

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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Every servant of Humanity has two successive lives—one objective and temporary, in which his direct work is done, the other subjective, a life in the minds and hearts of others.—J. K. INGRAM.

The Westminster Play.

MAN is the wisest animal on this planet. He is also the biggest fool. No other animal builds houses and ships, or paints pictures, or carves statues, or writes poems. And no other animal gets drunk or keeps a priest. Yes, man is the wonder and the scandal, the glory and the disgrace, of the world. "In action how like an angel," said Hamlet; but had he been censuring instead of praising he might have said "how like a beast."

Man is a bundle of contradictions. He will fight like a hero for what he wants; he will also pray for it like a silly child. He will stand up and defy death; he will also grovel on the ground to avoid it. He will dare the most powerful enemy—and he will be afraid of his own shadow. That scapegrace, the Earl of Rochester, who wrote the biting epigram on his boon companion and fellow profligate, Charles II., gave a clever expression to this contradictory character in the Merry Monarch:—

"Here lies our mutton-eating King
Whose word no man relies on;
He never said a foolish thing—
He never did a wise one."

This brings us to another monarch—the late King Edward. We do not mean that he resembled Charles II. in anything else; but he was still supposed to rule by the grace of God, as the very coinage declares—and he was Defender of the Faith—and he was anointed with holy oil by the Archbishop of Canterbury at his coronation, a process which was intended to consecrate him for the rest of his natural life. With all these supernatural advantages he ought to have been able to govern this country "on his own," as the saying is. Yet we still hold to the constitutional maxim with us that the King reigns but does not govern. There is a Government that carries on the business of the country, and in the name of that Government King George is just opening Parliament—the assembly in which the Government has to submit what it wants to do for the welfare of the people.

Neither the anointed King nor what some people regard as the more anointed Government is allowed to regulate the affairs of this nation without the assistance and ultimate control of Parliament. Neither does Parliament trust its own wisdom—which some think a mark of good sense. It pays a man to procure all the help he can from Almighty God. This man is called a chaplain; he receives a salary of several hundred pounds a year, and his function is to open the proceedings every day by imploring the divine blessing on its labors and the divine guidance in its deliberations. Generally speaking, the House of Commons is nearly empty when the chaplain communicates with the Deity. No doubt the members think that the divine blessing and the divine guidance will keep until they find it convenient to attend.

They have a similar man of God to bring down heavenly assistance at Washington. Ingersoll once said that people prayed for all sorts of things, some of them ridiculous, and some plainly impossible. "For instance," he said, "I heard the chaplain the other day asking God to give Congress wisdom."

It is well to remember that God was asked to give the House of Commons wisdom every day during Bradlaugh's long battle for his seat as the duly elected member for Northampton. Every time the House discussed and voted on the Bradlaugh question it went wrong, in spite of its regular prayers for divine guidance. Wisdom never came to it until just before the fall of the curtain at the end of the last act. Bradlaugh had won his seat and occupied it with great usefulness; he was then unfortunately dying; and the wisdom that came to the House of Commons at the last moment led it to cancel all its previous records on the Bradlaugh question as unconstitutional. So we see how much it had to thank the chaplain and his God for.

When the chaplain has requested the Almighty to fill the House of Commons with his ineffable presence, so that wise and beneficent laws may be carried for the benefit of the present inhabitants of this country, and of generations yet unborn, the members (those who are present) open their eyes and resume the old scrimmage. What one side of the House says is sure to be wrong to the other side of the House. They made up their minds about that before they went in to prayers, and they do not change it afterwards. Their business is to fight each other; they conduct the contest under Queensberry rules, with an umpire in the chair, but they give no quarter, and they take none; and they pay no more attention to God until the prayers come round again the next day.

Opening the House of Commons with prayer seems to us a farce—and it really does not seem otherwise to the members themselves, for they practically treat it as such. And such a farce is bound to infect the whole performance. It is really a part of what we venture to call the Westminster play.

Of course, the Westminster play, like other plays, may be very interesting, and very amusing, and even very tragic. It seems to have great fascination for the actors, and a vast number of people like reading about it. But there is one thing about it which thinking people wonder at. All the time spent on debating appears to be a poor investment. Speeches rarely, if ever, alter votes; the whips know how the division will go if they can get their men into the lobbies; indeed, if it were not for the look of the thing, the vote might as well be taken first, and the debate carried on afterwards.

This element of unreality in the great Westminster play is directly related to the absurdity of the chaplain's performance at prayer-time. A legislature which tolerates that nonsense will tolerate any other nonsense; for no nonsense could possibly be greater.

We suggest that the nation should make up its mind whether it will trust to its own wisdom or not. At present it is satisfied with a plentiful lack of sense, and leaves all the rest to Providence; and that is why we have still to admire with how little wisdom the world is governed.

G. W. FOOTE.

Mind and Purpose in Nature.—II.

(Continued from p. 68.)

DR. WALLACE cannot be congratulated on introducing anywhere in his book anything material that is new to the discussion. I do not mean by this that no new facts are cited. What I mean is that all the facts cited, with the arguments used, are substantially familiar to those who are conversant with the history of Theistic apologetics. Much is said, for instance, of the evident "intention" of various combinations of events; but "purpose" in the mouth of so eminent a naturalist as Dr. Wallace has really no greater logical value than it had in the mouth of one who saw design in the fact of great rivers running close to large towns. To take a few instances. We are told that, as the production of a short velvety turf is dependent upon its being regularly cropped by ruminants, it is significant that the group of animals should have increased so enormously about the period when men appeared on the earth (p. 82). Or, again, that the horse and the dog, fowls and pigeons, should have reached their fullest development at a time when man was able to profit by them, "must surely be accepted as additional evidence of a foreseeing mind.....to provide all that was most essential for the growth and development of man's spiritual nature" (p. 288). Nuts, we learn, are "intended" to be eaten (p. 313). Finally, great stress is laid upon man's sense of color as having been given him as "a part of the needful equipment of a being whose spiritual nature is being developed" (p. 312).

Something might be said on the above merely as regards questions of fact, but their chief interest to me—and I think will be also to others—is that they not only embody the usual Theistic fallacies, but that they help to illustrate what I have already said—namely, that it lies in the nature of the case that no study of natural phenomena alone can yield proof of purpose. I wish to emphasise this because some people are under the impression that the case against Theism is to be gained or lost by a mere balancing of evidence derived from a study of natural phenomena. This, however, is not the case. To discuss the question of whether we can explain with the aid of known forces any given organic structure, or any terrestrial occurrence, is beside the mark. At most this is only a Theistic appeal to ignorance. We know that the particular phenomenon selected exists, and unless natural forces, unaided, were capable of producing it, it could not have been produced at all. The mere combination—even if brought about by an outside intelligence—can add nothing to the quality of the forces themselves. What a scientific Atheism really insists on is the complete irrelevancy of the evidence produced, and therefore its natural inability to prove the point desired.

How does Dr. Wallace, or anyone else, know, or on what ground does he infer, that a particular structure or a given combination of events is designed? The undisguised and more primitive method is to show how a number of events have served as means towards a particular end. Both "means" and "end" are question-begging words, and may well be dispensed with. What we really see is a process and a result. But as all of nature is made up of processes and results—the results becoming in turn part of another process—in tracing a particular process to its result, we have only stated what is. Again, the quality of relation existing between a process and a result is exactly the same in every case—the result being, in fact, nothing more than an expression of the process. Here, for instance, is a process that results in life; there a process that results in death. Here a process that results in a worm; there a process that results in a man. But whether it be death or life, a man or a worm, the result is equally the expression of the process that preceded it. To say that a process results in life is to say that it could not have resulted in death, and so with any other example that may be selected. But if every result

is contained, potentially, in the process that it expresses, on what grounds do we infer "intention" in any particular case? Not because of the end; that is inevitable. Not because of the nature of the process; for that, too, is only a result in relation to previous processes. What is, is. This is all that any examination of nature can ever logically yield.

Let us look at the matter from another point of view. Theists of the Paleyan school used to argue that the adaptation of organisms to their environment proved design. The reply that some organisms perished for want of adaptation did not disprove this position—it only proved imperfect design in such cases. The inconclusiveness of the argument lay in the fact that all life is a question of adaptation up to a given degree. Man, in common with all forms of life, utilises all those conditions and circumstances that meet his necessities or satisfy his desires. His nature is consequently the expression of all that has contributed to its development. But suppose the conditions of human life had been, to the utmost possible limits, different. Man would, none the less, express all the conditions that had contributed to his growth, and there would have been exactly the same quality of relation between man and his environment. And Dr. Wallace could have used exactly the same argument of this different man that he uses of the present one. Adaptation, then, is not something that is dependent upon a specific structure, it is inherent in the very nature of animated existence. If man had not used the horse or eaten the fowl, or taken delight in a velvety turf, he would have eaten something else and delighted in something else. It seems absurd to have to point out to Dr. Wallace that because man lives by eating fowls it by no means follows that fowls were "intended" to be eaten. In common with all who have followed the same line of argument, Dr. Wallace simply transforms an end into a purpose. He fails in his argument because the material to hand is absolutely incapable of yielding proof.

"Intention" is not a material fact, and cannot be inferred solely from a material fact. If standing at the foot of the Monument I see a man fall from the top to the earth, on what basis may I infer that he intended to fall over? The mere fact of his falling can warrant no such inference. Whether he fell over purposely or by accident, the act, and the fact of falling with all its consequences, remains the same. To know whether the act was intended I must commence, not end, with the state of the man's mind prior to the accident. It will not do to start from the fact, and infer the purpose. I must start with the purpose, and see how far the fact realises it. And, in the same way, there is no logical bridge by means of which Dr. Wallace can reason from natural facts back to a "purpose." His creative mind may exist as a datum, it cannot exist as an inference. No examination of natural phenomena can possibly yield it. He must commence with the creative mind, prove that he has some means of knowing its intentions before creating, and then prove that the material results agree with the psychologic purpose.

Before dealing with the one or two specific instances of creative purpose given by Dr. Wallace, I may note what he would probably urge in reply to the above. As far back as 1870, in his *Contributions to the Theory of Natural Selection*, later in his *Darwinism*, and again in his present work, the argument is used that the nature of man shows a surplus of power—mental and moral—over the mere necessities of life. In the present work this argument is expanded so as to cover the production of other things, the conclusion being that as Natural Selection could not produce an organ, or a quality, in greater degree or strength than is needed to preserve life, the surplus mental and moral power of man, and the surplus productions of nature—such as color in the plant and insect world—seem intended to forward human development. Now, in arguing thus, Dr. Wallace appears to be laying too much stress on mere survival value. It is true that, according to Natural

Selection, an organ or a quality survives and secures development because it is of value to the animal in the struggle for existence. But is it also true that a quality can only develop to the *extent* of its survival value? I see nothing in what is known of the laws of life to warrant such a conclusion. Once a quality is established, there seems nothing to prevent it continuing to develop—particularly when it belongs to an animal sufficiently high in the scale to take delight in its exercise—up to a point that conflicts with the fitness of the animal to survive. Beyond that point it cannot go, but it may reach it. Once a line of development is commenced, mere biological laws may secure a certain continuance. And if, as often happens, a quality of no great survival value is correlated with others that are of value, the continuance is assured. I may also remind Dr. Wallace that Natural Selection not only operates in the direction of securing the perpetuation of a variation that has value, but it also operates in the direction of checking the over-development of variations at the point where they are injurious to the organism. The relation of Natural Selection to the history of a variation may be summed up as progression, quiescence, and retrogression. The middle term seems quite adequate to account for much upon which Dr. Wallace builds. Another consideration, that of the exercise of a quality for its own sake, will be dealt with later.

A word may be said in passing upon Dr. Wallace's belief that nuts were "intended" to be eaten. A nut is only a seed protected by a hard covering, and the obvious "purpose" of this—to use teleological language—is the perpetuation of the species. It is true that by birds and animals swallowing the nut it is often carried a distance, and thus stands an extra chance of fructification. This is good from the tree's point of view. But from the animal's point of view the "purpose" of eating is nutrition. And nutrition is dependent upon assimilation. But, if there is assimilation, the life of the seed comes to an end and the "purpose" for which the tree produced the nut is frustrated. If, on the other hand, there is no assimilation, and the seed passes uninjured through the animal's body, there is no nutrition, and the "purpose" of the animal in eating is unrealised. Thus, either the animal is defrauded in eating the nut, or the tree is defrauded in producing it. The "purpose" of both cannot be served.

Dr. Wallace replies that both purposes are served, because nuts are produced in such quantities that the survival of one out of ten thousand suffices. This is doubtless true enough from one point of view. The number of seeds produced in the plant world and of young in the animal world does undoubtedly bear a direct relation to the chances of survival. But this is not because the seeds or the young are produced with any intention of satisfying the animals that prey upon them, but in order to escape the difficulties by which the young of many species are beset. Besides, what relation is there between the spread of any species of tree and the development of the "spiritual nature of man"? Moreover, the species of plant or tree that, thanks to the agency of bird or animal, is spread over a wider area, only increases by dispossessing some other kind. Really, the only safe conclusion is that each species develops characteristics likely to promote its own welfare, with absolute disregard to the welfare of other kinds. This is the true reading of evolution, but it is very far removed from what one would expect were there any plan or purpose pervading the world of life.

(To be continued.)

C. COHEN.

Faith.

It is taken for granted in certain quarters that Freethinkers are Pyrrhonists, whose one accomplishment is the art of doubting, or of being undecided and uncertain about everything. If Timon accurately represents him, Pyrrho held that things are wholly

incomprehensible, or inaccessible; that certain knowledge on any subject is unattainable; that the highest wisdom consists in withholding judgment, one assertion being quite as capable of being proved or disproved as another; and that the reward of withholding judgment is imperturbability. Hence the short-lived Pyrrhonic school was a school of universal doubters, who confessed that knowledge was not one of their possessions. But Freethinkers pride themselves upon having a philosophy that is much superior to Pyrrhonism, a philosophy whose motto is "We seek for Truth." Doubters would be an entirely false label to attach to them. The art of doubting they have never learned; nor would it be correct to describe them as unbelievers, or sceptics. Their philosophy is known as Secularism, and Secularism, as a system, is characterised by its affirmations, not by its negations; by its beliefs, not by its disbeliefs. Christians imagine that they have the monopoly of such words as faith, belief, trust, and love, while, in reality, they have but degraded and impoverished them by the artificial uses to which they have put them. Faith, belief, trust, and love are natural, social terms, denoting social relations or virtues, in the absence of which social life would be impossible, and we maintain that their employment in the service of supernatural religion has forced into them ghostly, unreal, and unrealisable meanings, and largely disqualified them for the natural uses they were originally intended to serve. Our object is to rescue them from prostitution, and restore them to their proper position of social virtues. We claim to be the only true believers, the only people who exercise faith and trust in a purely legitimate manner.

It is true that the divines are willing to recognise the natural application of these words. The Rev. J. T. Forbes, M.A., of Glasgow, says that "when Couch Adams discovered Neptune it was as the result of an inquiry dependent on faith—faith in the Newtonian law of gravitation. All the unexplained irregularities in the motion of Uranus could be explained by the existence of a planet which no one had ever seen—supposing gravitation to act everywhere. Its mass, its orbit, its position were deduced by calculations; the telescope was turned to the spot where it ought to be, assuming the law to hold, and scientific faith was justified by its discovery." Coming to the social and moral sphere, Mr. Forbes says: "In human things you try to have your faith in accord with reason." Then he gives suitable illustrations, and passes on to this statement: "The faculty that works in the exercise of faith between man and man can receive a Godward direction." As we are now supposed to have left "human things" behind and below, faith needs no longer be "in accord with reason." Listen to this:—

"We are made of clay and spirit, dust and fire. If our material nature has its foundations in the dust, our immaterial nature has its connection with the heavenlies. Even the dust itself is the disguise of unknown treasures. We do not know what matter is. 'The earth hath dust of gold.' What we sometimes speak of in a disparaging way may be other in its essence than it appears to the senses to be. It is at least the shrine of spirit."

What we have here is faith without reason. Take the distinction between clay and spirit and tell us what it is. What is spirit? Breath, or wind, and wind is nothing but air in motion, and, as the merest tyro in science knows, is fully as material as clay. And what does Mr. Forbes mean by our "immaterial nature"? Can he present us with an intelligible definition of it? He admits that he does not know what matter is, and hints that it "may be other in its essence than it appears to the senses to be"; but, having made that admission, how on earth can he say that "it is at least the shrine of spirit"? How does he know that body and mind are a duality? If he is ignorant of what matter is, on what ground does he assert that it is not spirit? The belief in the separate existence of spirit rests on neither experience nor knowledge, and, consequently, cannot be justified before the bar of reason. And yet Mr. Forbes stakes everything on the truth of an utterly

baseless hypothesis. If there be no spiritual world Christianity is a house built upon the sand of superstition and doomed to be destroyed.

The first fact to be borne in mind is, that religious faith is based upon nothing but ignorance, and is, consequently, contrary to reason. The second fact of importance concerning it is its absolute impotence. Proudly is it spoken of as a supernatural gift; but it has never done any supernatural work. It may be true that people have performed deeds because of their faith which otherwise they would never have attempted; but what we contend is, that such deeds have never been characterised by any superhuman elements. And yet Mr. Forbes asserts that "the work Christians have to do is God's." He also says that "a little work done in great faith is greater than much work done in little faith, because the one is scientifically godly and the other is not." The truth is, that the work done by Christians never exceeds human capacity, and to call it God's work is sheer folly. Indeed, Christian faith is the biggest farce the world has ever seen. And the saying that "a little work done in great faith" constitutes scientific Godliness, is too funny for words. "The work Christians do," say the divines, "is God's work." If this is God's work, all we say is that God has every reason to be profoundly ashamed of it. It is not worthy of him. Moreover, why does God shirk his work? Why does he not do it himself? It is amazingly easy to affirm that "the least amount of genuine faith can pluck up trees, remove the everlasting hills, cast out demons, forgive sins, renew society"; but, as a matter of fact, those mighty miracles are still undone. Mr. Forbes knows it, and offers an ingenious but futile explanation:—

"Why are the unsaved so many? Why is the Church weak? Why is God's will not, by this time, done in earth? Faith must win its victories according to the laws of God's kingdom. It is a law, for example, that God cannot give the tasks and honors of his kingdom to anyone in an arbitrary fashion. James and John cannot have thrones simply because they desire them. Rule over many things is not given by caprice, it is the issue of faithful rule over few. And prayer that does not respect this rule will fail. Thrones are for those who can fill them.....Again, we are certain from the mind and act of Jesus as interpreting the Father, that well-being is always the will of God for his children. But its form we cannot anticipate."

Unfortunately, this explanation is simply an evasion. It is not an honest attempt to meet the difficulty, but rather a clever bit of shuffling. To say that God desires certain things, and at the same time to confess that such things are not realised, is to frame an argument for God's non-existence. It was God's masterly inactivity that puzzled Carlyle, and that irresistibly leads thoughtful people to Atheism. There must be something fundamentally wrong with the laws of God's kingdom if they prevent him from doing his work. It is vain to invent excuses for him, for to make apologies for a god is only a polite way of dismissing him. Faith in a deity that does absolutely nothing to justify it is confidence misplaced; and the sooner it dies the better for all concerned.

What we need is faith in ourselves, in the potentialities of our nature, and in the world in which we live. Our chief duty towards a god who does nothing is not to trouble our heads about him, and undertake the task of setting the world right ourselves, and in our own strength alone. Prayer represents so much nervous energy wasted. Religious rites and ceremonies are but so many forms of enervating self-indulgence when the work of life is clamoring to be done. Shall we not do our utmost, then, to liberate faith, belief, trust, and love from their long-continued supernatural entanglements and hurtful exercises, and to set them coursing along natural, social channels, wherein they shall prove of incalculable service in the higher evolution of the race; or, in other words, in ridding it of the countless disharmonies and disabilities and evils with which it is still afflicted, after two thousand years of the reign of the omnipotent Prince of Peace? J. T. LLOYD.

The Church in Politics—Americans, Beware!

A Lecture Delivered at Chicago

BY M. M. MANGASARIAN.

IN his letter on religion in politics, President Roosevelt takes the position, I believe, that we may look forward to the day when a Catholic, for instance, may be nominated and elected to the presidency of the United States of America. He also intimates that to refuse to vote for a Catholic on account of his religion would be bigotry! The Lutheran, Baptist, and Presbyterian bodies have, if I am not mistaken, officially protested against the President's pronouncement. These Protestant Churches declare that it is not fair to call them bigots for objecting to a Catholic for President.

Speaking only in the capacity of a private citizen, it is my opinion that, according to the Constitution, a Catholic is not eligible to be a candidate for President. Neither is a sincere and consistent Christian of any other denomination. Nor is a believing Jew. The Constitution explicitly ignores the religious interests of the nation; it does not even so much as mention the name of God. Had the document been created by infidels it could not have been more indifferent to the subject of Church or religion. The Constitution is a downright secular instrument, having at its end one, and only one, object—the rights of man. But the supreme end of the Church is God, not man; or man for God. There is, then, between the Church and the Constitution an irreconcilable difference. It is because of this that the United Presbyterians, for instance, who have a membership of about a million, refuse even to take part in elections, much less to accept office under a Government that deliberately ignores the Christian religion, as well as every other religion. I submit that the United Presbyterians are quite consistent, and that they deserve the respect of all who hold that courage and sincerity are better than ambiguity and inconsistency. A Christian, therefore, can accept a nomination to the presidency, for instance, only by either stultifying himself and belittling his Church, or by disregarding the Constitution, its spirit as well as its letter.

Nor would it be "bigotry" to contend that a Protestant or a Catholic candidate, to whom God is first and country second, should under no circumstances be voted into presidential power and influence. Even as it would not be an act of intolerance to deny the presidency of this country to a foreigner-born citizen, it would not be intolerant to deny it to Catholics, for example. They are simply not eligible. Both Protestant and Catholic ought to say, when invited to the office, that they cannot conscientiously swear to maintain a Constitution which fails in its duties to the Creator, and that if elected they will obey God rather than the Constitution; for a Christian cannot serve two masters, neither can he be a Christian and not a Christian at the same time. I am going to quote a page from the history of modern France, to show that that is precisely what the Catholic, at least, does when he comes into power—he obeys God, that is to say, the Church, and forgets all about the Constitution, that is to say, the rights of man.

France has been a turbulent country. Its political weather has been more frequently stormy than fair. It makes one nervous, almost, to read the history of France—it is so sensational. Its pages are lit up with the lightning. It is a sad and shocking story of intrigues, plots, conspiracies, treason, machination, finesse,—of manœuvre and scandal, of sudden strokes and startling surprises, which have alternately cooled and heated the brain of the nation, and which have cultivated in the people the unhealthy craving for excitement.

Let it be admitted that the temperament of the people, its irritability or impetuosity, is in a measure responsible for this. But this in itself is not enough to explain the terrible punishments and misfortunes

which have fallen upon that nation. You are all familiar with the remark of one of her great statesmen, Gambetta: "The enemy, it is clericalism."

Another statesman, Paul Bert, said: "It is not our domestic discords; it is not England; nor even the trained German legions, that constitute the greatest menace to Frenchmen and the prosperity of France, still bleeding from her wounds, *but the man in black.*" Did these statesmen speak the truth? We shall ask history to answer the question. This much, however, we can say without consulting history, that to-day the French Republic and the Catholic Church are at swords' points. After trying to pull together, Church and State have separated—are completely divorced—and each suspects and fears the other. Let us try to explain the strained relations between Rome and the French Republic by a reference to the events in France from the time of the Second Republic to the Franco-Prussian War.

In 1848, after many attempts to maintain the monarchy, France returned to the Republican form of government. The Catholic Church, always powerful in the country, and having great interests at stake, to the surprise of the nation, welcomed the Republic with enthusiasm. The Archbishop of Cambrai, the Bishops of Gap, of Chalons, of Nancy, and the Catholic periodicals, *l'Univers*, the *Moniteur*, etc., declared that the Republican form of government was of divine origin, and that there were no other three words in all the world more sacred than the words "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity." In all the Churches high mass was celebrated and a *Te Deum* chanted in honor of the new regime. "There are no more devoted and sincere Republicans in France than the Catholics," wrote Veuillot in *l'Univers*, the organ of the Church. In asking you to keep this in mind, I also request you to note that the Catholic Church in America seems to be to-day just as devoted to the American Republic as the French Catholics professed to be to the Republic of 1848. But let us not forget that this same clergy, during the reign of the first Napoleon, introduced the following questions and answers into every Church Catechism in use throughout the land:

Question: Why are we under obligations to our emperor?

Answer: Because, in the first place, God, who creates empires and distributes them according to his pleasure, in blessing our emperor, both in peace and war, has set him over us as our sovereign, and has made him the image of himself upon the earth. To honor and serve the emperor is then to honor and serve God.

Question: Are there not special reasons why we are most profoundly indebted to Napoleon the First, our emperor?

Answer: Yes. For in difficult circumstances he is the man whom God has raised up to re-establish the public worship of the holy religion of our fathers, and to be our protector.....He has become the anointed of the Lord by the consecration of the Pope, the head of the Church Universal.

Question: What shall be thought of those who fail in their respect to our emperor?

Answer: According to the Apostle Paul, those who resist the appointed powers shall receive eternal damnation to their souls.

Of course, when the first Napoleon fell, the Catholic Church quickly withdrew from circulation the Catechism from which I have been quoting. It was after considerable effort that I was able to secure a copy of the work. The Infallible Church, then, was for Napoleon, heart and soul, as long as he was in power. Without any conscientious scruples whatever, the Church hailed the tyrant whose profession was wholesale murder for his own glory—as "the image of God on earth"! In those days it meant "damnation" not to accept Napoleon as the anointed of heaven. Such a guide is the Church!

But at last the Church professed to be converted to liberty.

(To be continued.)

Acid Drops.

"In all justice, is there either sense or reason in the way I have been dealt with all my life?" This question has been asked by David Davies from the silence and gloom of his prison cell. He is sixty-nine years of age, and he has spent thirty-eight years under lock and key. None of his crimes have been really serious, but judges and magistrates always took a serious view of his misdoings. One judge—a severely pious and moral man—gave him fifteen years penal servitude for a crime that was technically burglary but actually foolish pilfering. Two years ago he stole two shillings. His sentence for that colossal crime was three years' penal servitude and ten years' preventive detention. Evidently the judge mistook him for Methuselah. But that's a joke, and on second thoughts we apologise for it. David Davies's life has been no joke. It has been a wretched tragedy. Christian England ought to ask his forgiveness and give him a pound a week for the rest of his life. Ten to one he would do no more pilfering in that period than (say) the Archbishop of Canterbury would.

What is the use of the really good maxims in the New Testament? Christians are the very last people to practise them. Fancy a Christian on the bench giving a poorer Christian in the dock a sentence of three years' penal servitude and ten years' preventive detention for stealing two shillings! What is the use of Christianity when such things pass almost unnoticed? "Blessed are the merciful" is a nice text—but the sermon is three years' certain imprisonment and thirteen years' probable imprisonment for stealing a florin.

"Preventive detention" is a fine phrase, but we are dead against the thing it signifies while society is in its present condition. It simply means handing over poor wretches to almost endless wretchedness. Philosophers and philanthropists might work such a scheme with wisdom and humanity. But in the hands of judges, magistrates, prison officials, and police—as they are to-day—it is a hellish invention. And all the efforts and good intentions of Mr. Winston Churchill will not make it otherwise. Not out of disrespect to Mr. Churchill do we say this; on the contrary, we lift our hat to him with profound respect for taking into his own hands the case of this unfortunate man. And perhaps "the judge of all the earth," if such a being existed, would count it more to his credit than the biggest political speech he ever delivers or the biggest political battle he ever fights.

A Manchester Corporation Tram-guard writes to the *Manchester Evening News* of 24th ult., complaining of the unkindness, want of thought, and in many cases the *vindictiveness*, of people travelling to church and chapel on Sundays. He says:—

"We have more trouble with these people than we have with the workpeople and general public all through the week. These people all want change (3d. pieces and 6d. pieces), and what with their various other demands they make upon us, they often worry us out of our self-control, and then we are very lucky if we are not reported to some bigwig for any rough word we may use under annoyance."

The same old story.

The late Sir Charles Dilke's career was wrecked by sexual indiscretion, or by being found out, or by the puritan energies of Mr. W. T. Stead. Take it how you will. We had our own say on the subject in the eighties, and we do not propose to repeat it now. Dilke was a man of great ability and great information, but he had not the manners or the magnetism of a great popular leader. He was sound on the Bradlaugh question, and that must stand to his credit. We always understood that he was not overburdened with religious belief. The funeral service at Holy Trinity Church, Sloane-street, was probably a family arrangement.

Dilke had the reputation of a brilliant talker. He was certainly not a brilliant writer. His chief characteristic as a writer was solidity. If he possessed liveliness as a writer, he never imparted any of it to the *Athenæum*. Of late years nothing could be more stodgy than this highly respectable weekly. We wonder if it will brighten up under new auspices. Formerly, too, the *Athenæum* used to be liberal in matters of religion; latterly it has been of a churchwarden temper in that respect. Perhaps a change will be made here likewise.

Lord Curzon's Glasgow Rectorial Address on "East and West" opened up many interesting questions, most of which do not come within the scope of these columns. One point,

on which he was clear and emphatic, will be of interest to *Freethinker* readers. "I concur," he said, "in the view that the East is unlikely to accept Christianity, for two main reasons. First, the religions of Asia give to it what the Pagan mythologies did not give to Europe—namely, a definite and intelligible theory of the relations of God to man, which satisfies the spiritual aspirations as well as the day-to-day requirements of the Oriental; and, secondly, the latter sees in the teachings of Christianity something hostile to that revived self-consciousness of which I have spoken, and to which he clings as his dearest possession. Even if he had no objection to the dogmatic teaching of Christianity, he would not consent to become a Christian at the cost of ceasing to be an Asiatic." We commend Lord Curzon's expression of opinion to that portion of the British public that has not yet raised itself above placing reliance upon the highly colored reports of missionary societies.

Presumably, it would not do for one in Lord Curzon's position to disparage Christian efforts completely in the East, and so, following the words quoted above, he told his audience that Christianity had exerted an immense but silent influence upon the morality of the East. "It has taught the East philanthropy and pity." Now it is almost impossible for two civilisations to come into contact without their exerting some reciprocal influence, although there does not appear any obvious reason why this should be called Christian. And Eastern observers, particularly those belonging to Japan and China, are by no means convinced that the moral gain of the East from the West is of a marked or valuable character. Purely *Christian* morality—that is, the morality taught in the New Testament—the East has always possessed, and in Buddhism it has a far saner moral teaching than genuine Christianity has to offer. The idea of Christianity teaching the East philanthropy and pity is simply ridiculous. Indeed, if there were two things of which one can safely say that Eastern teaching is saturated with, it is these that Lord Curzon says the West has taught the East. What a pity it is that public men in England, when they do let out a little of the truth, immediately stultify themselves in order to placate the pious Mrs. Grundy.

We agree with Lord Curzon that if China organises her forces for industry and commerce she will become one of the great forces of the world. But we are not sure that China will not use her reorganised strength for aggressive purposes because of the "unwarlike character of her people." The warlike capacity of the Japanese people, manifested of recent years, has been so out of proportion to their previous record that one might fitly call them in relation to this an unwarlike people. Yet little more than a generation produced a transformation that astonished the world. And a fighting man is not such a miraculous or superhuman creation that he must needs take a few centuries to produce. Those who have studied the Chinese closely have not thought meanly of their military capacity, once they are properly drilled and led. A generation of Chinese brought up under different conditions and with different ideals would suffice to put an army in the field that would give Europe pause. And China has suffered enough wrong and indignity at the hands of the Christian powers to nerve her to the effort. Christians have taught China by experience that brute force is the only thing that the European Powers really respect. It is true that all the traditions of China are on the side of peace, and it is to be hoped that these will maintain their ascendancy. But if ever an armed China threatens the world it will be one of the clearest evidences of the real influence of the Christian West on the non-Christian East.

Quite a number of chapels have been closed in the East End of London of late years, owing, it is said, to the growth of the Jewish population—although we fancy other causes have contributed. One chapel that used to have a congregation of 1,500 people is now a Jewish synagogue. Others are put to more secular uses. One is being turned into a police-station, and another, that once belonged to the Primitive Methodists, is used for storing ice. This is a sample of the irony of fate with a vengeance! A building that once echoed the teachings of a genuine, unmodified "flat-footed hell" turned into a refrigerating chamber! But, after all, it is only symptomatic of the general course of events.

A Mohammedan mosque, costing £100,000, is shortly to be built in London. One of its principal objects is "to interpret Islam as a world-wide religion in all its varied aspects, and its deep needs, ethical and spiritual, to Christians." An active and enterprising Mohammedan missionary mosque in London should provide interesting developments. And, with the same process of gloss and reinterpretation of

the Koran that Christians use in relation to the Bible, we see no reason why the venture should not meet with a certain measure of success among Christians. We shall be interested in noting how Christians act towards the new venture.

It is high time to put a curb upon the tongues of Christian gentlemen who sit upon benches in what are called courts of justice. One of them, the other day, asked what a certain person did for a living. The answer was, "He is too old to work, he is seventy-seven." "Nonsense," the Christian gentleman on the bench replied, "a man is not too old to work at seventy-seven." As a general statement, could anything be more cynical?

Religious differences arose between Randolph Houghton and Bertha Smith, of Bolton. They were going to be married, but they quarreled over the Church they should be married in, and it's "off" now. But there is a magistrate's order for two shillings a week for the baby.

Rev. R. Clews, of St. Luke's, Lightbourne, has a quarrel with members of his congregation over a wooden cross, six feet high, which they want to bring into the church and which he won't have there. A pretty quarrel as it stands, and a pity to spoil it. A wooden cross is a good match for wooden heads.

Mr. John Martin, of Liverpool, writes us that there was a blunder in our paragraph on the Watt divorce case. He says that it was not the female respondent, but another lady, whom Watt took for a trip to Rhyd as his wife. We very much regret having been misled by a newspaper report, especially as Mr. Martin informs us that the female respondent "has been victim enough already." This correction, which we gladly publish, makes no difference to the character and achievements of the pious Watt.

Mr. R. J. Campbell should be more careful with his illustrations. In a recent sermon he perpetrated the following: "Take an acorn. Who could imagine, if they did not know, that a mighty oak-tree was wrapped up in that acorn? Cut it open and examine it as minutely as you like, you will not find the oak-tree that is to be; but it must be there, otherwise sun and rain could never call it forth." Well, we do not know that the oak-tree is in the acorn; we *know* it is not there. And the sun and rain do not call it forth. These are merely two of the conditions that enable the acorn to utilise material that will result in an oak-tree. Mr. Campbell's science, like much of his philosophising, sadly needs correction by the light of current knowledge.

Rev. Dr. Orchard thinks he can "understand, in a dim sort of way, why it is that God does not interfere to prevent natural calamities. If he did, it would certainly be fatal for human progress. We should attempt nothing and learn nothing." Now this way of understanding is certainly "dim" enough. In fact, it is decidedly foggy. Observe. Man learns the nature of certain calamities—say the cause of typhoid—and invents certain methods of preventing it. But if the typhoid germ were not there—by the grace of God—there could be no learning about it, and inventions would be needless. Should we, then, be any the worse off? If yes, then consider how badly off we are for lack of a number of evils that we do not possess, and which, if they existed, would still further stimulate our energies. Calamities are here because God permits them; the only virtue in learning about them is to destroy them or to nullify them. Man is doing exactly what God does not do. God does not do it because he would obstruct human progress. Is man, then, obstructing the progress of future generations when he removes an evil that, otherwise, the future would be able to learn from? And will God create new ones in order to provide these future generations with material for their development? In the end, says Dr. Orchard, evil will disappear. Man will then have nothing to learn and nothing to invent. He will be, at the end, exactly in the position that he might have been in the beginning if God had played his part in the business. Decidedly Dr. Orchard understands in a "dim sort of way." He is trying to penetrate a theological fog with an empty candlestick. Still, he is one of the leading Christian thinkers. God help the Christians

If Christianity were only real in this country! said the Bishop of Carlisle the other day. Of course the Bishop went on to point out the number of beautiful consequences that would ensue from Christianity being a real thing. For our own part, much as we dislike the Christianity that is current, and which the Bishop rightly characterised as being

mainly "one huge lie," we should like still less a Christianity that was real, in the proper sense of the word. One reason why there never has been a "real" Christianity is because common sense and daily experience showed how impossible such a thing was. The salvation of Christianity, merely as a continuous historic phenomenon, has been that each generation has had to correct its extravagances and impracticabilities by its own experience of life. And that is really what the Bishop of Carlisle is also doing. His Christianity is no more "real" than the Christianity he is attacking. It is simply a badly concocted mixture of modern ideas and ideals with a label that is both respectable and official.

"The suggestion of an expurgated edition of the Bible," made to the Association of Headmasters, recalls a story told in Sir Mountstuart Grant Duff's diary of M. Jozon, 'a grave, stern, Republican lawyer,' who went to Egypt to make arrangements for the debts of the Khedive's private estate. One day his British colleague asked him, in talking of the Pyramids, whether he had ever read the Old Testament. The flavor of the reply is not spoiled by the English language: 'Yes, I have a copy in my library; there are many things in that work which are not edifying.'"—*Daily Chronicle* (Jan. 13).

Rev. W. A. Barber, of Cambridge, has not gained knowledge or accuracy by being for nine years a missionary in China. Preaching lately at Nottingham, in connection with the Albert Hall Mission, he took for his text the foolish partisan text "Without God, no hope," on the strength of which he declared that "there is no genuine Atheist in a Christian country." There are thousands in *this* Christian country. We could introduce the reverend gentleman to more than he would probably wish to meet.

The Bishop of Lichfield has been appealing to a meeting on behalf of the Diocesan Church Extension. They wanted nine additional churches, and ten churches enlarged, nine mission buildings, twenty-three parsonage houses, and to increase the income of seventy benefices. They needed the money to do all this with, and the Bishop pleaded for it almost tearfully. The meeting was appropriately held at Weeping Cross.

According to old parish records, it cost £30 12s. to bury the parish minister of Balfron a hundred years ago. No less than £12 was spent for rum, wine, and brandy. What a fuddle the minister missed by being the corpse instead of a mourner!

When Dr. Torrey paid his first visit to England that peripatetic ignoramus inquired—in the course of one of his sermons—if any scientist could tell him from whence came the primitive protoplasm out of which *the universe was made*? And, of course, no one was able to answer. Now we see that Dr. Torrey has a successor in Dr. Campbell Morgan. From the summary of an article of his, contributed to the *Chicago Advance*, we learn that he is inclined to accept the doctrine of evolution—the scientific world will, of course, be duly elated at securing so notable a convert. But his is a discriminating adherence. Scientists, he says, trace things back and back, they see one developing from another, and if you had asked the scientists of thirty years ago where he would end, the reply would have been: "In the primordial, protoplasmic germ." Prodigious! Dr. Torrey and Dr. Campbell Morgan ought to be invited to give a course of lectures before the Royal Institution. Seriously, though, is there anywhere else but in the pulpit or in the religious press that such colossal ignorance could gain an appreciative hearing?

Mr. Morgan thinks more highly of present-day scientists. Perhaps he flatters them by assuming that they have reached the level of his own intellectual attainments. To-day, he says, the whispers (why whispers?) that he stops at electrons, and then speaks of a psychological beyond. "The scientist of to-day tells us he hears whispers—thunders of mind [how in the name of all that's absurd can one hear a thundering whisper?] and is conscious of psychological mysteries." We imagine that, with most scientists, the greatest mystery would be to understand the state of Dr. Campbell Morgan's mind; and many might decide that his was a case for a neural pathologist or a decent evening-class. At any rate, we hope that Sir Oliver Lodge, and those men of science who play to the religious gallery, are pleased with the class of converts they are making.

The Christian Evidence Society is desirous of interesting thoughtful Christians in "the great and pressing controversy with unbelief." Thoughtful Christians, we imagine, who

note this Society's work, and who study the methods of many of its advocates, will be inclined to give their support elsewhere. We have never heard of their doing any particular injury to unbelief, and we have a strong conviction that the finishing touch to many a Christian's belief must have been given by hearing a course of Christian Evidence lectures.

Dr. R. F. Horton is not in love with the results of the study of comparative religions, at which we are not at all surprised. He is particularly fearful of its influence on missionaries. "Difficulties," he says, "emerged from the closer sympathy with the religions which the missionaries go out to change." Quite so. Either they do not try to understand the religions of the people they seek to convert, or they make them the subject of a little serious study. If the former, people like educated Hindoos or Mohammedans feel they have already religious teachings that are as reasonable as anything Christianity has to offer, and are unaffected by missionary teaching. And if the latter, the missionary himself cannot avoid being struck by the points of similarity in the rival creeds, and he relaxes his efforts. In either case the outlook is not a very hopeful one.

"There is a pathetic desire on the part of some defenders of the faith to call in allies from every quarter. There is delirious joy if a literary man is on the side of the faith or a scientist confirms it. Surely the joy ought to be more restrained." So says a writer in the *Christian World*, and both the complaint and the advice are timely. Christians who felt really convinced of the truth of their creed would not be so anxious as are most of them to secure a good testimonial from a prominent man whose own Christianity is often of a very doubtful character. The "pathetic desire" referred to is really strong evidence that with most Christians to-day there is an uneasy consciousness that their religious beliefs are sadly in need of evidence. And as this is not forthcoming, it is naturally soothing to their feelings to reflect that certain well-known people, in spite of their learning or ability, still support Christianity—at least in name. This is really all it amounts to. Their support is, in spite of their learning, not a consequence of either their knowledge or their ability.

"No Christian man," said the Rev. E. E. Fisher, preaching in the London-street Primitive Methodist Chapel, Reading, "No Christian man has a right to invest in slum property or in breweries." Two prominent members of the congregation got up and walked out. Perhaps they had a bit in both. No doubt the reverend gentleman will be more careful next time. He should remember "Christians" include all sorts of people; some good, more bad, and most indifferent.

Czar Nicholas headed the procession of the royal family at the recent tomfool ceremony of Blessing the Waters of the Neva at St. Petersburg. Tens of thousands of soldiers were there to see that he took no harm—although his subjects, as distinguished from his officials, were not allowed to look on except at a very respectful distance. The White Czar of Holy Russia dare not go amongst his own people.

The coroner at Royton, Lancashire, rebuked a midwife for burying a "still-born" a child that had lived a day. "You ought not," he said, "to have treated the child like an animal. You knew that it had lived, and therefore had an immortal soul." The Manchester City Coroner is an M.A. and M.D. and a barrister, and no doubt a very clever man; but he is no better authority than the midwife on the subject of immortal souls. It was the *body* that had to be disposed of; the "soul" in all cases is left to look after itself. The coroner accused the midwife of *knowing* what he certainly doesn't know himself.

Pearson's Weekly has a column by Peter Keary headed "My Notebook." This gentleman looks upon Freethinkers as half-intelligent reformers. It is natural, of course, that they should fall short of his intellectual greatness; but some of them might give him lessons in English composition. "Editors," he says, "do not steal ideas like some people think." If he wrote such English in our columns he would soon have to choose between doing better and clearing out.

A retired tailor, named Aylott, died suddenly at a Bible Class for men conducted by Canon Herbert Jones at Hitchin Town Hall. Had he been an Atheist at a Freethought meeting, it would have been "a judgment." In the circumstances, it was only an incident.

Rev. Dr. Aked, of Liverpool, was tempted off to New York, where Rockefeller is a member of his congregation. Rev.

Dr. Jowett, of Birmingham, now follows suit, he explains that he goes to a salary which is only an equivalent of the one he leaves at Carr's-lane Chapel. But we dare say the word "equivalent" will be interpreted liberally. And all salaries are open to revision.

Dr. Jowett followed the usual plan in respect to his invitation to New York. It was tendered to him several times. When he first received it, and decided to decline it, he said he felt sure it was *not* the will of God that he should go. When he last received it, and decided to accept it, he said he felt it *was* the will of God that he should go. The will of God veered about with Dr. Jowett's interests and inclinations. Yet the gentlemen of the Black Army charge Atheists with taking God's name in vain.

Rev. A. J. Waldron, as a Christian minister, does well to try to cure "alcoholism," which is promoted by several texts in the "blessed book" that he and his friends call the Word of God. The wine that "cheereth God and man" ought to be strongish stuff, like the beverage that a man is to drink and "forget his poverty and remember his misery no more." Mr. Waldron announces that he has a certain cure for alcoholism; it is so efficacious, indeed, that you needn't leave off drinking to be cured by it of your "craving." There ought to be a big run upon it. It will suit old toppers to a T.

We take the following from a special article on "Sunday Concerts" in a recent number of the *London Daily Chronicle*:—

"From many denominations comes the plaint of dwindling congregations, of sermons preached to a few old folk in a 'beggarly array of empty benches,' of the failure of evening services to attract the young people who formerly came, hymn-book in hand, to lift up their hearts in praise. The Free Churches have just revealed their profound uneasiness in regard to this matter. The Church of England makes no secret of its discontent. Even the 'popular preacher' is losing his following, however big his posters."

This is pretty plain speaking. The truth on such matters crops up now and then even in "respectable" newspapers.

The *Glasgow Herald* thinks that Presbyterianism will have to buck up. "The time has come," it says, "for a resolute dealing with this tremendous problem in cities like Glasgow, for the drift from the churches is proceeding at a pace that no half-measures will stop." The "drift" is all right. We doubt the Presbyterian buck-up.

The *Church Missionary Gleaner* thanks God "for the baptism of the head chief of the Blackfeet"—Indians in North West Canada. Three cheers for Blackfeet! He will be a good stiff job for J. C. when he carries the soap-and-towel performance, which he treated "the twelve" to, in that part of the world.

From another note in the same journal we infer that, although the missionaries make such few converts, they are far from sure of those they do make. The Lord is asked "To keep and strengthen in the faith the Eskimo Christians on Blacklead Island." We daresay the prayer is necessary.

Cornish Nonconformists are up in arms against the general exclusion of Dissenting teachers from the Truro Diocesan Training College. They would have our sympathy if they did not join Churchmen in keeping non-Christian teachers out of all Training Colleges.

The Congregationalists have been having a field-day at Dewsbury in aid of the central fund for ministerial support, which needs another £250,000. Sir M. Olroyd, who occupied the chair, is ex-Mayor and ex-M.P., he has made a lot of money in the wool business, and is altogether the sort of man that Nonconformists delight to honor. In the course of his speech he had a lucid interval and made an open confession. He said that Independents looked up to Christ as their great Head, but that had a certain disadvantage. "The very fact of their lifting their eyes heavenward," he said, "debarred them from seeing their brethren on the right hand and on the left. Hence the tendency of Independency had been to make them too independent, not sufficiently fraternal, and they had been so proud of their Independency..... that they had really fallen into the other extreme of forgetting and neglecting their neighbors." We quite believe it.

The practice of holding lotteries in connection with Roman Catholic bazaars in Ireland has grown into scandalous proportions; so much so, indeed, that the Archbishop of Dublin

is making an effort to put them down. We doubt if he will succeed. Lotteries have always been popular in Roman Catholic countries.

"How the whirligig of time brings in its revenges!" Saint Paul said: "I suffer not a woman to teach." The Archbishop of Canterbury has just given diplomas to half-a-dozen ladies who have passed an examination in theology. His hope is that "their knowledge may be imparted to other women," and his belief is that "women have their place as well as men in spreading the Gospel." Thus the Church gives way at every point—when it must.

Having made himself an authority on most things in this world, the Bishop of London is now setting up as a final authority on the affairs of the next world. He has just been informing the world that "the idea that the spirit slept after death is a complete delusion," the truth being that "the man was the same man five minutes after death as five minutes before it." We hardly think his lordship could have learnt this from personal experience. We suppose, therefore, he must have learnt it by telephone from heaven. Or is it only a bold guess on his part? One would really like to know, if he wouldn't mind telling.

"The frozen grin of the ecclesiastic, most conspicuous on the countenance of the Catholic Cardinal Gibbons, of Baltimore, must have turned to a sneer the other day in Washington when 'diplomats, statesmen, jurists, and soldiers,' to quote a local paper, united in 'paying homage' to the 'venerable primate of the Roman Catholic Church in America.' It was 'the cardinal's Sunday,' with a celebration at St. Patrick's cathedral, and a luncheon at which the politicians gathered. There was not much in common between them except that they are all tax-eaters and need the Roman Catholic vote. Most significant was the presence of Judge White, the newly appointed chief justice of the United States Supreme Court, and his declaration, added to flattering words about the cardinal, that the longer he lived the more he became convinced that religion (meaning Roman Catholicism, for he is a Catholic) was necessary to the existence of the government. We can imagine with what elation a Supreme Court justice holding those views would affirm the constitutionality of a law against admitting attacks upon religion to the privileges of the United States mails."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

The *Schoolmaster* quotes some warm words of the Earl of Kimberley's against the beating of children by schoolmasters and schoolmistresses. Our contemporary looks upon him as little short of a maniac for objecting to what is evidently looked upon as necessary discipline. But the mania, in our opinion, is on the other side. We would take away from all school officials the right to beat other people's children. If they say they *must* beat them, we reply that this is the way of all vicious indulgences; after a time they become essential to existence. Certainly there is no other "must" in the case. Children are not beaten in the schools of other civilised nations; why should they be beaten in the schools of England? We pause for a reply.

Perhaps if the Bible were taken out of the public schools the cane might soon follow. Religion and brutality have always gone so well together, and the "Blessed Book" teaches the virtue of corporal chastisement. Yes, the absence of Christianity and the Bible will not only be good for the children, it will tend to civilise the teachers.

NOT A SURE THING.

Mike Mullen is fond of telling this good little joke on his own district—the Eighth Ward—which sends him, their benefactor and guardian, to Council regularly:

"It was during a hot city campaign and a colored preacher was exhorting his congregation to vote the right ticket and bring peace and righteousness to the community. He pleaded with them to stand for the men who would bring about law enforcement and rid the city of dishonesty or immorality.

He preached and waved his arms, called forth the wrath of the Lord on those who did not 'line up right,' and his blessing upon those who stood for the right, and ended with the solemn statement and benediction: 'God will rule Cincinnati!'

Up jumped a flashily dressed young Negro in the rear and shouted: 'Ten to one he doesn't carry the Eighth Ward!'

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

February 12, Manchester; 26, Birmingham.
 March 5, Liverpool; 19 and 26, Queen's Hall, London.
 April 2, Stratford Town Hall; April 9, Glasgow.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—February 5, Birmingham; 12 and 19, Queen's Hall, London; 26, Glasgow. March 5, Manchester; 12, Queen's Hall; 19, Stratford Town Hall.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—February 19, Failsworth; 26, Queen's Hall. March 5, Queen's Hall; 12, West Ham; 19, Glasgow; 26, Stratford Town Hall. April 2, Manchester; 23, Liverpool.

R. BREWSTER.—We are always careful to quote accurately. It is one of the courtesies due to writers in general, and one of the most obvious respects due to great writers. The phrase you refer to is miserably misquoted in the paper you mention. It occurs in Carlyle's account of the death of his friend John Sterling. Four days before his death Sterling wrote "some stanzas of verse" for Carlyle, "written," the latter says, "as if in star-fire and immortal tears; which are among my sacred possessions, to be kept for myself alone." To change "star-fire" into "star-shine" is—well, we would rather not say what it is.

E. K.—You score a bullseye when you say that "there is no real progress alongside of religion."

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

J. W. M.—It would be an endless task if we had to hunt up past "Acid Drops" for our readers and give further information and verification. The Liverpool Stipendary's statement, for instance, was quoted in our columns at the time of the disturbances, with details of time and place. It is impossible for us to do more. Glad to hear the *Freethinker* is your "weekly intellectual treat." Your letter in the local newspaper should do good.

TURPENTINE.—You might find them in an old Prayer Book; otherwise only in expensive ecclesiastical law books.

GALLO.—Your questions seem to us nonsensical. "Nature" is a personification, as you use it. You talk as if she kept a school for teaching cunning. We answered you on the general matter a fortnight ago.

J. DOBSON.—Glad you have "enjoyed" the *Freethinker* for years, and that it "always cheers" you. If you have given "endless copies away" in order to "change a few people" you have succeeded. One person brought to the truth through your efforts may be the vital centre of the conversion of scores, hundreds, thousands. You never can tell. Go on sowing the seed, and trust to the law of causation. The task is difficult! All the more honor to those who undertake it.

E. A. AND A. R. WYKES.—Thanks for good wishes.

J. BARRY.—A new in rôle indeed.

T. COMERFORD.—See paragraph. Thanks.

A. CLAWKE.—The binding part of a church marriage is the same as that of a marriage at a registrar's; and it is the only part that the State takes notice of—namely, the undertaking to which both bride and bridegroom put their signatures.

W. BAILEY.—Much obliged for your practical interest in our circulation. If the rest of our readers would follow your example, and do what they can to push our circulation, it might double during 1911.

T. HODGSON.—Pleased to hear you have obtained us six new readers, and that the people around you are turning more and more from the cant of Christianity to the teachings of Atheism. See paragraph *re* enclosure.

R. M. BRADNER.—So you are "amazed at our ignorance," are you? Well, we are not amazed at yours. The Revised Version makes the text about God's not caring for oxen still stronger. After quoting the old command "Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn," the Revised Version makes Paul continue: "Is it for the oxen that God careth, or saith he it altogether for our sake? Yea, for our sake it was written."

E. B.—Thanks for cuttings.

HARRY SHAW.—Pleased to see your excellent letter in the local *Courier*, and glad to hear the circulation of the *Freethinker* is increasing in your locality, largely through your own efforts.

JOHN GREEN.—You want to know what a *Freethinker* is. Read this paper for a bit and you will find out. It is more than we can put into a sentence in this column.

W. C. B.—You could get the *Freethinker*, and probably other advanced literature, at Smith & Son's bookshop, 61 Dale-street, Liverpool.

W. H. EAYRES.—We had a paragraph already in print on the subject. The Bishop of London is one of the biggest "bounders" in England; which is saying a good deal.

F. ALLEN.—See "Personal." Thanks.

W. CHALLIS.—We have seen it, but thanks all the same. Pleased to hear you say, "There is nothing I enjoy so much as my *Freethinker*."

A. H. SMITH.—Why be ashamed of ten shillings? Some are not ashamed at nothing. Which looks like bad English; but it isn't.

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

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

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

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

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

Personal.

HAVING a very bad cold last week, and in the doctor's hands, although I kept up work with my pen at my desk, and not knowing how it might turn out, I thought it prudent to postpone my visit to Glasgow, rather than have the bills and other advertising done, and then perhaps be unable to undertake the long journey. It was necessary, in short, to be on the safe side. My visit to Glasgow, therefore, is postponed until April 9. And I hope this notice will be in good time to prevent any disappointment to "saints" who were coming from a distance to hear the lectures.

I got through my lecture at Queen's Hall all right, working a little harder than usual, of course, and I am going to speak to-night at the Rationalist Peace Society's meeting. And I hope to get rid of the balance of my bad cold very shortly. It is not the lecturing itself, it is the travelling that is so risky.

Tuesday, Jan. 31.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote's audience at the Queen's (Minor) Hall went on improving week by week, and Sunday evening's meeting (the last of the five) was considerably the largest of all. It was not only a fine, but a most appreciative and enthusiastic meeting. The musical part of the evening's program, from 7 to 7.30, was much enjoyed. Then came an unannounced item. Mr. Foote's daughter Florence (recently married, so that she is no longer *Miss* Foote, except on these occasions), who was warmly welcomed by the audience, recited the strongest and most pathetic portion of Tennyson's *Enoch Arden*. She recited it beautifully, with her pure young voice and her natural dramatic faculty, and was vociferously applauded. Mr. Foote's lecture on "The Bible" was followed for over an hour with bright attention, punctuated with frequent laughter and cheers. Mr. F. A. Davies, who occupied the chair, invited discussion, but could not elicit any. A few questions, however, were asked and answered. Thus ended the January course of Sunday evening lectures at Queen's Hall. In spite of many disadvantages, including detestable weather, these lectures have been unquestionably successful. And we hope the success will be continued through February and March.

The Queen's Hall platform will be occupied this evening (Feb. 5) by Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, the only surviving member of the Bradlaugh family, which once numbered five. Her mother died ever so many years ago, her brother Charles died even before that, her sister Alice died in the eighties, and she herself, we hope, will live for many years, if only to keep Christian insects off her father's memory. Mrs. Bonner's subject is "Freethought and the Portuguese Revolution." We bespeak for her a large audience and a very hearty welcome.

Mr. Cohen follows Mrs. Bonner at the Queen's Hall for two Sunday evenings, and will in turn be followed for two Sunday evenings by Mr. Lloyd. Particulars will be found in our advertisement pages. "Saints" are earnestly requested to advertise these meetings by circulating the neat printed announcements which can be obtained of Miss Vance at the N. S. S. office, 2 Newcastle-street, E.C.

Mr. Cohen had good meetings at Liverpool on Sunday. He lectures to-day at the King's Hall, Birmingham, where he is sure to have good meetings, being well-known and popular there.

Mr. Lloyd was to have lectured at Maesteg, in Glamorganshire, last Sunday, but the Christian bigots took care to keep him out of the place. They didn't frighten *him*, of course, but they frightened the management of the hall that was depended upon, so that it was refused at the last

minute, too late to make arrangements for elsewhere. Mr. Lloyd thus lost a Sunday, the Maesteg people lost two good lectures, the management of the hall lost the rent, and the bigots gained—what? Perhaps they think they have kept Christianity going a week or two longer in their district.

The following is an extract from the letter of a subscriber to the President's Honorarium Fund:—

"My subscription for 1910 is somewhat late in its payment.....I now try to make amends by paying this year's more promptly. Appreciating very much the good things that fall from your pen in the *Freethinker*, and wishing you continued good health, Yours faithfully, EDWARD OLIVER."

Mr. Oliver's cheque is for 1910 and 1911 together. We wish all subscribers had his financial conscience.

Mr. W. Bailey, of Manchester, in sending his annual cheque for the President's Honorarium Fund, encloses also a cheque for a year's subscription for two weekly copies of the *Freethinker*. "I intend," he says, "to present them to my friends, in order to try to increase the circulation of your paper." Mr. Bailey wishes us "the best of health to continue our uphill fight against the common enemy."

Mr. George Payne, of Manchester, has forwarded a cheque for £50 to the Secular Society, Ltd., completing the gift of £250 which he expressed his intention of making to the Society's funds. We wish some other "saint" would go and do likewise. That is why we mention the matter,—which we do in spite of Mr. Payne's dislike of being advertised, just to "encourage the others."

The *Wood Green Sentinel* had a very sympathetic notice of the death of Mr. Alexander Lewis, whose demise and funeral are recorded by the N. S. S. secretary in another part of this week's *Freethinker*. "Men who were opposed to his ideas about religion," our contemporary says, "nevertheless held him in high respect as a fair-minded, very honest, and really educated man."

The annual meeting of the Secular Education League will be held in the Conference Room of the National Liberal Club on Tuesday evening, February 28. After the members' meeting for the transaction of business there will be a public meeting, addressed by various speakers whose names will appear in due course. We hope to see a good meeting, and many of our readers present. The League's object is one in which Freethinkers should be supremely interested.

Mr. Arthur Holland, the Bilston head-postman, retiring after forty years' service with a well-earned pension, is the recipient of a testimonial by the inhabitants of the town. Being interviewed by a representative of the *Birmingham Express and Star*, Mr. Holland related some interesting experiences. It appears that he used to be called "the Radical postman,"—"but thanks to the advice of his old friend Charles Bradlaugh, he never trespassed against the rules of the Post Office." We congratulate Mr. Holland on following Charles Bradlaugh's characteristic advice.

Mr. Foote's late article in the *Freethinker* on "The 'Why' of Ethics" has been reprinted as No. 57 of the "Truthseeker Tracts" by Mr. George Macdonald at the instance of Dr. E. B. Foote, of New York, and has thus crossed the Atlantic to do duty in America. The only alteration made is in the heading, which runs—"Why Be Good, Without Fear of Hell or Hope of Heaven? The Secular Answer."

☹ We keep losing old friends with the lapse of time. One of them will soon be what may be called half lost. He is going to settle in the United States. "I shall, however," he writes, "keep in contact with you through the medium of the *Freethinker* as soon as I attain to a permanent address. With greatest admiration and appreciation of your invaluable work and self-sacrifice, I send you all good wishes." Evidently we don't wear our readers out. This one has been reading the *Freethinker* more years than we care to count.

President's Honorarium Fund, 1911.

Fourth List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £85 17s. 8d. J. Harker, £1; E. K., 5s.; G. White, 10s.; J. A. T., 5s.; Sunlight "Saints," 5s.; R. Walsh, £2; J. Dobson, 6s.; W. Bailey, £6; Dr. A. Martin, £2; H. C., 10s.; J. A. M., 5s.; A. R. Wykes, 2s.; E. A. Wykes, 1s.; Rev. U. Dhammaloka (Rangoon), £1; Edward Oliver (1910 and 1911), £4 4s.; J. O. Restall, 5s.; W. Palmer, 1s.; A. H. Smith, 10s.

The Hybrid Mare's Nest.

DESPITE the brilliant expositions of evolutionary science which authors of the highest eminence have submitted to the reading public, the crudest misconceptions permeate the popular mind in matters relating to the doctrine of descent. There prevails a widespread belief that the barrenness of the hybrid offspring of the horse and ass, canaries and finches, etc., presents an insurmountable barrier to the acceptance of the theory of evolution. In ordinary casual conversation, as well as in deliberate discussion, we have been repeatedly confronted with an alleged universal sterility of plant and animal hybrids; and this has almost invariably been accounted a chasm between "species" and "species" which can never be bridged.

To the trained biological thinker the phenomena of hybridisation possess little value or importance as factors in organic evolution. He, above all men, is aware that the hybrid offspring of crosses between species and species, or even species and genera, have, to say the least of it, played a very unimportant part in the development of modified organic structures.

Nevertheless, it need not be deemed an act of supererogation to in some degree outline the extent to which fertile hybridisation has been demonstrated by the comparatively few experiments conducted by practical breeders and students of flora and fauna, in their natural and native surroundings. In the vegetable kingdom, indubitable instances of successful hybridisation are too numerous for detailed description within the limits of an article. Professor de Vries, the famous Amsterdam botanist, records many examples of fertile crosses between separate species of plants. Among others, he mentions the hybrid which results from the cross-fertilisation of the purple with the yellow species of lucerne. This plant, writes the Professor, "is cultivated in some parts of Germany on a large scale, as it is more productive than the ordinary lucerne." Some of the most beautiful florists' flowers have been produced by crossing one species with another. Yet notorious hybrids, such as petunias, rhododendrons, crinums, and pelargoniums are perfectly fertile. And the Epicurian fruit-eater may be reminded that Burbank, the celebrated Californian horticulturalist, has produced a hybrid between the blackberry and raspberry which is not only perfectly fertile, but deservedly popular both as a novel product and a table delicacy.

When one plant species readily lends itself to fertilisation by the pollen, or male element of another, the converse relation usually obtains. In some cases, however, hybridisation is invariably one-sided. Darwin describes the experiments of Kölreuter, during which that distinguished botanist readily obtained seeds from *Mirabilis jalapa* with the pollen of *M. longiflora*, while investigations extending through eight years, and embracing over two hundred experiments with the pollen of the former upon the stigma of the latter, failed to produce a single seed.

The fully established examples of successful hybridisation in the animal kingdom may be reviewed at greater length. When the mammals are examined, many striking instances are brought to light. Two quite separate species, the brown and polar bear, interbreed freely, and the resulting cubs are capable of procreation. There is, or recently was, in the Zoological Gardens a hybrid of this nature, which was successfully crossed with a pure polar bear. In America the ordinary domesticated cows are occasionally covered by the untamed bison bull, and the calves or "cataloes" of this union are quite fertile. When the bison cow is mated with the domestic bull she fails to procreate, and this barrenness brings into prominence the delicate considerations which determine successful hybridisation. The tamed Indian yak is notoriously fertile when

crossed with the quite distinct zebu which roams through the Himalayan areas of Northern India. The resulting hybrids are likewise perfectly fruitful. "Yet the zebu and the Indian buffalo, living constantly side by side in the plains of India, never interbreed at all."*

Another Indian instance is presented by undomesticated native ruminants. The wild mammoth rams of the Himalaya (*Ovis ammon*), a sheep as large as an ass, sometimes covers ewes of the Urial breed (*Ovis ignei*), a quite unlike domesticated species similar in size to animals composing ordinary flocks. Numerous young were lambed, and these hybridous offspring interbred with the pure Urials of the flock with the greatest facility. It is customary among the natives of Asia Minor to cross the female of the one-humped species with the male of the two-humped Bactrian camel. Mendelian dominance appears to prevail in this particular cross, the hybrids being one-humped like the maternal parent. They are prolific when interbred with the pure species; the hybrids are strong and useful, although succeeding generations appear to deteriorate.

The diminutive deer of Japan (*Cervus sika*), that interesting feature in the landscape of some English parks, is fully fertile when intermingling with the red deer, and their progeny are procreant. That quite distinct carnivore, the stoat, has been successfully crossed with the common domesticated ferret, a descendant of the polecat, and their hybrid offspring have proved fruitful. An even more remarkable instance is afforded by the cross breeding of the male goat (*Capra*) with the domesticated sheep. The offspring of this union are well known to have remained fertile—both among themselves and with parent sheep and goats—for several generations. This phenomenon is the more striking as the animals successfully hybridised are not merely members of separate species, but of different genera. We are informed by Professor Packard that Caton has hybridised the common Virginian with the Ceylon and other species of deer, with healthy and prolific results. And among rodents we find the well-authenticated instances of free inter-crossing of hares and rabbits, and the hybrid progeny have proved fertile for generations.

As a result of the circumstance that our feathered friends have been more closely studied and bred in captivity than most other classes of animals, this order furnishes numerous examples of fertile hybridisation. A classical case is that of the fruitful union of the Chinese and common goose. These birds have freely interbred for a long period with no sign of lessening fertility. A fertile hybrid has resulted from the pairing of the Rosella parrakeet with the parrakeet of Pennant; and its departure from the parent stocks was so pronounced that, when first described, it was mistaken for a separate species.

Fruitful hybrids have also been obtained through the sexual union among themselves, of distinct species of pheasants, doves, finches, wagtails, crows, and various other feathered bipeds. Similar phenomena occur among amphibia. Two species of newt native to France have been known to freely interbreed under natural conditions. Corroborative evidence is supplied by the great naturalist, De Quatrefages, with reference to insects. He intimates that the hybrid products of silk-moths have proved fertile through eight generations, even when bred *inter se*.

The preceding illustrations prove that the phenomena of hybridism are possible to a considerable extent within fluctuating limits. Critical experiments of the most prolonged and painstaking character have demonstrated that fruitful union never occurs between plant or animal organisms of widely separate genera. The most remote cross of which authenticated specimens exist in the bird world, is that between the red grouse and bantam cock. Grouse are usually grouped by ornithologists as a family distinctly divided from that of the partridges

and pheasants which are near relatives of our domesticated fowls. But the relationship is obviously fairly close, and other favorable circumstances facilitate the cross breeding which has unquestionably taken place between grouse and fowls.

All the experimental work hitherto conducted leads to the conclusion that the more closely related organisms are to one another, the greater are the chances of generating healthy and prolific offspring through cross breeding. The popular beliefs in the genesis of hybrid monstrosities through the sexual congress of cats and rabbits, fowls and ducks, human beings and the lower animals, must all be dismissed to the realms of superstition. Whenever these old wive's fables are traced to their alleged sources they promptly collapse. Physical and physiological laws may no more be set at naught in the processes of procreation than in any other biological phenomenon.

Dogs, wolves, and foxes appear to interbreed readily enough, and all the various canine races intermingle and produce mongrel offspring with the most reckless prodigality. But even this is circumscribed. Physical considerations alone render impossible the act of coition between a Newfoundland and a King Charles' spaniel. But the fact remains that, apart from special conditions which preclude the performance of the reproductive function, the numerous races and varieties of dogs, cats, cattle, sheep, horses, pigs, and even mankind itself, all freely interbreed with their respective congeners, and the most enduring fertility results.

That the difficulty of successful hybridisation increases with the more and more extended departure from the recognised relationship of the plants or animals involved is a general proposition that no competent naturalist will dispute. And the facts are precisely those that any philosophical student of evolutionary processes would anticipate. The production of hybrid organisms has had little or nothing to do with the origin of species in a state of nature. Whether the transmutations which organic forms have demonstrably undergone are to be solely traced to the agency of natural selection; whether the factors of mutation have materially assisted in modifying living structures, or whether the changes set up in plants and animals by their surrounding circumstances and modes of life have also assisted in the transformation in question, no matter what causal theory we favor, hybridity is entirely out of court. On this point, then, we may be morally certain that, were there no fertile hybrids on this planet, instead of the relatively large number which a small amount of experimental investigation has revealed, the doctrine of evolution would remain as soundly established as any historical phenomenon can conceivably be. Great Nature presents abundant illustrations of birth, growth, and development in all her vast and varied manifestations. The Evolutionary Law is simply an amplification and extension of the transformations displayed in the individual lives of organic and inorganic structures; each and all perform their transient parts in those ceaseless activities which the gifted materialist philosopher, Arrhenius, has happily termed the Life of the Universe.

T. F. P.

Tales of Our Times.

BY A CYNIC.

I.

A good Christian lay dying. He had lived a true and honest life. He had knowingly wronged no man, and was esteemed and respected by all who knew him. He had also faithfully observed the precepts of his religion, and was thus, according to the dogmas of his faith, sure of eternal happiness in the future state on which he was about to enter. Moreover, death was approaching kindly, for he was in no pain and had full possession of his mental powers.

Yet his death-bed was a scene of poignant anguish on the part of all his loved ones. The doctor has just informed

* Dewar and Finn, *The Making of Species*, p. 120.

his heart-broken wife that he had but a few hours to live, and she was kneeling by the bedside, weeping in silent misery. A clergyman was also kneeling there, praying in a broken voice, and around the bed stood his children and other relatives with bowed heads and tearful eyes.

As the clergyman rose from his knees there came a knock at the door, and one of the dying man's dearest friends, an Atheist, entered the room.

"Well, old man," said the Atheist, approaching the bed and taking the dying man's hand. "I have heard that you are about to leave us, and have come to say good-bye. It is hard on all your friends, who will miss you horribly, but it must be grand for you. You're feeling all right, of course?"

"Yes, all right," said the sick man, smiling faintly.

"Courage, old chum," said the Atheist, cheerfully. "Remember the words of the jolly old Persian whose philosophy we have so often discussed together:—

'While the rose blows along the river brink
With old Khayám the ruby vintage drink,
And when the Angel with his darker draught
Draws up to thee—take that, and do not shrink.'

And the Atheist laughed softly—actually laughed in the chamber of death, while all the people standing around looked inexpressibly shocked.

"Ah, that is good," said the sick man, brightening up. "Courage—yes, my friend, you give me courage."

"If ever I could believe as you believe I should wish to do so now," said the Atheist, "for then I should believe that our parting would be only temporary. But such consolations are not for me."

"No, no," said the dying man. "We shall meet again, I hope. God is just, and there can be no heaven from which any honest man could be justly excluded."

The clergyman turned up his eyes in pious horror at this unorthodox sentiment, and the others looked more shocked than before.

"That is bravely and generously spoken," said the Atheist, pressing the dying man's hand; "and so good-bye, dear old friend."

With that he passed quietly out of the room, while the others fell to weeping and praying once more, with every sign of inconsolable grief.

II.

A boat full of human beings was cast adrift upon the wide ocean. No help was in sight.

In the hurry of escape from their sinking ship a very limited supply of provisions had been secured. Some had been able to bring with them a few loaves of bread, others a tin or two of biscuits or of meat, another a keg of water, and so on. Some poor wretches had brought nothing, having barely had time to escape with their lives.

Presently discussion arose as to the ordering of affairs in the boat, especially with regard to the food.

One of the castaways suggested that all the provisions should be shared equally by all the persons in the boat.

"What!" exclaimed a prosperous-looking individual sitting comfortably on the cushioned seats at the stern. "Shall those share equally who are unable to contribute equally? This man is a Socialist—a dangerous revolutionary Socialist. Unless he is thrown overboard at once we shall all utterly perish."

So they all yelled, "Socialist, Socialist—overboard with him." And overboard he went.

"Now, my friends," said the prosperous-looking individual, "there is only one equitable method of distribution. We must act in accordance with the long established Principles of our Economic System, which are simply that every man keeps as much as he can of his own property, and gets as much as he can of his neighbor's. Here is a pack of cards. I propose that we play for each other's loaves, tins of meat, and kegs of water. A fair deal and no favor, and the Devil take the hindmost."

So they played, and the prosperous-looking individual, having more skill and cunning than the others, soon won everything.

As the days passed by the winner lolled on the cushioned seats at the stern, eating and drinking comfortably, while the others gradually famished away, dying of starvation one by one. But they were quite content to abide by the Principles of their Economic System—the phrase had such a fine, convincing sound about it.

III.

"May I be permitted to ask what is your ultimate object in governing the three hundred millions of us?" inquired the intelligent Hindu.

"Certainly," said John Bull, pompously. "My object is your own highest good. My sole aim is to raise you in the scale of civilisation, to make you better citizens of the world, to implant in your Oriental breasts the noble ideals of European morality, to teach you our sublime Religion —"

"Which one?" interrupted the Hindu. "You teach us so many varieties, you know."

"And in short," went on John Bull, with an impatient wave of his hand, for he hated any interruption when in the full flow of his eloquence, "in short, to make men of you—men, sir, not the children of ignorance and superstition which I found you."

"I see," said the intelligent Hindu, apparently much impressed.

"This is what my little Jingo Jangler, Rudyard Kipling, calls the White Man's Burden, and that burden I'm always prepared to take up," continued John Bull, squaring his broad shoulders. "I'm the only party on this planet whom I consider fit to bear it, and if anyone tries to take the job from me—well, I'll know the reason why."

"And in learning how to attain this desirable state you would, of course, wish me to pursue the same methods as have proved so effective during your own distinguished career?" asked the Hindu, mildly.

"Certainly," said John Bull. "You couldn't possibly do better than follow my example."

"And you would wish me carefully to cultivate and develop those noble qualities which have made you the pride and glory of the world?" asked the Hindu, with a winning smile.

"By all means," replied John Bull, highly flattered. "If you do that you won't go far wrong."

The intelligent Hindu went home, and at once wrote an excellent article on the advantages of Political Freedom, Self-Government, Democracy, Equal Rights, and all the rest of it.

"God bless my soul!" exclaimed John Bull, when he opened his morning paper. "That damned Baboo has taken my remarks much too literally. This won't do at all."

So the intelligent Hindu went to prison for a while, to reflect on John Bull's method of taking up the White Man's Burden.

IV.

Once upon a time (later Tertiary time) there dwelt in the land of Lemuria (which now lies at the bottom of the Indian Ocean) the Pithecanthropus Erectus, or Ape-Man. Though the Pithecanthropi had a cranial capacity of about fifty-five cubic inches, and though there was no doubt as to their possession of a hippocampus minor (see Huxley), their intellectual capacity could scarcely be termed brilliant. However, they were getting on, for the better educated among them could count up to three, and their profoundest mathematicians had discovered that two and two made four. Their philosophers, too, had reached such important generalisations as that a whole was greater than any of its parts, but whether or not things that were equal to the same thing were equal to each other was still a subject of some controversy.

Nor were their attainments confined to matters of pure speculation only. They had their keen observers of nature who had discovered that bodies fall to the earth when unsupported, that water steadily refuses to flow up hill, and many other interesting and noteworthy physical facts.

But perhaps their cleverest achievement was their discovery of a God, even at this early date, and their invention of a Religion to fit him. He dwelt in a deep and gloomy gorge among the mountains of Lemuria, and his special abode was a great, dark cavern running into the mountain side at the head of the valley. Whenever a Pithecanthropus entered this gorge and shouted loudly the God's voice could be heard answering in the distance, but if he stood actually at the mouth of the cavern (which was as far as any Pithecanthropus dared go) and spoke to the God, even in a low tone of voice, every word of the deity's reply could be distinctly heard. So it was clear that the God lived in the cavern; and it was also clear that he slumbered not nor slept, but was always ready to attend to the requests of his faithful Pithecanthropi, for at any time, day or night, his replies to their supplications were prompt and certain.

True enough it was that the God's replies were merely verbatim repetitions of what the Pithecanthropi told him, but they accounted for this by assuming that the God repeated their words thus accurately as a sign to them that their requests had been duly heard and noted—which was quite as good an assumption as one finds in many later Religions.

Thus originated Religion on the earth—in empty sound and hollow mockery. And it is not difficult to detect in it these characteristics of its origin even unto this day.

Guest: "Well, what do you want?"

Hall Boy: "Oh, nuffin', boss; only dis am Room Thirteen, an' I's got a bet wif Jim Harris dat you'll commit suicide 'fore mornin', an it's mos' four o'clock now. But dat's all right, boss. Don't hurry yo'self on my account!"

Correspondence.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—An article in the *Freethinker* of last week, entitled "The Ruined Tower," by F. J. Gould, appealed strongly to the sympathies of human nature (this, by the way, is nothing new for that writer) and gave us a sample of what a martyr is though he may be encompassed with failings and a partial slave to superstition. David Lazzaretti made himself and that of his followers conspicuous by wearing different colored costumes of grey and red tunics, with blue mantles and red hats. The prophet's hat was blue, on which fluttered three feathers. To find the origin of these religious customs we must look back through many ages of the past to find that in India, the country from which we as a people owe so many of our religious beliefs, in which are included the reverence or holding in esteem the very colors that David displayed in his costumes while working at his self-imposed task. In the religious books of India, then, that great nation and mixed peoples whose influence has been and is still great in almost all communities of men, we find in their books their Trinity represented by the very colors that David and his followers wore in his religious work. The books referred to are the *Asiatic Researches* (p. 45, vol. viii.), in which their Trinity is printed in the following manner:—

BRAMA,	VISHNU,	SIVA,
CREATION,	As emblematical of PRESERVATION,	DESTRUCTION.
MATTER,	These are referred to SPACE,	TIME,
RED	And painted them BLUE	WHITE
(to represent substance.)	(to represent apparent color of space.)	(in contrast to black night of eternity.)

Head to foot with the colors that represent the Trinity of the peoples named; and, therefore, it is equally true of so-called Christian nations who use those colors in their forms of worship, though, in many cases, they are ignorant of the fact; for at the present time in the Catholic and Protestant Churches we still have the colors representing the Indian, Egyptian, and, I might say, the Japanese deity in the surplices of the officiating priests; for do we not see the Red, White, and Blue—or Black—that, according to the above peoples, represent the powers of nature, which is really and truly one, or, according to mythologists, three in one?

These are not the only cases in which these colors are to be observed. If I mistake not, the presiding judge in our Law Courts wears them; and, above and beyond all, they are the national colors (without jingoism is the assertion made) of the greatest empire that the world perhaps ever knew. And in almost every clime in which the sun rises there it shines on the colors that men have chosen to represent their nation—namely, the Red, White, and Blue flag, the colors of which were, at one time, purely religious symbols, and is the foundation of all religious creeds in all parts of the world without one exception.

R. YOUNG.

January 25, 1911.

Bible English.

The Bible Society is to celebrate next April what it calls the tercentenary—the three hundredth anniversary—of the first publication of the English Bible. With reference to this occasion, the *Utica Observer* asserts that "there is no better example of good English than this book," and then adds:—

"This fact has been admitted by those who rejected the teachings of the Bible utterly. Robert G. Ingersoll, the foremost Agnostic of his day, was a great admirer of the Bible, and was probably more familiar with it than many who accepted its teachings. He could quote chapters of it from memory, and it is probably the fact that not many clergymen are more familiar with the book than was this disbeliever. He said many times that it was the finest piece of English literature in existence."

The paragraph is well meant, but contains little truth. Ingersoll by no means regarded the Bible as "the finest piece of English literature in existence." He accorded that distinction to the works of Shakespeare, and never said "many times," and we do not believe he did once, that the Bible was unique in excellence from a literary point of view. That the Bible excels all other books, or that "there is no better example of good English available for the student," as the *Observer* asserts, is pious fiction. It is no model for writers of our tongue; there never was any such written or spoken English as it presents either before or after it. It contains poetry and imagery quaintly expressed, but its style is impracticable and ridiculous. The Bible is not comparable with the works of uninspired authors. As John Remsburg once said, it is a long way from God to Shakespeare.

—*Truthseeker* (New York).

"THERE IS NO GOD."

I found thee not by the starved widow's bed,
Nor in the sick-rooms where my dear ones died;
In cities vast I hearkened for thy tread,
And heard a thousand call thee, wretched eyed,
Worn out, and bitter. But the heavens denied
Their melancholy maker. From the dead
Assurance came nor answer. Then I fled
Into these wastes, and raised my hands, and cried
"The seasons pass—the sky is as a pall"
Then wasted hands on withering hearts we press—
There is no God, in vain we plead and call,
In vain with weary eyes we search and guess—
Like children in an empty house sit all,
Castaway children, born and fatherless.

Robert Buchanan.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON JAN. 26.

In the absence of the President through indisposition, Mr. Cohen occupied the chair. There were also present:—Messrs. Barry, Bowman, Cohen, Cowell, Dobson, Dawson, Heaford, Lloyd, Leat, Lazarnick, Moss, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Silverstein, Shore, Schindel, Thurlow, and Wood.

A letter was read from Mr. Foote explaining his absence and referring to matters of business. A resolution expressing regret for the cause of his absence, and assuring him of his colleagues' appreciation of his services to the cause, was carried unanimously.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed, and the monthly cash statement received and adopted.

The Secretary reported that a grant of £50 had been received from the Secular Society, Limited.

New members were received for the following Branches:—Birmingham, Liverpool, Maesteg, Rhondda, Wood Green, and the Parent Society.

Grants towards defraying the expenses of out-door propaganda were made to the following Branches:—Bethnal Green, North London, and Islington.

The death of a respected member of the Executive, Mr. A. Lewis, was reported, and a vote of sympathy with his family passed.

The Secretary was instructed to make arrangements for out-door demonstrations in the London parks during the coming season.

It was also resolved to arrange for another social evening at Anderton's Hotel for the beginning of March.

Other matters of business were dealt with, and the Secretary was instructed to send out the usual circular reminding Branches of the approaching Annual Conference. The meeting then adjourned.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary*.

Obituary.

We have again to record the loss of another staunch and valiant member of our Society in the person of Mr. Alexander Lewis, a member of our Executive and of the Wood Green Branch, who passed away on Monday, January 23, after a long and painful illness. Mr. Lewis has been known to us for upwards of twenty-five years as a man of education and wide reading, a fluent and always courteous speaker, and a writer of no mean order. He was always an enthusiastic admirer of the *Freethinker* and of its Editor, and formerly an occasional contributor. Although never losing an opportunity of doing battle for Freethought, his abilities were not solely confined to that side of progress. Much of his time was devoted to the local Liberal cause, and he was a ceaseless opponent to Tariff Reform. Almost his last act was to leave written instructions for his remains to be cremated, and to reiterate that he died as he had lived, "a convinced and avowed Atheist, with profound conviction, painstakingly thought out, of the evil influence of all religions." His colleagues on the N. S. S. Executive passed a resolution, on Thursday last, conveying their sympathy to his widow and sons, and expressing their appreciation of his long years of unselfish service to the cause. The cremation took place at Golders Green on Saturday; the service, of an interestingly personal character, being impressively read by Mr. J. T. Lloyd. The General Secretary of the N. S. S. and Messrs. Thurlow and Samuels represented the Executive of the Society. His immediate relatives, and many of his personal friends and fellow-members of the Wood Green Branch, were present; and the Islington, Kingsland, and North London Branches also sent representatives.—E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary*.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.**INDOOR.**

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham-place, W.): 7.30, Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner, "Freethought and the Portuguese Revolution."

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (46 Dame-street): Monday, at 8, Discussion Class. Saturday, at 8, Elocution Class.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Public (Minor) Hall, Canning Town): 7.30, F. A. Davies, "Bradlaughism."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Green): 7, J. Hecht, "The Teachings and Character of Christ."

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner): 12 noon, Ivan Paperno, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.**INDOOR.**

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): C. Cohen, 3, "Militarism and Freethought"; 7, "Christianity in its Cradle."

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Joseph McCabe, "Sir Oliver Lodge and a Future Life."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Sidney Wollen, "The Converted Infidel."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, R. C. Phillips, "Some Problems of Unemployment."

RHONDDA BRANCH N. S. S. (Parry's Temperance Bar, Tony-pandy): 3, J. Hammond, a Lecture.

WEST STANLEY BRANCH N. S. S. (Co-operative Ante-Room): 6, Business Meeting.

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Secretary—Miss E. M. VANCE.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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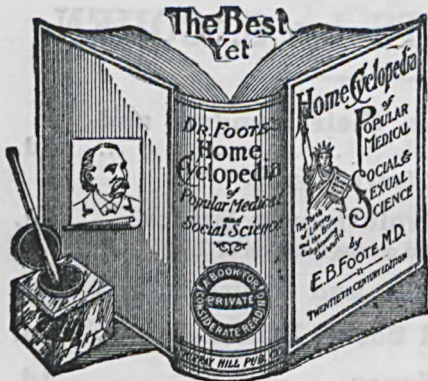
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