

THE Freethinker

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PRICE TWOPENCE

Atheism leaves a man to sense.—BACON.

Views and Opinions.

PROMINENT politicians are apt to have their fuglemen, especially when they belong to enthusiastic religious denominations—usually Nonconformist. Rather more than twelve months ago (it was in the *Freethinker* of January 9, 1910) we devoted an article entitled "Christian Heroism" to some sloppy sentimentalism that the Rev. R. J. Campbell had been talking about Mr. Lloyd George. The Oracle of the City Temple had been lunching with the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the conversation had turned upon what they would do if they knew they had only a couple of months to live. "I would bring in my Budget," Mr. Lloyd George said, "and proceed with it till the appointed time of departure, and so leave the world with a good conscience." Mr. Campbell was struck all of a heap by the "spirituality of feeling" displayed in that utterance. He recognised that the good Christian, known to the world as Chancellor of the Exchequer, was "making the earnest performance of earthly duty a preparation for the eternal." To the Christian preacher there was something singularly high-minded in a Christian statesman's sticking to the post of duty in such painful circumstances; whereas any sound man, merely as a man, would wonder how any decent human being could act otherwise. Mr. Lloyd George owed nothing to Mr. Campbell for suggesting that, without the aid of religion, he would sink upon his knees before death,—abject, paralysed, and contemptible.

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Another pious admirer of Mr. Lloyd George's has been puffing him in quite a novel fashion, by representing him as a sort of messiah.

"An interesting story of the Chancellor of the Exchequer's childhood was related by the Rev. J. Hugh Edwards, M.P. for Mid-Glamorgan, at a meeting of the Camberwell 'Pleasant Sunday Afternoon' at Surrey Masonic Hall, Camberwell New-road, yesterday. Forty-seven years ago a doctor was called to a little country cottage, where a baby-boy, only 12 months old, was lying dangerously ill. The mother, who had only just lost her husband, was distracted.

'Save my child!' she cried. 'I have dedicated him to God, and I want him to live and be a man who will do something for his fellow-beings.'

The doctor stood by the little one's bedside for an hour and a half. Then he told the mother that her prayer had been answered; the crisis was passed and the child would live.

'Thank Heaven!' exclaimed the woman. 'We are poor, but he belongs to God, and I want him to do some good in the world.'

'That child became a man,' proceeded Mr. Edwards.

Recently, the doctor went into the public gallery of the House of Commons, and, looking down at the Treasury Bench, he saw his old patient—the Chancellor of the Exchequer. I repeated the story to the Chancellor.

"It is perfectly true," he said. "My mother told it to me many a time. Her prayer was: 'O, God, spare this child, that he may do good to his fellows and make a life.'"—*Daily News*, Feb. 13.

This "interesting story" throws a flood of light upon the ordinary Christian mind—if one may use

the word "mind" in such a connection. To begin with, how is it that the story has never been told before? Why has it waited forty-seven years for its introduction to the world? Would it never have served the turn at some previous point of Mr. Lloyd George's career? We are not called upon to challenge the truth of the story. We daresay it has the usual amount of truth in it. But all the truth in the world could not atone for its silliness. Yes, silliness; sheer, sloppy silliness.

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Is it meant that God knew of that baby's dedication? If the answer is in the negative, God is not omniscient. If the answer is in the affirmative, why did God let the poor baby fall so dangerously ill? Was it merely to make him suffer, or to provide him with a useful advertisement in later years? And why should the doctor say that Mrs. George's prayer had been answered? How did he know? Did not children die of that complaint (whatever it was) whether they were prayed for or not, and recover from it whether they were prayed for or not? And why should God, who is declared to be no respecter of persons, answer one agonising mother's prayer and treat another agonising mother's prayer with silent contempt? More questions might be asked, but these are enough to show that the whole story abounds in intellectual confusion. The worst of it all is that Mr. Lloyd George himself is cited in support of such nonsense.

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Turning to a very different matter, we have to note that the West Ham Town Council has at last done itself justice in relation to the *Freethinker*. Some ten or eleven years ago the bigots collected their forces and got this journal removed from the reading-room tables in the Free Library. All sorts of reasons were given, but every one of them meant that this paper attacked Christianity in a way that gave the bigots great displeasure; which was, indeed, a sign that it was doing its work well and effectively. The paper was called "scandalous," "indecent," "scurrilous," "corrupting," etc; in fact, all the adjectives were employed that are usual on such occasions. The borough was deeply agitated on the question; it was even proposed that there should be a referendum of the ratepayers. The upshot was that the *Freethinker* was kept in the reading-room, but not placed upon the tables. It was kept behind a screen, and only handed out to those who asked for it, and (we presume) looked as though they could stand it.

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The West Ham Branch of the National Secular Society has appealed year after year against this unfair and foolish treatment of the *Freethinker*, and this year the appeal has taken effect. The Libraries Committee recommended the Council to let this paper be placed on the tables with other publications. This evoked a warm debate at the Council meeting on Tuesday, February 14. The voting was a splendid victory for the cause of toleration. It was 25 to 12. We congratulate the West Ham Town Council on its complete recovery from a bad attack of religious fanaticism.

G. W. FOOTE.

Civilising the Eskimo.

A GREAT deal has appeared in the papers of late concerning the work of Dr. Grenfell, missionary and explorer in Labrador. For my own part I am quite willing to assume that he deserves all the good things that have been said of him. I know little or nothing concerning him, and therefore cannot question—nor have I any desire to question—all that has been said concerning his personal courage, good nature, and, above all, his good intentions. But while it may be perfectly true that many missionaries go out to Labrador and elsewhere for the benefit of the natives, it is not by any means clear that the natives really benefit by having forced upon them modes of life to which they are quite unaccustomed. Dr. Grenfell, for instance, is praised for three things—preaching the Gospel, fighting tuberculosis amongst the natives, and for developing local industries. For each of these accomplishments Dr. Grenfell may deserve all praise, but the question of the value of missionary work as a whole is not to be decided by reference to work such as Dr. Grenfell carries on.

For the instructive, and deplorable, thing is that the diseases Dr. Grenfell is fighting, and the defective social conditions he is trying to amend, owe their existence very largely to missionary enterprise. Until missionaries forced upon the Eskimos European methods of housing, quite unfitted to the people and the climate, tuberculosis was unknown among them. Until the missionaries began their work, the Eskimos were quite able to secure enough food to satisfy their modest requirements. It was the breaking down of old habits and customs, and the creation of a number of artificial needs, that made it necessary to develop "local industries," which in practice means exploiting the natives for the benefit of traders. Dr. Grenfell may live to see, as he desires, the rearing of reindeer to serve as food for the English market. But whether that will mean that the food of the natives will be rendered more secure, or more plentiful, and their labor lighter, is open to question.

In truth, in relation to a people such as the Eskimos, the peaceful missionary acts as a far greater danger than the raiding trader. The latter may rob or kill. In either case the individual loses his goods or the tribe loses a member. The piratical trader comes and goes, and the evil of him practically ends with his departure. But the missionary settles down. His deliberate aim is to break down customs that time has tested and to which long experience has habituated the people. He forces upon the people modes of living and dressing in complete ignorance of their effects upon the people, and of the moral and physical consequences that must follow. His standard of excellence is that of his own country; native customs are so many barriers to evangelisation that must be destroyed at all costs. The more sincere he is in his character as a missionary the more iconoclastic he is. And when physical disease and economic disorganisation results from his ministrations a chorus of praise comes from home for the little he is able to do to stem the consequences of evils he has been one of the chief causes in producing. If the pen is mightier than the sword, the missionary—be he ever so good-intentioned—is often far more deadly than slave raider or maxim gun.

That famous explorer, Dr. Nansen, who knew the Eskimos intimately—lived with them, ate with them, and slept with them—had little but praise to offer concerning them. So long as they were untouched by Christian missions and European influences, he found them uniformly honest and truthful. Dishonesty was so uncommon amongst them that their first missionary noted with surprise that they let their goods and chattels "lie open to everyone without fear of anyone stealing or taking away the least portion of them." They were extremely hospitable—far more so than they are when they become "civilised"—and regarded strictly each others' rights in the

community. An Eskimo would view with amazement a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, and wonder why on earth it was necessary. Amongst themselves children are never beaten. It is to their view inhuman. Says Nansen, in his fascinating volume on *Eskimo Life* :—

"I have never once heard an Eskimo say an unkind word to his child.....When the children are old enough to understand, a gentle hint from father or mother is enough to make them desist from anything that is forbidden. I have never seen Eskimo children quarrelling either indoors or in the open air; not even talking angrily, much less fighting."

Doubtless things will soon change under the chastening influence of Christian teaching and European trading. As with children, so with adults. They are exceedingly peaceful, and dislike offensiveness in word as well as in act. "It is wonderful," he says, "in what peace and unity they live with each other; for quarrelling and strife, hatred and covetousness, are seldom heard of among them." They had perfected their weapons to the work of fishing and hunting; their native boats were marvels of ingenuity; their clothing, habitations, and customs adequate to the climate and to their needs. How much better would it have been to have left them alone, instead of ignorantly sacrificing their well-being to the insane desire for "conversion"?

Now what were the consequences of the desire to "civilise" and Christianise the Eskimos? First of all the natives were migratory. When one fishing ground failed they moved to another. This placed very obvious obstacles in the way of evangelisation. To be preached at, the people had to be kept stationary. The complaint was, "their wandering and unstable way of life certainly offer great hindrances to their conversion." So it was "remedied." But to keep them to one place meant either that they must suffer from want of food consequent on poor seasons or develop other methods of living. Other methods were found. The Europeans brought them firearms—a great advance, it might be thought, upon the primitive spear and harpoon. It really involved the thinning out of the Eskimos' invaluable asset, the reindeer. Thousands of reindeer were killed, for the purpose of selling the skins to Europeans—the flesh being left to rot. Again, the ease with which birds may be killed with the shot-gun has induced the natives to largely surrender their fishing, which supplied them with food, skins for clothing, boats, etc. Still, the trader is benefited, and the Eskimo is getting civilised.

The houses in which the Eskimos formerly dwelt—large huts sheltering many families—quickly erected and quickly destroyed; the very scant clothing worn—sometimes none at all inside the houses—made for physical health. These were in the way of missionary success, and offended the missionaries' notion of what was proper. It would be such a glorious thing to get a small and permanent house for each. So thought the missionaries; and prizes were offered for house-building. Again the results were disastrous. Instead of the old-fashioned large communal house, easily unroofed during the summer, and carelessly deserted, small separate houses became the rule, with the result that tuberculosis—the disease Dr. Grenfell is praised for combating—became the great scourge of the natives. The natives were taught the use of money; with the result of an increase of covetousness, and greed, and dishonesty—vices that were formerly conspicuous by their absence. We gave them coffee, of which they drink large quantities, with deleterious results to their nervous systems. And, of course, brandy, of which—like all people who have not already passed through the alcoholic stage—they are extremely fond, and which produces temporary madness. In every direction our efforts at civilising the poor Eskimo has involved disaster. Dr. Nansen's conclusion that the upshot of European activity amongst the Eskimos has been "degeneration and degradation in every respect" seems fully justified by the facts.

The *Methodist Times*, in a notice of Dr. Grenfell's work, remarks that "foreign critics" sneer at the

way we mix up the flag, the Bible, and business. But it adds: "It is a tribute to the English genius that it is able to combine three things—a genuine Imperialism, a deep devotion to religion, and a good eye to the commercial possibilities of a country." Well, yes; we do manage to combine these things, and it may be with commercial profit—to ourselves. Certainly we are always most concerned with the spiritual welfare of a people where and when there exists the possibility of commercial and industrial exploitation. And our religion, while it serves as a justification for exploitation, seldom, if ever, possesses the inconvenient quality of condemning our methods. Our exploitation is sanctified by our religion, and our religion enhanced in value, by contributing to our gains. It is a beautiful arrangement; and missionaries who really understand their business never fail, when appealing for support, to dwell upon the commercial possibilities that are open to us. Even Dr. Grenfell dwells upon the possibilities of the lumber trade and the provisioning of the English market with reindeer flesh.

It is, perhaps, a delightful arrangement for us. But what of the poor native? For it is ostensibly on his behalf that we are there. Does the poor Eskimo benefit by our presence? True, we take him medicines—after we have introduced disease. We develop "local industries"—after we have paralysed the native ones and made his existence infinitely more precarious. We have taught him the value of private property, at the cost of breaking down the primitive tribal hospitality and honesty. We give him the means of satisfying his desires—created by the unhealthy absorption of the less lovely features of our own civilisation. Unfortunately, the natives do not infrequently decline to benefit by our attentions. In the middle of the eighteenth century the Eskimos in Greenland alone were estimated to number nearly 30,000. Seven years ago their entire number in Greenland, Labrador, Baffin Land, and Alaska hardly exceeded that number. As in the case of the Tasmanian, the Australian, and the Maori, Christianisation and civilising spells to them degeneration and disappearance.

In Greenland, says Nansen, "The Eskimos fell in with Europeans. First it was our Norwegian forefathers of the olden time; then they gradually overcame. But we returned to the charge, this time bringing with us Christianity and the products of civilisation; then they succumbed, and are sinking ever lower and lower." This may be safely taken as descriptive of the position and outlook of the whole of the Eskimo race. In their case ignorant zeal has been more fatal than lawless cupidity. Whatever future either Greenland or Labrador may have, it is very questionable whether the Eskimo will share in its greatness or prosperity; certainly he will be neither happier nor better than he was ere civilisation overtook him. What he is and what he may become will stand as a glaring illustration of the folly—when it is nothing worse—of a movement that first of all spreads the seeds of degeneration among a people and then acclaims its moral heroism in palliating some of the consequences of its own indiscretion.

C. COHEN.

Ethical Authority.

THE chief service which Nietzsche rendered to the world consisted in his demonstration of the truth that there is not, and never can be, any absolute authority in morals. Such is the message of his much-maligned, but ever-precious work, entitled *Beyond Good and Evil*—a message which is now bearing abundant fruit throughout Christendom. What the Churches complain of as "the present unrest," or "the arrest of progress," is in reality nothing but an expression in conduct of the natural desire of the human mind for emancipation from the cruel tyranny of the priest. A prominent preacher laments the undisguisable fact that "to-day perhaps

the cry for emancipation from all authority is more strident and insistent than ever before"; but he can only meet this cry by the bald assertion that "man needs a master." It is very true that, at present, most people are slaves, but the fact of slavery does not justify slavery as a principle of life. It is, alas, only too true that "a Parliamentarian who refuses to recognise the authority of his leader will soon lose even his seat"; but that cannot justly be adduced as an argument in favor of party government. The most deplorable thing about Parliament is that the majority of its members lack the rich endowment of individuality, and are like a flock of sheep obeying the will of the shepherd. It is also undeniable that "the soldier who will not obey orders is drummed out of the Army or shot"; but it does not follow from that that the soldier of to-day is bound to obey the orders of an Army officer who lived two thousand years ago. It is likewise beyond question that "the business man who pays no heed to the customs and ideals of his trade will soon be broken"; but no one is silly enough to imagine that the trade customs and ideals of the present obtained in the days of Lycurgus or Pericles. Such things are in a state of constant flux. No one has ever spoken the final word, or furnished the authoritative example, in any of these departments. And yet the theologians maintain that Jesus uttered the final word, and offered the authoritative example, in the realm of morals. We contend, on the contrary, that good and evil are relative terms—that is, terms whose interpretation is dependent upon time, place, and circumstance, and not terms whose meaning was fixed for all time by an individual who flourished long ago. In other words, we of the twentieth century are, or ought to be, "beyond" the good and evil of the first.

No scientist would dream of saying that "morals have to do with things that are beyond the natural understanding of man"; but a preacher actually said it in a London pulpit only a few weeks ago. The Rev. Dr. Newton Marshall, preaching in the Heathstreet Baptist Chapel, Hampstead, indulged in the following extravagant licence:—

"What is goodness? we ask. No one can give himself a final answer, because goodness is a great and divine reality that had its home in heaven before the world began, and goes on to heaven after this world is ended. It applies not only to England, but to all the world; not only to the twentieth century, but to every century; not only to what my little brain can grasp, but to what is far beyond its reach. I am therefore no more able to be sure for myself what goodness is, and what is the right thing for me to do, than I am able to travel to Constantinople without the aid of a time-table."

That looks like a slice of the "Glory Song." Dr. Marshall modestly refers to "my little brain"; but surely the reverend gentleman must be mistaken. It requires more than the ordinary brain to perceive goodness basking in the sunshine of its ideal home in heaven before the world began, and to see it returning thither after this world is ended; and that is the very feat Dr. Marshall prides himself upon being able to perform. And yet he cannot tell what goodness is among men without the aid of a guide, nor what to do on any given occasion without consulting his master. To him, conscience, though the gift of God, is deplorably inadequate; he cannot trust it at all by itself. He says:—

"Conscience is a very poor guide unless it be in co-operation with a master. Conscience is like eyesight. If I walk to some country village, I need direction.....And so conscience is second, but only second, to whomsoever is our master. The conscience of the Mohammedan co-operates with Mohammed, the conscience of the Hindu with the Hindu teacher, and the conscience of the Christian with his Lord."

If God existed, he would never apply to Dr. Marshall for a character. The reverend gentleman gives him an exceptionally bad name. He represents him as creating or evolving a being, not only capable of going wrong, but with a disposition to do so, and then as supplying him with a perilously unreliable guide. The truth is, however, that goodness, as delineated, does not, and never did, exist, and that

conscience is the individual's registered sense of what society demands from him. Goodness is merely the name of the individual's right attitude towards his neighbors. Now, it is perfectly absurd to think that Jesus, or any other teacher, could lay down a rule of conduct applicable to all ages and countries—a rule from which, in any circumstances and under any conditions, it would be a sin to depart. And yet Dr. Marshall assures us that "essentially Christianity is the acceptance of the Lordship of Christ." We will not follow the preacher in his metaphysical flights, wherein he so greatly delights. There is no difficulty whatever in talking grandiloquently about "the tones of perfect contentment and unity with God which gain their marvellous fulness from the utter sinlessness of Jesus," and those "words and acts of the Lord which are based upon his kingly function, and imply an authority which is unique," in which it would be blasphemy on our part even to pretend to follow him; but the crux of the whole question lies in the claim that this Jesus demands, and deserves, absolute obedience. Speaking in the abstract on this point, Dr. Marshall is most emphatic:—

"We do well to realise the ruthlessness with which Jesus asserts his Lordship. He does not advance his claims with diffidence, or in such a way as to minimise their effect. On the contrary, he claims to be the unique captain of the human soul. He will suffer no rival. He will allow no right of appeal. He will grant no constitutional limitation of his authority. He will be the disciples' dictator."

That language is extravagantly strong; but what does it mean? It is simply an emotional outburst devoid of any intellectual and moral significance whatsoever. Dr. Marshall knows well enough that he is preaching an utterly foolish and impossible gospel. Whether Jesus was the Son of God or not, whether he be regarded as an honest but self-deluded man, or as a deliberate impostor, the fact that stares us in the face is that nobody in the world has ever obeyed him, and that because he is absolutely unobeyable. Tolstoy made a most theatrical attempt to accept him as his unchallenged dictator; and for his pains Christian ministers describe him as "wrong-headed." Poor Tolstoy, he attempted the impossible, and ignominiously failed, as was inevitable.

It is very curious that, whilst enforcing the duty of obedience with signal insistence, Dr. Marshall has next to nothing to say about *what* Christians are called upon to obey. If Jesus is his "disciples' dictator," he must dictate something. "He commands us to be humble, pure, gentle, peace-loving, and the like," says this preacher: but so does every other moral teacher the world has ever seen. Let us rather listen to the Galilean teacher in what is more peculiar to himself:—

"Ye have heard that it was said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you, Resist not evil; but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man would go to law with thee, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go one mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow from thee turn not thou away."

That passage may be employed as a fair test of discipleship. According to the teaching ascribed to Jesus, "every one that heareth these words, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand," or, according to another version, if such a man escapes when his house falls, he "shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven." But the above extract contains words attributed to Jesus which have never been done; and when divines, even the most evangelical, are confronted by them, they either shrink into their shells or resort to unworthy shufflings. They say: "You are in error if you suppose that those sayings are to be taken as so many literal precepts or commandments. They are nothing of the kind; they are general principles, or spiritual ideals, and not intended for rigid translation into actions." Here is an ima-

inary dialogue between the Divine Dictator and his human disciple:—

Dictator.—I have loved thee and given myself up for thee on the cross; and I have accepted thee and forgiven all thy crimson sins. Now, I demand a return in the form of unquestioning obedience to all I say. Among other things, I command thee never to resist evil in any shape or form. Art thou prepared to obey me?

Disciple.—Yes, dear Lord, I am ready to die for thee any moment. I shall do my level best to be obedient to thy precious words; but, dear Lord, if a man breaks into my house at dead of night, and begins to annex my property, or to assault my dear ones, shall I not do my utmost to knock him down and fling him out through the nearest window, irrespective of possible consequences?

Dictator.—Whosoever shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven.

Disciple.—Loving Master, I do keep all thy commandments *in the spirit*, though I break most of them *in the letter*. While resisting evil *outwardly* I strive to maintain *inward* passivity. While turning the burglar out and half killing him in the attempt, I shall be earnestly praying for his soul's salvation. And hast thou not said, through thy servant Paul, that the *spirit* it is that maketh alive, while the *letter* only killeth?

J. T. LLOYD.

The Black Army.—II.

(Continued from p. 114.)

THE clerical profession, like every other, has its prizes, and they are so graduated as to inspire hope in the least capable and sanguine. No doubt it is true that, in the Church of England particularly, a minister may wait long, or all his life, for preferment, unless he has influential friends or relatives. But this is a disadvantage which is common in every branch of industry. While, however, there are doctors with no patients, and barristers with no briefs, there are comparatively few ministers without occupation and salary. However small their income may be, they begin with *something*, which is solid and secure; whereas a doctor has often to spend years in seeking patients enough to keep him in bread and cheese, and a barrister to wait years for his first solicitor's cheque.

A complaint was once made at a Church Congress that many incumbents were deplorably poor, and it was proposed that a gigantic national fund should be raised in order to level up the poorest to £300 a year. Now, I ask any man of candor and intelligence, who has seen anything of the average "poor" incumbent, to say whether he is really the equal, in energy and general ability, of the average man who occupies a post worth £300 in the commercial or professional world.

Probably the clergy would resent their ability being canvassed in this profane manner, but when they complain of their poverty they invite such treatment; in fact, it becomes inevitable.

Much as it may hurt their feelings, I will even go farther. I have already said that we have a right to expect from Christian ministers, as from all other men, a decent conformity to their own teachings. Now, if there is any teaching in the New Testament which is clear, explicit, and unmistakable, it is that wealth is a danger and poverty a blessing. According to the Sermon on the Mount, the "poor" are the first to inherit the kingdom of heaven; and according to the epistles of St. Paul, every Christian should content himself with little, and only minister to the bare necessities of his "carnal" part during his earthly pilgrimage. I do not accept this teaching myself. I believe that man is a risen animal, not a fallen angel, and that our sensuous nature should have its rational gratification. But I am *not* a Christian, while the clergy *are*—at least, by profession. They are bound to follow Jesus and Paul, or to confess themselves hypocrites. And if the teaching of Jesus and Paul should be followed by every ordinary Christian, how much more should

it be followed by those who assume to exhort and reprove their brethren.

Apart altogether from the express teaching of the New Testament, there is something incongruous in the action of *spiritual* teachers, who would wean us from the *material* world, and who at the same time demand a fair share at least of all the good things of this life. It reminds one of the Cornish minister, whose sermon was interrupted by the news that a ship had run ashore. The wrecking instinct was strong in that congregation, and every man started for the door. They were arrested, however, by the stentorian voice of their pastor, who bade them take their seats before God; and then, casting off his ministerial robe, he exclaimed: "Let us start fair."

Considering the *spiritual* pretensions of the clergy, I smile when they complain that they are poor. That is precisely what they ought to be. It is their only honest condition. Every penny they expend on themselves, or their families, beyond what is necessary to support life, is a confession that their *doctrines* are absurd and impracticable, and that *they* are subsisting on false pretences. I am not at all sure that they are entitled to take *any* care of their bodies. If they had a proper supply of the *faith* which they recommend to *us*, they might trust to God for a supply of their bodily wants, as Elijah did in the desert and the Jews in the wilderness.

Let us turn our attention now to the missionaries. It is popularly believed that these gentlemen are all animated by a burning zeal to spend and be spent in the cause of Christ; that they court hardship and danger in the spirit of martyrdom. But what is the real truth? It is beyond doubt, to anyone who has investigated the matter, that the great majority of missionaries have positions of ease and emolument. They are generally within reach of protection, and their salaries, though sometimes moderate if expended in England, are always sufficient to provide them with every comfort in the land of their labor, and generally to provide them with a retinue of servants which they could never hope to have in their native country. I have no hesitation in saying that the lot of the average missionary is an enviable one. If the statement be disputed, I will furnish conclusive evidence from the writings of travellers, and even from the reports of Missionary Societies.

It is, of course, undeniable that there have been missionaries who held their lives cheap, and faced hardship, peril, and death itself with unfaltering devotion. I honor such men, though I do not share their faith. Courage and conviction are always admirable, and a martyr's grave is holy ground. But every cause has had its heroes. A doctor in a hospital has been known to suck the poison of diphtheria from the throat of a strange child, and sacrifice his own life in the attempt to save another's. Large bodies of men will always yield a percentage of such noble spirits; and we may reverence the martyr missionary without throwing a false halo round the heads of all his profession.

Missionary Societies, in practice, are chiefly agents for relieving the congestion of the clerical labor market. It is better to send the superfluous men of God abroad than to let them stay at home, competing with their brethren and reducing the general rate of wages. Emigration is an advantage to those who go and to those who remain. And when this is understood by the British public, the missionary business will be seen in its true light. A few go converting the heathen for Christ, some for Christ and themselves, and more for themselves and Christ.

Of a piece with the chief motive of this missionary enterprise are the arts employed in raising its expenses. School children are cheated of buns and toffy to fill the mission-box with halfpence. Shameless begging goes on from door to door. False pictures are drawn of missionary heroism, and falsified pictures of the moral darkness of the "heathen." It is perfectly certain that in many cases, whatever may be said of the "civilisation" of the heathen and their scanty costume in hot climates, they are essentially more moral than the majority of the mission-

ary's countrymen—more truthful, more honest, more sober, more tender to their children, and more respectful to their elders and parents.

It is a common reply, on the part of its apologists, that the Black Army is too much judged by exceptional cases. In the Church of England, for instance, there are only two Archbishops, and less than three dozen Bishops; and what are these among the many thousand ministers of the Establishment? But what is the real value of this objection? Are not the plums few in every profession? How many physicians, how many King's Counsel, how many writers make their thousands a year? The number is just sufficient to keep the fire of hope alive in the breasts of the less fortunate; so that, after all, we find the same commercial law operating in the clerical profession which operates in other departments of human activity.

The critic to whom I referred in my opening paragraph asserted, as though it were a fact of his own knowledge, that the Archbishop of Canterbury does not spend a penny of his £15,000 a year upon himself; that it is all expended upon his diocese, his own wants being supplied by his private income. I do not believe this; but if it be true, it proves nothing. One swallow does not make a summer, and an argument cannot be based on a glaring exception. It cannot be *usual* for Church dignitaries to subsist on private fortunes. Nor is my critic's suggestion in any way reconcilable with the fact that such immense sums of money have been left by so many Bishops in the last hundred years. I take it that their estates, as disclosed by probate, were partially, if not wholly, built up by savings out of their episcopal revenues; and I say that their conduct in this respect is scandalous, when we consider that Bishops are constantly pleading to laymen on behalf of "the poor clergy," and that Jesus Christ told them to feed, and not to fleece, the flock committed to their charge.

Another objection of the Black Army's apologists is that the Church of England does not comprise the whole Christianity of the country, and that the Nonconformist ministers must be taken into account. None of these, it is said—not even the highest—is paid five thousand a year. I daresay not; but I think it probable that they take all they can get. Some of the luckiest Dissenting ministers in America have salaries running into four figures. Dr. Hall, of New York, was reported to be in enjoyment of £8,000 a year. Dr. Talmage took a very large salary at the Brooklyn Tabernacle, with freedom to make as much more as he could by writing and lecturing. When he visited England, and discoursed for Christian bodies, he never opened his mouth for less than £50 a night. Surely it is difficult to see anything but commercialism in such conditions of advocacy. The late Mr. Spurgeon was paid £1,200 a year, in addition to the revenue accruing from the extensive sale of his publications. Dr. Joseph Parker lived in a fine house and kept his carriage. Even the salary of a provincial minister, like the Rev. A. J. Berry, of Wolverhampton, was far from despicable. This gentleman publicly called me "a professional infidel." I replied that his salary exceeded the earnings of all the "infidel" lecturers in this country put together. Of course there are plenty of Nonconformist ministers with very small stipends, but are there not plenty of ill-paid doctors and barristers, and still more of journalists? The law of supply and demand operates in *all* professions. The clericals may not get as much as they *desire*, and indeed they were never heard to say they had *enough*; but they obtain all that is possible in the existing state of the market.

I may be told—in fact, I *have* been told—that the salary is not *everything* to the members of the Black Army. I never said it was. They have tastes and inclinations like other men, and prefer to earn their living in that way. What tickles my risibility is the pretence that they are "moved by the Holy Ghost." They are really called by the motives which lead men into other professions. When a man already in holy orders receives a "call," in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it is to a more lucrative or eligible

situation. The farce which is gone through on such occasions is sickening. When a clergyman leaves a poor living for a richer one, he solemnly declares that he is directed thither by the third person of the Trinity. Every man of sense knows this to be a hypocritical falsehood. Nor is the case any better among Nonconformists. A minister is invited by a neighboring or distant congregation; the stipend is higher, and the church more famous. He cannot give an immediate answer, for it would look too much like a mere business transaction. He says he will consider it, and consult the Lord, and pray to be told what he should do. Meanwhile he makes inquiries, the negotiations continue, and perhaps his old congregation makes him a tempting offer to remain. When he has thought the matter out and come to a decision, he finds that he has a clear call from the Holy Ghost; and when he preaches his farewell sermon, he does not say that he has accepted a better situation, but that he is going to a wider sphere of usefulness.

Many years ago a friend of mine was a member of a Congregational Church in Lancashire. The minister was an attractive rhetorician, and was known to be contemplating a career in London. His congregation wished to retain him, and money was raised to purchase him a house. Subsequently a fresh bribe had to be put in his way. Another house was purchased for him, and a handsome cheque was presented to him in the vestry. The man of God pocketed the cheque with great complacency, but he could not tell the deputation whether he would stay with "his old church" or go to London. He would have to lay the matter before the Lord. A week later he said he had been told to go. But he did not return the cheque, and within another week the house was advertised "to be sold." My friend thought the church was sold too. It was a lesson to him for life. He has understood the Black Army ever since.

English history furnishes a colossal illustration of the worldly, mercenary motives of the Black Army. During the sixteenth century England was converted, reconverted, and converted back again; and it was all done with the high hand of temporal power. Henry VIII. quarrelled with the Pope, repudiated his spiritual supremacy, and set up an independent Church. Under his successor this Church was made definitely Protestant. The reign of Edward VI. was a short one, but during that brief period the Prayer Book was drawn up and ordered to be used in all churches, under penalty of fine, imprisonment, banishment, and finally death. The Church officials declared that they were moved in this matter by the Holy Ghost. But soon after, when Mary came to the throne, they kicked out the Prayer Book, and declared that the Holy Ghost had nothing to do with it. Once more the English Church became Catholic, and the Protestant clergy turned right about face to keep their livings. Only a hundred and twenty, out of about thirteen thousand, had the honesty to stand by their convictions. Elizabeth succeeded Mary, the English Church went back to Protestantism, and the glorious Reformation was a standing proof of the ease with which the pulpit can be turned by those who have power over the bread-and-cheese of the clergy.

Let me conclude with a few words on the function of this Black Army. Our red-coats have to fight a visible, tangible enemy; they shoot, and they are shot at; they kill, and they are killed. Many who are not killed are wounded, and bear about them the scars of combat. But the Black Army fight an enemy who is intangible and invisible. They fight the Devil. This personage was once a grim reality—at least, in the imagination of believers—but he has sunk into a comic figure, and is now laughed at as a bogey. Nevertheless, the Black Army survives. It is engaged in fighting "Sin." But what a ridiculous notion it is that sin can be put down by preaching. The Black Army should be disbanded, and the money it costs be expended on the secular improvement of the people.

G. W. FOOTE.

Acid Drops.

"Providence" favored the Pope with an attack of influenza. Fortunately the doctors were able to minimize it, and his Holiness only suffered a slight inconvenience. We hope "Providence" is not annoyed.

A cranky monk, Ilidore of Tsaritsin, is agitating all Russia. The Holy Synod resolved to transfer him from Tsaritsin to a monastery in the diocese of Taila, but he refused to go, and swore an oath before the altar to starve himself to death rather than give in. For five days he remained at the altar fasting and praying, with others watching with him on the same diet, and thousands of pious people coming and going with their minds unhinged. When the recalcitrant monk felt he was at the end of his tether, he started the convenient theory that his telegram to the Tsar had not been received; then he had a good dinner, and was presently picking his holy teeth.

A picture of Jesus Christ standing on a rock in the wilderness is being exhibited at the Doré Gallery. It was painted by Henry Ault, a Canadian. The artist says he does not know how it is that his picture is luminous in the dark, and that a large Cross appears behind the figure of Christ. Suggestions of a scientific explanation are treated as profanity. The principal cities of Canada and the United States have had this picture exhibited, in the usual way, and for the usual consideration, and we are told that "the simple folk of the far West regard it as a miracle." We dare say it is as good a miracle as any other.

Mr. John Denvir, in his *Life Story of an Old Rebel*, tells the following anecdote:—

"A noted man among the Fenians was 'Pagan' O'Leary. Jack Ryan told me of how he rather surprised the prison officials when they came to classify him under the head 'Religion.' Being asked what he was he said he was 'Pagan.' No, they said, they could not accept that. 'Well,' he said, 'you have two kinds, the 'Robbers' (meaning Protestants) and the 'Beggars' (Catholics), and if I must choose put me down a 'Beggars.'"

Good! And Irish to the end.

"Rock of Ages" was written by Augustus Montague Toplady, an eighteenth century Englishman, of the Calvinist variety. Theology was a serious thing then, and Toplady was assured that every man, woman, and child on this planet needed a tremendous lot of saving. The number of sins we all commit is appalling. At ten years of age, Toplady taught, each of us is responsible for more than 315,000,000 sins; at twenty, for more than 530,000,000; at eighty, more than 2,522,000,000. What a job the recording angel must have! Surely he must be the head of a big department. Perhaps they call it the Sin Census Office.

The Bishop of London has hit upon a new way of proving the truth of the Crucifixion story—including the eclipse, the earthquake, and the resurrected saints. He proposes a special service at St. Paul's Cathedral, both inside and on the steps, with a procession of some two hundred clergymen marching through the Strand and Fleet-street and up Ludgate-hill. The Bishop himself will be in the procession. That settles it. "Infidelity" will hide its diminished head—for ever. We mean the "Infidelity" that managed to survive Dr. Ingram's attacks in Victoria Park.

We are glad to see the *Christian Commonwealth* raising a protest against the Bishop of London and others speaking and writing against using the word "morality" as though it were limited to sex relations. Bachelors like Bishop Ingram and Father Vaughan, with numbers of other clergymen, are so obsessed by sex that they see nothing else. It is, so to speak, a form of inverted eroticism; a subject on which a great deal might be said if this were the place to say it. But that the protest of the *Christian Commonwealth* is fully warranted by the facts of the case is undeniable, and it is a point to which attention has often been called in these columns. And it is a fault which is, in the degree of its development, peculiarly Christian. The unclean imagination of the monk, for so long the moulder of the public mind on the subject of morals, gave the fact of sex an overwhelming place in the mind of laymen. And the teaching of the monk is continued by the clergy of the Protestant Churches. Other vices—lying, deceit, dishonesty, and a number of other faults not usually numbered vices, but none the less obnoxious—are passed by with comparative lightness. We have no desire to undervalue the importance of

sex rectitude, but to make it cover the whole of morality is to fail to secure even that.

For the peculiar fault of harping upon this topic by preachers is that, in general, more harm than good is done. The solacious imagination of many a preacher loves to dwell upon it, and the imagination of his listeners is also roused to unhealthy activity. Things not necessarily objectionable are made so, either by attention being drawn to them or by an objectionable meaning being given them. The row over the Living Pictures in the music-halls, or the exhibition of nude statues in the Strand, only served to make them indecent to thousands who might have seen either without having any thought of indecency aroused. People are taught to be on the look-out for the unclean, and those who look for it are seldom unsuccessful in their search. The right way to attack an objectionable thing of this character is to arouse thoughts and ideals of an opposite description. The less said about it the better. But the whole treatment of Christianity, with its dwelling upon evil and uncleanness, its desire to arouse a strong "sense of sin," is morbid and disastrous. To arouse a sense of sin in young men and women is equal to sending them to read advertisements of quack medicines in order to gain good health. Human nature may need wise guidance, but in a decent environment what it most needs is to be let alone.

Mr. Harold Begbie's new book, *In the Hands of the Potter*, which deals with the work of the West London Mission, is announced as based "entirely on material supplied by Mrs. Hughes and the Sisters of the People of the West London Mission." Christians will no doubt regard this as a recommendation. Others of a more critical mind would prefer testimony less open to the charge of bias or exaggeration. But it is on the usual lines. The Mission tells the writer, who is on the lookout for something catchy; the writer tells the public; and the Mission quotes the writer as independent testimony to the value of its work. The circle is thus complete. All the "independent" testimony one reads of as to the value of Salvation Army work is prepared in this manner, the gullible public never once thinking of asking whether it is the writer's own opinion or his reading, or a prepared advertisement of the mission. Meanwhile the social ills that these missions are called into existence to redress continue, and are only removed by the application of remedies that lie quite outside a strictly religious sphere of action.

What strikes one about these stories of social missionary labor is their sameness. There is the same catalogue of evils to be removed, the same collection of funds, the same stories of earnest men and women devoting themselves to picking up a human being here and there, and the same glorification of the power of the Gospel. No one need question that many of the men and women engaged in this work are earnest and self-sacrificing, nor that they succeed in exerting a good and strengthening influence over some others. But the constancy of the work and the sameness of the stories ought to at least arouse some suspicion as to the value of the methods employed. That these do nothing to check the production of the evil is certain. That there is an evil in the expenditure of human energy and conviction in the wrong direction is almost as certain. And as there is an exaggerated value in the estimate of the value of the work performed, so there is a morbid value set on the people who are "saved." To most of these missions the drunkard, the thief, or the prostitute, either of whom holds out some prospect of being "saved," is a much more attractive figure than the man or woman leading a decent and unpicturesque life, but who may, through pressure of circumstances, one day join the submerged class. Only when they do join this class are they of real importance to missions and to sentimentally picturesque writers like Mr. Harold Begbie. In another direction medical men are recognising that the future lies with preventive medicine. We have to realise that the same thing holds good of diseases that affect society as a whole.

General Booth has discovered a new argument against the charge of his ill-administration of affairs. This is, that he is the best-loved leader of any religious or philanthropic movement on the face of the earth. We do not see how this meets the charge that those who criticise the Army's methods are carefully squeezed out, often with complete disregard to their past services and present circumstances. There are two ways of securing unity in a movement. One is to bind together various elements as a result of just and wise administration. The other is to throw out all who disagree or criticise, or otherwise show independence of character, retaining only such as care to submit. The complaint is that the rule of the Salvation Army is to follow the latter

plan. Those who remain are content—for awhile. But what of those who do not remain? Perhaps General Booth will answer next time he is announced as "replying to critics."

Rev. Walter Wynn, in the *Chesham United Free Church Magazine*, has discovered a live Atheist, in the person of Mr. Victor W. Knight, and replies to a letter of that gentleman's. Mr. Wynn recognises that an Atheist may be honest; if he were in a proper public debate, he would probably find that an Atheist may be a quick reasoner. Mr. Wynn himself is nothing of the kind. What could be more ridiculous than the argument that God is responsible for the heavens, and also for the earth, but not for the people upon it? Who is responsible for them? They are not—for they did not make themselves. Mr. Wynn's many sentences on this matter are mere verbiage. And what an idea he has of Bradlaugh's being sent "further adrift into mental darkness" by the sneering clergy! Fancy the great Charles Bradlaugh in "mental darkness" and the "illustrious obscure" Mr. Wynn basking in intellectual sunshine!

The *Railway Signal* must think there is a large percentage of fools amongst the godly. "If God has given you a first-class ticket to heaven," it says, "do not travel second class." Who but a simpleton would—especially if the ticket included first-class victuals on the train?

The Vicar of Worksop objects to the presence of women in sick chambers when the parson is called in. It doesn't occur to him that some of the women may have an equally strong objection to the presence of the parson. For, after all, he isn't a man. Sidney Smith said there were three sexes—men, women, and clergymen. Parsons belong to the third sex.

Mr. W. Mager, of 8 Wakefield-road, Bradford, sends his boy to a public elementary school, and as the lad is the only Jewish boy there he is marked out for Christian abuse and injury. Christian lads mobbed and kicked him as he was going home, shouting at him, "Who killed Christ?" The father resolved to keep the boy at home rather than let him be subjected to such treatment, but an agreement was arrived at whereby the teacher sent the Jewish boy home ten minutes before his Christian fellow scholars. What a splendid illustration of the moral value of the religious education given in public elementary schools!

"Who killed Christ?" Not that Jewish boy, anyhow. Even if his forefathers did, they ought to be thanked instead of abused. To be killed was the very thing that Christ came to this world for. If nobody had killed him, there would have been no Atonement, not a single Christian would ever have existed, nor a single human soul have been saved from everlasting fire. If the Christian bigots had any sense, they would see that whoever killed Christ performed the greatest service to mankind.

As we expected, those who are praising Dr. A. R. Wallace's last book are exactly those who are least able to appreciate its scientific value. Amongst others, Mr. R. J. Campbell referred to *The World of Life* in a City Temple sermon. And, in dealing with the question of pain, he quite outdoes Wallace's position. Professor Wallace argued that pain was less intense in the animal world than in the world of man. Mr. Campbell goes one better by arguing that we are better nervously organised than the Greeks or Romans, and so feel pain more, and even quotes Sir James Paget to the effect that the same is true comparing modern Europeans with the people of the Middle Ages. The statement, in either application, is downright nonsense. The phenomenon of the modern shrinking from pain is a purely social and intellectual phenomenon. In the Middle Ages—typically Christian times, be it noted—when manners were rude and customs brutal, when people were publicly burned, whipped, cropped, hung, or broken on the wheel, when the infliction and receiving of pain was an everyday affair, people were all accustomed to its presence and so resented it less. It is a question of familiarity—of education. Very few of us, nowadays, see much physical pain in any acute form. We shrink from it as we shrink from the unaccustomed. But give a child of to-day the education and social environment of the Middle Ages, and we should witness the same degree of callousness to suffering. If Sir James Paget really said what Mr. Campbell attributes to him, it is only proof that eminent doctors may often go astray in a department where they ought to be reliable guides. Or perhaps it is evidence of how rare is the existence of a really scientific mind.

Of course, Mr. Campbell finds the usual Christian excuse for pain—pain purifies and develops, and God is therefore

aiding us in our spiritual career. Perhaps, when Mr. Campbell is again dwelling upon the deadening and demoralising effects of certain social conditions, he will reflect that these serve as aids to our spiritual development, and that these conditions should be retained as a valuable training ground for the generations that are to come after us. The spiritual benefits produced by a fit of the toothache is also a theme on which we should like to hear Mr. Campbell dilate. Mr. Campbell's circle of acquaintances must be a strange one indeed if he cannot find examples of pain and suffering that, instead of leading to spiritual enrichment, are the direct cause of spiritual debasement. This cheap and easy method of apologising for pain is agreeable only to those who lack either the courage to face facts or the ability to understand them.

Father Bernard Vaughan has been replying to Edison; but, from the report before us, we have no doubt but that the famous man of science will survive the answer. Edison had said that he knew nothing at all about the soul, and gave it as his opinion that his mind was no more immortal than one of his own phonographic cylinders. Father Vaughan unfortunately mistakes assertion for argument and invective for proof. He *knows* that "at the back of his being there is a soul." He also *knows* that "this came from God, and at death would return to God." All this is to Father Vaughan "absolutely self-evident." Edison may have been either right or wrong, but at all events he was sensible enough to avoid a string of absurdities of this character. Self-evident truths are those the truth of which is apparent as soon as they are known. Father Vaughan's truths are precisely those that men are certain about in exact proportion to their ignorance or unfitness for accurate thinking. Father Vaughan concluded by telling his audience that religion was "the only thing worth while." Of course, he meant *his* religion; other religions are neither self-evident nor worth while. Naturally.

Rev. J. Nuthall, a Southport curate, regrets that "one cannot spank a boy because of sentiment." Poor curate! Lucky boy! It is all up with the good old Bible policy of lash-'em and smash-'em.

Mr. J. Fraser Hewes, secretary of the Nottingham Branch of the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, declares that some of his hardest battles have been fought with ministers of religion. He really feels more bitter against some of the clergy than against some of the vivisectionists themselves—for they are paid teachers of morality. Mr. Hewes should not have added that the vivisectionists are "materialists." We invite him to indicate a single one who accepts that designation.

It is announced that Pastor Aked is going to spend a long holiday in California, and it is whispered that San Francisco is to offer him a bigger salary than he gets at New York.

Rev. Newton H. Marshall is delivering a series of lectures on the Apostles' Creed. In the first one he says Herbert Spencer believed in God; which looks as though Dr. Marshall would have been qualified for drawing up the Apostles' Creed itself, had he lived soon enough.

According to two telegrams on the same page of the *Daily News* lately, it was terribly hot in South Africa and terribly cold in the south of Russia. The temperature was 115 degrees in the shade at Johannesburg, with serious results, even colored children succumbing to the heat. The cold in the south of Russia was so intense that 167 persons were frozen to death in a week. These diverse experiences, and both so dangerous, on the same planet, show, as the late W. E. Gladstone said, how beautifully "Providence" has fitted up the earth for man's habitation.

A correspondent of the *Daily Mirror* says that "a complete revision of the Bible, with pages, chapters even, eliminated, is the only thing to save Christianity from infidelity." Then Christianity is doomed. For the Church revisions of former times were done in privacy; no printing press existed, and there were no newspapers,—so that almost anything could be palmed off upon the people. But the game would have to be played in public now,—and that renders it impossible. To bring the Word of God up to date, by a committee of uninspired men, is too plain a joke, even for the most pious and confiding numskulls.

Lord Roberts has his own views of what a British Army should be, and, like most professional men, he is willing to

sacrifice every other interest of the nation to the one he is associated with. It is impossible for him to hold his tongue until every British citizen is a soldier—and not a voluntary soldier either. Military men are making a great effort to militarise the whole of Great Britain. It is not unnatural that they should do so, but it is not very wise on the part of civilians to listen to them as if they had some peculiar right to settle the national policy. Lord Roberts himself is no more worth listening to on this topic than any other intelligent and well-informed person. As for the Dean of Norwich who seconded Lord Roberts's resolution at a recent meeting, one is bound to say that his being there "solely in the interest of peace" is nonsensical without being humorous. This dull joke is becoming too common. The Archbishop of Canterbury indulged in it at the launching of the *Thunderer*. Now the Dean of Norwich takes it up, and it seems likely to be patronised by all the higher clergy. By "higher" clergy we merely intend a reference to their positions and salaries.

From a review of the latest edition of Mr. Bryce's *American Commonwealth* we observe that in the "Land of the Free" there are still six States in the Union that exclude from office any person who denies the existence of Deity. Pennsylvania and Tennessee require, in addition, belief in future rewards and punishments. And in Arkansas and Maryland a man who does not believe in the existence of a God cannot act as a juror or give evidence in a court of law. Tennessee, we may remark, is noted for its homicides, and Pennsylvania has an equally flourishing reputation for corrupt government. Still, they are very pious, and that atones for a deal—with some people.

Bunyan's prison at Bedford, where he wrote the *Pilgrim's Progress* and other works, long ago disappeared, but the site is identified, and is now occupied by a public-house. Which is a very unpleasant sarcasm. A representative of the *Daily Chronicle* went down to Bedford recently, in order to witness the great stir he thought there must be in the town at the idea of disposing for £10,000 or so the copy of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* which was used by John Bunyan. He found no excitement at all in the place. "If the population of Bedford," he wrote, speaking generally, take any interest whatever in Bunyan, they conceal it very successfully." Bunyan's theology is as dead as a door-nail, and his place in English literature is hardly a supreme problem for Bedford.

Mr. Edwards is an active member of the Swadlincote Urban Council, and his sole object at present is to avail himself of his membership to do his utmost to prevent cinematograph exhibitions from being held in the district on Sundays. His narrow-mindedness and bigotry are such that he will leave no stone unturned in the attempt to preserve the sanctity of the Sabbath. Addressing the Council, as reported in the *Burton Daily Mail*, he waxed eloquent in denunciation of "Sacred Picture Performances" on the Lord's Day, ostensibly because they are given for commercial purposes, but in reality because he fears they will result in emptying the churches. In the following utterance he showed his hand with a vengeance:—

"He believed the proprietor was applying in the near future for permission to build a theatre opposite the Wesleyan Chapel, and if this thing were not nipped in the bud he feared that young people would flock out of the chapels into the shows. He might be called narrow and a 'kill-joy,' but he believed the Sabbath ought to be observed as it should be, and if the Council had any power it should be exerted to the utmost."

Well done, Councillor Edwards! You hit the nail right on the head. What the churches dread is not Sabbath desecration, but competition, because they know full well that they are not able to compete successfully.

Two deaths occurred in the pulpit last Sunday,—that of the Rev. A. J. Mowatt, pastor of the Erskine Presbyterian Church, Montreal, and that of the Rev. James Nicholas Knight, pastor of the Albion Congregational Church, Ashton-under-Lyne. Evidently they were not under the special protection of "Providence." In spite of all their prayers, the clergy die just like Atheists. Yea (as the old book says) one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth so dieth the other; they have all one breath.

Canon Tupper Carey has been "blessing the nets" at Lowestoft. Nets were brought to the church, and the man of God took them in his hands and blessed them, invoking success on the fishermen's endeavors, and preservation from peril. Some of the fishermen may be soft enough to believe in the value of this clerical performance. We should hardly think the performer himself does.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, February 26, Town Hall, Birmingham: at 3, "The True Heaven and Hell"; at 7, "Charles Bradlaugh: After Twenty Years."

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 26, Glasgow. March 5, Manchester; 12, Queen's Hall; 19, Stratford Town Hall.

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

V. WHITTY writes, in reference to our recent reply to F. Marshall, that an English translation of Carducci's *Hymn to Satan* appeared in the *Westminster Review* for February 1907; and there is an English translation of *Poems* by Carducci, published by Fisher Unwin at 5s., and the *Satan* poem may be in the collection.

G. GROVE.—The Revised Version of 2 Kings, chap. viii., v. 13, gives a similar translation to yours; but, frankly, it seems to us quite inconsistent with the context. Even if that text were removed, there is plenty left to show that Jewish law and sentiment regarded the dog as unclean and despicable. The worst possible insult to a Jew was to call him a dog, and the word was used as a euphemism for the committer of a certain unnatural offence under the Mosaic Law.

J. T. GRIFFITHS.—Sorry your subscription was overlooked in last list of acknowledgments. Thanks for your good wishes.

CLARA GUNNING.—Freethought is so common in the ordinary French press that there is no need of a journal like the *Freethinker*. At any rate, there isn't one.

R. H. ROSETTI.—Editorial illness was the cause of your little report being neglected. Glad the West Ham Branch's "social" was so successful. Thanks for paper.

G. ROLEFFS.—Emerson followed Gibbon (both great names) with respect to St. George. Ruskin advocated the other theory, that England's St. George had nothing whatever to do with the bacon-selling George of Cappodocia. You refer to our *Crimes of Christianity*, p. 26; but we advanced no theory of our own; it is, indeed, a merit of that book that it refers to standard authors for every statement it makes.

W. MAGER.—See "Acid Drops."

G. SMITH.—We have noticed one of the items.

R. HARRIS.—Voltaire lived to a great age—long enough to get a little old-fashioned in the time of Diderot, who, however, admired him greatly and treated him with profound respect. Diderot and other Atheists, such as D'Holbach and D'Alembert, smiled at the grand old man's prejudice against Atheism. They knew, as we ought to know, that a great man is to be judged, not by his foibles, but by his service to truth and humanity, and Voltaire's service was transcendent.

IRISH CONVERT.—Thanks for your interesting letter. Your experience justifies the incessant propaganda of Freethought. Millions of people fail to have it introduced them, and die without knowing anything about it. Yet a percentage of them would certainly have welcomed it. We wish individual Freethinkers would do more missionary work. "Catch my pal" is not a very elegant expression, but there's no want of elegance in the act it expresses, especially if it succeeds.

H. DAWSON writes: "It may encourage others to advertise in the *Freethinker* if I mention that I had a reply to each of my single advertisements." This correspondent has obtained thirty signatures of ratepayers to a petition for the placing of the *Freethinker* in the reading-room of the Wood Green Public Free Library. He asks whether all London Branches could not act in the same direction. "It will be a long time," he says, "before the paper gets even a black man's chance, but I often wonder if we do individually as much as we could, or as much as we ought to, do for it."

E. PARKER.—See paragraph. Thanks.

J. W. DE CAUX.—If the weekly sermon in *Lloyd's* is to be taken as fairly representative of Christian brains in the twentieth century, that fact damns Christianity more than anything we could say.

R. T. NICHOLS.—Thanks for copies of *Stratford Express*.

W. P. BALL.—Always glad to receive your cuttings.

FRANK JONES.—Thanks, though we had noticed the paragraph in other papers. Such statements are, of course, interesting, but they do not appear to rest on adequate authority, and we have to be very particular—far more so than any other journal.

G. HOWELL.—Lecture Notices should be framed on the model of our printed list. Nothing should be added. It only gives us trouble and expense.

A. G. LYX.—Pleased to know you "look forward to every issue of the *Freethinker*, and treasure them." Shall be glad to see you at Birmingham.

W. MOORE.—Our readers do us a service by sending us newspaper or other cuttings which they think we might find useful. Glad you were so pleased with our Manchester lectures.

J. B. BARKER.—We do not know that it matters very much, but if Mr. Arthur Hyatt told the judge that he had never spoken in Hyde Park as an Atheist, and that he was strongly opposed to Atheism, we fancy the statement would surprise some who have heard him. John Allen ought to have been dealt with long ago; it is a wonder his "criminal lunacy" did not end by including murder.

ANONYMOUS letters cannot be inserted or replied to. This may sound harsh, but experience shows it to be a sound rule of journalism.

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote's visit to Manchester was quite an adventure. He had the remnant of a very bad cold hanging about him, yet gradually disappearing, but it had temporarily settled in the throat and larynx and nearly robbed him of his voice; in fact, it had robbed him of his voice for platform purposes. He took the risks, however, of travelling to Manchester on Saturday afternoon, hoping that some improvement might take place by Sunday. It was "kill or cure" treatment of the malady, and happily it did not kill. There was a little improvement by Sunday, but the voice was still wretched enough, and Mr. Foote had a terribly heavy task to get through. He kept the attention of his audiences, though, from first to last, and there was plenty of laughter and applause—and a good deal of questioning and discussion after each lecture. Naturally he felt very "weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable" on Monday morning, and was glad to hurry homewards. But he got better as the hours passed, and his voice came back all right. It had been shaken, punched, and kicked into good behavior. The treatment was drastic, and we shouldn't recommend it in every case, but it succeeded in this one. We may add that the audiences were excellent.

Mr. Foote delivers two lectures to-day (Feb. 26) in the great Town Hall, Birmingham, and very large audiences are expected, especially at his "Bradlaugh" lecture in the evening. It would be well for "saints" who wish to secure a good seat to come early.

Tea will be provided in a large room connected with the Birmingham Town Hall between the afternoon and evening lectures, at a small charge, for the convenience of visitors from a distance. Tea will be served at 5 o'clock.

On the Saturday evening before his Sunday (March 5) lectures at Liverpool the N. S. S. Branch will be having a Dinner at the Bee Hotel, St. John's-lane. Mr. Foote will be the guest of the evening. The tickets are 3s. each, and can be obtained at the Alexandra Hall, or from the secretary, Mr. W. McKelvie, 49 Penrose-street, Everton, Liverpool. Tickets for Mr. Foote's lectures (reserved seats 1s. or 6d. each lecture) can be obtained in the same way. Admission to non-reserved seats will be by silver collection at the door.

Mr. Cohen pays Glasgow his spring visit to-day (Feb. 26), lecturing twice in the Secular Hall, Brunswick-street. He is sure to get good audiences at Glasgow. We hope they will be more than good on this occasion.

Mr. Cohen had ten questioners after his lecture at Queen's Hall on Sunday evening, who were, of course, satisfactorily answered. Ten must be a record.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd is now taking two Sunday evenings at the Queen's (Minor) Hall. His first subject, to-night (Feb. 26) is "History Cooked to Christian Order," and should be entertaining as well as instructive. We hope the London "saints" will see that Mr. Lloyd has good meetings.

We hope to see a good meeting of members and friends of the Secular Education League next Tuesday evening

(Feb. 28). The formal business of the Fourth Annual General Meeting (for members only) will begin at 7.15, and will not last long. General speaking, to which sympathisers are invited as well as members, will start at 8, when Mr. Halley Stewart will take the chair. The list of speakers includes Mr. George Greenwood, M.P., the Rev. S. D. Headlam, Mr. S. H. Swinny, Mr. J. A. Hobson, Sir Henry Cotton, Mr. G. W. Foote, and others. Admission is entirely free to this meeting, which will be held in the Conference Room of the National Liberal Club (entrance in Whitehall Court).

Caxton Hall has been engaged for the public debate which is to take place on Thursday and Friday evenings (March 30 and 31) between Mr. G. W. Foote and the Rev. Dr. J. Warschauer, the well-known Congregational minister. Dr. Warschauer is stationed at Bradford at present, and can only come up to London after Wednesday; otherwise the debate would have been fixed up earlier in the week. The subject of debate on both evenings is "Theism or Atheism?" This is the most sensible way in which the question has ever been framed. Complete details of the joint-committee's arrangements will appear next week.

There are pretty sure to be big audiences at this debate. Dr. Warschauer is a man of ability, and we understand a very good speaker. And the newer generation of Free-thinkers have never yet had an opportunity of hearing Mr. Foote in a set debate. It is nearly fifteen years since his last debate in London.

Miss Kough has paid Birmingham three visits, the last on Sunday, and has had a better audience each time. The Midland "saints" appear to have taken to her, after first taking our advice to give themselves an opportunity of hearing her.

The Committee of the *Œuvre Francisco Ferrer* at Brussels has just issued its report for 1910. It consists of a sixteen-page pamphlet recording the past work of the Committee. Incidentally, mention is made, and a photograph given, of the Ferrer medal by the well-known medallist, Godefroid Devreese, which is on sale for the benefit of the *Œuvre*. The medal in gold is sold at 75 francs, and the silver one at 5 francs—sent post free by registered post. In addition, an account is given of different public demonstrations organised by the Committee, and of the publications issued by them on the Ferrer case. These will be new, and cannot fail to be interesting to English readers of French, who will note that the publications range in price from 10 to 60 centimes. Notable amongst these publications is the full translation of the official proceedings at the Ferrer trial (*Les actes officiels du procès Ferrer*, etc., 120 pp.), and the preface and analysis (80 pages, all in one volume) by Professor Lucien Anspach. This is sold at 60 centimes.

The chief work of the Committee in 1911 will relate to the inauguration at Brussels of the handsome monument to Ferrer designed by the sculptors M.M. Puissant and Puttesnans. This will, it is hoped, be erected on October 13, 1911, the second anniversary of the martyr's death. The cause of Ferrer is the cause of international Freethought, and the Committee makes its appeal to the organisers of Freethought, Rationalist, Ethical, and Positivist Societies and their members, and to all individuals sympathetic with Ferrer or Freethought, to aid them with subscriptions towards the necessary funds to complete their work. They ask for 5,000 francs (about £200), and we hope their project will not fail for want of funds. Subscriptions for the monument, and applications for medals and publications (the series of 9 would cost 2 francs, post free), should be addressed to the Committee's Secretary, Professor Eugène Monseur, 75 Avenue Milcamps, Brussels.

A great anniversary has occurred, not since the date, but since the publication, of last week's *Freethinker*. It was on February 17, 1600, that Giordano Bruno was burnt to ashes at Rome. He was murdered by the Catholic Church for his Freethought. He was perhaps the noblest martyr of all the ages. In the name of science, freedom, and humanity a monument has been raised to his memory on the very spot where he was burnt.

President's Honorarium Fund, 1911.

Seventh List of Subscriptions.

Previously acknowledged, £132 16s. 8d. J. T. Griffiths, 10s.; Manchester, 5s.; H. A. Lupton, 10s.; H. Baker (Miss), 10s.; O. Friedman, 8s.; H. Shaw, 5s.; F. Rose (S. Africa), £1 1s.; A. G. Lye, 5s.; J. Charter, 7s. 6d.; W. Wells, 2s. 6d.

Airy Nothings.

"Philosophy will clip an angel's wings."—KEATS.

CHARLES LAMB'S jocose question to the pious Coleridge of how many angels could rest on the point of a needle is irresistibly funny. Yet men from the earliest ages seemed to have believed as firmly in guardian spirits as in witchcraft. Such a view was held by Pythagoras and Plato and many an ancient wiseacre besides, and their faith was as earnest and robust as that of the Christian metaphysician, Sir Thomas Browne. The titled philosopher lays it down that angels "do what we cannot without study or deliberation." If that be so, then ladies are intellectually on a par with angels, for that sex usually arrives at conclusions by instinct. According to the Jesuit father, Lewis Henriquez, angels masquerade as well-dressed ladies. So that, in the love of personal adornment, there is a further resemblance between ladies and celestial beings. Anyone who wishes to know more of this fascinating subject should consult the learned father's scarce book, *The Business of the Saints in Heaven*, published at Salamanca in 1631.

In this secular and matter-of-fact generation, the world has lost utterly that delightful simplicity of faith which took the old-world priest's pretty imaginings for granted—and without a smile. In the middle ages, a man might believe what he pleased. Disbelief was the thing that mattered. In the Campo Santo at Pisa, Andrea Orcagna, in his fresco, "The Triumph of Death," painted his angels as birds. This idea of the angels taking the form of birds is, it may be remembered, made a point of in the old-fashioned story of *The Changeling*, in which a child imagines that the sound of church bells was made by angels, much like the Shelleyan lark singing at heaven's gate. Shakespeare, knowing what would please the crowd, makes Horatio say over the dead body of Hamlet:—

"Good night, sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest."

"Angels visits are few and far between," says the lying proverb. Yet they come when most needed in pictures and stories and melodramas. Almost everyone has seen a picture of a poor sempstress asleep over her work whilst a diaphonous angel finishes her task. In real life, unhappily, "The Song of the Shirt" is tragic, not farcical.

Other and more learned pens must discuss the wide and fascinating subject of the origin of angels and their connection with the cognate conceptions of Greek genius borrowed from Assyrian predecessors. In the Saxon manuscripts the angels are dressed in shirt and undershirt. As it happened, the Saxon artists had little, if any, imagination, and clothed their angels in the fashion of the period. With Perugini, Luini, and Raffaele died the old simple and ascetic angelhood. Doubtless, Angelica's angels were elegant creatures; but Ary Scheffer could, had he tried, have done as well. After all, it comes to this, that artists have all along created angels as the character of their own minds allowed them to conceive creatures from a supposed heavenly sphere. And as with the artists, so it has been with the writers. Dante deals with the subject in the truly Dantesque spirit, with a mixture of ideality and worldly satire and a Christian spirit of unforgiveness towards his contemporaries. Our Dante Rossetti is really more ideal than his prototype. Thus, the "Blessed Damosel" is more modern in conception than he who lifted the veil from the great Florentine's brow and led him the rounds of purgatory.

From the iconography of angels to their osteology is but a step, maybe, the one narrow step which divides the sublime from the ridiculous. In the case of an artist like Michelangelo, the skeleton might be left to take its chance under the drapery. It cannot be denied that with a pair of wings fixed without relation to muscular and anatomical requirements, the scapula is made to do double its work. The

point of juncture of the wings with the body of an angel has always puzzled the artists, as well it might. Some solved the difficulty by dispensing with the angelic body and attaching the wings to the head only. Concerning the articulations necessary for a six-winged angel, like that figured on a stained glass window at Merton College, Oxford, the least said, the soonest mended. Such discussion is mere word spinning, more or less resembling the verbosity in *Light and The Two Worlds*.

The fact remains that Christian theologians stole their angels with so much else of their religion. Christian art is not entirely to blame for angelic construction. Some of the responsibility for the iconography of the angel must be thrown upon the Greeks, who, according to their own imperishable words, possess backs broad enough for the burden. The "Winged Victory" of the Greek is unquestionably more sublime than any feathered biped of the Christian imagination.

MIMNERMUS.

Nature's Curious Contrivances.—II.

(Continued from p. 125.)

WE will now consider that most wonderful form of protective adaptation specially termed Mimicry. As early as 1836, Boisduval's attention was arrested by the remarkable resemblances existing between distinct species of Lepidoptera. No explanation of this apparent anomaly was forthcoming until Bates published his classical paper on the *Insect Fauna of the Amazons' Valley*, in 1862. In this essay, which Darwin described as one of the finest he had ever read, Bates demonstrated that great advantages would accrue to a palatable insect if it were able to successfully mimic the manner and appearance of a conspicuous species of the unpalatable kind. This illuminating theory bore immediate fruit, and the investigations of Wallace, Weismann, Meldola, Fritz Müller, and Poulton, to which it gave rise, proved that in a vast number of instances where such mimicry exists, the mimicked species belongs to the unpalatable order of insects.

The phenomena of mimicry are probably more interesting among butterflies than in any other group, and, in consequence, have been more widely studied by many of the greatest naturalists of our time. Trimen pointed to one of the most striking illustrations of mimicry yet discovered during his entomological observations in Africa. The male of a South African swallow-tailed butterfly (*Papilio canea*) possesses all the normal characteristics of the species, including the "tails" on the hind wings. The female, however, is utterly unlike the male both in coloring and form of the wings, the "tails" being entirely absent. But although the female in no way resembles the male of her own particular species, she appears in three well marked varieties which have mimicked three separate species of the unpalatable genus, *Danais*. In West Africa, a similar swallow-tailed butterfly (*Papilio merope*) has females which mimic two distinct varieties of the nauseous *Danais*. And while these striking modifications have taken place on the African mainland, "the ancestral form from which these mimetic forms have been developed has been preserved comparatively unchanged in the island of Madagascar."

In this series of interesting facts, we find various forms of conspicuous and inedible butterflies, closely mimicked by local varieties of an edible species. It is thus illogical to discount the importance of the mimics' modifications in relation to the struggle for existence. Nevertheless, it would be premature to assume from the existence of marked resemblances between different species that mimicry has necessarily occurred. Various instances of close resemblance in form and color are believed to exist, which cannot be interpreted in terms of mimetic resemblance. There is a butterfly common to certain parts of the Argentine which so closely resembles the

European *Vanessa levana*, that Dr. Seitz mistook it for a member of this species. Careful examination, however, proved that it did not belong to the same genus. But, remarks Dr. Seitz, "if they were found in our country no one would doubt that it was a case of mimicry as perfect as any that exists."* A further instance of a kindred nature is furnished by those flower frequenting flies (*Eristalis*) which are such a familiar sight in our gardens during the autumn season. These insects resemble both in habits and appearance, rather large bees. This, at first sight, seems a genuine instance of mimicry, particularly when we reflect that their resemblance to stinging insects is of great utility to the flies. Still, according to Dr. Andreae, flies of this character are common in Southern Japan, where bees are very scarce. The occurrence of such anomalies has led to a careful scrutiny of all cases of apparent mimetic resemblance; the champions of the theory of mimicry were foremost in checking all earlier observations, and in fortifying their position with an immense array of fresh facts.

Dr. Wallace himself laid down five indispensable conditions, the fulfilment of which is essential before any example of mimicry can be considered as established. These were:—

1. That the mimics and mimicked should occur in the same area.
2. That the imitators are the more defenceless.
3. That the imitators are the less numerous.
4. That the imitators differ from the bulk of their allies.
5. That the imitation is external and visible only, never extending to internal characters which do not affect the external appearance.†

When these stringent conditions are complied with, as they are in the instances of mimetic butterflies previously advanced, it is unreasonable to deny that the explanation offered is the true one. When, in the light of such evidence, Mr. R. H. Lock strongly doubts the demonstration of any clear case of mimicry, one cannot but regret that such magnificent scepticism is not extended to certain alleged instances of Mendelian inheritance, which Mr. Lock so readily accepts. Mr. Lock's contention that "there is nothing to show that color patterns of the same type may not have arisen from the same causes in quite different groups,"‡ seems to be completely negatived when conditions 4 and 5 are fulfilled. If the similarity of color, pattern, and arrangement which exists between *Papilio Merope* and the various species of *Danais*—which it mimics—is to be traced primarily to environmental influences of a purely physical nature, how are we to account for the fact that in each instance the female alone is modified by these influences, while the male form, which is larger in size and lighter in color, remains quite unchanged? It cannot even be contended that, for some mysterious reason, the female is more susceptible to environmental influences than the male, because in Madagascar and in Abyssinia other allied species of *Papilio* occur, in which the female differs from the male only in the slightly greater predominance of black markings.

The restriction of mimetic resemblance in Lepidoptera to the female sex is of general occurrence throughout the world. This phenomenon, while presenting a grave difficulty to those who ascribe protective coloration to some cause other than deceptive adaptation, also demands some explanation from those who uphold the doctrine of the all sufficiency of Natural Selection. In dealing with this question, Wallace advances the view that mimicry is of greater utility to female butterflies owing to their greater need for protection. They are more liable than the males to attack owing to their slower flight while burdened with eggs, and run greater risk of destruction while depositing these eggs on the foliage. Being thus prone to greater persecution from their insectivorous enemies

* Beddard, *Animal Coloration*.

† Darwinism, pp. 264, 265.

‡ *Variation and Heredity*, p. 51.

than their male partners, the operating influences of Natural Selection are more strongly potent and thus help to evolve the differentiation displayed.

A further interpretation of the unchanged condition of the male butterfly in mimetic species, was proffered by the distinguished traveller and naturalist, Belt. This evolutionary pioneer suggested that the males of mimetic species retain the colors and markings peculiar to their group as the result of an æsthetic preference exercised by the female. The consequent choice in courtship of males manifesting no departure from the ornamentation usual to the species would tend to perpetuate the original markings characteristic of the group. In supporting this suggestion, Belt held that many males of the mimetic Pieridæ,—

"Have the upper half of the lower wing of pure white, while all the rest of the wing is barred and spotted with black, red, and yellow like the species they mimic. The females have not this white patch, and the males usually conceal it by covering it with the upper wing, so that I cannot imagine it being of any use to them excepting as an attraction in courtship."*

In the species to which Belt refers, both sexes mimic the form of the inedible Ithomiine butterflies; but, if Belt's theory be valid, we are driven to suppose that, had the female preference lain in the direction of some color peculiarity which could not be successfully hidden "by covering it with the upper wing," or with some other convenient contrivance, male mimicry would never have been evolved.

This supposed female prepossession for highly ornamental partners is the basis of Darwin's celebrated theory of Sexual Selection. The great evolutionists brilliant advocacy of this view in the *Descent of Man* gave rise to a considerable amount of controversy and initiated a discussion which has not yet died away. Wallace, at first an adherent of the theory, has completely abandoned his earlier belief, and many other leading evolutionists have fallen from the faith. Within the limits of this article nothing resembling justice can be done to this deeply interesting subject. I may, however, outline the objections urged against Sexual Selection, while indicating a few facts which lend it support.

In criticising the theory of Sexual Selection, Wallace alleges an entire absence of evidence of female preference during animal courtship. But as he admits that among birds the hen is probably pleased and excited by the display of the highly decorative male plumage, his objection is reduced to the contention that the female remains uninfluenced by the gratification she receives. That direct evidence in favor of Darwin's view is slight and scanty must be conceded, and Professor Poulton, one of the most loyal of Darwin's thanes, justly deploras the inadequacy of the attention devoted to those departments of field biology which alone can furnish the requisite data for establishing the validity of his master's theory. Apart from Sexual Selection, no satisfactory explanation of the undisputed facts has been advanced. Wallace's own view is, that in numerous cases the colors and appendages special to the male sex possess value as recognition markings, while most of the remaining ones are the outcome of surplus vitality in some way related to underlying structure. It is also urged that the leading function performed by recognition markings serves to secure the pairing of individuals of the same species. But we must not forget that, notwithstanding the extraordinary resemblance borne by females of a mimetic species of butterfly to the species and varieties they mimic, there exists no reason whatever for supposing that coupling complications arise as a result of the inability of the unmodified male to recognise his very materially modified partner.

Wallace's second suggestion, that decorative coloration is the outcome of surplus male vitality, is easily met by the fact that, in many instances, the brilliant adornments are at their best during the periods of courtship. Wallace anticipated this

answer by including in his somewhat nebulous category of surplus vital energy the additional excitability to which the male is at this season subject. Quite apart from the objection that little physiological evidence exists for the supposition that sexual excitement is correlated with the production of elaborate ornamentation, Wallace's theory fails entirely to explain why sexual coloration and adornment is always developed on those parts of animal surfaces which are most freely exposed to view. Striking coloration is usually confined to diurnal species; nocturnal forms, on the other hand, fail to exhibit them. Moreover, as Poulton has pointed out, in cases in which the conditions of flight are such that rapidity of motion renders all wing coloration invisible—as, for instance, with humming birds and most insects—the coloration distinctive of sex is absent from the wing. But when sluggish flight is the rule, as with butterflies and the majority of birds, the wings furnish the framework for elaborate coloration.

This almost invariable relation between male coloration and ever possible facility for female observation and appreciation, tells heavily in favor of the theory of Sexual Selection. And the same must be said of all the best ascertained facts which bear upon the problem.

T. F. P.

(To be concluded.)

Digestion and Assimilation.

WHOEVER has had the experience of living among savages and barbarians will have noticed, as the writer has, the huge contrast between their manner of feeding and that of civilised man.

Once, whilst watching an Eskimo stuffing whales' blubber into his mouth to its utmost capacity, and then cutting it off short at the lips, the comparison forced itself on to my mind between the food and religion of barbarians. Both are equally repulsive, and in each case there is an equal lack of discrimination shown as to the material consumed. Quantity goes before quality, both in food and religion, with a savage. As men grow more cultured it is noticeable that their table manners improve and their appetite gets more particular; likewise their religion ceases to be altogether grossly material, and becomes more spiritual.

Nay, the very matter of consumption changes. There is a very wide interval between the berries and roots, the raw fish and flesh of a savage and an up-to-date menu. A modern Christian would scorn to share the *plat du jour* indulged in by the prophet Ezekiel as described in his fourth chapter. I doubt greatly whether his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, or his Holiness the Pope, would, even at the express command of Jehovah, consent to such a dainty dish being provided for their daily fare.

Just as wide an interval exists between the early forms of religion and their modern developments. From anthropomorphic gods and devils, interfering with every concern of humanity, we have come to such etherealised substances as the God and Satan of modern Christianity. And why? Because the mental digestion of modern races revolts at the crudity and beastliness that sufficed for their more simple and uncritical ancestors, as much as their stomachs would at the food that seemed good to the latter.

Nowadays we want to know what we are eating. We want to make sure that our food is pure and wholesome. In like manner with regard to our beliefs, we are not inclined to pin our faith to everything we are told. We must criticise and investigate first. We must prove all things, and only hold fast that which is good.

Ezekiel's religion must be relegated to the same place as we now send his breakfast.

W. M. W.

* *Naturalist in Nicaragua*, pp. 384, 385.

READING THE BIBLE.

It is not possible that anybody in these islands could bring a virgin mind to the Bible, least of all to the Gospels, and my intellectual virginity was, after all, only relative. I had heard that everybody was agreed that the Gospel of John was merely an ecclesiastical work written about two centuries after the death of Christ; and I had heard that Luke was the man of letters; and having perforce to begin with one it seemed to me that I might as well begin with Luke as with another. I think I was disappointed almost from the first. A great weariness certainly overtook me about the middle of his narrative, and King Solomon's saying that "There is no end to the making of books" came up in my mind, and I said to myself, "A polished, lifeless narrative written by a skilful man of letters, sleek as Maeterlinck"; for Maeterlinck is a very skilful and elaborate writer that knows how to burnish his prose, so that it shall seem like poetry to the ignorant. And what I miss in the Belgian I miss also in Luke—the essential. In Luke's narrative Christ seems a lifeless, waxen figure daintily curled with tinted cheeks, uttering pretty commonplaces gathered from *The Treasure of the Lowly* as he goes by. The Gospel of Matthew I liked a great deal better; Christ attains to some reality in it, despite a certain retouching of the text. "A canvas that has passed," I said, "through the hands of the restorer." The verses in which Christ gives Peter the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven saying, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven," are easily recognised by the critical mind as ecclesiastical paint. Remembering that I had heard somewhere, "Whosoever sins ye remit they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain they are retained," I turned up the passage in John, and could not help smiling at the deftness with which the ecclesiastical reviser had improved upon his predecessor, and the thought popped up that, while inditing this emendation, the writer of the fourth Gospel had had his eye on my poor country, for in Ireland Purgatory yields richer dividends than any other commercial enterprise, whether brewery or distillery.—*George Moore, "English Review"* (February).

LORD MORLEY AND INDIA.

In India is there not too much that bears a dreadful likeness to the rule of Russia in Finland—not perhaps in brutality of execution, but at least in disregard of liberty and justice? Imprisonment without trial, Press prosecutions, public meetings forbidden, constitutional protest silenced, Hindoo and Mahometan not brought nearer, but driven further apart, above all obstinate adherence to that admitted wrong, the partition of Bengal—such are the evils that must be set against the benefits of the Reform Scheme in any estimate of Lord Morley's tenure of the Secretaryship of State for India. That tenure has now ended, the power of good and evil has passed to other hands, and Lord Morley's admirers, as they look back on his long and beneficent career, as they think of the interpreter of Voltaire and Diderot and Turgot to England, the stalwart defender of reason and enlightenment, the eloquent voice so often raised for justice, freedom, and peace, will mourn over a glorious opportunity lost, over a memory that a few short years ago seemed spotless and unassailable, and now passes to the future clogged with the miseries and the injustice of the years of his Indian administration.—*Positivist Review*.

THE CLERGY IN GERMANY.

The highly successful visit of Professor Harnack and Dr. Spiecker to this country gives special interest to articles that have been written in Germany on the disinclination of the younger generation to take Holy Orders. Pastor Schmidt, surveying the situation as it affects Saxony, points out that in 1907 the list of candidates for the ministry had fallen from an average of 190 a year to 113, while at the present time there is actually no list at all. The good pastor does not attribute this to the effects of modern liberal theology, which he thinks were more potent twenty years ago, when it was newer and more startling than it is to-day. Rather, his conclusion is that there has been an extension of the time required for the training of the theological student from three to three-and-a-half years, while the class fees have also risen. Then, about £300 a year would seem to be about the extreme limit of salary that he may hope after many years to attain.

Pastor Richter points out that two or three decades back it was the ambition of the village schoolmaster or the farmer to see a son in the ministry, but that now they aim at making them electrical engineers or lawyers. As to the young men themselves, there is a growing feeling that to study for the ministry suggests that "they will be regarded

by their fellows as fossils, as obscurantists." Moreover, there is no particular social distinction attaching to the profession, which, indeed, is becoming associated in many minds with what is retrograde and reactionary. The Protestant pastor, it would appear, has little scope to strike out new lines, and is too much dependent upon the congregation. Altogether, the position seems to have reached a much more acute stage than with ourselves, where there are signs that the Church is again attracting a good proportion of men of high ability.—*Daily Telegraph, Feb. 13.*

DECADENT SABBATHS.

With all its advantages Toronto is in an ill way morally. The Lord's Day Alliance is doing what it can to elevate the morals of the degenerate community, and, like Abraham and Lot over the cities of the plain, the official protectors of the Sabbath are agitated about the result. They are not going to leave it to the intervention of Providence, however, but are going to use the means placed at their disposal in the courts of the land to purge the iniquity. It will give sincere pain to many to know that such degrading and debasing practices are indulged in on Sunday as tobogganing, which is an insidious device to bring young people together in great numbers in the parks during the cold weather. Skating has also been known on Sunday, and this calamitous fact cannot be too greatly deplored by members of the Alliance. Certain Jews have also been known to have danced at their wedding parties on Sunday, and they add to this intolerable practice the habit of keeping Saturday in the strictest way as the Sabbath, to the constant indignity of the Alliance. At-homes, where demoralising amusements like bridge, whist, are played on Sunday, have been discovered by Rev. W. G. Hanna, and, worse than all, the heathen game of golf is actually played when men like Rev. Dr. Speers are at church and preaching. Some enthusiast has organised what he calls religious services in a large public hall on Sunday, and the people are being led astray by the performance of band music on these occasions. This very deplorable business must be stopped.

We believe the Alliance should approach Sir James Whitney and request him to appoint a commission for the purpose of visiting the homes of the people on Sunday, and investigating the extent to which these deplorable practices are carried on. Ontario might yet hold up her head among the enlightened communities of the earth like Scotland, where in all respectable houses the blinds are kept drawn all day, and all cooking for the Sabbath meals is done on the previous Saturday. It may appear incredible, but there seems to be enough evidence that many people read newspapers on Sunday in Toronto, and even works of fiction. These things should be looked into, and Sir James Whitney will no doubt give the whole matter the consideration it deserves.—*Toronto World*.

MIRACLES.

All the wonders of the world cannot make what is bad, good, or what is false, true. A teacher who has a falsehood which he wishes to pass for the truth may resort to a miracle; but why should an honest soul undertake to win converts by unintelligible performances? If physical and mathematical truth can, unaided, command universal assent, why should there be "signs and wonders" to maintain moral or intellectual truths?—*M. M. Mangasarian*.

Obituary.

I REGRET to record the death of my father, George Atterbury, of 51 Flag-lane, Crewe, which took place on Thursday, the 9th inst., in his sixty-fifth year. The interment took place on the 11th, at Crewe Cemetery, when a Secular Service was conducted at the graveside by Mr. Geo. Viggars. Although not a member of the N. S. S., he was an ardent reader of the *Freethinker* till the last, and a great admirer of Charles Bradlaugh and G. W. Foote.—*Geo. L. ATTERBURY*.

I REGRET to report the death of a former member of the Liverpool Branch, in the person of Miss Charlotte Hudson. The funeral took place at Anfield Cemetery on Tuesday, 14th inst., a Secular Service being impressively read at the graveside by the Branch President, Mr. John Hammond. Besides the chief mourner, Mr. Hudson, brother of the deceased, other Freethinkers present were Mr. and Mrs. Roleffs, Mrs. Wharmby, Messrs. Holmes, Pearson, McKenna and Coochan. The Branch secretary, Miss Hayward, and Mr. Ashburner represented the Committee.—*W. McKELVIN*.

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, J. T. Lloyd, "History Cooked to Christian Order."
WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Public (Minor) Hall, Canning Town): 7.30, W. Davidson, "God the Devil."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Green): 7, W. J. Ramsey, "How I Fell Among Thieves."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

ABERTILLERY, MON. (New Era Union, Metropole Theatre): Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, 3, Lantern Lecture, "The Evolution of the Idea of Hell"; 6, "The Fourth Centenary of Michael Servetus, the Victim of John Calvin."

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

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): C. Cohen, 12 noon, "Militarism, Patriotism, and Freethought"; 6.30, "Man's Search for God"

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Miss Kathleen B. Kough, "Woman and Christianity."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Charles Wilson, "The Origin of Religions."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Sidney Wollen, "The Moral Perfection of Jesus Christ."

RHONDDA BRANCH N. S. S. (Parry's Temperance Bar, Tony-pandy): 3, Business Meeting.

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

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

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