simple or complex, laws of morality must arise, for they are simply the permanent conditions of social health; and even if men entertained no belief in any supernatural power, they would still recognise and obey the laws upon which the welfare, and indeed the very existence, of human society depends. "Even," said Martineau, "though we came out of nothing and returned to nothing, we should be subject to the claim of righteousness so long as we are what we are: morals have their own base, and are second to nothing." Emerson also confesses that, "Truth, frankness, courage, love, humility, and all the virtues, range themselves on the side of prudence, or the art of securing a present well-being."

Not only must all moral appeals be made, ultimately, to our human sympathies; it is also a fact that theological appeals are essentially not moral but immoral. The hope of heaven and the fear of hell are purely personal and selfish motives. They make men worse rather than better. They may secure a grudging compliance with prescribed rules, but they must depress instead of elevating character. By concentrating a man's attention upon himself, they develop and intensify his selfish propensities. Secularism appeals to no lust after posthumous rewards or dread of posthumous terrors, but to that fraternal feeling which is the vital essence of all morality and has prompted heroic self-sacrifice in all ages and climes. It removes causation from the next world to this. It teaches that the harvest of our sowing will be reaped here, and to the last grain eaten, by ourselves or others. Every act of our lives affects the whole subsequent history of our race. Our mental and moral like our bodily lungs have their appropriate atmospheres, of which every thought, word, and act becomes a constituent atom. Incessantly around us goes on a conflict of good and evil, which a word, a gesture, a look of ours changes. We cannot tell how great may be the influence of the least of these, for in nature all things hang together, and the greatest effects may flow from causes that seem so slight and inconsiderable. And when we thoroughly lay this to heart, and reflect that no contrition or remorse can

undo the past, or efface the slightest record from the everlasting Book of Fate, we shall be more strongly restrained from evil and impelled towards good than we ever could be by the expectation of future rewards or punishments.

There are those who cannot believe in any effective morality, and still less any devotion to disinterested aims, without the positive certainty of immortal life. Under a pretence of piety they cloak the most grovelling estimate of human nature, which, with all its faults, is immensely better than *their* conception of it. They declare that, without hopes and fears beyond the grave, the sanest philosophy of life would be, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." How gravely the great Spinoza satirises this "vulgar opinion" which enjoins a regulation of life according to the passions by those who have "persuaded themselves that the souls perish with the bodies, and that there is not a second life for *the miserable who have borne the crushing weight of piety*"; "a conduct," he adds, "as absurd, in my opinion, as that of a man who should fill his body with poisons and deadly food, for the fine reason that he has no hope to enjoy wholesome nourishment for all eternity, or who, seeing that the soul is not eternal or immortal, should renounce his reason, and wish to become insane; things so preposterous that they are scarcely worth mention."

Whether there be a future life or not—which no one can positively affirm, and no one can positively deny—the natural issues of human conduct are inevitable in this life. Secularism bids us be true to ourselves and our opportunities now. Let us realise as far as may be, by practical agencies, that Earthly Paradise where the flower and fruit of happiness shall bloom for the delight and sustenance of all. And let us reflect how much nearer realisation that Paradise would be if a tenth of the time, the energy, the ability, the enthusiasm, and the wealth that have been devoted to making men fit candidates for heaven had been devoted to making them fit citizens of earth. The grosser evils of society would by this time only remain as traces of what once was, and a certain prospect of reasonable happiness and usefulness would be the heritage of every child born into the world.

There are others who deny that a philosophy which ignores the Infinite can have any grand ideal capable of lifting us above the petty tumults and sordid passions of life, and fit to stand in rivalry with what is called religion. But surely the idea of service to the great Humanity, whose past and future are, to us at least, practically infinite, is a conception vast enough for our finite minds. Carlyle found that "the essence of all true religion," as he chose to term it, was "reverence for human worth." But reverence is not all; love and service are also elements. The instincts of Love, Reverence, and Service may be fully exercised and satisfied by devotion to a purely human ideal, without resort to unverifiable dogmas and inscrutable mysteries; and Secularism, which bids us think and act so that the great Human family may profit by our lives, which enjoins upon us to labor for human progress here on earth, where effort may be effective and sacrifices must be real, is more profoundly noble than any supernatural creed, and holds the promise of a wider and loftier beneficence.

G. W. FOOTE.

Teeth and Claws.—II.

(Concluded from p. 691.)

THE argument that militarism is worthy of support because of the physical training enforced, and of the habits of mind developed, was well put by the late Professor C. H. Pearson, whom I quote because his advocacy is not of an altogether unqualified description, he says:—

“There can be little doubt that the Army has been a very admirable school for the lower orders of European society. The recruit is forced to acquire habits of cleanliness; has his frame developed by athletic exercise; is taught some elements of knowledge in the regimental schools; learns implicit obedience, and acquires traditions of honor and loyalty to his colors and comrades, that on critical occasions raise him above regard for the perishable life.”*

Every word in this statement might be admitted as true without it weakening in the least the case against militarism. Of course, if the Army is the only means by which physique can be developed and desirable qualities of mind obtained, then the Army is a highly beneficial institution, and its decrease will indeed lead to a weakening of our national fibre. And if that be so, the sooner we have conscription the better—indeed, it is puzzling how we have managed to get along without it.

But, obviously, physical development is not dependent upon a military life. Habit of life is the essential thing here, and class for class, English people compare favorably, from a physical point of view, with countries where conscription obtains, and all but a minority of the nation are subjected to a military training. But, it will be observed, that the virtues of military training are said to be exemplified in its effects upon the “lower orders of European society.” Suppose this were true, it only affects such of the “lower orders” as are brought under its influence. It does not destroy, or even weaken, the conditions that eventuate in undesirable physical and moral qualities. Moreover, it condemns militarism by the very nature of the defence set up. For, by its advocacy, militarism is the accompaniment of a diseased or undeveloped condition of the social organism. The argument stripped of all superfluities, really asserts that an Army is a good thing because it helps, in some degree, to counteract the existence of certain evil social conditions. And to that, the obvious reply is, that instead of holding up the ideal of militarism, the better task would be to pursue the work of social organisation, treating militarism, at best, as a disagreeable necessity, and as always an expression of a lower stage of civilisation. The nation that maintains an Army for the purpose of teaching people cleanliness, imparting a little knowledge, and developing moral character, reminds one of Charles Lamb's Chinaman, who had to burn down a house every time he wanted roast pork for dinner.

For there are none of the qualities enumerated by Mr. Pearson that are either causally connected with or receive their best expression under militarism. Loyalty to one's comrades, including obedience to some code of honor, is not specially characteristic of the Army. It is found in all associations of human beings. Schoolboys, financiers, doctors, lawyers, even criminals, have their special codes of honor, and manifest loyalty to their class. Generically this is a social, not a military product; and specifically its form is determined by class grouping and occupation. The influence of militarism may, with very undeveloped characters, strengthen these nascent social feelings; but its evil influence is that it checks their development beyond a certain point, and tends to give them an anti-social character. The loyalty of the soldier, as such, is essentially loyalty to the regiment, the flag, the Army as a whole. He becomes part of a special organisation, the interests of which, must be

placed before that of all others. The truth of this is shown in the well-recognised disposition of a military to ignore civilian rights whenever placed in a position of power. An Army will fight in defence of a country when ordered, but how poorly the profession develops a genuine social consciousness is seen by the fact that when ordered it will also turn its weapons against its own countrymen. Of course, in this latter eventuality the ties of kindred will have some effect in diminishing the ardor of its assault; but this clearly cannot be placed to the credit of militarism. An Army must obey orders; and whether the party attacked is made up of its fellow-countrymen or not does not alter the force of the rule. All that happens is that, when the warfare is internal, those who command an Army have to reckon with the social and humanitarian feeling that military training is never quite successful in eradicating.

What has just been said has, in substance, an even wider application. This is that the peculiar turn given by war to human qualities, admirable in themselves, is not such as to make them of great social value. The first duty of a soldier is obedience, a quality not without its value in social life. But the unreasoning obedience of the soldier, the “His not to reason why” ideal, is totally opposed to the ideal obedience of the citizen—based upon a reasoned sense of the necessity of organisation and an intelligent conviction of the justice of the order he is asked to obey. A citizen's duty may be obedience or it may be resistance; and he may as often serve the real interests of his society by the one policy as the other. Of course, it may be argued an Army would be impossible where disobedience was permitted, or where soldiers were allowed to regulate their actions by their sense of right and wrong. With this I quite agree; and it is merely emphasising the incompatibility of the military ideal with the higher aspects of social life. Every Army is of necessity a school for reducing to a minimum the self-assertion and individuality of its units.

Along with this destruction of individuality there must always accompany militarism—particularly actual warfare—a certain coarsening of the moral sense and a hardening of one's whole nature. Nothing is more absurd than to imagine that you may for years drill men into the belief that a mere command makes just the destruction of life and property without blunting their sense of right and wrong; or that, having engaged in actual warfare, there will be no residual evil left in their nature. Let anyone picture a modern battle, or place themselves in the track of a conquering Army; let him calculate the suffering, the bloodshed, the horror of a single campaign; and then ask himself seriously if such things can really make for a higher type of character? Callousness to danger may be developed by warfare, as may also carelessness of death; but our whole knowledge of human psychology is false, and all our methods of training character a ghastly blunder, if such things develop that intellectual and moral and physical sensitiveness that we associate with an ideal civilisation.

Much is said of the chivalry of the military life. A chivalry that seeks to outnumber and outclass an opponent, that takes advantage of any number of subterfuges and deceptions, does not seem a chivalry of a very high order. In competitions designed to develop skill we either see that the opponents are fairly matched or handicap the stronger one. Even in street-corner fisticuffs, the one who fights another obviously weaker than himself is called a coward. In warfare, the whole aim is to secure victory by means that are discredited in social life. Much, also, is said of the good feelings evinced by the soldiers of rival armies when there is a lull in the fighting. All this may be true. I am far from saying or believing that soldiers are without either good or bad qualities. My complaint is that the whole tendency of militarism is to brutalise, and that its influence is counteracted by other factors is no justification of militarism itself. Heroes of the prize-ring show as great a callousness to punish-

* *National Life and Character*, p. 147.

ment as do soldiers to danger, and fraternise once the encounter is at an end. Still, we are not in the habit of holding up the prize-ring as a great school of character.

Much, again, is said of militarism as a school of courage. Personally, I do not rank very highly the courage that leads to physical fighting. It is common enough in all conscience. The man is the exception who will not, if the inducement to do so is present. As a matter of fact, most people indulge in physical fighting because they are lacking the moral courage to abstain. But I do not think the Army is even a school of courage. The rank-and-file of the Japanese did not have their courage created by militarism. Militarism simply organised them and taught them the use of weapons. Their courage on the battlefield was rather the expression of their previous social training and national enthusiasm. The Boers, again, were not a military people. But they showed themselves quite the equals in courage of a civilised army, while their freedom from militarism made them individually more formidable. Or to come to other and more particular instances. Is the courage of the sailor, the miner, the aeronaut, the quiet heroism that manifests itself in a thousand and one ways in daily life, less than that of the soldier? Or what are we to say of the courage of a Bradlaugh and of a Garibaldi—even though the latter engaged in actual warfare? Was their courage, and the courage of many similar men, due to militarism?

The truth is that the virtues expressed under militarism are all created apart from militarism. Loyalty and courage, obedience and self-sacrifice, are qualities strictly dependent upon social life and organisation for their existence. It may be true, as Mr. Pearson says, that the Army encourages the development of these qualities among the European lower orders. But this is really an impeachment in disguise of militarism. It makes its value dependent upon the existence of a class who are without the instinct or the desire to lead a proper civilised life, and one may be forgiven the belief that, in turn, militarism serves to perpetuate the conditions that produce this class. For militarism lives by exploiting the social virtues, as it feeds itself by exploiting social industry. This is proven by the fact that a military body, left to itself, soon degenerates. Its loyalty and courage decays, its obedience and discipline disappears. In this it reproduces on a small scale the fate of nations that give themselves over to the militant ideal. So long as there is a home-bred population to supply it with men, and so long as there is a home industry to supply it with means, a military nation maintains an outward semblance of strength. But as both sources of supply are encroached on, the nation that converts itself into a nation of teeth and claws falls into decay.

Finally, there is the inevitable reaction of militarism on social life. First there is the manifest inferiority of the retired army man to the civilian for the affairs of social life. That soldiers may be good and admirable men, I do not question. All I question is, whether their admirable qualities are the product of the military life. But if a nation is to hold the military ideal in high estimation, looking to an Army as a means of relieving it from a little of the pressure of the "lower orders," upon war as being a practicable possibility of the near future, then some degree of brutalisation and coarsening of character is inevitable. We must accentuate the value of the lower phases of life, and this can only be done at the expense of the higher. If, as Spencer says, we are to develop our teeth and claws, then it is also necessary that we should encourage feelings adapted to the effectual use of them. In our public functions we must give the soldier the place of honor, and thrust the thinker into the background. For the latter is a dispensable luxury; the former is a prime necessity. And, as a consequence, we shall look to national aggrandisement in the shape of new territory, counting ourselves rich in the thousands of miles of the earth's surface we govern, instead of attending to the type of human beings we are breeding and to

the worth of our internal organisation. If we worship brute force in uniform, we ought not to be surprised to find that it commands respect in civilian attire. With every accession of strength to militarism we see the tendency to make the Army more spectacular and attractive to the general public, and to give it a greater prominence in State functions. No wonder, then, that the State which spends freely, and in the name of patriotism, its many millions annually, deals out grudgingly its thousands for the promotion of our higher intellectual life. The two ideals—that of a civilised and enlightened State and that of a State resting upon military strength—simply cannot develop concurrently. One declines as the other advances. And there is, unhappily, enough of the savage left amongst us to give militarism an enormous advantage in the struggle for survival.

C. COHEN.

The Christian Faith.

THE Rev. Principal A. E. Garvie, M.A., D.D., has undertaken, in the columns of the *British Congregationalist* for October 27, to present the public with what he styles "A Restatement of the Christian Faith." As Dr. Garvie is a distinguished classical scholar and an avowed evolutionist, it will be very interesting to learn what version of Christianity he believes to be in harmony with the scientific knowledge of the day. It is highly significant, however, that instead of treating the subject critically or scientifically, he handles it merely as an orthodox theologian of the Protestant persuasion. He commences by asking whether or not John the Baptist and Jesus were alike mistaken in laying their supreme emphasis upon repentance and the forgiveness of sins. If they were not mistaken then sin is a reality, and the reality of sin justifies the prominence given to the duty of repentance. It is the fashion just now either to deny the reality of sin altogether or to make light of it. Over against this fashion of the hour Dr. Garvie has nothing to set but "the authority of Jesus" and "the general testimony of Christian experience." The authority of Jesus, however, is of absolutely no value, because there is no agreement among Christian scholars as to the measure of historicity possessed by the Gospels. Dr. Garvie himself may be a sincere believer in their entire historicity, but then there are other scholars, equally eminent and competent, who regard them as partly historical and partly legendary, while others still find in them no reliable history whatever. Thus the authority of Jesus is necessarily a broken reed, and may be dismissed as of no account.

We now come to "the general testimony of Christian experience." First of all we require to know what sin is, to the reality of which Christian experience is said to testify with such completeness. Dr. Garvie describes it as follows:—

"What in its legal aspect is crime, and in its moral, vice, is in its religious, sin. Sin, in its Christian sense, is not merely disobedience to Divine law; for such a view would fall short of the Christian conception of God. God is not only the Moral Governor of Mankind. He is the Father. Wherever in any measure divine love towards mankind is recognised, then distrust of that love must be also regarded as sin. Not to have faith in God's goodness, as well as not to do his holy will, is sin. Neglect of personal communion with him, and defiance of his moral order, come under the same judgment. To distrust and disobey God is to be religiously and morally separated from, and even opposed to, God; and to be thus estranged from God cannot but involve a disturbance of God's fatherly relation to man, as it is a disturbance of man's child-like relation to God."

Such is the Christian doctrine of sin; and the contention is that "the reality of sin, as thus described, is testified by the human consciousness." We have no hesitation whatever in pronouncing that statement totally false. The human consciousness, as

such, is wholly unaware of the existence of sin. It is Christian experience that testifies to the reality of sin, and, as Dr. Garvie must know, Christian experience is an acquirement. Christian experience is the product of Christian belief, and Christian belief is the fruit of careful Christian teaching. Apart from Christian instruction, neither Christian belief nor Christian experience has ever been known to exist. It would be the easiest thing in the world to introduce Principal Garvie to a beautiful home in which the third and fourth generation of Atheists are represented, and in which there is not a trace of any such thing as the sense of sin. To each member of this family God is unknown and silent, absolutely without witness. This proves that the consciousness of sin is impossible apart from belief in God, and that belief in God is non-existent in those who have not received religious training. Dr. Garvie refers to the prominent position remorse occupies in the world's greatest literature; but he forgets that remorse may be unspeakably poignant without having a tinge of religion about it. In Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, for example, the remorse so exquisitely portrayed is simply the natural biting back of a horrible crime committed from a despicably selfish motive. *Macbeth* and his wife are depicted as self-condemned criminals, not as miserable sinners.

Of course, Dr. Garvie is not ignorant of the fact that, without a strong doctrine of sin, Christianity would be an absurdity. But as an evolutionist he cannot subscribe to the orthodox view as to the origin of sin. He even attempts to show that, although Paul believed the ordinary Garden of Eden story, he did not use it as an argument for the universality of sin. But it is incontrovertible that Paul does clearly teach that, had it not been for Adam's sin, there would have been no need of the cross and passion of the Son of God. Having half apologised for Paul and ignored the place he assigns to Adam's sin in his philosophy of the plan of salvation, Dr. Garvie says:—

"Frankly accepting the modern standpoint, on the one hand, in regard to the evolution of mankind, and, on the other hand, in regard to the literary character of the narrative in Genesis, we can affirm the reality of sin as clearly and firmly to-day as the moral conscience and the religious consciousness have ever done. It is an experience of the present and not a tradition of the past that is here a constant, universal witness."

The modern standpoint is only fifty years old. Dr. Garvie is old enough to remember with what unscrupulous violence and bitterness the Church stormed against it. It was characterised as calculated to undermine the foundation of the Christian religion. The chief argument against it was that it contradicted the infallible teaching of the Word of God. The narrative in Genesis was then taken as literal history, and Paul's utilisation of it in the construction of his theology held the field as the infallible teaching of the Spirit of God. The echoes of the Bishop of Oxford's perfervid diatribes against the *Origin of Species* are still audible in out-of-the-way corners of the land. But the modern standpoint caught on, and the divines eventually perceived that if they were to survive at all they must adopt it, with certain mental reservation, and shoulder the task of adapting their doctrine to the new views in such a way as to obscure the contradiction between them. In this process the first three chapters of Genesis ceased to be history and became pure literature, and the latter half of the fifth of Romans lost its authoritative character. But, Dr. Garvie maintains, "the experience of the reality of sin is not dependent on, or affected by, the theory of the origin of sin which may be held." True; but the experience of the reality of sin is dependent on, and affected by, a man's attitude to the God-idea. Those who do not believe that there is a God have no experience of the reality of sin. Now what makes unbelief in God possible if not the fact that no God exists? The existence of God, if real, would be the most patent, the most certain, and the most undeniable of all facts. The Universe would be perfect, and

there could be no such things as evil, cruelty, and shame. The perfection of the Creator would be reflected in that of the creation. To admit the existence of evil is to furnish the strongest possible argument for the non-existence of God.

Principal Garvie takes the Christian God for granted, seemingly without perceiving that the Christian God is a Deity who, having failed as Creator, is now bidding for success as Redeemer. The Christian God is a being who is endeavoring to repair his damaged masterpiece, to rectify his own blunder, to set right again a world that went wrong, and a being who in the latter capacity is as conspicuous a failure as in the former. In Genesis vi. 7 he is represented as feeling so heartily ashamed of the human race that he experienced profound regret at having ever created it. In the Christian religion, it is not God who repents of having made such a mistake as creating man, but it is man who is called upon to repent of the sin of being what his Creator made him, and to allow himself to be made over again by his Redeemer. Thus, the reality of sin would be a sad reflection on the Divine character, and the real sinner would be, not man, but God. Dr. Garvie seeks refuge in the conventional doctrine of free-will. Man fell, he holds, because God had conferred upon him the sublime gift of freedom. He says:—

"It is assumed in the Christian view that man is free to trust and obey God; that it is by his own choice he distrusts and disobeys; and that, therefore, he is blameworthy, and deserves punishment for his estrangement from God."

But there is no such thing as freedom for a perfect creature to do wrong. Is not God's will free? But no theologian would ever dream of saying that God can do wrong. Wrong-doing, so far from being the outcome of freedom, is rather an indication of the existence of some organic defect or disease in the doer. In any case, if God exists man is not a sinner, is not blameworthy, and deserves no punishment, because he is and does what God made him capable of being and doing. Sin is a theological figment, and the belief in it must be held largely responsible for some of the darkest chapters in human history. But modern science has dealt it a mortal blow. The bishops and clergy and Nonconformist ministers of fifty years ago were quite right when they condemned evolution as in direct opposition to the declarations of the Scriptures; and the Christian faith has been in the process of dissolution ever since. The doctrine of sin is already obsolete. The preachers do their utmost to prolong its life by medicating it in an endless variety of ways; but it is slowly dying in spite of their treatment. In the majority of people it is already quite dead. And what is taking its place? Belief in evolution, in the unity of all life, in the close kinship of all living things. Man differs from other animals only in the greater refinement and complexity of his organism. Brain is the same and does the same kind of work in all its possessors; and man's pre-eminence is alone due to the superior size and quality and educability of his brain. Gods and God-men, and doctrines of sin and salvation and predestination, are but the offspring of his brain in the days of his youth, of all which, as he nears his prime, he is getting rid as quickly as he can, by learning to live the life opened out to him by the discoveries of the various sciences. No restatement of the Christian faith can now preserve it from extinction.

J. T. LLOYD.

More about Portugal.

THE final meetings of the second National Congress of the Portuguese Freethinkers were duly reported in *A Vanguardia* of October 28. We now learn that the whole work of the Congress was accomplished in nine sessions, lasting from October 13 to 18—a fact which will give some idea of the enthusiasm and staying power of the victorious legions of Freethought recently assembled at Lisbon under the presidency of Dr. Theophilo Braga.

Enthusiasm is the word which alone can explain the present widespread dissemination of the Free-thought ideal amongst the Latin peoples. At the present moment the Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese papers are almost aflame with Freethought in one or other of its varied manifestations. Whilst our English journals are unctuously silent as to the rationalistic current of ideas around us and especially pervading the quick and sympathetic minds of the logical Latin peoples, carrying the boycott to such an extent, indeed, that a spendthrift outlay on our daily press would yield the investor but a few inches of printed matter per week dealing with live Freethought problems, the average output of rationalistic news and comment in the daily press of either France, Belgium, Italy, Spain, or Portugal is perennially copious and, usually, sympathetic. It is this contrast which makes it so pleasant for an Englishman to read the resolution passed at the close of the Lisbon Congress, in which the delegates manifested their "deserved recognition" of the "noble, dignified, and conscientious manner in which *the press* had helped the Congress to promulgate its principles." Methinks we shall have to wait a long time before a N. S. S. Conference or any similar gathering in this smugly pious country will feel constrained by a sense of gratitude to pass such a vote of thanks. But it must always be remembered that in Portugal any man born with any salt in his constitution, or with any savor left in the original salt, is always a Freethinker.

One of the chief solicitudes of the Congress was the vital question of religion in the schools, and the necessity of establishing in the new schools, about to be instituted in Portugal, a complete independence of education of all theological taint or bias. Nowhere is the elimination of the priest from all official and subsidised participation in the public school more urgently needed than in Portugal or Spain, where the fires of religious intolerance have burnt its black scar upon the soul of the people. Wise and opportune, therefore, were the words in which the Congress took up the cause of Secular Education—a lesson to our own people and to the spiritual leaders who are still pasturing our children in the arid fields of religious teaching. The matter was introduced in a speech by Gongalves Neves, who stated that—the Congress having recognised in the previous day's sitting how much more easy it was to vote the separation of Church and State than carry the idea into execution—it had become essential that all those who interest themselves in the Freethought cause should actively comply with the principle of separation and convince other people to do the same. He reminded the delegates that the Congress had already decided in favor of the abolition of religious teaching and the elimination of religious, spiritualistic, or deistic morality in the official schools, and for its exclusion from all private schools enjoying subventions from the State. In order to make the Congress consistent with itself, he moved, and the Congress adopted, the following resolution:—

"That a Committee be appointed to study the best means of securing that in none of the schools provided for a liberal and democratic people shall books be used in which reference is made to God, to Christ, or to the 'supposed Virgin,' to the Commandments, or to the belauded grace benefits or privileges emanating from the aforementioned superstitious entities, or to whatsoever other subjects relative to Church or religion; and that the Committee, in carrying out this purpose, be instructed to place itself in communication with the eminent pedagogue and poet, Joao de Deus, and with Dr. Joao de Deus Ramos, his renowned son, in order to frame a modification of the poet's 'Method of Reading' adapted for use in the secular schools of the State."

As under Portugal's new regime the national life is really starting *de novo*, it is well that a clean sweep should thus be made of gratuitous obstacles in the shape of supernatural impedimenta to the upward progress of the nation. Luckily, the political conditions now prevailing in Portugal, and the general temper of mind of the nation, both in its proletarian depths and in its intellectual heights, are in harmony

with a settlement of the religious "difficulty," based on the lines of the recommendations of the Committee.

The sixth session of the Congress was wholly devoted to glorifying the memories of Heliodoro Salgado, of the murdered Dr. Miguel Bombarda, and of the heroic Admiral Candido dos Reis whose genius organised the revolution to a successful issue, and who, as is now suspected, was assassinated in the hour of victory. The name of Dr. Bombarda, distinguished scientist and convinced Freethinker, will henceforth, like that of Ferrer, be a sword to smite and dumbfound the Catholic. Erudite, eloquent, a born master of men, possessed with a genius for organisation, a man of such shining abilities that his reputation in the higher walks of the medical art had become world-wide, his devotion to the Republican and Freethought cause was perhaps the most staggering blow that the prestige of religion in Portugal has received in modern times. He aroused the enthusiasm of his people to the highest degree by the constant stream of lectures which he delivered throughout the country, denouncing the crimes and stupidities of religion. His recent abandonment of his early Monarchical faith rallied hosts of the disaffected and undecided to the Republican cause and largely contributed to the collapse of the modern Boabdil, whose piety and tears and puerile reliance upon the "Immaculate Conception" failed to have a steadying effect on a falling throne. Let no one say that religion is "dead" when, after affronting the conscience of mankind by the murder of Ferrer, it returns to its homicidal vomit with the open murder of Dr. Bombarda and the secret assassination of Admiral dos Reis. The world does well to remember these crimes and to commemorate the sacrifices of these worthy soldiers of freedom, in order to keep alive the torch of Freethought for the enlightenment and redemption of the superstitious.

The proceedings of the Congress show with what remarkable persistency the flame of Portuguese Freethought is fed by this generous sentiment of remembrance of the sufferings of the men who fell by the way. One of the names to which grateful homage was paid was that of Antonio José da Silva, a Jew by race, a Freethinker by conviction, and one of the great comic poets in the Portuguese language. He was cruelly tortured by the Holy Inquisition on October 18, 1799, as a "pertinacious and relapsed heretic." The document drawn up by the notary, who witnessed and recorded his sufferings, states that:—

"The doctors and surgeons, and the many ministers appointed for the execution of the torment, swore on the Holy Gospels, on which they placed their hands, that they would well and faithfully perform their duties and maintain secrecy concerning it" (*A Vanguardia*, May 8, 1910).

After enduring his torment in presence of two members of the Holy Office, the victim was decapitated, his body burnt at the stake, and the ashes flung to the winds. Thus the powers that be in Church and State, in the true line of ascendancy from their twentieth-century degenerates, took vengeance on the fearless genius who aroused the people to irreverent laughter with his sallies of wit—the man who poured ridicule in brilliant plays upon the tonsured and enthroned tyrants of the day. His sonnets, of rare beauty, combining exquisite sensibility with biting sarcasm, written in prison in hourly expectation of torture and death, display the unyielding courage of a man who scorns to make any compromise with the priests who, as he sings, had robbed him of riches, spouse, and liberty, and were afterwards to torture his mother. (See *A Vanguardia*, August 14, 1910.)

Well has Dr. Theophilo Braga said, in reference to the ignominious triumph of the Church on the body of one of Portugal's greatest literary glories,—

"The death of this man was a most cruel violation of justice in the name of God. We can hear the eternal cry of the victim thrust by the pitchfork of theology into the flaming belly of Moloch. His death throws a

dark page on the Gospel, and lends a solemn argument in favor of Atheism." (Cited in *A Vanguardia*, May 15, 1910.)

The sympathies of the new President of the Republic for Freethought are no doubt begotten not merely of his great heart and fine intellect, but of his knowledge, as a master in history, of the crimes which have sprung up wherever the Cross has been planted in human society. For the Cross has been watered not only by the tears of simple religion, but by the blood of martyred Rationalists, who walked not by faith but by sight.

It was meet that the second National Congress of Portuguese Freethought, assembling on the date which records the first anniversary of Ferrer's martyrdom, and with the great sorrow of the martyred Dr. Bombarda weighing upon the minds of the delegates, should hallow the memory of the dauntless dead. It was no less meet that the school should be uppermost in the thoughts of the men who have freed a nation of illiterates and who seek to emancipate their fellows from the cruel hands of the Great Lying Church. This sentiment of reverence for the dead and of solicitude for the new life which grows up in the child found expression in the final resolution carried by the Congress. It was a resolution for the nomination of a Committee to wait on the new President of the Republic, to urge upon him the propriety of constructing in Lisbon a school in honor of Joao de Deus, the great poet and great Freethinker, still living, who has done so much on behalf of education in Portugal, and in addition to press upon the Government in order that model schools may be established in Lisbon in honor of the great Iberian Freethinkers—José da Silva, Gomes Freire, Heliodoro Salgado, Miguel Bombarda, Candido dos Reis, and Francisco Ferrer—as symbols of the socially renovating force which had recently found expression in the Revolution. With the adoption of this motion this memorable Congress closed its proceedings.

This gathering, which gives witness to the re-birth of advanced ideas in Portugal, coincides with the discredit which has overtaken the regime of religion in that country. The active participation of the Church in the corruptions carried on during the domination of the fallen monarchy; its assumption of the arms of the flesh in the shape of revolvers and bombs; the notorious discovery of subterranean passages facilitating communication between monasteries and convents—all these circumstances, combined with countless holy scandals perennially cropping up from this theological Tom Tiddler's ground, explain and justify the drastic measures of expulsion and expropriation which the Government is actively pursuing. A symptom of the policy that the Government is likely to pursue is indicated in a telegram from Lisbon, dated Oct. 26, which states that the Government has declined with thanks the Patriarch's invitation to assist at the Requiem Mass to be held in memory of the victims of the Revolution. The Government, in declining, declared it would take no part in any religious functions. This attitude of neutrality is the true standpoint, and we hope that the Government over which Dr. Braga presides, whilst insisting on absolute religious equality, and observing a strict attitude of toleration, and, indeed, enforcing the same upon all parties with justice and impartiality, will continue to hold itself aloof from all participation in the religious usages of any of its subjects, and thus pave the way for the effectual secularisation of all the collective aspirations and expressions of the national life.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

"Grays," a religious weekly says, "is a small town in Essex near Tilbury. Its population of 20,000 is largely dependent on great cement works, the wages in which are not high. It is well served by Nonconformist as well as Anglican churches." One would expect that where the wages were low.

Acid Drops.

Sir Oliver Lodge does so much preaching nowadays—for it is absurd to call his religious discourses scientific—that he may as well be reminded of the old truth that metaphors are dangerous things to handle. Addressing the Campbellite League the other day in London, he said that "there was hops in the air, and the time would come when they would realise that Christ was walking, not on the waters of Genesareth, but on the Thames." Sir Oliver Lodge has only to state the time when Christ's performance on the Thames is to be witnessed—with some sort of guarantee that he is speaking the truth—and we shall see the biggest crowd that ever was on the Embankments. But we fear it won't come off in our time.

"No thoughtful person nowadays," Sir Oliver Lodge said on the same occasion, "believes that a person at death drops into the jaws of vacant nothing." This is turning a negative into a positive, something into nothing, and endowing it with devouring jaws. And for what reason? Simply to frighten the folk who are listening. To cease to be cannot be painful and tragic, as Sir Oliver Lodge tries to represent it. We may add that "thoughtful persons" might differ from Sir Oliver Lodge on this or any other question. That he thinks otherwise only shows how preaching promotes egotism.

Sir Oliver Lodge, speaking at Weigh House Chapel, described death as "emigration." That's no news. What we want to see is the return ticket used.

Rev. John Barrett, Roman Catholic priest, of Cork, left personal estate valued at £12,549. He left £500 of this amount for public masses for 500 years after his death, and £20 and £1 1s. per annum for 500 years to the North Charitable Infirmary, Cork. The reverend gentleman evidently thought that things are going to last as they are for a long while in Ireland.

Wonders will never cease. It was with something like a shock that we read in the *Daily News* that the progress made in Germany was due to the superior moral character of the people, rather than to Protection. We are content to take the statement on its face value, but that an English newspaper should admit that anywhere on the face of the earth there are people morally superior to inhabitants of these islands, is staggering. And that the admission should be made in the columns of such a pious paper as the *Daily News* simply borders on the miraculous. Perhaps it is all a mistake, and we shall see in a subsequent issue a correction to the effect that the British Christian is still without a peer for morality and strength of character. For the sake of one of our most valued traditions, let us hope so.

It has been pointed out many times in these columns that the attention paid by churches and chapels to social work is not a sign of religious life, but an indication of decay. We are glad to see a writer in the *Christian Commonwealth* endorsing this view, without, of course, acknowledgments. He says that the modern institutional Church, which some regard as the apotheosis of Christianity, is really a sign of the end. This, because the growth of municipal and State activity, by taking charge of the secular welfare of the people, will leave the Churches nothing to do. Education has already escaped the control of the Church, relief is rapidly freeing itself, and other things are following in the same direction. What, then, will be left for the Church? Taking the most favorable estimate of its work and value, it is only of use in the face of the existence of an unenlightened or rudimentary social consciousness. But when the social consciousness is better developed what will there be left for the Church to do? The C. C. writer answers it will be left to its proper function of witnessing "for the eternal in the midst of time." Perhaps so; but we do not anticipate that any Church will be able to make much of a show of living on that basis. Churches have been powerful because they were believed to have a very practical value in life; and they have unscrupulously exploited the social qualities to support this belief. But when people discover that everything of value in social life can go on quite well without the Christian Church, civilisation will serve the Christian Church as the Portuguese Republic has served certain of the religious orders. It will be given notice to quit—if by that time there is enough of it left to repay the trouble of removal.

This writer uses the very common and misleading expression, "the Christianisation of modern society." There

is no such thing. What is happening is a socialisation of modern Christianity. Christianity does not civilise man; man civilises Christianity. Everyone of the modifications of Christian belief in the direction of a more humane teaching, has been the result of the influence of a more civilised human nature on a less civilised religion. It was not any of the Christian Churches that discovered witchcraft to be a delusion and hell a myth. Human knowledge and a developing human nature did this, and forced the Christian Churches to discard its ancient teachings. Religion is eternally the fly on the wheel of civilisation, deluding itself with the notion that if it forsook its position the wheel would cease to go round.

A promoter of a religious bazaar writes to the *Congregationalist* pointing out that his effort was innocent of any connection with a raffle or gambling of any kind. This gentleman has moral objections to raffling articles. He says that all the high-priced articles were sold, and concludes with, "Further, raffling is illegal, and its promoters liable to prosecution." That "Further" is delicious. It is like the postscript to a woman's letter.

There have been many important resignations from the Salvation Army of late years, which have necessitated fresh appointments, one of which is that of "Colonel" Isaac Unsworth to the editorship-in-chief of the Army's publications. According to a religious weekly, this gentleman's "administration of the Anti-Suicide Bureau made a deep impression on all who had to do with him at the time." Was this the gentleman, we wonder, who saved 194 people in London from committing suicide in the first week of the Bureau's operations—when, as a matter of fact, only 537 suicides took place in London during the whole preceding year (1906)? If so, it is not surprising that "Colonel" Isaac Unsworth made "a deep impression."

The great Unsworth's miraculous ability in preventing suicide is perhaps the reason of his appointment to the editorship of the Salvation Army's publications. We have heard that these publications were falling off, but we didn't know they were quite so far gone as that.

Very Rev. Dr. Moses Gaster, Chief Rabbi of the Spanish and Portuguese Jews in London, has been interviewed by a representative of the *Christian Commonwealth* on "The Situation in Portugal." Except so far as this gentleman, being a Jew, may know something of political finance or financial politics, we are unable to understand what particular value is to be attached to his opinions on this subject. He admits that the people felt instinctively that "the religious orders, which have no connection with the soil, and which have no interest in the soil, are at the bottom of all the political, and consequently economic, trouble" in Portugal. He also admits that "Braga and the rest of the new Government are honest men." But he says that they "are the tools of the politicians, the dupes of much cleverer men behind the scenes." Thus the Hebrew divine talked—and it seems to us great nonsense. The idea of famous intellectuals like Braga being the dupes of anybody is simply absurd. We are not sure, in Dr. Gaster's case, that the wish is not father to the thought. It is not very likely that Jewish rabbis will excel Christian priests in love of Free-thinkers.

Mr. Zangwill, who was one of the speakers at the recent London meeting in recognition of Mr. E. D. Morel's brave efforts to liberate the Congolese, referred to the Belgian missionaries who "saw and knew" the Congo horrors—and yet remained out there instead of "hurrying back to Belgium, where their teaching was so much more needed." Mr. Zangwill did not deny that "in some instances they appear to have played a noble part in publishing the truth or protecting the natives." "But the irony remains," he added, "that their mission in the Congo was less to spread Christianity than to protect the natives against the ravages of Christendom." Precisely so. And the pious gabble of the clerical gentlemen at that meeting was positively sickening. They took credit to Christianity for the labors of Mr. Morel and others on behalf of the Congolese. But what about the other side of the account? Were not the unspeakable horrors of the exploitation of Congoland due to the brutal greed of Christians, from King Leopold downwards, who callously maintained a hell on earth for the sake of their gains?

Rev. R. J. Campbell's "Progressive League" was recently changed into the "Liberal Christian League," but that is in hot water already. Campbell seems to have drawn up a Manifesto for the League "on his own." It is repudiated by

several of his most prominent colleagues, including the Rev. G. T. Sadler, Dr. Orchard, the Rev. T. Rhondda Williams, and Dr. K. C. Anderson. What a prevalent complaint swelled head is—especially amongst the popular clergy!

Poor Servetus! He was hunted down to a fiery death at the stake by John Calvin. But his worst martyrdom was to come. The Campbellites are celebrating him now as "a Pioneer of the New Theology."

With regard to missionary work in the East, the *New Theology* weekly says: "It is not improbable that the tables will soon be turned, and the East seek to convert the West." We have been saying something like this for nearly thirty years. "Advanced" Christians do catch us up at last.

The Rev. Father Adderley says he distrusts the Socialism that is without religion. Naturally. We expect he dislikes any kind of social effort or theory that does not provide somewhere or somehow for a parson. We, on the other hand, distrust every kind of social effort that is mixed up with religion, and we think our distrust is based upon much more solid ground than is the distrust of Father Adderley. For every social movement that has been associated with religion has been either robbed of its full effectiveness or collapsed. And opponents of social reform know that they have less to fear from a religious movement than from one that is purely social. Hence their readiness, when they scent danger, to enlist religion in their service.

Jesus says the Rev. J. E. Rattenbury, commended the people who did not reason, but trusted. Exactly; but it is only children who behave in this way. Adults trust because they have reason for their trustfulness, or—what amounts to the same thing—because the larger experience of the race provides the justification for their confidence. Naturally, the religious preacher prefers the trust that is not based on reason, because he is always working a gigantic confidence trick. He can perform miracles—if you trust him. But the miracle really lies in the confidence of those who trust, not in those who are trusted.

Rev. George Jackson, B.A., has been interviewed on the subject of a Christian minister's reading. Questioned as to how far a preacher should read anti-Christian literature, he replied that there "was not much literature of the kind worth bothering about. Books, however, that are sympathetic towards the moral side of Christianity, but antipathetic towards its doctrines, should be studiously reckoned with." Good old ostrich policy! Books that are thorough in their opposition are not to be read, and so, in time, the preacher will believe they are not worth reading—perhaps that they do not even exist. But he may read a book that supports Christianity, with qualifications. By so doing he will, presumably, derive the increased satisfaction in his own beliefs that results from a consciousness of opposition. After all, Heine was as nearly right when he said that Christianity was a religion for cripples.

The publication of Mr. Moneypenny's *Life of Benjamin Disraeli* has caused renewed interest in that Jewish statesman's career. It is curious to recall that Disraeli owed his initiation to the Christian faith to an accident. The story goes that a Christian friend took advantage of the father's absence from home and carried him to the nearest church and had him baptised.

Prior to this, the young Disraeli was initiated into the Jewish faith, a relative performing the rites of circumcision. Heine says one ought to be careful as to what grandfather one chooses. Disraeli was very fortunate with his god-parents in view of his future leadership of the Church party.

Despite this early apostasy, Disraeli had to face a certain amount of obloquy on account of his Hebrew descent. One of his retorts to his tormentors was excellent—"One half of Europe worships a Jew and the other half a Jewess."

The assurance of university men is sublime. A recently published book, *Six Oxford Thinkers*, includes the names of Gibbon, Froude, and Lord Morley. Gibbon's opinion of Oxford dons, "sunk in prejudice and port," is well known. Froude and Morley, Freethinkers both, derived their inspiration from other sources than from that university which expelled Shelley and canonised "General" Booth.

Mr. T. Wing, M.P., may be a good politician, as politicians go, but as a religious guide he is most unreliable. He asserts

that "the whole tone of public life in this country is influenced by the work of the Church and the Sunday-school," that "the habits of the people, their sentiments, their attitude to religion, to Sunday, and to the Bible have all been affected by the work of the Christian ministry"; and that "on all sides there is proof that the teaching of Christ is gradually leavening and shaping the life of the nation." This is a fine example of lying for the glory of God. Everyone who keeps his eyes and ears open is fully aware that Mr. Wing's assertion is the very reverse of true. The great complaint of the preachers is that the pulpit is being sadly forsaken; that the bulk of the people pay no heed to its utterances; that the Sabbath is being woefully desecrated; that the teaching of Christ is a dead letter, scarcely ever looked at by the masses; and that the hope of immortality and the faith of the Redeemer are rapidly dying out throughout the land. The characteristic trend of the age is towards the secularisation of the whole of life.

The curious thing is that in the very next column to that which records Mr. Wing's inaccuracies, the *British Congregationalist* for October 20 tells the simple truth. "It is futile to ignore the fact," it says, "that at the present moment civilisation is being controlled by forces largely beyond the direction of the Christian Church, and there are social evils and social reconstructions which pursue their way in defiance of all that the Churches can do by merely proclaiming the Evangel." In other words, the people are turning their backs upon the worst superstition the world has ever seen, and beginning to be guided by common sense.

Canon Beaulands, of British Columbia, was addressing the annual meeting of the Birmingham Branch of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, when an interrupter started up shouting "Start at home!" and "Narrow-minded lot!" Edging his way to the platform, he cried: "The reason I interrupted is because I have been turned out of church by my vicar, who refuses to discuss with me. What is the good of taking missions to the heathen if you won't discuss with intelligent fellow Christians at home?" The gentleman's question was not answered, and we don't suppose it ever will be.

Rev. Dr. Jowett wishes that ministers on leaving a district would not insert in local papers the customary paragraph to the effect that "during his twelve years' ministry no less a sum than 'so much' had been raised." Well, it does look like giving the game away. But probably the minister has put more backbone into the collecting branch of his business than into any other, besides it representing, perhaps, the most enduring part of his ministry.

Here he is again! Just home from abroad, and quite unchanged. We refer to that unapproachable person the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of London—a man who is certainly establishing a record for stupid statements. Addressing a meeting of undergraduates, he calmly informed them that the Christian belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is based on "at least ten times the evidence that we have for the death of Julius Cæsar." Bless the man's stupidity; no one wants any evidence to prove the death of a man who lived nineteen centuries ago. Once establish the fact of his having lived, and no one outside a lunatic asylum will doubt that he is now dead. There might be doubt as to where he died, when he died, or how he died; but that he is dead may be taken as the most certain of facts. Now if someone came along with a yarn of Julius Cæsar having risen from the dead and being still alive, then we should ask for evidence of the most convincing character before believing it. And this is all we ask for in the case of Jesus Christ. As it is no one can prove that he ever lived. If that is once proved, we are willing to accept offhand that he is dead also. The Bishop apparently believes that he lived because he was resurrected; and he would ask the sceptic how could that have happened if he had never lived? And before such reasoning the unbeliever is dumb. Against stupidity even the gods fight in vain.

Here is another example of the clerical mind. The other day the well-known medical specialist, Dr. Clouston, was giving evidence before the Royal Commission on Divorce. He was dealing with the question of insanity, and advocating the divorce of persons where incurable insanity was clearly proved. On that the Archbishop asked him the profoundly idiotic question whether he had considered the bearings of his opinions on the teachings of the New Testament. Now what does it matter what kind of relation holds between the opinions of Dr. Clouston and New Testament teachings? Does anyone believe that a civilised community will continue to condemn to perpetual celibacy one

of two persons when the other is discovered to be incurably insane? In such cases the sooner the parties are declared free the better. Common sense and justice demands it. If the New Testament does not agree with this, so much the worse for it. That volume belongs to a stage of human culture that had no idea of the real nature of insanity and of its far-reaching social consequences. The people who wrote the New Testament believed that the insane were possessed by evil spirits, and that these might be expelled by gentlemen belonging to the same profession as the Archbishop of York. His lordship will have to recognise the fact that civilisation will not submit to take its rules of life from a phase of civilisation represented by such writings as the Christian Scriptures.

Father Bernard Vaughan, the well-known Catholic preacher, having returned home from America, boasts that the future over there belongs to the Catholic Church. He says it is a question of population. Catholics have large families, Protestants have small ones, and the big families must win in the end. Catholics breed Catholics. Yes, but not all of them; at least, let us hope not. How many Catholics does Father Vaughan breed? We understand that he lets other people do the breeding and (in Paul's language) does the "burning" himself.

"A Missioner" writes to a religious paper asking for the age at which people are converted. In reply the following figures are given as furnished from a list of 300 conversions:—

"Above the age of 29, 0; above the age of 28, 1; between 24 and 28, 6; between 19 and 23, 29; between 10 and 18, 270. Two placed the age between 10 and 14; 24 placed the age between 12 and 16; 184 placed the age between 14 and 20; 47 placed the age between 16 and 25."

These figures have been borne out by other statistics that have been collected, and their significance is of the greatest importance. If figures were taken as to years in which hereditary insanity first declares itself, or the years in which epilepsy or alcoholism first appear, the figures would be much the same as those furnished for religious conversion. This is not to be understood as implying that religion has the same origin as insanity and epilepsy and alcoholism. It only implies that conversion, being essentially a phenomenon of adolescence, the same plastic or unstable nervous condition that on the appropriate stimuli will, in some cases, develop latent disease, will, in other cases, lead to religious conversion. Between twelve and twenty-five are the years during which the human organism achieves immaturity as either man or woman. New functions are developed, new feelings excited, and the boy or girl are brought out of the egoism of childhood into the larger life of the race. And what really happens is that just as, owing to special conditions, the latent susceptibility to drink or disease is more likely to be developed during these years, so the peculiarly susceptible condition of the organism enables the religious operator to translate the developing sexual and social feelings into the workings of the "religious spirit." There is plenty of evidence of the truth of this; and some of it is not very pleasant reading.

Rev. A. J. Waldron has been vehemently rebuking a brother clergyman for declaring that "death and pain were brought into the world by the devil." Mr. Waldron told him that death was in the world millions of years before ever man appeared. That is quite true. But it is Science. The other clergyman was quite right according to the Bible—which we understood Mr. Waldron believes to be the Word of God.

At a recent Salvation Army meeting at Stratford a convert said he had not been to bed sober for years. Probably he thought spiritual intoxication would be a welcome change.

"Madame," said a New York reporter to Sarah Bernhardt, "please tell us your secret of eternal youth." "My friend," she replied, "hard work and the good God." We suspect that the "good God" is a paraphrase for a good digestion.

Pious people have unbounded impudence—especially pious Chief Constables. The high and mighty official bearing that title in Cumberland and Westmoreland has induced the Standing Joint Committee to stipulate that a part of the weekly day of rest for policemen, as required by the new Act, shall be conditional upon two hours of the time being spent in attendance at some place of public worship. The "cheek" of these "authorities"! What legitimate concern is it of theirs how a policeman spends his day of rest? Surely he has the same right as other citizens to dispose of his leisure time as he pleases.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 6, Town Hall, Shoreditch; at 7.30, "Charles Bradlaugh: After Twenty Years."

November 13, Liverpool; 27, Shoreditch Town Hall.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—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: £261 2s. 1d. Received since:—W. P., £1. 1s.; Dovre, £1.

CLARA GUNNING.—We printed an extract from Charles Bradlaugh on the left side of his portrait on the front page of the *Freethinker* dated September 25. Read that, and you will find it answers your question as to Bradlaugh's Atheism. Glad to hear that you have just read *Bible Romances* and don't think you "have ever read such an amusing and instructive criticism of the 'Blessed Book.'" Mr. Balfour and Mr. Haldane cannot be called Atheists. What the former really is must, we think, be a puzzle even to himself.

MARY DAWES asks us if we know of any medical practitioner holding Freethought views who resides in or near the N.W. district of London. "There must be many young mothers like myself," she says, "who would be glad to know if there is one or more such doctors." If any Freethinking doctor in that district chooses to send us his name and address, we will hold it in confidence, and communicate it by letter to this lady or any other applicants.

H. W. MATTHEWS.—Thanks; but the story seems too "well found" to be true.

ICONOCLAST.—The paper referred to is not the *Freethinker*, but the bigotry of "Wesleyan Methodist" is none the better for that. When a controversialist calls "Police!" he ought to be told to get out of the arena.

P. RATCLIFFE.—The question of capital punishment has no connection with Crippen's personality, nor has it anything whatever to do with the question of determinism or free will. Besides, while you argue that Crippen ought not to be hanged, you do not suggest what should be done with him. Such a question should be considered from every point of view. Your letter has good points, but it is not comprehensive enough.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.

W. H. HARRIS.—Thanks for the reference.

M. V. WHITTY.—Cuttings are welcome.

T. HARGREAVES.—The subject you mention will be dealt with in our columns before long. We note your wish that Mr. Lloyd's lecture on "If Man is Responsible, etc.," could be run through the *Freethinker*.

G. ROLEFFS.—See paragraph. Thanks.

ALBERT VANN.—We give you credit for good intentions.

J. JOHNSON.—(1) Why say you are "only a poor cabinet maker"? Why only? Isn't a cabinet maker a more useful citizen than the minister of religion you listened to? May he not be an artist in his way? (2) Amongst the critics who hold the famous Josephus passage to be an interpolation are Gibbon, Lardner, Bishop Warburton, Rev. Dr. Giles, and De Quincey. Milman himself could only suggest that it was "not altogether a forgery, but interpolated with many additional clauses."

J. HECHT.—We cannot discuss Socialism, nor allow a discussion on it, in the *Freethinker*. You agree with us on the primary importance of Freethought propaganda. That is the main point. The rest must be as it may.

LEONARD WILLIAMS.—The passage occurs in one of George Eliot's essays. Sorry we haven't time to hunt it up just at present.

H. BLACK.—Tuesday is too late for letters. We note your appreciation of Mr. Heaford's lecture at Manchester on Ferrer.

T. O'NEILL.—Better not mix up the two things. The reference to Spiritualism was only by the way. Worrying the dying was the real point.

W. GILES.—We do not recollect the pamphlet, or the author. Is a "converted Atheist," and an obscure one at that, dating 1886, worth troubling about now? You should ask for something fresh. Meanwhile you might point out, in the lingo of the orthodox, that Mr. Foote and Mr. Lloyd are "converted Christians" and Mr. Cohen a "converted Jew."

G. HULL.—Too late for this week.

H. S. SALT.—It is pleasant to know that a man of your calibre reads our articles "with unfailing interest."

A. B. MOSS.—Poor Ben Ellis! We are glad you were able to attend his funeral.

A. D. HOWELL SMITH.—Shall appear. You hold a disadvantageous view of your legal rights as an author. The copyright of matter contributed to a periodical remains with yourself, unless you expressly part with it; only you must not publish "on your own" while the number of the periodical in which it appears can be regarded as current. You will be glad to hear this.

E. B.—Thanks for cuttings, etc.

W. J. LIVINGSTONE ANDERSON.—Glad to see your vindication of Freethought writers in your admirable letter to the *Grimsbey Daily Telegraph*. The only fault we see in it is that your reference to Mr. Foote is flattering. You are right, however, in calling him a careful writer. He is entitled to say that of himself.

W. H. H.—We are bearing it all in mind, as you will see presently. We hope there is no danger of the contingency in your joke.

G. GROOMBRIDGE.—Pleased to hear you say of this journal—"It is the only treat I get, and I make the most of it." We do not know of any reply to the Bishop of London's *Reasons for Faith*.

W. J. RAMSEY.—Much obliged, but misprints will occur. We see them in all sorts of papers.

W. P. ADAMSON.—Keep pegging away. You are bound to do good, even if you do not perceive it.

E. PRESTON.—Certainly; courtesy and good English are as necessary on outdoor as on indoor platforms.

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THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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Personal.

I AM writing this simply because I do not wish loose talk—for people will talk—about my health to prevail.

I took a bad influenza cold to Leicester with me, and it got worse there. I ought to have been nursing myself for a day or two instead of travelling and lecturing. When I faced the audience on the Sunday evening I was quite unfit for the task before me, but I forced myself through it by a strong effort of will, and I believe the audience did not suspect there was anything wrong. But one cannot deceive nature in the same way, and I had to pay the penalty afterwards.

It would have been very imprudent to go to Birmingham on Sunday. Fortunately I was able to get Mr. Lloyd to take my place at the Town Hall meetings. There were grand audiences, and he delivered two fine lectures. I would have taken the evening lecture myself if I could have got to Birmingham by the good old Bible method of disappearing in one place and reappearing in another.

I had a bad time for several days, but I have been at work with my pen all the while, and I am looking forward confidently to resuming platform work on Sunday evening (Nov. 6) at Shoreditch Town Hall.

G. W. FOOTE.

Tuesday, November 1.

Sugar Plums.

The special course of Sunday Freethought lectures at the Shoreditch Town Hall opens this evening (Nov. 6). Mr. Foote, who occupies the platform, will lecture (by special request) on "Charles Bradlaugh: After Twenty Years." There are reserved front seats at 1s., but all the rest of the big hall is free. A collection will be taken up, of course, in aid of the expenses, which are heavy. Freethinkers should therefore come prepared to contribute liberally.

Tickets for Mr. Foote's lectures at Liverpool next Sunday (Nov. 13) can be obtained at 202 Molynaux-road, 24 Kensington, and 83 Windermere-street, Everton. Local "saints" who can dispose of tickets amongst their friends are invited to communicate with the secretary, Mr. W. McKelvie, 49 Penrose-street, Everton. Only by obtaining tickets can seats be secured. The admission to all seats not filled by ticket-holders will be by silver collection at the door.

In response to inquiries from readers of this journal who will not see the bills of Mr. Foote's Liverpool lectures, we

beg to say that his subjects will be "Freethought's Victory in Portugal" and "Charles Bradlaugh: After Twenty Years."

There was a good audience at the Queen's (Minor) Hall on Sunday evening, when Mr. Cohen wound up the September-October course of lectures. We hear that the lecture was a fine one. Some questions were asked after it, but there was no discussion. Dr. Marshall made an excellent chairman.

We repeat the announcement that the Queen's (Minor) Hall has been engaged for Sunday evening Freethought lectures during January, February, and March.

Mr. Cohen delivers two lectures to-day (Nov. 6) in the King's Hall, Corporation-street, Birmingham. This is a new hall as far as Freethought lectures are concerned, and the "saints" should make a careful note of the address. Mr. Cohen's titles look attractive and should draw large meetings.

Mr. Cohen is to have a public debate with the Rev. J. E. Gun on Thursday and Friday evenings, November 17 and 18, at the Public Hall, Prince of Wales-road, Kentish Town. The question for discussion is, "Theism or Atheism: Which is the More Reasonable?" We believe Mr. Cohen represents the North London N. S. S. Branch in this debate, and Mr. Gun the North London Christian Evidence League. The tickets are 1s. and 6d. for each night. Freethinkers can obtain them of Miss Vance, 2 Newcastle-street, E.C.

This will be in time to remind some London "saints" of the N. S. S. "social" at Anderton's Hotel on Thursday evening, November 3, at 8 o'clock. The program will be pretty much as on the previous occasion.

The Paisley Branch, having had successful lectures by Mr. Cohen and Mr. Lloyd in October, is arranging for lectures during November and December at the Branch's rooms, 4 Cumberland-court. Local "saints" are invited to attend and bring their friends with them.

Senhor Braga, the first President of the Portuguese Republic, is the father of the revolution. He is a quiet, extremely modest, grey-haired man of sixty-seven. By his work as Professor of History and Philosophy he prepared the ground for the movement of the "intellectuals." He particularly desires it to be understood that the Revolution has no military or personal ends, but is purely the outcome of philosophical ideas, like the Revolutions in Brazil and Turkey. We stated last week that Braga had always been poor. This was referred to in a letter from Lisbon by a correspondent of the *Westminster Gazette*, who had conversed with a fellow student of Braga's in his college days. "He is quite a poor man, is he not?" the correspondent asked, and the Portuguese gentleman's reply is worthy of permanent record. "Braga," he said, "lives in an intellectual atmosphere. He has no wants, and therefore is the richest of men. No one is better fitted to occupy the position he now holds, for his well-known probity commands universal confidence."

We have received a pamphlet entitled *Bible Atrocities and Immoralities* from the Rev. U. Dhammaloka, General President of the Buddhist Tract Society, Tavoy Monastery, Rangoon. We suspect it has some relation to a part of our *Bible Handbook*, but we cannot tell, for it is in a language of which we do not even know the alphabet. We feel pretty certain, however, that the Christian missionaries in that section of the world will find it very distasteful—and extremely inconvenient. Primitive Buddhism, orthodox Buddhism, is rather a philosophy than a religion. Mr. Dhammaloka is frankly Atheistic. He does not want to see his countrymen falling a prey to Christian superstition. He wants them to be devotees of Humanity. There is something really touching in the simplicity with which he expresses himself. This pamphlet, for instance, which cost money to produce, is "Given in Charity by Yeo Ba Oo, secretary of the Chinese Social Club, Rangoon." That is on the cover. Inside we find the following delicious notice—in English:—

"Sow the Good Seed!!
Let your Light Shine!!"

Circulate Truthful Documents! Pass around the Buddhist Tract Society's Tracts. And other Buddhist publications, to do Missionary work and to help in opening the eyes of the Blind Christians!"

Delightful! Twice delightful! Thrice delightful! Instead of converting the Buddhists, the "Blind Christians" are to be converted themselves. It is an immense joke—though meant so seriously.

Where is Modern Evangelicalism?

THERE are three extracts, taken from the *British Weekly*, which I should like to put together and show from this organ of Nonconformity how Evangelicalism is being educated out of its crudities. The advance of modern thought has forced the leaders further and further away from the old dogmatic positions and has broken down the old-fashioned, stultified tone of finality.

This is particularly noticeable in the attitude of the leading professors towards the question of the dates and historicity of the various books of Hebrew literature. We find the solitary theologian of Primitive Methodism—Professor Arthur Peake—taking up a moderately advanced position on the date of the Epistles. And his book on Biblical study is a fairly good guide—at least, for the average man—to the literature of Higher Criticism. Then, Mr. Edward Grubb, the editor of the Quaker organ, *The Friend*, has, in a recent book, *Authority and the Light Within*, stated very forcibly his opinion on these very points. He seems to follow very much in the lines of the late Professor A. B. Bruce and Professor Percy Gardner, and he does not consider any of the Johannine writings authentic—that is, they were probably written early in the second century by a disciple of the Apostle. In a recent lecture in London, we find that Professor Bennett, of Hackney College, in speaking on the historicity of the Old Testament, gave expression to the following: "The treasure of religious truth in the Old Testament has immense value, apart from any question of date or authorship.....We obtain ample information for all practical religious purposes" (*British Weekly*, Oct. 6).

"Practical religious purposes"! what an equivocating and accommodating phrase. But how weak when compared with the dogmatic language of the theologians and preachers of the past generation. The whole thought is quite out of tune with old-time expressions, such as, "unquestioned genuineness," "verbal inspiration," "absolute historicity," "infallible doctrine," and all similar phrases, which were juggled with in an amazing manner and with an air of absolute assurance. But now, we find that what Paine taught a century ago in his *Age of Reason*, is repeated in every theological seminary to-day with an important air of discovery, originality, and erudition.

"The treasure of religious truth." Well, does not Professor Bennett believe that there are "treasures of religious truth" in other eastern religions, or in the writings of Jacob Boehme, Emanuel Swedenborg, George Fox, Leo Tolstoy, or in Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning? And, after all, Professor Bennett's position is simply this: we have in Hebrew literature a series of books, not exactly historical, but with a certain strain of history running through them, and in these books we find a great deal of religious thought and aspiration, valuable to the Christian Church, and from which much inspiration is to be got. So Evangelicalism is slowly surrendering her once vital doctrines, and is being swept on before the rising tide of Rationalism. Very soon it will be fashionable to read the lessons in church and chapel from Shakespeare and Plato, from Walt Whitman and Horace. But let us hope that by then the discourse will have been modelled on the lines of the lecture, and that the hortatory part will have been swallowed up in the serious discussion of ethical problems.

The second extract is from the same number of the *British Weekly*, and is taken from an address delivered by Dr. Robertson Nicoll at Bristol Baptist College. Referring to a great Baptist preacher, John Foster, who was a force in the early half of last century, he says:—

"He wrote the essay on "The Aversion of Men of Taste to Evangelical Religion," a weighty and most powerful plea for the elevation of evangelical literature. John Hall, like John Foster, was profoundly impressed with the importance of style.....Both condemned the

pitiful manner in which, for the most part, evangelical books were then written.....But there is no doubt that the protest against a kind of greasy cant, which educated persons found it impossible to endure 'was fully justified."

Here, again, it is admitted that education emancipates people from the crudities of religious ideas and from the consequent cant—inseparable from dogmatic religion. It is the brilliant and eloquent men of the Church who wish to elevate the tone of thought, and who find the pious phraseology impossible. And so culture discards the old-fashioned phraseology with the unctuous words, "blessedness," "tribulation," "sanctified," etc. The pious language in which the simple-minded believer has been trained to express himself is written down as "cant." The educated person only finds in such expression "nausea," not "inspiration." And so reason, culture, and vigorous thinking act where the teaching of creed and Bible failed to elevate. "A kind of greasy cant." What will the followers of Dr. Torrey, and those who worship the memory of Mr. Spurgeon, say to their favorite hymns, and cherished phrases, and sacred thoughts being called "greasy cant"? We heartily agree with Dr. Robertson Nicoll and his endorsement of worthy John Foster, and hope that his words will be warmly discussed by his co-religionists. We have read hundreds of evangelical books, and though the style has improved within recent decades, yet there is no class of literature which contains so much bombastic repetition, and so lacks character, vigor, and manliness.

So to-day the authority of the Bible is being dismissed by the conclusions of literary and historical criticism; the pious language of the devout is being condemned as "greasy cant"; and we are not surprised that the old-fashioned idea of the control of the Holy Spirit is completely ignored. A modern congregation does not talk about the pastor's "saintliness," but about his abilities as a writer, a lecturer, or a preacher, and about the university distinctions which he has gained.

So I come to my last extract. It is in reference to a full-page advertisement of a new and expensive publication, entitled *The Expositor's Dictionary of Texts*. It is a two-volume work, published at fifty shillings, and suitable for "ministers, Sunday-school teachers," etc. It is edited by Sir Wm. Robertson Nicoll, assisted by two well-known writers. Fancy Isaiah and Paul, or the Carpenter of Nazareth, having recourse to such a work of ready-made ideas as this for inspiration and for topics. The Christian Church is not satisfied with factory-made prophets; it must have factory-made sermons too. No need for inspiration now. The Holy Spirit is dismissed, and the pulpiter churns out the hashed-up thoughts of others—while his congregation marvels at his erudition and his extensive knowledge of literature. The Bible is simply a book of texts, and modern literature is ransacked to supply a lazy preacher with ready-made anecdotes and quotations. Can there possibly be any moral power attached to a profession where the very ideas are supplied ready-made, and thus even the grand moral power of the Hebrew books is lost sight of?

The old dogmas gone, the distinctive phraseology condemned, the moral vigor of the preacher is exchanged for the fluency of ready-made sermons; this is the picture of modern Evangelicalism which we get when we take one of its leading organs and when we piece together these extracts. And we know that the man who gets out of the atmosphere of such a religion gets out of a poisoned fog into the clear air of Nature, and finds ample inspiration in the creed of Humanism.

FELIX PONDERING.

Error is a Penelope who, without wishing to do so, is incessantly unraveling the texture which she has woven. Truth, on the other hand, in the struggle of ideas for life, will sooner or later bear off the victory.—*Fouillée*.

Pseudo-Criticism.—V.

(Continued from p. 701.)

HAVING set the Critics right with regard to the authenticity of the Pentateuch, Sir Robert Anderson next turns his attention to the pseudo-criticism of the book of Daniel—a subject upon which he is a great authority, at least upon the Christian Evidence side. The latter statement is merely an inference drawn from the fact that Sir Robert is the author of two apologetic works on Daniel, and should therefore be thoroughly conversant with the question. "Ninety-nine people out of every hundred who accept the 'Critical view' of the book," Mr. Anderson tells us, "do so on the authority of scholars like Canon Driver." This, no doubt, is perfectly correct; though, in my own case, I had worked the problem out, and found the book to be fiction several years before ascertaining the opinion of Dr. Driver, who upon many points is almost a Christian apologist. Sir Robert continues (p. 35):—

"It was Professor Driver's *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* which first shook my faith in the Bible.....His case against the book seemed complete; and not being a Hebrew scholar, I felt myself to be incompetent to review his decisions.....The pivot upon which the whole case turned was the presence of Greek words in the book: and when I discovered that on this vital point the argument was either an anachronism or a puerility, I determined to prove the matter further."

One can readily understand the circumstances here referred to, but it is a mistake to think the presence of three or four Greek words in the book could be a point of vital importance. The real "pivot upon which the whole case turns" is to be found in the presence of a certain "Abomination that maketh desolate" in the so-called "visions"—to which may be added the gross errors contained in the "historical" portion of the book. Of course, when all the facts bearing upon the case are clearly and plainly stated, one does not need to be a Hebrew scholar to be able to weigh the evidence for or against the credibility of the book; neither does one need to be a scientist to see the fictitious character of the Genesis Creation and Deluge stories. In disputed matters of this kind, the first thing which the Freethinker or unprejudiced inquirer has to do is to sweep away the perversions and misrepresentations which the Christian advocate has imported into the narrative; all then is plain sailing. And that is exactly what I am now called upon to do. Mr. Anderson says in continuation of his own case:—

"And when this was followed by the further discovery that recent archaeological research had proved that Daniel's main 'Historical Errors' were not errors at all—that, for example, Cyrus's own inscriptions tell us that Belshazzar actually ruled in Babylon, as the Bible says he did, and that he was killed when the Mede who commanded the invading army captured the city and set up the Persian rule—I began to think it was high time to inquire what could be said upon the other side. And my efforts were rewarded by finding an array of solid facts, as set forth in the preceding chapter, sufficient to convince any competent tribunal that the 'critical hypothesis' is untenable."

I am not just now concerned with Mr. Anderson's "array of solid facts," which shall not be forgotten, though they appear out of their proper place in the book: the foregoing statements have first to be dealt with. It is news to me to hear that "recent archaeological research has proved that Daniel's main 'historical errors' were not errors at all."

Well, one of the "main" historical errors in the book is that Daniel did not know even the names of the kings of Babylon in whose reigns he claims to have been living. He says that these sovereigns were: Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, "Darius the Mede," and "Cyrus the Persian." He also tells us that one of his "visions" was seen "in the first year of Belshazzar, king of Babylon," another "in the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar," another "in the first year of Darius the Mede," and

another "in the third year of Cyrus, king of Persia." There can, therefore, be no doubt as to these being the names of the kings who, he says, reigned in Babylonia in his days. Now the actual sovereigns of that country during the period referred to in the book of Daniel were those given in the following table:—

605 B. C.	—Nabu-kudur-usur = Nebuchadrezzar.
562 "	—Avil-Marduk = Evil Merodach.
560 "	—Nergal-sar-usur = Neriglissar.
556 "	—Labasi-Marduk (reigned 9 months).
555 "	—Nabu-nahid = Nabonidus.
588 to 529 B. C.	—Cyrus (king of Elam).

The name by which Jeremiah and Ezekiel speak of the first of these kings—Nebuchad Rezzar—may be allowed to pass; but that employed by Daniel, who is said to have been in personal attendance upon the king—Nebuchad Nezzar—cannot be passed as correct. This point, however, is not of great importance; it is, so to speak, but a feather in the air, which serves to show the direction in which the wind blows. Another minor point is that Daniel calls Cyrus "king of Persia"; whereas that monarch was king of Elam before the conquest of Babylonia. The Persian dynasty was not founded until B. C. 521—eight years after his death. This point, also, need not be pressed; though a man living in the reign of Cyrus could not have made such an error.

The order and years of succession of the Babylonian kings in the foregoing table are historically correct, though cited more than 1,800 years ago by Josephus from Berosus, the Chaldean historian (Apion i. 20). And the remarkable accuracy of this historian has been confirmed in every particular by the discovery in 1876 of a large number of cuneiform tablets, which record the commercial transactions of a Babylonian firm named Egibi and Sons for a period of 120 years. The Babylonians dated all their contracts and documents *in the year of the reigning king*; hence these tablets give us the order of succession of the Babylonian monarchs, and the number of years of each reign. Tablets are found dated in forty-three different years of Nebuchadrezzar, in two years only of Evil-Merodach, in four years of Neriglissar, in seventeen years of Nabonidus, and in nine years of Cyrus. A tablet has even been found dated in the year of accession of Labasi—Marduk; so there can be no doubt whatever as to the sovereigns who reigned during the period covered by the book of Daniel. Moreover, the author of the last-named work of fiction (who is said to be a prophet named Daniel) tells us that one of his visions was seen "in the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar," and he describes in that or a later year what is called "Belshazzar's impious feast," at which, he says, he interpreted some writing traced by a hand on the wall—which story he concludes by saying: "In that night Belshazzar, the Chaldean king, was slain. And Darius the Mede received the kingdom" (v. 30, 31). Furthermore, the writer says that this king Darius "set over the kingdom an hundred and twenty satraps.....and over them three presidents, of which Daniel was one": consequently, Daniel certainly ought to know the king's name. It was, too, this Darius who is said to have put Daniel in the den of lions, after which fictitious event the writer says: "So Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius, and in the reign of Cyrus the Persian" (vi. 28). We have thus three kings who are stated to have reigned over Babylonia in succession—Belshazzar, "Darius the Mede," and "Cyrus the Persian."

As to the first of these, Belshazzar, that imaginary Babylonian monarch is distinctly stated—and that no less than six times—to have been the son of the preceding king, Nebuchadrezzar (Dan. v. 11, 13, 18, 22). According to the Bible story, Daniel lived in Babylon in the reigns of the four kings he names; he knew all four perfectly well, and had held office under three of them: there could therefore be no possibility of being mistaken. Yet he tells us seriously, as an undoubted historical fact, that between Nebuchadrezzar and Cyrus there reigned in Babylon two kings unknown to Babylonian history

—Belshazzar and Darius the Mede. And such being the case, it must be obvious to anyone with a grain sense that the book of Daniel is a work of fiction written by a Jew of later times who had no exact knowledge of the line of Babylonian kings. Also, with the setting aside of these two imaginary monarchs, we get rid of two Bible miracles that are thus proved to be pious fables—the handwriting on the wall and the preservation of Daniel in the den of lions. To these may be added the stories of the three asbestos men in a furnace and Nebuchadrezzar herding with beasts and deriving nourishment from raw grass: for the man who invented the fictions of Belshazzar's feast and Daniel in the lions' den was exactly the kind of man to concoct the fables related of Nebuchadrezzar. And, as a matter of history, one of these alleged events is proved by the Egibi tablets to be a fabrication. Nebuchadrezzar was not deposed for seven years and afterwards restored to his kingdom, as narrated in the book of Daniel: he enjoyed a long reign of forty-three years, without any break whatever.

But, says Mr. Anderson, "recent archæological research had proved" that what were thought to be historical errors "were not errors at all," and then he states, as an instance, that "Cyrus's own inscriptions tell us that Belshazzar actually ruled in Babylon, as the Bible says he did, and that he was killed when the Mede who commanded the invading army captured the city and set up the Persian rule."

Here Mr. Anderson's Christian Evidence friends have again misled him: "Cyrus's own inscriptions" tell us nothing of the kind. The king that ruled in Babylon when that city was captured by Cyrus was Nabu-nahid, called by the Greeks Nabonidus. Upon this subject Berosus the Chaldean historian says:—

"But when Nabonidus was come to the seventeenth year of his reign, Cyrus came out of Persia with a great army, and having already conquered the rest of Asia, he came hastily to Babylon. When Nabonidus perceived he was coming to attack him, he met him with his forces, and joining battle with him, was beaten, and fled away with a few of his troops to the city of Borsippa. Hereupon Cyrus took Babylon.....and then marched to Borsippa to besiege Nabonidus; but as Nabonidus did not sustain the siege, but delivered himself into his hands, he was at first kindly used by Cyrus, who gave him Carmania as a place to reside in. Accordingly Nabonidus spent the rest of his time in that country, and there died." [It would appear, however, that the army of Nabonidus, instead of fighting, went over to the enemy.]

We come now to the cuneiform inscriptions. There are two, written immediately after the capture of Babylon by Cyrus, in which that event is duly recorded. From the first of these—the Annalistic Tablet—I make the following extract:—

"On the fourteenth day of the month Tammuz, Sippara was taken without fighting: Nabu-nahid fled. On the sixteenth day, Gobryas the governor of the country of Gutium [i.e., Kurdistan] and the soldiers of Cyrus without fighting entered Babylon. Afterwards Nabu-nahid was captured.....On the third day of the month Marchesvan, Cyrus entered Babylon. Dissensions before him were allayed. Peace to the city did Cyrus establish," etc.

In the second tablet—the "Cylinder Inscription of Cyrus"—the god Merodach is represented as assisting that conqueror and giving him the victory "without fighting"; for which reason Cyrus did not destroy the city after its capture. From this account I give the following extract:—

"Without fighting or battle Merodach caused him [Cyrus] to enter Babylon: his [Merodach's] city of Babylon he spared; in a hiding-place Nabu-nahid, the king who revered him [Merodach] not, did he give into his hand. The men of Babylon, all of them, and the whole of Sumir and Akkad, the nobles and the high-priest, bowed themselves beneath him; they kissed his feet; they rejoiced at his sovereignty; their faces shone."

This inscription was evidently written under the direction of priests. In another inscription of Cyrus, that king says:—

"And the gods of Sumir and Akkad, whom Nabu-nahid to the anger of Merodach, the lord of gods, had

brought into Babylon, these, by the command of Merodach the great lord, in peace I settled in their own sanctuaries, according to their hearts."

Where now does the mythical Belshazzar king of Babylon come in? Where, also, is the imaginary "Darius the Mede," whom Daniel says succeeded Belshazzar as king of Babylon? Biblical critics know perfectly well the source of the error with regard to "Darius the Mede." The author of the book of Daniel (who wrote about 164 B.C.) knew that a certain Darius king of Persia had conquered Babylonia, and had thus become the sovereign of a dual empire, being at the same time the founder of the Persian dynasty. But, having a very imperfect knowledge of the Babylonian and Persian lines of kings, he placed the reign of this Darius (*i.e.*, Darius Hystaspes, who reigned from 521 to 485 B.C.) before that of Cyrus (and of Cambyses), and called him "Darius the Mede"—the "Medes and Persians" being thought by late Jewish writers to be two peoples forming one nation or empire (Esther i. 3, 19, etc.), when, as a matter of history, there was no kingdom of Media at all. In Dan. v. 28, Daniel is represented as saying to the imaginary Belshazzar, "Thy kingdom is divided, and given to the Medes and Persians"; after which he introduces two kings, one "Darius the Mede," the other "Cyrus the Persian"—both wrong. And here, again, the testimony of the Egibi tablets is decisive: not only are they dated in 17 years of Nabonidus, in 9 years of Cyrus, and in 7 years of Cambyses, but they run through the whole 35 years of Darius Hystaspes. Thus do archaeological discoveries corroborate the Bible narratives.

Sir Robert Anderson, however, actually tries to identify the fictitious "Darius" of Daniel with Gobryas, the general of Cyrus's army; for he calls the latter "the Mede," and this in face of the fact that the nationality of Gobryas is unknown. Daniel's king Darius ruled over "the whole kingdom," and appointed 120 princes as governors of different localities, with three presidents as superintendents over these. Does Mr. Anderson really think that Cyrus handed over the sovereignty of his kingdom to his servant Gobryas, which servant was at that time already governor of another district subject to Babylon? If so, the Egibi tablets should prove a salutary corrective. There are no tablets dated in the reign of a king Belshazzar, and none in the reign of a Darius until after the reigns of Cyrus and his son Cambyses: the tablets are dated in the years and reigns only of kings who actually ruled over the Babylonian Empire. No evidence ever produced in a Court of Justice could be clearer or more conclusive, and no amount of apologetic ingenuity can set this evidence aside.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

DIFFICULT PROBLEM.

Sandy McPherson, in a moment of abstraction, put half-a-crown in the collection-plate last Sunday in mistake for a penny, and has since expended a deal of thought as to the best way of making up for it.

"No, I might stay awa' frae the kirk till the sum was made up; but, on the other han', I wad be payin' pew rent a' the time an' getting nae guid o' it. Losh, but I'm thinkin' this is what the meonistor ca's a 'religious deeficulty'!"

BREAKING THE NEWS.

The Widow: "Wouldn't you like me to read your palm?"
 The Man: "Delighted! Now, tell me something of my future."
 The Widow: "Your future is to be a very happy one."
 The Man: "How do you know?"
 The Widow: "I am going to marry you."

WOULD DECIMATE THE CLERGY.

A Dominic, after telling his scholars the story of Ananias and Sapphira, asked them:
 "Why is not everybody who tells a lie struck dead?"
 After a long silence one little fellow exclaimed:
 "Because there wouldna be nobody left."

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON OCT. 27.

There were present:—Messrs. Barry, Bowman, Cohen, Charlton, Cowell, Davey, Dobson, Heaford, Lloyd, Leat, Lewis, Moss, Nichols, Quinton, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Silverstein, Shore, Thurlow, Wood.

A letter was read from the President, Mr. G. W. Foote, explaining that his absence was caused through indisposition. The Secretary was instructed to convey to him the sympathy of the meeting. Mr. Cohen was elected to the chair.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. The monthly cash statement was presented, and adopted.

New members were received from the following Branches: Camberwell, Paisley, Stockport, Rhondda, West London, and the Parent Society.

Permission was also granted for the formation of new Branches at Edmonton and Maesteg.

On the motion of the Kingsland Branch it was resolved:—

"That the President be asked to convey the congratulations of the N.S.S. to the Portuguese Ambassador, Dr. Magalhas Lima, on the installation of the Portuguese Republic."

The Secretary reported that a telegram of congratulation in the name of the Society had been sent to the Freethought Congress at Barcelona; and, after hearing from Mr. Heaford a report of the progress of the Freethought movement in Spain in the teeth of difficulties, it was resolved that a letter be written to the Spanish Freethinkers expressing our sympathy with them in their struggles.

The following resolution concerning the heroic Freethinker, Mr. Walsh, about whom an article had appeared in the *Freethinker*, was carried unanimously:—

"That the Executive has much pleasure in electing Mr. Walsh, of Leamington, as honorary member of this Society, and, at the same time, begs to assure him of its deep sympathy, and expresses a grateful sense of the encouragement given to the cause of Freethought by the example of patient fortitude shown by him in his affliction."

The meeting then adjourned.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

Obituary.

It is with great regret that I have to announce the death of Mr. W. Shipley, a good, steady Atheist, one of the old guard. He was smitten with a lingering and painful disease, to which he finally succumbed on October 19. He was an ardent admirer of the late Charles Bradlaugh and Mr. G. W. Foote, and died as he had lived, a sworn enemy of superstition. The burial took place in Chester-le-street Cemetery on Saturday, October 22, and was attended by a good number of people, among whom were many Atheist friends. The Secular Burial Service was ably read by Mr. Newrick Richardson, an old comrade.

T. AISBITT.

A FREETHINKER who, at one time, was an active member of the National Secular Society, in the person of Mr. Ben Ellis, died rather suddenly from pneumonia at his residence at East Dulwich on Sunday, October 23, last. Although a pronounced Freethinker for many years, he was better known as a politician, and on two occasions had stood as a Labor candidate for Parliament for the Peckham Division of Camberwell. A few Sundays ago I met him on Peckham Rye. He had been ailing for some time, and had undergone an operation which left him a wreck of his former self. We talked together for some time, and he acknowledged that he was as much a Freethinker as ever, and was glad to know that Freethought views were spreading rapidly in every civilized country in the world. He was a great admirer of the illustrious Charles Bradlaugh, and of Mr. Foote, with whom he had worked years ago. He was buried on Saturday last at Forest Hill Cemetery, and I was present, as a former colleague, to show my respect for him. Unhappily his widow, in deference to the wishes of relatives and friends, allowed the Christian Burial Service to be read over his remains, once again demonstrating how much we, as Freethinkers, are at the mercy of our Christian friends and relatives in the last scene of all in the great drama of our individual lives.—ARTHUR B. MOSS.

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.

SHOREDITCH TOWN HALL: 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Charles Bradlaugh: After Twenty Years."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Public (Minor) Hall, Canning Town): 7.30, E. C. Saphin, "Paganism in Church." Illustrated with lantern slides.

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Green, Edmonton): 7, Debate between Mr. Hecht (Secularist) and Mr. Hart (Christian), "The Authenticity and Morality of the Bible."

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): C. Cohen, 3, "Christianity and the Logic of Life"; 7, "Is Death the End?"

BLACKBURN BRANCH N. S. S. (Exchange Lecture Hall): J. Genever, 3, "The Population Question"; 7.30, "The Life of Charles Bradlaugh."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12 (noon), Class; 6.30, Miss Muirhead, "Luke xiv. 41."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Arthur Ransom, "Plants and their Problems."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, S. Reeves, "Citizenship."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): Ernest Evans, 3, "Germany and the Germans as Seen Through English Spectacles"; 6.30, "With the Camera and Hammer in Switzerland." Lantern views. Tea at 5.

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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.

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