

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXII.—No. 3

SUNDAY, JANUARY 21, 1912

PRICE TWOPENCE

"The fool hath said in his heart there is no God."
Fool, because saying it in his heart, he has not the
courageous wisdom to publish it with tongue and pen.

JAMES THOMSON ("B. V.").

Love, Honor, and Obey.

THE Church of England Marriage Service comes down to us from the Tudor age. It naturally reflects the opinions then generally obtaining amongst Protestants. Those who broke away from the Church of Rome had abandoned marriage as a sacrament, but they clung to its ancient Christian character in all other respects; the more so, indeed, as they worshiped the very letter of the Bible (which the Catholics never did) and entertained a special veneration for St. Paul, deriving most of their doctrines from that great Apostle and really thinking far more of him than they did of Jesus Christ.

Now, the attitude of the New Testament generally, and of St. Paul in particular, towards women is oriental, and even grotesquely oriental. The miraculous birth of Jesus, to begin with, is partly based upon the wide-spread Eastern idea of the eternal and irreconcilable hostility between spirit and matter, and partly upon the Jewish idea of the essential and inevitable pollution of sex,—an idea which expressed itself in what the moderns call "the churching of women," and what the Hebrews called purification after childbirth. The saintliest mother was to the Chosen People "unclean." Thus it is that both on the Aryan and on the Semitic side the dogma of the Virgin Birth, instead of honoring and elevating motherhood, placed it under a stigma of impurity. To have been born in the ordinary way, of a purely human father and mother, would have been a degradation. Jesus had to be free from the taint of original sin. He entered the world, therefore, not by the way of sexuality, but by supernatural generation. If he knew this, or thought it, there is no occasion for surprise at his exclaiming to his mother, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" She was born according to the flesh if he was not, for the dogma of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mother herself had not then been invented. He was her superior from every point of view; he looked down upon her; and he spoke accordingly. The views of Paul, of course, have not to be inferred; they are plainly expressed in his own language. His attitude towards the other sex more than smacked of the barndoor rooster. He simply tolerated them. They were a sort of necessary evil. But they were not to be permitted to give themselves airs. He suffered them not to teach. They were to learn of their husbands in silence and subjection. The husband was the head of the wife as Christ was the head of the Church. He was to rule her, and she was to obey. Such is the Pauline—that is, the Christian—theory of marriage.

Christians who do not exactly like the Pauline theory of marriage argue that it is least monogamous, and is therefore ahead of all the oriental polygamies. But this is incapable of being sustained.

Monogamy already existed at the time of Christ, not only in the civilisation of Greece and Rome, but also amongst the Northern barbarians; just as polygamy still lingered amongst the Jews, in spite of their contact with higher stages of culture. But neither Christ nor Paul uttered a single word against polygamy or in favor of monogamy. The latter is not recognised as a virtue; the former is taken for granted from Genesis to Revelation. It is true St. Paul says that a Bishop must be the husband of one wife; but the Mormons contend that he meant "one wife at least," and it seems that they are right, for the text occurs in a passage recommending general temperance on the carnal side of life.

The Church of England Book of Prayers and Ceremonies represents the ideas of long, long ago. There is nothing really modern about it. And its marriage service is terribly old-fashioned in an age of women teachers, women orators, women politicians, women artists, and women with latchkeys—to say nothing of women on the warpath for parliamentary votes. Even a suffragette, when she leads her bridegroom to the altar, will promise to love and honor him,—for she feels like it just then. But a promise to *obey* him is quite another matter. Perish the very thought! She will find in some cases that she has to do it, and in some cases she will delight to do it; but the abominable *word* shall never pass her lips. And indeed it is an awful word at this time of day. Ingersoll pictured a loving young couple walking with their arms round each other in the moonlight, and trying to settle the problem which of them is to be boss! George Eliot says that marriage is a relation either of sympathy or of conquest. The marriage of sympathy is all right. The marriage of conquest is a relic of the good old times when primitive man hunted down a wife for himself with the aid of a big club.

No wonder the suffragette, Miss Una Stratford Dugdale, who got married so recently at the Chapel Royal Savoy, boggled at the promise to "obey" her husband. Being a niece of Viscount Peel, and moving in "Society," she was able to attract the attention of the newspapers. "Obey" might do very well during the honeymoon, on the principle of "a lover's pinch that hurts and is desired." But not afterwards. Especially when the husband, judging by the photographs, is probably going to obey his wife. The lady appears to have skipped the objectionable word. But why, after all, boggle at that little dissyllable? It is only one feature of an obsolete ceremony. If the lady must have the Church's blessing on her marriage, instead of going quietly and sensibly through a civil marriage before a registrar, why make a fuss about a single expression that nobody seems to take seriously? If she abrogates her reason so far she might as well "go the whole hog." Promising to "obey" is at bottom no worse than promising to "love" and "honor." The words may be the statement of a fact, but as a part of a promise they are an absurdity. Fancy *promising* to love and honor! Spontaneous affections are not amenable to the will. One human being cannot love another by an act of volition. Promises to perform *acts* may be fulfilled; promises to entertain *sentiments* are a mere waste of breath.

G. W. FOOTE.

Militant Atheism.

THE other day, Dean Pigou, of Bristol, celebrated his eightieth birthday. The Dean is represented by an interviewer as being still hale and hearty, full of good humor and interesting reminiscences, and quite inclined to take a rosy view of the future. This is as it should be. Cheery old men and enthusiastic young ones form an admirable combination for the world's welfare. The young see nothing to damp their confidence in achievement, and the older ones find their declining years made the pleasanter by the reflection that the world will not be wanting in enthusiasm to carry on the necessary work. Evidently, too, the fact of having lived beyond the Biblical three score and ten does not worry the Dean. Not many Christians do find this a source of lamentation. They are far more likely to complain at the prospect of being hurried to their heavenly home, which in theory they are longing for, at a premature age. I should not be surprised to learn that Dean Pigou regards it as a special proof of divine favor that heaven has dispensed with his attendance for so long. And he will doubtless be pleased if "Providence" remains in the same humor for more time yet.

To a *Daily News* interviewer Dean Pigou expressed ground "for rejoicing in the decrease of militant Atheism, since in the late 'seventies and early 'eighties he fought against Bradlaugh as vicar of Halifax." No one will be surprised at this. If the decline of Atheism, militant or otherwise, be a fact, the Dean's rejoicing is natural and understandable. I do not know what part Dean Pigou played in counteracting the influence of Bradlaugh thirty years ago. His name is not mentioned by Bradlaugh's daughter in the life of her father, so that it was evidently not considered of very great importance by either Bradlaugh or his biographer. And his work was certainly not very effective in checking the spread of Bradlaugh's Freethought opinions. They are more powerful to-day than ever, although it is always open to the Dean and others to argue that but for their opposition these opinions would be more prevalent and more powerful than they actually are.

Is the decline of Atheism, militant or non-militant, a fact? This is a statement often made by religious speakers and writers, although they usually refrain—perhaps wisely—from giving reasons for the assertion. True, Bradlaugh is dead; and doubtless the religious world, which had for so long felt the power of his personality and the weight of his advocacy, heaved a sigh of relief at his demise. His was a colossal figure, but there was something more colossal still, and that was the idea he represented and advocated. Religious people who depend in a peculiar manner upon personalities, find it difficult to divorce the man from his message, the idea from the vehicle of its expression. And yet had Bradlaugh been ten times the colossus he was, he would have been powerless to injure theology or to influence people as he did influence them had he not voiced truths that were independent of him for their existence. Ideas make men in a far more real sense than men make ideas; and ideas are the personified expression of the operative forces of the age. In Bradlaugh these forces found an instrument of rare power and excellence. But without him they would still have found expression. A Freethought that depended for its existence upon any man, no matter how great, would not be worth the trouble of supporting. It would mean the worship of a personal idiosyncrasy in place of the advocacy of a principle. The real power of Freethought has always been that, while independent of any personality, it has possessed the power of attracting to its service strong, virile intellects, men who have stood head and shoulders above the rank and file of average humanity. It is this alone which has enabled Freethinkers, wanting money, political power, and social prestige, to force

their ideas on powerful and wealthy Churches organised for their defeat.

What ground is there for saying that militant Atheism has decreased? None whatever, so far as I can see. It is less noticeable now than it used to be; but that is quite another matter. To begin with, the number of militant Atheists was never very great. The combination of ability and courage required to openly attack a religion protected by the law, favored by social opinion, and able to call to its assistance a host of associated vested interests, is not found in many individuals. They cannot be picked up as easily as political speakers or local preachers. Such men are rare, and numerically never have, and I daresay never will be, very numerous. But I do not believe they are less numerous than in Bradlaugh's time. There was only one militant Freethought Society in his time, and there is the same militant Freethought Society now. And that shows neither a decrease in militancy nor in the serious and effective nature of its propaganda.

Probably Dean Pigou really had in his mind the idea that militant Atheism was less noticeable now than it was. In this I believe he is correct. But the noticeability of a thing depends upon its rarity. We should all stare at a two headed horse, but no one is specially attracted by the ordinary specimens that one sees in the streets. I remember a curious experience of my own in this connection. I lectured, some years ago, at a watering place on the Clyde. It was the first Freethought lecture ever given there. The hall was crowded to suffocation, and people climbed on the window sills outside. What for? To hear the lecture? Not a bit of it. I have not the slightest doubt that at least seventy-five per cent. came to see, for the first time in their lives, a real live Atheist. That such a person should visit the place was enough to attract the people round about. I question if an Atheist would rouse the same attention there to-day. Christians have become too familiar with the like.

My experience was a fair illustration of the attitude of Christians towards militant Atheism. First of all, the spectacle of anyone boldly and openly denouncing Christianity was so startling that it rivetted their attention. They could see nothing else and think of nothing else. When they recovered their breath and collected their wits they rushed in to pulverise—sometimes argumentatively and sometimes in other ways—the Freethinker. But the Freethinker refused to be silenced, he defied the crushing. Intelligent Christians lost their own faith by the first method, and decent ones were shocked by the second. The number of Freethinkers increased until they were no longer a rarity. Instead of having to wait for a visit from a travelling lecturer to get a good square look at an Atheist, Christians could find them in all relations in life. And as they became common, Christians left off noticing their existence. And as they could not be silenced in discussion, Christians left off arguing with them. Their presence not being a rarity, they were no longer looked for. Their arguments not being answerable, they were no longer reasoned with. And by a curious process of self-delusion, Christians began to persuade each other that as they no longer felt the interest of a zoological collector in hunting for Atheists, and no longer argued with them, therefore, they had ceased to exist. And they have kept up this elaborate humbug for so long that I really believe some of them have persuaded themselves of its genuineness.

It is noticeable that Dean Pigou did not say there was less Atheism now than formerly, but that there was less militant Atheism. If this were true, it is not a state of affairs that anyone should rejoice at. A Christian might reasonably and properly rejoice at there not being as many Atheists now as of old. But I do not think any of them really believe this to be the case. But to rejoice at there being less militancy with Atheism is not a symptom that ought to fill even a Christian with delight. For militant Atheism—or militant anything with an idea as its

motive force—does argue that men are in earnest and, according to their lights, honest. And what a country has to dread is not the time when men have opinions, stand by them, and fight for them as things of supreme value, but the time when people treat opinion as something of small value, unworthy the expenditure of energy or the sacrifice of convenience. In the making of manhood I question whether the opinions we hold are in themselves of nearly so much value as the way in which we acquire them, the manner in which we hold them, and the sense of importance we attach to their power in directing our own lives and the lives of others.

Under the form of Agnosticism, Rationalism, and other variants, Atheism was never so widespread as it is at present. And its prevalence involves of necessity a certain change in the form of Freethought propaganda which some Christian observers readily mistake for a cessation of the attack. Comparing Freethought to-day with fifty years ago, one fails to see the same amount of energy being expended against such beliefs as Biblical inspiration, future punishment, textual criticism of the books of the Bible, etc. But this is not because Atheism is less prevalent or less militant. It is because Christians, of the educated variety at least, have admitted the substantial accuracy of Freethought criticism. Criticism is not to-day seriously concerned with whether Moses wrote the Pentateuch, whether miracles really happen, or whether the world is to be saved by a supernatural revelation. Except to the more illiterate religionists, these questions have lost all vitality. Criticism has taken a wider, deeper, and more deadly survey. It has advanced from a criticism of the Christian God to a critical analysis of the God-idea as a whole. It not only questions the Christian scheme of salvation; it is busy explaining how that scheme came into existence, tracing its origin in savage life and thought, and showing the historical causes of its development. Atheism no longer need expend so much of its energy in capturing outworks; its attack is now directed on the citadel itself.

Things are assuming a logical character. This is apparent beneath the apologetic pseudonyms of Agnostic, Rationalist, etc., adapted by the more timid of non-Theists; and it is evidenced also by the concessions of Christians. For they are forsaking more and more specifically Christian doctrines, and seeking refuge in a formless Theism. The contest is thus rapidly becoming a fight between Atheism and Theism. And to this fight there can be only one ending, however long that ending is delayed. Atheism, like science, never retreats. All it has it holds, and what it has is but a means to get more. And the records of its successes in the past are a sure promise of further and greater victories in the future.

C. COHEN.

Pious Piffle.

DEALERS in so-called supernatural wares cannot help being guilty of conscious or unconscious fraud. If they verily believe in the genuineness of their goods, the fraud is not a recognised fact in consciousness; but it is no less fraud on that account, and a moment's serious reflection would bring it home as such to the conscience. The supernatural world is a pure creation of the imagination, "the undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveller returns." Nobody has ever seen it except through the eye of faith. The same thing is true of supernatural beings and supernatural forces, because they are beings and forces unrealisable by the reason. And yet the supernatural world and its inhabitants are the theologian's stock-in-trade. He writes and talks about them as if they were objective realities, and not subjective inventions; and by so doing he defrauds those who take him at his word. He prevails upon them to accept as genuine the tales which neither he nor anybody else has ever succeeded in verifying. They purchase his wares at the

cost of their intelligence. They are even exhorted not to exercise their reason, but simply to believe without a scrap of evidence. The Christian minister is a sort of spiritual auctioneer who plays upon the ignorance and credulity of his customers. He speaks with the confidence which only a total lack of knowledge renders possible. He may or may not believe that his goods are what he represents them to be; but it is his profession to do his utmost to secure their acceptance by all those who wait upon his ministry; and to the extent of his success at his trade he is a public defrauder. His utter unconsciousness of the deceit by no means exonerates him from blame, for he ought to know better.

Ever since the triumph of science many divines claim theology as a science, the very queen of all the sciences. They forget, however, that science confines itself to the known and the knowable, while theology deals exclusively with the unknowable, and pretends that it is entirely known. The preacher talks of God, for example, with the most impertinent familiarity, simply because he does not know God; and as it is his business to talk about him continually he naturally indulges in a vast amount of unqualified nonsense. The Rev. Thomas Phillips, of Bloomsbury Chapel, contributes a sermon to the *Baptist Times* for January 12, in which he represents his Heavenly Father as stipulating for the complete "self-denudation" of all who wish to be truly happy. What "self-denudation" signifies becomes clear as we read the discourse. Take the following as a sample:—

"Keep the self quiet, so that God may work. I know of no better religious exercise than this, no one more effectual to kill worry; no one more fruitful to produce blessedness. Sit alone in some quiet place. Realise the Eternal Goodness that is surging around you like billows of sunshine on a summer morning. The Father of Jesus Christ, the God of Calvary and the Cross, is close at hand. Now be still and let Him come in. Your will may rebel and be eager to do something. Keep it quiet. As a rule, the will is helpful, but on the present occasion it is a hindrance. Your mind will want to think. Stop it. Think only of God and keep saying earnestly and prayerfully, 'God, God, God.'.....Make yourself as much of a nothing as you possibly can, and into the vacancy and stillness and quietude will come in the fulness and holiness and blessedness of God."

It is difficult to realise that a sane person can so forget himself as to utter such awful trash. This is pietism at its lowest and worst. According to this divine, the secret of blessedness is to be nothing and have nothing, poverty being the grandest wealth. "Blessed is he that has nothing," he exclaims, "for he has everything. Blessed is the pauper, for he is a king." Fancy a child stripped of everything and grovelling in the dust, in order that his father may be able to approach him! Or fancy a father refusing to have any intercourse with his children simply because they are intelligent, thoughtful, and self-respecting! Is it any wonder that the best people leave the preacher severely alone, and devote their Sundays to domestic enjoyment, or to golf, rather than to attending church or chapel? Mr. Phillips is quite willing to admit that Jesus pronounced a beatitude upon poverty, saying "Blessed are ye poor," but contends that later, after discussion with the disciples, the saying was changed into "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Of course, in neither version is the saying true. All history bears witness to the fact that poverty is a curse, although rich Christians always try to persuade the poor that it is a blessing in disguise; and common sense tells us that it cannot be good for anybody to make himself "as much of a nothing as he possibly can." Our reason assures us that it is our duty to cultivate self-control and self-reliance, and make as much of ourselves and our lives as is within our power. And after all, the people who practise self-abasement and self-denudation in the presence of an imaginary Deity are not always the most genuinely humble. Taking Christians as a class, we find that they are absurdly proud and haughty, thinking and asserting that they are the only really good people in the world, and that

had it not been for them mankind would have perished long ago through moral corruption.

It is sheer folly to declare that "happiness is independent of circumstances," or consists in lying low in the dust under the shadow of divinity. Social welfare is an essential condition of social felicity. It is contrary to nature for people who live on the verge of starvation in mean dwellings, surrounded by depressing and heart-breaking conditions, to experience the joy of life in full tide. Here is a poor woman who works hard fifteen hours a day for the paltry sum of ten shillings a week, with which she has to pay rent and feed and clothe herself and six children. Surely "the highest and choicest felicity" is not within her reach, though she may be somewhat comforted by the baseless hope that fortune will smile on her in a future world; and, surely, Mr. Phillips cannot be entirely joyous even in the fellowship of his God, while so many millions of his fellow-beings are held down and tormented by force of untoward and wicked circumstances. It is vain to affirm that God has no responsibility in the matter, and heap all the blame upon the people themselves. If there be a God, and this is his world, it is impossible to hold him guiltless. Indeed, Mr. Phillips himself has often said that this world is governed by its Maker, who is all-powerful, all-wise, and all-good; and if a world so made and governed is yet full of evil and suffering and sorrow, there must be something wrong with the Governor and his government. And yet the reverend gentleman says, "Your life may be cursed and blasted; but that is due, not to his fault, but to your own, or that of others." What is the use of having blessedness "right across the portals of the Kingdom of God" when wretchedness is written large across the portals of human society? The kingdom of God is a dream that has never come true, an invention of speculative theology, a castle in Spain, or in the brains of religious fanatics. At least it has never materialised yet.

The curious thing is that Mr. Phillips delivers himself of observations which necessarily presuppose the non-existence of the kingdom of God, or of a God of justice and love as the ruler of the world. He characterises the maxims of the day as being in direct opposition and contradiction to the sayings of Jesus. They run thus:—

"Not blessed are the poor, but happy are the rich; not blessed are they that mourn, but happy are the merry; not blessed are the meek, but happy are the self-assertive; not blessed are they that hunger for righteousness, but happy are they that seek name and fame, place and power; not blessed are the merciful, but happy are the fit and grasping; not blessed are the peacemakers, but happy are the swaggering and the conquerors."

Mr. Phillips forgets, however, that the maxims of the day are the maxims of people who call themselves Christians. Are they not the maxims honored in Russia, Germany, Great Britain, and by every other power in Christendom? Are they not also the maxims observed by Christian Churches in their attitude to and treatment of one another? "Amongst the millions of England," asks the reverend gentleman, "is there such a being as a Christlike man?" and the above extract clearly shows that there is not. "A yawning gulf separates the maxims of the day from the teaching of Jesus," and this admission is equivalent to a confession that the kingdom of God, or the reign of Christ, is a myth. Mr. Phillips preaches a Gospel which the world laughs to scorn in its daily practice, and which even the Churches do not really believe.

What the world needs and is determined to have is not the pious piffle of the Christian pulpit, but a rational exposition and enforcement of man's various duties as a citizen of this world. Poverty is not a means of grace, but an economic problem crying out for solution along the line of economic readjustment. Suffering and sorrow are not Divine visitations to humble us, but symptoms of a corrupt heredity and of an imperfect correspondence between organism

and environment. Crime is not a deliberate violation of God's laws, to be repented of and forgiven, but a form of disease needing medicinal treatment. What makes for happiness is not the supposed knowledge of God in the face of Jesus Christ, but the loyal working for the formation of just and brotherly social relations and conditions. Instead of producing happiness religion has often prevented and destroyed it. It is science that has the power requisite to banish misery and to generate joy. It is science that holds the secret of the world's happiness; and in proportion as science prospers wretchedness shall dwindle. The hope of the world lies in the fact that at last science is coming into its own, and that knowledge is chasing superstition out of existence.

J. T. LLOYD.

Science and Metaphysics.

NOW that the public has become more or less familiar with the scientific achievements of the century which has just passed away, the inevitable rhythm of motion again displays itself in a slight reactionary tendency towards the mystical and metaphysical. The old parrot cry is again repeated that materialistic science has failed to solve the riddle of the universe. The pseudo philosophical vagaries of William James and Henri Bergson are much talked of and largely written about, if seldom or never understood. Doubtless science, as even Mr. A. J. Balfour has recently reminded the theologians and metaphysicians, will continue her fruitful labors, utterly oblivious of the cobweb-spinning activities of these darkeners of counsel. Her ways will remain those of blessedness, and her paths will be of peace. Her approaching triumphs will most assuredly awaken the constitutionally credulous from the mystical somnolence into which they have for the moment relapsed.

In countless thousands of partly emancipated minds there exists an almost instinctive desire to accept any mystical "explanation" of complex natural phenomena. A personal God; a divine Savior reduced to a vague and shadowy social and religious reformer; a material after-life of purgatory, damnation, or bliss; all these, and more, may fade from the minds of men, but the supernaturalistic concepts of the universe inherited from savage and semi-civilised humanity will lurk hidden and unseen in the nerve structures of otherwise perfectly rational men and women.

The claims of science upon human regard are many and varied. Her services are rendered in the form of vastly increased physical comforts and widely extended intellectual enjoyments. Science is also of immense value in the sphere of education. Her methods are the only ones that can ever supply the means which will enable us to attain the conditions of sound citizenship. Vitiating, as nearly all our reforming activities are, by the dominating influences of emotion, prejudice, and a quite unscientific use of the imagination, there exists no sterner corrective of these weaknesses than a training of the intellect to a mastery of an exact and impartial analysis of facts. There is no danger to those accustomed to survey the problems of social science in the light of a dispassionate understanding of the factors involved. But the imaginative and undisciplined enthusiasts who are ready at a moment's notice to restore order to the chaos of the world almost invariably lack that knowledge of social phenomena which is essential to the true statesman or real reformer.

The realms of science are coextensive with the universe itself. The stars in the remotest stellar depths, the floral beauties of plant life, the chemical constituents of the sun, the heart of a codfish, an alligator's tooth, the vocal organs of a skylark or a prima-donna, the brain-cells of a poet, are all legitimate subjects of science. No fact need lie outside

her domain; so soon as any phenomenon or group of phenomena has been examined, classified, and coordinated, it becomes for all time annexed to the kingdom of science.

Science thus embraces the sum-total of our knowledge of the universe. Our outlook upon this universe expands with the growing years. In our day the scientist's concept of Nature as far transcends that of the thinkers of the Renaissance as theirs outstripped the parochial outlook of the Christian Middle Ages.

It appears fairly obvious from the foregoing considerations that no scheme of philosophy can be accepted by science which fails to find its firm foundations in the bedrock of natural truth. It is for this reason that the evolutionary philosophy of Herbert Spencer is destined to survive all rivals or predecessors. And herein yawns the enormous chasm which separates philosophy from metaphysics. Philosophy unifies the facts laboriously gathered by the human race in its upward progress. Metaphysics merely speculates, conjectures, or surmises concerning the probabilities or possibilities of the unknown, and, maybe, unknowable. Where facts are known to exist their sequences are open to human investigation. Every essential to scientific classification is thus presented. But in the absence of facts any arrangement of them is obviously impossible. Yet, in spite of this, countless wearisome tomes from the pens of so-called philosophers continue to mystify mankind concerning matters of which we have no direct or indirect knowledge whatsoever. Metaphysical systems of all orders are founded upon unwarranted assumptions, and usually develop conclusions more unwarranted still. The study of science leads its votaries to certain definite conclusions; the more certain the facts, the more rigorous the deductions from them. With metaphysics, however, the results are entirely different. Every leading metaphysician or theologian has his own system, which largely differs from those of his predecessors or contemporaries. This is in nowise to be marvelled at if we bear in mind the circumstance that pseudo philosophy usually commences with introspection and ends with the wildest and most fantastic absurdities.

With the painstaking man of science the methods are entirely different. There is no royal road to truth save that of patient inquiry. The hare of knowledge must be snared before it can be dressed for the table. Natural phenomena must be arranged, classified, and reasoned upon before they can enter the gateway to the palace of science. And when theories concerning natural phenomena have withstood all the critical tests that the human understanding can devise, then, only, are they to be numbered with the eternal truths gained for the service of man.

The danger that mysticism may in our time check the progress of science is probably not very great.

"The day has gone by when the Hegelian philosophy threatened to strangle infant science in Germany; that it begins to languish at Oxford is a proof that it is practically dead in the country of its birth. The day has gone by when philosophical or theological dogmas of any kind can throw back for generations the progress of scientific investigation. There is no restriction now on research in any field, or on the publication of the truth when it has been reached. But there is nevertheless a danger which we cannot afford to disregard, a danger which retards the spread of scientific knowledge among the unenlightened, and which flatters obscurantism by discrediting the scientific method."*

Philosophy is widely different from mere metaphysics. The true philosopher reasons upon the ascertained facts of science, while the metaphysician, very often in the blindest ignorance of science, calmly proceeds to evolve from his inner consciousness both his premises and his conclusions. That abundant areas for the exercise of the legitimate speculative faculty exist is not denied for one

moment. Such zones are to be found wherever science and philosophy merge. There is ample scope for philosophising in all ultra-scientific realms. But so long as the metaphysicians refuse to investigate and master the facts before propounding their guesses, their mystical word-structures will remain, as Huxley once put it, "largely connected with the moon."

Theology and metaphysics are the twin offspring of human nescience. Where science ends, religion and metaphysics begin. No science can possibly exist apart from knowledge; the greater the abysses of human ignorance, the vaster the scope for theology and her twin-sister. The conflict between science and superstition is as old as the human race. Science has never made one single advance without lessening the territory of her eternal enemies. Though pitilessly persecuted, tortured, and most foully done to death, science has never turned her back, but has ever marched breast forward. No compromise between such inveterate foes can ever become possible. And when science solves the problem of ethical living through the establishment of a sane system of human society, this crowning achievement will dwarf to utter significance all her previous triumphs in her warfare with Nature's unpying processes.

In certain reactionary quarters it is commonly asserted that the systematic cultivation of science is fatal to the æsthetic side of human nature. The solitary circumstance that the great Charles Darwin lost in his later years his earlier power of appreciating Shakespeare, is constantly paraded. But this hackneyed instance loses much of its imagined force when we recall the names of a few only of our illustrious scientists who were also great men of letters. The writings of Humboldt, Haeckel, Huxley, Tyndall, Maudsley, Clifford, Faraday, Davy, and even Darwin himself, sufficiently illustrate this. Moreover, the marvels of Nature, which science daily discloses, provide many-sided material for some Shakespeare of the future. The greatest poet of Germany, the immortal Goethe, was a keen student of biology. William Watson's magnificent "Ode in May" is a poet's picture of some of the revelations of modern science. Tennyson's masterpieces, "Maud" and "In Memoriam," display a wide acquaintance with astronomy, geology, and natural history. Our philosophical poet-novelist, Thomas Hardy, owes much to his knowledge of science. Never-to-be-forgotten passages in his *Dynasts*, *Pair of Blue Eyes*, *The Return of the Native*, *Two on a Tower*, and *Far from the Madding Crowd*, combine to prove this. In ancient Rome, the poet Lucretius—the Pagan creative artist most deeply touched with the spirit of science—was the greatest singer by the Tiber's side. The Greek, whose thoughts, above all others, still animate mankind, was the scientist and philosopher, Aristotle. The spirit of science is as constant in its attendance upon literary expression as that northern star which called forth one of the most powerful passages even in the mighty Shakespeare himself.

In the case of Darwin, his imaginative range is so vast that the æsthetic judgment is touched to the finest issues by thoughts expressed by him in his *Origin of Species* and *Descent of Man*, to mention two only of his wonderful works. That the creative and receptive powers of man are cramped by the study of Nature seems too absurd to merit serious refutation. The distinction between the ordinary undisciplined imagination and the imagination of the man of science is summed up in the circumstance that the former is apt to run riot through lack of acquaintance with the facts of Nature, while the latter is purified and exalted through a knowledge of natural phenomena, which must ever remain a sealed book to those who disdain to inquire concerning Nature and her laws.

Truth is the ever-worshiped divinity of the votary of science. He is ever anxious to make secure his foundations before laying the stones of his future edifice of facts. He claims admission through every

* Karl Pearson, *Grammar of Science*, part i., pp. 17, 18. Third edition, 1911.

avenue which opens up prospects of coming discovery. He refuses to accept as true all propositions which are not demonstrable, or which do not follow as a logical consequence from ascertained facts. He is, above all, anxious to test and re-test his theories by practical application to the affairs of life. He realises that science—mental, moral, and physical—apart from which civilisation can never exist, has always been, and presumably must ever remain, the result of observation and experiment in Nature's universal garden. Science has never been helped, but always obstructed, by the mudfog metaphysicians and nocturnal loving priests. In the striking words of William Kingdon Clifford, "It has never had help from phantoms and falsehoods, and it can never want any."*

T. F. PALMER.

A Sermon on Flying.

WHEN I entered the sacred precincts I made about the twentieth in that poor little congregation. An old lady next to whom I was placed whispered me the text, but I couldn't hear. Just then the preacher was saying:—

"Fifthly, brethren, we are confronted with the pregnant fact that there is really nothing new under the sun—not even the aeronautical accomplishments of which I have spoken. The latest height records sink into insignificance before that altitude reached by the Prophet Elijah, for he ascended to heaven! God has given us reason *with* faith for a due and proper understanding of the marvellous, and the *chariot of fire*, being interpreted, becomes *flying machine with internal combustion engine*. [Here there was an uneasy movement in the pews.] It is not for us to criticise, brethren, but to accept. Is not the glory of belief magnified by trustful acceptance? The text is sufficient for those with the perfect trust. Verily, all things are justified; the first shall be last, and the last first. I may, perhaps, be permitted to use here, in this sanctified place—ahem!—as pointing a moral, the words of a worldly betting man I encountered in the train from Epsom races, and to whom, with his ungodly friends, I had—I am afraid quite vainly—expounded this argument. He said, 'So, according to you, Elijah is still in the running,' and my rejoinder was, 'Yes, sir; a thousand times yes! Modern records are as nothing before that which was achieved solely by the aid of the *Holy Spirit*.' Fortunately I then arrived at my destination, but none too soon, for the world, the flesh, and the Devil were in that carriage. Something was shouted after me about 'Holy Spirit favorite—Petrol outsider,' and that is all I heard.

"Sixthly, we come to a phase of modern flying, which is at once arresting and imposing. In the after life, those of us who shall take on immortality in conjunction with the necessarily angelic form, will assuredly be provided with the familiar adjuncts for flight. I say familiar, because ancient art has depicted the blessed *clothed with wings*, and the inspired artists portrayed the visions divinely given them. Wings, brethren, were the chosen form, and the Holy Spirit—not the mere vapor of earthly petrol—was the impelling force. Doubtless, Elijah's chariot was abandoned when he assumed the angelic form. [Here some of the congregation walked out.] The proof—I say the proof—is awaiting all of those who shall be permitted to join him later on. And now comes the crux of the whole matter. [A boy in the free seats cracks a nut with his teeth.] Mac, in his ignorance and effrontery, is seeking to emulate a power which transcends him, for, if I am rightly informed, there are, while I speak, two brothers over the sea seeking to encroach on the domain of the heavenly in their wicked experiments with wings. [Some more people silently retire.] May God—I say, may God—in his mercy be kind to them! Let

us all say—'Father, forgive the Wright Brothers, for they know not what they do.' [The old lady gathers up her books and reticule.] The Church, ever mindful of erring ones, extends even to them the saving grace she alone can give. I have been asked whether it is likely that any attempt will be made to attain the glorious regions without, as my questioner somewhat bluntly put it, 'the unpleasantness of dying,' and I can only affirm that any such effort must end disastrously.

"Seventhly, the Prophet Elijah—er—er—but I see that some of you have already taken your departure. I—I can then most fittingly conclude [pleased expression from the boys]—if the gentleman, the pew-opener, and the two little boys will kindly remain seated—by quoting to you the eternal words of warning"—

But only the pew-opener remained, possibly to look for umbrellas, and watch the preacher count the buttons.

A. FAGG.

Acid Drops.

Religious services are held by permission of the Brighton Guardians every Sunday afternoon in the male tramps ward, which usually contains twenty men. On Sunday afternoon, December 31, not a single tramp attended the holy function. Probably they had all had some.

Some of the Brighton picture theatres are dodging the six-days' license bigots by using non-inflammable films on Sunday. In this way they keep their shows going and demonstrate that if the Sabbatarian bigots don't want Sunday picture shows the general public do. It is a pity all the other picture theatres don't join in this policy. By acting all together they could defy the bigots easily. It would be quite impossible for the magistrate to deprive every picture theatre in the town of its week-days' license.

We are glad to see that the Brighton picture theatres have friends in the press. The *Herald* announces that there may be reprisals:—

"One can understand that the Picture Theatre people do not view with complacency a Council that can thus strike so heavy a blow at providers of an innocent and educative recreation. They contemplate retaliation. The Gas Company have not been asleep. They have taken advantage of the sore feeling against the Corporation to draw the attention of the Picture Theatre people to the fact that they can supply them with gas engines to make their own electricity. The Picture Theatres seriously propose to do this. Thus the action of the town's representative may strike a serious blow also at the town's electrical supply."

When it is found that two can play at the same game the Sabbatarian bigots are apt to give in; for they usually like to gratify their spleen at other people's expense rather than their own.

The Sabbatarian battle has been opened at Margate. Councillor Rowe fired the first shot. He asked the Town Council to resolve that Sunday concerts should be so in reality as well as in name. He objected to aggressively secular music. Well now, if he will talk to any competent musician on the subject, he will find that the distinction between secular and religious music is purely imaginary. Music is music—and there's an end of it. The words, of course, are a different matter. We have a certain sympathy with Councillor Wales, who complained of "The Star of Bethlehem" being followed by "Come Into the Garden, Maud" as an encore. But as the singer chose it, and the audience liked it, we don't see why Margate should be upset over Councillor Wales's personal preferences. Besides, the superiority in poetry, and even in music, lies with "Maud." It now remains to be seen if the Entertainments Committee will defer to the Sabbatarian representations.

Broadstairs has been troubled in the same way. But the Sabbatarians only mustered two votes against the Sunday band on the pier. It was agreed on both sides that the band performances last summer were largely attended by "the best class" of people—appreciative, orderly, and in every way well-behaved.

The newspapers are reviewing what appears to be a very interesting book, *Alone in West Africa*, by Mrs. Mary

* *Essays*, vol. i., p. 338.

Gaunt. The lady is anything but orthodox on the subject of Missionaries, and she makes a moral declaration respecting Africa and Europe which the Christian Churches of the latter continent would do well to ponder. "There is not in all the length of Africa, I will venture to swear," she says, "one quarter of the unutterable misery and vice you may see any day in the streets of London."

The way in which religious prepossessions operate in judging native races is well illustrated in an article by Mr. James Bryce in the *International Review of Missions*. Mr. Bryce bases his call to interest in missionary work on the ground that as civilisation takes charge of the lower races we are bound to care for their moral wellbeing. But it is just this notion that the civilised States, which happen to be commercial countries, with Christianity as the established form of religion, that is at the root of the trouble. Consciously or unconsciously, but more often consciously, the trader and the missionary work into each other's hands. So long as the native remains wedded to his old customs he is a poor market for the trader. These must be broken down to open a free road to his exploitation. The missionary does this for the trader; the trader finds funds for the missionary. And there is scarcely a case where a native race is not worse physically and mentally after it has been indoctrinated with the white man's creed. It contracts our diseases and absorbs our vices. It learns to use the Bible and becomes a buyer of English goods. And so long as these two things result English religion and English commercialism will declare that all is good.

Mr. Bryce refers to the work done for education in the Turkish East by the missionaries. He says the missionaries there are far more concerned with spreading education than making converts to Christianity. This may be true, but we beg to submit that this is not what the missionaries are subsidised for. They are equipped for the purpose of turning Mohammedans into Christians, and although educating, etc., may be part of the machinery, it must be subordinate to the work of conversion. Moreover, in the appeals made for funds stress is laid upon "winning souls for Christ." If the missionaries do not do this, but, having got the money, are more concerned with schools than converting, this is suspiciously like obtaining funds under false pretences. Mr. Bryce's recommendation is, in brief, not an account of the religious good done by missionaries, but an account of secular benefits incidentally conferred. An aspect of the truth ignored by Mr. Bryce is that schools and medical missions are, as a matter of fact, used as bribes to bring people to Christianity. They do not succeed in this work on any scale proportionate to the cost and labor involved, as their own figures show conclusively enough.

Religious papers seem to sadly need a sense of humor. The *Methodist Times* relates that a little while ago a Chinaman called at a Methodist Church in Peking and asked permission to read the pulpit Bible. Presumably, it was a large one. After reading it for some time, he asked permission to take it home. This was granted on a promise to return it. But the Bible was not returned, and we are wondering what is the moral we are expected to draw from the story. The story winds up with the hope that the Bible "though stolen may be of use in leading men to God." Perhaps; but it strikes us as just as likely to lead to more demands to take home good-sized saleable, or usable, Bibles.

According to the *Railroad Man's Magazine* it appears that Christianity was the genuine old article at Lancaster, Ohio, in 1828. A party of young men asked permission to use the school-house for a debate on the subject of steam railways, and the reply they got was this: "You are welcome to the use of the school-house to debate all proper questions, but such things as railroads are impossibilities and rank infidelity. There is nothing in the Word of God about them. It is a device of Satan to lead immortal souls to perdition."

The *Times* the other day contained an invitation to the owners of haunted houses to communicate with the advertiser. We don't at all mind if they will communicate with us. We are quite willing to take charge of a good house, rent free, no matter how haunted it may be. The quality or number of the ghosts is of no consequence whatever. The size of the house and its situation are the only things of importance. These being satisfactory, we extend a hearty invitation to as many members of ghostland as care to honor us with a visit.

The Archbishop of York naturally calls upon his friends to resist the disestablishment of the Church in Wales. He

also tells them that if this is done the Legislature will have destroyed the basis of our Christian State. This is sheer fudge. In what sense is our State Christian? All sorts of people—including Jews, who deny the basis of Christianity, and Atheists, who deny the basis of all religion—make the laws, and are a part of the State. A non-Christian religion, or no religion at all, is no legal bar to office under the State. Our laws are not based upon Christian teaching, and in actual life people pay little attention to it. The only ground on which we can call this a Christian State is that there are certain old statutes that favor and protect Christianity, and that the majority of people profess Christianity—of a kind. But in India the majority of the King's subjects profess Brahminism, and we might as well call the British Empire of India a Brahminical State. The cry, we repeat, is sheer fudge. This is not a Christian State. It is a State in which Christianity has the most favored position; a State in which Christianity exerts considerable influence. But the latter will no more stand careful examination than the former will stand impartial consideration.

The editor of *Public Opinion* says it is significant that "two of the virile and outspoken arraignments of Europe" should have recently appeared from the pens of Max Nordau and Pierre Loti, "who stand apart from all religious profession." This is the editor's mild way of expressing, or hiding, the fact that they are both Atheists. We agree with Mr. Parker that it is significant; but it is not surprising—to Freethinkers. Their Freethought enables both writers to look at the European situation with open eyes, and neither has any religious axe to grind. When Pierre Loti says "It is we [the Christian peoples of Europe] who are the biggest killers; it is we who, with the words of fraternity on our lips, are every year inventing some new and more infernal explosive; we who put to fire and sword for purposes of plunder the old African or Asiatic world, and treat men of the brown or yellow races like cattle," he is saying something that the Christianity of many will not permit them to say without reservations that rob their saying of a large part of its power. Even now Christian Russia welcomes China's attempt to reform, as Christian Powers in Europe tried to welcome Turkey's attempt at reform—by stealing native territory in the name of progress and order.

Annie Barton told the magistrates at Shire Hall, Nottingham, that she had "visions" assuring her that Mormonism was true and that her husband was "a bad wicked man." The magistrates found that "they were a very awkward couple to live together" and gave her an order for ten shillings a week and the custody of the children. The magistrates seem to have had visions too.

Rev. C. Feneley, of the Tunbridge Wells Wesleyan Circuit, is reported to have given a demonstration of thought-reading which left his audience "completely mystified and astounded." Many a man of God has left his audience in that state before.

Mr. Joseph McCabe's "demonstration" of the great decline of the Catholic Church was a good deal like a burial-service in anticipation of death. It carried conviction to the common-garden Protestants, who congratulated him in their newspapers on his achievement. One of these, if our memory does not serve us a trick, was the *Daily News*. But what do we read now in that representative of Political Non-conformity? In its issue of January 6, there was a long letter "from our own correspondent" at Berlin on the coming German elections, in which the following passage occurred:—

"The Socialist gains will in all probability be at the expense of the Centre, which of all the parties stands to lose most heavily. Its only *raison d'être* is the defence of Catholicism in the Empire, but it is common knowledge, even among the Catholics, that so far from needing defence, the Church is expanding with remarkable rapidity in Germany, and that the percentage of Catholics to the rest of the population is steadily rising."

Freethinkers, at any rate, should avoid the dangerous blunder of underrating their enemies. They may rely upon it that the Catholic Church is not going to die in a hurry. It is the only Christian Church that has a future.

"Owe no man anything," says the New Testament; but the promoters of the great Y. M. C. A. building in Tottenham Court-road forgot that text. They opened £100,000 in debt. But a Yankee hustler called Ward is trying to raise that sum in twelve days. Will he succeed? We must wait and see.

The usual "week of prayer" with which January opened hasn't done any good—and probably has done no harm.

The weather hasn't improved, and the "unrest" in the labor world got worse. And the hustling effort to raise £100,000 for the London headquarters of the Young Men's Christian Association is not yet a success. Either the celestial powers have retired from business or they have something more important to do than attend to the wriggling of pious worms—they call *themselves* "worms"—on this paltry little planet.

With a portion of the late Mr. George Herring's bequest of £100,000, the Salvation Army started a Small Holdings Colony at Boxted. This Colony has recently been the scene of the eviction of six of the small holders, under conditions that have aroused strong local feeling against the Army. Of course, the Army allege that the men did not keep their agreements and spoke evil of the Army. The men, on the other hand, declare that the soil was very poor, they were compelled to pay extortionate prices for tools, etc., and money due to them from sales of their produce has been kept back. From what we know we should be very loth, indeed, to deny offhand that there may be faults on the men's side, but from what we know of the Army's dealings in other directions we should say the men's complaints are well founded. The Army, as a rule, does nothing for anyone on which it cannot make a profit—as, for example, its emigration scheme and its food shelters, the latter often being closed when a profit is not forthcoming. Moreover, the Army bases its claim to public support on its power to save the worthless. To take men on who can make things pay, and turn them off when they cannot, is merely the practice of the sharp business man with little concern for those whom he employs. We should like to see a really independent committee appointed to look into the management of these things by the Army. And we should like the committee to hear the evidence of those who have left the Army or who have been turned out, in addition to those who are still with the Army, and who may have their own reasons for speaking well of it. We are not likely to see General Booth and his advisers consenting to this, but public opinion should press for it all the same.

The Colchester magistrates were obliged to grant General Booth those eviction orders for the Salvation Army Colony at Boxted, but they refused to shorten the notice from 28 to 21 days, and expressed regret that the case had not come before a civil court. But that wouldn't be General Booth. His motto is "Blood and Fire," and if you don't accept the first as he deals it out he is sure to do his utmost to make you have the second.

"Providence," by the way, is taking its usual care of the people of India. No less than 23,860 persons were killed by wild beasts and snakes during 1909. How beautifully, as the late W. E. Gladstone said, "Providence" has fitted up the earth for man's habitation!

What a farce royal tiger hunting is in India! There is really no danger, for King George it nearly as well guarded in the jungle as he is in Buckingham Palace. And it seems to us a miserable thing to go deliberately killing even tigers in the name of "sport." One thinks of William Blake's "Tiger, tiger, burning bright," and then wonders at the boast that Christianity is the only religion of love and mercy.

Bible teaching in schools seems to be a very mixed affair. Miss Green, of Hither Green, has been telling a meeting of the Church Kindergarten Union some of her experiences. She told the youngsters of the coming of the Holy Ghost to the Apostles in that Upper Room on the day of Pentecost, and of "the mighty rushing wind" and the "tongues of fire." One boy thoughtfully asked: "Did their hair catch alight?" Other questions were these:—

"What is the Holy Spirit?
Why did the wind blow?
Did the wind bring the Holy Spirit?
What is the Holy Spirit like?
Was the house on fire?
Did the engines come?"

A teacher who has to solve these mysteries will have little time for anything else.

The village parson of Glenfield, near Leicester, left a copy of his Parish Magazine at the house of one of our readers, who sends us a cutting from it on "How to Live Well." There are sixteen directions, all duly numbered. The first is: "The first thing in the morning lift up your heart and soul to God." The last is: "Let your last thoughts at night be of Death, Judgment, Heaven, or Hell, or of the love of the Lord Jesus to us sinners." The fourteen in between

are of the same "kidney." When a man had gone through them all, he might very well exclaim, "What a day we've been having!"

At the Liverpool Conference of the Student Volunteer Missionary Union the Rev. W. E. S. Holland, of Allahabad, declared that in Africa "Christianity and Islam were racing for the conversion of 50,000,000 pagans and Islam was winning easily." "As certainly as anything can be predicted," he further said, "they might take it that in the next ten years North Africa was going to be Mohammedan, the new China was going to be materialist and godless, and the new India was going to be agnostic—unless something absolutely radical and revolutionary happened at home." But doesn't the reverend gentleman know that the age of miracles is past?

Southwark Cathedral, it is announced, is being used to train young men in public speaking, so that they may go out to street corners and oppose the "infidels." We are glad to hear it.

"Beware of Pickpockets" may be seen at St. Paul's Cathedral. One need not be surprised, therefore, to hear that Mr. Paul Prince, worshipping at the Congregational Chapel, Ashbourne-road, Derby, had his overcoat stolen from the cloak room. He was not good Christian enough to obey Christ by offering the thief another outside garment. The case has gone to the Assizes.

Rev. Thomas Austen Holcraft, of Bolney, Hayward's Heath, left £11,388. Not a big lump, but enough to keep the camel from going through the needle's eye.

THE MERRIMENT OF MARS.

The sons of the Cæsars are bleeding to-day
Under the African sky,

The sons of Mohammed are dumb with dismay,
While Mars filled with laughter looks down on the
Watching the poor devils die. [fray,

Like brutes of the jungle they spilled out their gore
Staining the African dust,
Heaping their hides on the hot desert shore,
While banqueting buzzards their proud faces tore
After the battle's wild gust.

But whether they conquer or whether they fall
Bloody old Mars calls it fun,
He knows that a harvest of sorrow is all
That the sowers of strife can glean from their brawl,
Knows what the poor fools have done.

The age of the soldier—grim era of fears—
Blotteth the annals of Time,
Encrimsoning History's page with hot tears,
Erecting a charnel-house out of the years,
Weaving a garland of crime.

Vast kingdoms have crumbled; their might is no
Even the deities fall, [more,
Long perished are Jupiter, Isis, and Thor,
Till only the God of Destruction and War
Marshals mankind to his call.

One foe ye must vanquish, O children of Earth,
Ere Peace and Justice may reign,
The Lord of the Combat who dwells with his mirth
In the core of your breasts where battles have birth,
He must be conquered and slain.

The sons of the Cæsars are bleeding to-day
Under the African sky,
The sons of Mohammed are dumb with dismay,
While Mars filled with laughter looks down on the
Watching the poor devils die. [fray,

—G. O. Bensinger.

NOT A BEAUTY.

A working man married rather late in life a more than ordinary plain-looking woman. The little bit of money she had saved was supposed to be the chief attraction. A few days after the wedding his master met him. "Well, John," he said, "I hear you've got married at last, and what sort of wife have you found?" "Well, master," he replied, "she's one of the Lord's handiworks, I suppose, but I canna' say she's one of his masterpieces!"

LIFE EVERLASTING COMES HIGH.

An evangelist says it costs \$620 to save a soul in Indianapolis. It seems that the cost of eternal living is going up with that of the mortal article.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

Orders for literature, of whatever kind, should be sent direct to our new Shop Manager (Mr. H. Saill) at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C.—and to no one else. Subscriptions to the "Freethinker" should also be sent to the same—and to no one else. The proper address for such orders and subscriptions is as follows:—The Shop Manager, Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C. Subscriptions for Funds that may be open in the "Freethinker" should be sent to Mr. G. W. Foote at the same address. Complaints of any kind should also be sent direct to Mr. Foote.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, January 21, Secular Hall, Brunswick-street, Glasgow: at 12 noon, "Marie Corelli and 'The Life Everlasting'"; at 6.30, "Milton and Burns on the Devil."

February 4 and 11, Queen's Hall; 18, Manchester; 25, Birmingham.

March 3, Liverpool; 10 and 17, Queen's Hall; 24, Leicester.

April 14, Glasgow.

To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—January 21, Shoreditch Town Hall; 28, Battersea. February 11, Glasgow; 25, Queen's Hall. March 31, Queen's Hall.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1912.—Previously acknowledged. £10 6s. Received since:—J. M. Gimson, £2 2s.; Dr. and Mrs. Laing, £2 2s.; E. B., £1 1s.; Robert Avis, £1; W. H. Morrish, £1 1s.; James Moffat, £1 1s.; W. Muir, 2s. 6d.; Edward Oliver, £2 2s.

C. GUM.—We hope we have your name correctly. Thanks for cutting. See paragraph. There is no obligation to pay more than the minimum subscription of 2s. to the N. S. S. There is no active Branch at Cardiff now. We should like to see one. We understand that the great difficulty was getting halls for meetings.

J. ELLISON says: "I wish you and the *Freethinker* every success in the New Year, and sincerely hope to see the 'output doubled.'"

A. MATTHEY.—Flunkeyism, as you say, but rather "off our beat."

J. M. GIMSON subscribes to the President's Honorarium Fund "with kind regards and best wishes."

F. HOBDAV.—See paragraph. Thanks. Paper shall be sent.

JOSEPH A. E. BATES.—Thanks for cuttings and good wishes.

C. W. M.—Glad to hear you are so pleased with the *Freethinker*, which has only recently come under your notice. We do not keep binding cases or filing apparatus. A sufficient demand might induce us to do so, but we cannot see that it exists at present.

E. B.—You are quite right about the "Lord Bacon." But he has come down the ages that way, and it cannot be altered now. The "Bacon" is too great to be lost in the "Verulam." We suppose that is a good part of the explanation. This is a case in which strict accuracy is now, through the lapse of time, practically impossible.

S. SCOTT.—Glad you think this journal is "the best going, and the best value for the money."

JAMES MOFFAT.—Mr. Cohen's new book is selling well, but the party who reported it as "out of print, wait for second edition" is highly imaginative, unless he was misled by someone else of that character.

W. MUIR.—Thanks for your generous letter. Shall be pleased to see you and other Motherwell "saints" at Glasgow.

L. KOTHE (S. Africa).—Glad you like the *Freethinker* so much. Your suggestion, as you will see, is acted upon.

JACK BARTON.—"Abracadabra's" articles on the Apocalypse were not published in a separate form. We should like to hear from some Birmingham "saint" about the Albert Reeves case. His wife said he was an Atheist, but did any other Atheist know him as such?

W. A. HOLROYD.—Shall be sent as desired. Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation.

J. H. B.—Will write you on the matter.

A. W. HUTTON.—The explosive and murderous brothers McNamara are Roman Catholics, we understand.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

A. B. MOSS.—Proof in due course. We agree with you as to the social value of the Annual Dinner.

ISABELLA J. ROBERTS.—We appreciate your good intention, but we are not very keen on what you suggest. Our feeling is, "If the cause live we live."

HARRY SHAW.—See paragraph. Your letter, dated January 10, was obviously too late for last week's *Freethinker*.

J. CLAYTON.—Pleased with your letter. Order passed on to Shop Manager.

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 Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote delivers two lectures to-day (Jan. 21) at the Secular Hall, Brunswick-street, Glasgow. The Branch committee have chosen two subjects with a more than usual literary flavor. The subject at 12 noon is "Marie Corelli and 'The Life Everlasting,'" and at 6.30 "Milton and Burns on the Devil." There ought to be crowded audiences.

Mr. Foote had another fine audience at Shoreditch Town Hall on Sunday evening, and his lecture was very enthusiastically applauded. Miss Kough occupied the chair gracefully and effectively. A good many questions were asked and answered.

The Shoreditch Town Hall platform will be occupied this evening (Jan. 21) by Mr. J. T. Lloyd, who should have a good audience to hear what is certain to be a good lecture.

Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner lectures for the Birmingham Branch this evening (Jan. 21) at the King's Hall, Corporation-street. No doubt she will have a large audience and a hearty welcome.

The meeting organised at South-place Institute on Monday evening was a great success. The place was crowded in every part and the enthusiasm never flagged during the two hours that the meeting lasted. Rev. Stewart D. Headlam occupied the chair, and he was very warmly applauded when he rose to begin the evening's business. All the speakers were in good form, and now and then the audience was stirred to fever heat. Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, Mr. Harry Snell, Mr. F. J. Gould, Mr. C. Cohen, and Mr. G. W. Foote formed an array of platform power not often met with. Mr. W. T. Stead also kept his word, and, being in London, came to the meeting and seconded the resolution, which was finally carried unanimously. We print it in full as it may serve as a model for other protest meetings.

"That the late revival of the Blasphemy Laws in London and Leeds is to be deplored as a reactionary proceeding on the part of the Police in a province in which they have no legitimate concern; that these laws should be abolished as an odious legacy from the days of general bigotry and persecution; and that all alleged improprieties of speech at public meetings, or in printed publications, should be dealt with under the ordinary law, with equal justice to all forms of opinion."

A copy of this resolution has been forwarded to the Home Secretary.

We ought to add that, in addition to the speeches on Monday evening, letters of sympathy were read from Mr. Herbert Burrows, Mr. F. Verinder, Mr. George Greenwood, M.P., Mr. H. S. Swinny, Mr. J. Ramsay Macdonald, M.P., and Mr. George Lansbury, M.P.—all of whom regretted their inability to attend in consequence of prior engagements.

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, under the auspices of the National Secular Society, took place at the Holborn Restaurant on Tuesday evening, January 9. There was no special attraction this year, and it was therefore all the more gratifying to see the well-filled tables, and the large contingent of ladies who gave a welcome touch of color and brightness to the festive scene. Mr. Foote, acting as chairman, was freely congratulated on his looking so well. Miss Vance's attendance had been doubtful, but she was just able to be present, and perhaps it did her more good than fretting at home. Messrs. Cohen, Lloyd, Moss, Heaford, and Davies, and Miss Kough, who spoke to toasts, were all brief, pointed, and effective. It was a most successful gathering from every point of view.

Most of the diners missed the presence of the cheerful veteran, Mr. R. H. Side, who had been affected by the wretched weather, and obliged to keep indoors at night; indeed, he had really been ill, but was getting better, though still obliged to be careful. Our old friend informs us that he hopes to attend the Annual Dinner for years yet—and we hope so too. He had a big family gathering, running into dozens, on Christmas Day; and right and left, and up and down, they were all good Freethinkers, and many of them active workers for the cause. Yet some orthodox ninnies pretend that Freethought never runs into the second generation.

The petition we referred to last week for the release of Thomas William Stewart and John William Gott, who are suffering three and four months' respectively for "blasphemy" in Armley Prison, Leeds, has been forwarded to the Home Secretary. For what will happen we must wait and see. Meanwhile the National Secular Society's application to Mr. McKenna to receive a deputation stands in abeyance. Of course the deputation would be as widely representative as possible.

Mr. McKenna has a very good excuse for action if he wishes to say or do anything against the Blasphemy Laws. He need not speak too freely, but releasing the prisoners would be more eloquent than almost any words he could utter. The petition bears a number of distinguished names. Now that it is completed, and issued in that state with the (printed) names attached, we have been favored with a copy "with the Secretary's compliments"—for which we are as grateful as the circumstances permit. It is true there are a number of names of N. S. S. members towards the end of the list, but these were secured at the Annual Dinner on the very last possible evening, and that by no effort of the promoters of the petition, but by the action of Miss Vance the N. S. S. secretary. We are able to say, therefore, like other newspapers, that the petition contains some distinguished names; for instance, Lord Courtney, Sir John Brunner, J. M. Robertson, M.P., F. W. Jowett, M.P., Thomas Burt, M.P., Sir W. P. Byles, M.P., Edward Clodd, Dr. T. K. Cheyne, Alfred R. Wallace, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sir Edward Brabrook, Frederic Harrison, Israel Zangwill, Dr. Jane Ellen Harrison, Major-General Elphinstone Begbie, John Galsworthy, G. K. Chesterton, Havelock Ellis, Professor Patrick Geddes, Dr. C. W. Saleeby, E. Sidney Harland, G. Bernard Shaw. One name suggests the famous exclamation of John Huss—*O sancta simplicitas!* It is that of Mr. Joseph McCabe, who appears to have found his ideal "blasphemy" case at last. Mr. McCabe actually agrees now, with the other petitioners, that "to punish persons for coarseness or violence in the expression of opinions which may be promulgated without punishment if soberly expressed is to make a lapse from good taste into a crime and is cruelty." We are not at all sure that this clumsy sentence is thoroughly defensible. But it may be allowed to serve the turn at present—as against the Blasphemy Laws.

"That the Belief in God is Unscientific and Illogical" is a proposition to be maintained in public debate by Mr. Joseph A. E. Bates at the Town Hall, Ripley, on Friday evening (Jan. 26). The opposite view will be maintained by the Rev. S. Dodd. The bills announce two chairmen as well as two debaters—Rev. A. Wilson, of Swanwick, and Mr. H. Shaw, of Leabrooks. We had an arrangement like that once, and it took us (and our opponent) all our time to keep the chairmen in order.

Our veteran friend, Mr. W. H. Morrish, of Bristol, suggests that "it would have been a good plan to start the year with the balance that was over and above the £300." He thinks it "would have had a tendency to encourage the subscribers" to the President's Honorarium Fund. Any suggestion from Mr. Morrish deserves attention. But doesn't he overlook the two years' deficiencies which amounted together to more than last year's overplus? On the whole, perhaps, the matter had better remain as it is.

Mr. Morrish has sent a New Year's Gift of £5 to the Secular Society, Ltd., through the Secretary, and asks that it may be acknowledged through the *Freethinker*. It is so acknowledged with pleasure, and we should be glad to acknowledge similar donations in the same way.

Our valued contributor, Mr. W. Mann, suggests that our correspondent "J. Galvin" should read Gustave Le Bon's *Evolution of Matter*.

A subscriber to the President's Honorarium Fund, who has reasons for not advertising his identity in our columns, writes:—

"I congratulate you upon the success which attended last year's appeal. It is a unique experience for an applicant to get more than he asks for. But I trust that it may be taken as evidence that your readers are realising, more generally, the necessity for supporting their leader with deeds, as well as words. I hope that when we reach the end of 1912 we shall see the performance of 1911 excelled, and that will be the most satisfactory tribute that your admirers can pay you. Wishing you the best of health and the greatest vigor to enable you to prosecute your noble work under the most favorable conditions, I am," etc., etc.

We are very glad to have this correspondent's warm appreciation.

The President's Honorarium Fund.

To the Freethinkers of Great Britain.

January 1, 1912.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

We the undersigned renew our appeal on behalf of the above Fund.

The longer the Fund exists the less necessity is there to say much about it. You all know its object, which is to relieve Mr. G. W. Foote—President of the National Secular Society, Chairman of the Secular Society, Ltd., and Editor of the *Freethinker*—from the worst of his financial worries, so that he may be as free as possible to devote his time and energies to his work as leader of the militant Freethought movement in this country.

Previous appeals have mentioned the fact that Mr. Foote's heavy and incessant work on the *Freethinker* brings him no salary or profit whatever. Hitherto he has actually had to pay out of his own pocket a considerable deficit on the paper and its adjuncts. We are happy to have his assurance that this deficit is now greatly reduced and will in all probability be soon extinguished.

This is the fifth year of the President's Honorarium Fund. We suggested that £300 might be raised in this way. During the first two years it was nearly raised, the third year it was fully raised, the fourth year it has been exceeded, the full amount subscribed during 1911 being £333 16s. 8d. We venture to hope that the Fund will be as well maintained in 1912. There is no occasion, however, for the subscribers to be less generous. One subscription of £50, not likely to be repeated, came from Canada; and death has been busy amongst the larger regular subscribers. Mr. George Payne, Mr. F. Smallman, and Mr. Horace W. Parsons, contributed no less than £30 between them; and the loss of that amount will naturally be felt. Remaining subscribers, therefore, should rather increase than lessen their donations.

All subscriptions received have been acknowledged week by week in the *Freethinker*, and will continue to be acknowledged in that way.

Subscriptions for 1912 can be forwarded to either of the undersigned. Those who prefer to do so can send, as before, direct to Mr. Foote himself, at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

Subscribers who do not wish their names to appear in print should state the form of acknowledgment they prefer.

We are aware that all subscribers cannot conveniently respond to this appeal at once, but many can, and it would be pleasant if a considerable portion of the Fund were subscribed during January, which is the month of the President's birthday.

Yours faithfully,

J. W. DE CAUX, J.P.,
92 St. Peter's-road, Gt. Yarmouth.

R. T. NICHOLS, M.D.,
28 Park-road, Ilford.

A. J. FINCKEN,
66 Mount Grove-road, Highbury,
London, N.

Determinism or Free Will?

By Chapman Cohen. The Walter Scott Publishing Co., Ltd. Price 1s. net.

THIS volume supplies a long-felt want, and supplies it in the most excellent manner. Though comparatively a small book, it yet possesses the highest scientific and philosophical merit. As a statement of the Deterministic position, from the logical point of view, Anthony Collins's *Inquiry Concerning Human Liberty* has never been surpassed; but as it was published nearly two hundred years ago, it cannot reasonably be expected to meet the requirements of to-day. In Jonathan Edwards's *Freedom of Will* we have a perfect masterpiece, a veritable classic, which will never be out of date; but it contains such an admixture of metaphysics and Calvinistic theology that it cannot possibly be acceptable to the general reader of the twentieth century. It must be admitted, however, that the famous American was a genuine Determinist, and not a mere Fatalist like Augustine and Calvin. As a rule, theologians regard the will as an entity, in the same sense as they look upon soul and body as distinct entities. One noted divine observes that the relation between the will and the soul is like that between the soul and the body. As the soul controls the body, he says, so the will controls the soul. The same writer asserts that the freedom of the will consists in its power to choose and determine without the action being caused by anything outside of the will itself. Then he adds, without perceiving the contradiction, that though the will acts on its own initiation, yet it is bound to act in conformity to the laws by which a reasonable being is governed. From such fallacious reasoning what a delightful relief it is to turn to a thoroughly scientific work like *Determinism or Free Will?* Mr. Cohen is a complete master of his subject, and his book is bound to prove of immense service to multitudes of people.

This work possesses highly valuable characteristics. One is *fairness*. It is never guilty of misrepresenting the views of opponents. Mr. Cohen is peculiarly careful to be perfectly accurate in all his allusions to the arguments employed by the champions of Free Will. The essence of the Free Will doctrine is the contention that the law of causation which holds throughout the rest of Nature does not apply to man. The will is an exclusively human faculty which serves at once as the badge and the instrument of man's pre-eminence over all the animals below him. In providing him with such a faculty God made him, in a sense and for a time, superior to himself. The Rev. Dr. Warschauer, for example, has said, again and again, that man's will limits the omnipotence of God. Of course, such a doctrine was framed with the object of protecting God's moral character by representing man as the sole author of evil. In this form the doctrine is of modern origin. Practically all the great thinkers of the Church have been either Fatalists or Determinists. As Mr. Cohen says, Augustine, Aquinas, and Calvin were advocates of Predestination or Fatalism. Aquinas was not quite so positive as the other two, but he used no language that could not legitimately be employed by a Fatalist. Another characteristic of this book is *lucidity*. Mr. Cohen is pre-eminently a clear thinker. There is no possibility of mistaking what he means. His definition of "freedom" as "an absence of external and non-essential coercion" is a case in point. Scientifically there is no such thing as freedom.

"Atoms of matter are not *free* to move in any direction, the planets are not *free* to move in any shaped orbit, the blood is not *free* to circulate, the muscles are not *free* to contract, the brain is not *free* to function. In all these cases what takes place is the result of all converging circumstances and conditions. Given these and the result follows. Scientifically, the thing that occurs is the only thing possible" (p. 22).

Here is another fine example:—

"One may put the Deterministic position in a few words. It is essentially a thoroughgoing application of

the principle of causation to human nature. What Copernicus and Kepler did for the world of astronomy, Determinism aims at doing for the world of psychological phenomena. Human nature, it asserts, is part and parcel of Nature as a whole, and bears to it the same relation that a part does to the whole. When the Determinist refers to the 'Order of Nature' he includes all, and asserts that an accurate analysis of human nature will be found to exemplify the same principle of causation that is seen to obtain elsewhere. True, mental phenomena have laws of their own, as chemistry and biology have their own peculiar laws, but these are additional, not contradictory to other natural laws. Any exception to this is apparent, not real. Man's nature, physical, biological, psychological, and sociological, is to be studied as we study other natural phenomena, and the closer our study the clearer the recognition that its manifestations are dependent upon processes with which no one dreams of associating the conception of 'freedom'" (p. 9).

It must not be inferred, however, that the passages quoted are exceptionally lucid. They are not; the whole book, from the first page to the last, is marked by the most transparent clearness.

We now pass on to the chief and most precious of all the characteristics, namely, *cogency*. This book has the high power of compelling conviction. Its logic is simply irresistible. How conclusive is the interesting account of how the belief in Free Will originated in animism. Primitive man attributed all activities to the intervention of some supernatural beings or forces.

"Men were once satisfied with the explanation of the 'wetness' of water as due to a spirit of 'aquosity,' of the movement of the blood as due to a 'certain spirit' dwelling in the veins and arteries. These were not statements of knowledge, but verbose confessions of ignorance. To this class of belief belongs the 'Free Will' of the anti-determinist. It is the living representative of that immense family of souls and spirits with which early animistic thought peopled the Universe. The surviving member of a once numerous family, it carries with it the promise of the same fate that has already overtaken its predecessors" (p. 14).

It is well known that the Indeterminist has really but one argument, namely, the argument from consciousness. "I am conscious," he says, "of possessing the power of choice, of being able to act as I please; and I am conscious that having acted I could have acted differently under precisely the same conditions." One is being continually encountered by this plausible but spurious argument. It is refuted by a plain statement of fact thus:—

"In any voluntary action I am conscious of the possibility of choice and of having chosen, and that is really all. What is the nature of that possibility, and why I choose one thing rather than another—on these points consciousness can give us no information whatever. One might as reasonably argue that a consciousness of hunger gives us a knowledge of the process of digestion, as argue that a consciousness of choice supplies us with a knowledge of the mechanism of the process.....Instead of telling us that we could have acted in opposition to the strongest motive—which is really the Indeterminist position—consciousness simply reveals which desire is the most powerful."

Perhaps the most practically valuable chapter in the whole book is the one dealing with "The Nature and Implications of Responsibility." The advocates of Free Will constantly charge Determinism with doing away with man's responsibility for his conduct. Because it holds that being, at any given time, just exactly what heredity and environment have made him, he cannot help doing what he does, it is declared to be guilty of treating man as a pure automaton who can be neither praised nor blamed for his actions. It is to be regretted that a few unscientific Determinists have been ensnared into an ignorant endorsement of that absolutely false inference. Mr. Cohen makes it perfectly plain that our conduct is an expression of our character, and that our character is susceptible of modification. He says:—

"When the law, or when society, calls a man to account for something he has done, it does not deny that had he possessed a different character he would have acted differently. It does not assert that at the

time of doing he could have helped doing what he did. Both are admitted. What it does say is that having a character of such and such a kind certain things are bound to follow. But inasmuch as that character may be modified by social opinion or social coercion, inasmuch as it will respond to certain influences brought to bear upon it, it is a responsible character, and so may be held accountable for its action.....The approval and respect of society serve to awaken a positive liking for honesty and the formation of desirable mental habits. Praise and blame rest upon a precisely similar basis. Man being the social animal he is, the approbation and disapprobation of his fellows must always exert considerable influence on his conduct.....Every time we praise or blame an action we are helping to mould character, for both will serve as guides in the future.Social approval and disapproval become an important portion of the environment, to which the human being must perforce adapt himself" (pp. 72, 74, 75).

The book abounds in good things. It will amply repay careful perusal and prolonged study. The case for Determinism was never more fairly and convincingly presented. It is to be hoped that it will circulate widely and rapidly, and that a second edition will soon be called for.

J. T. LLOYD.

In Praise of Nature.

Dance of the Months, by Eden Phillpotts. Illustrated. Gowans & Gray, Ltd. 1912.

MR. EDEN PHILLPOTTS has celebrated the New Year with a beautiful book, which he describes as the *Dance of the Months*. It tells us of the changing seasons in the Dartmoor district through the year, told with a deliberate skill which may be compared to that of the modern musicians. Indeed, the book is instinct with the poetic principle, and the author introduces a dozen poems in the series of nature studies with charming effect. Just because the prose is so charged with lyrical feeling, the transition to actual poetry is so appropriate. Not that the book is all "clouds and sunsets," for the human interest is continually introduced in a most characteristic manner and with rare art. Indeed, these peasants whom he introduces give an impression of life-likeness to the book. They are racy of the soil, and not vague forms into which dusky fields, twisted trees, and waving hedgerows have gathered themselves; but human beings immanent in the Devonian landscape. But, observe the art of the author. Despite the dialect and mannerisms of the peasants, the reader knows instinctively that the important action is not the human one. It is the world's life of the seasons which the peasants symbolise, ill or well, with every degree of appropriateness, like figures crowned with flowers or sceptred with sheaves. The chief subject of the book is the sovereignty of nature, and the human beings but obey her behests.

To this Titanic theme the peasants become as the hare running along the railway in Turner's magnificent picture of "Steam, Rain, and Speed." The episodes which delight one so, the peasant lovers at daybreak, the young woman dreaming of her coming child, the peat cutters, and a dozen similar things, are incidents whose importance exists as part of the impressionist pictures which the author's passionate genius paints for the reader.

If you came across them in real life, you would not see them in the same light. The book reminds us of a night journey across the country, when the moonlight created a new world of miracle. Ordinary objects disappear in their everyday insignificance, and are replaced by gigantic shadows, which stretch far and fantastic across the blue mist of the uplands. Even the human passions have passed through the crucible of the poet's imagination, and, so to speak, represent the author's intensity. The rustic sweethearts, folded together in a lasting embrace, are symbols of human affection, like the lovers who embrace for ever in Millais' wonderful painting of "The Huguenot." In a book like this the chief

personages seem formed of the substance, and living the life of mountain streams, of clouds and winds. And withal there is our immense satisfaction at the gusty, balmy, bracing atmosphere in which all takes place, and in which, evidently, the author's spirit moves.

"The proper study of mankind is man" only in the sense of man's constitution. But man's constitution includes relations, affinities, necessities, quite outside mankind; for man has become what he is in the company of the universe as well as of man. There is a deep meaning in the fact that the greatest art has always incorporated into the human figures the shapes and gestures of natural objects, of plants, animals, and landscapes. We see it in the god-like forms of Greek sculpture, and again in Michelangelo, Leonardo, and Botticelli, with their creations reclining like chains of hills, and their Madonna's hair as the slow smoke of a camp fire. Backgrounds of landscape are better than curtains and furniture. The pathos of Millet's "Angelus" is intensified by the sunset, and Tintoret's "Ariadne" is rendered more glorious by being crowned with stars.

Mr. Phillpotts's muse is influenced by the majesty of his subject, and especially in his "Wind of the West" the verse rings and glows with fervor:—

"Thou dost weave all the songs of the sea and the requiems of surges and waves—
From least laughter of ripples in glee, to the cry of the billow that raves;
From the whisper, when white-bearded foam hoars the head of the mighty upborne,
Where the ocean's own anakim roam and their spendthrift is scattered and shorn,
To the agony endless that roars when the seas break their hearts on the land,
And the hiss of their scythes on the shore, and the suck of their lip on the sand.
So the manifold song of their shout, from thy wings to the mountain and plain
Falls for ever; it echoeth out by the forests and hill-tops again."

In another mood he depicts with masterly hand the homecoming of a peasant:—

"The pure white glory of the evening star
Hangs low beside Demeter's sleeping place,
And galaxies, that swim through heaven afar,
Strive with their golden hands to touch her dreaming
A shadow lingers in the rutted way [face.
Under the drowsy eyelids of the wood,
Where one is plodding to a distant ray,
That glimmers home to him, and rest and friends and
Home to his mate and cubs and den; [food.
Down through the dying of a dimsey light,
The woodman creeps with weary feet; and when
His step is still, peer out the children of the night."

This power of investing the common life of to-day with cosmic import is surely the true romance. Content to leave all the machinery of the supernatural, to lay aside the well-worked properties of sensationalism, and yet move his readers with pictures of Nature in her varying moods, and of humanity in moments of elemental passion, is akin to great art. Only as Millet was realistic in his peasant subjects and a poet as well, Mr. Phillpotts contrives by the magic of his genius to infuse quiet prose with a great poetry that thrills the reader unconsciously but decidedly.

The book is a great achievement, and the prose and poetry is enhanced by twelve fine colored pictures of Dartmoor scenery by Mrs. Annie T. Benthall, which are reproduced in the best style on fine paper. The volume is magnificently printed, and reflects great credit on printer and publisher alike.

MIMNERMUS.

HOPELESS.

Mr. William Harvey, in his *Scottish Life and Character in Anecdote and Story*, recently published, refers to a country minister playing curling, with the mason standing at attention. The game had grown critical and the parson spoilt it. "A rather awkward shot, sir!" exclaimed his critic. "Well, Thomas, I'm only learning," said the minister, in an injured voice. "Learnin'! Ye tauld me that years syne! Logie, man, wi' a' yer learnin', you'll niver be a curler in this world, an' I doot there'll be nae ice i' the next!"

Lest We Forget.

ALTHOUGH there is little or no occasion to fear that Rome will ever again reach the ascendant position she held in former years, we are constantly receiving reminders from her that she has not altered in spirit, and it is well that we do not forget all that she has done in the past. The following particulars concerning the Spanish Inquisition should, therefore, be borne in mind by the modern apostles of freedom:—

Dates.	Grand Inquisitors and Sovereigns.	Burnt Alive.	Burnt in Effigy.	Imprisoned and Properly Confiscated.
1481-1498	Torquemada	10,220	6,860	97,321
1498-1507	Archbishop Disa	2,593	896	34,952
1507-1517	Cardinal Ximenes	3,564	1,232	48,059
1517-1522	Cardinal (Pope) Adrian	1,520	560	21,845
1522-1523	Interregnum	324	112	4,369
1523-1538	Cardinal Manrique	250	1,125	11,250
1538-1545	Cardinal Tavera	840	420	5,460
1546	Cardinal Louisa	120	60	600
1546-1556	Charles V.	1,200	600	6,000
1556-1597	Philip II.	3,690	1,845	18,450
1597-1621	Philip III.	1,840	920	13,848
1621-1665	Philip IV.	2,816	1,408	10,356
1665-1700	Charles II.	1,728	864	6,912
1700-1746	Philip V.	1,584	782	11,732
1746-1752	Ferdinand VI.	10	5	170
1759-1788	Charles III.	4	—	56
1788-1808	Charles IV.	—	1	42

The recent elevation of Archbishop Bourne to the Cardinalate reminds us of the institution of the grotesque head covering. Innocent IV. first made it the symbol of the Cardinals, enjoining them to wear a red hat at the ceremonies and processions in token of their readiness to spill their blood for Jesus Christ. Pope Benedict made a decree forbidding the bestowal of any benefice upon the undeserving clergy, but he offered a Cardinal's hat to Francis Petrarc 1336 if he would give him his sister for concubine. Petrarc answered that he had no need of so foul and filthy a hat. His brother, Gerald Petrarc, however, consented; but when the Pope had got the sister he refused to give the hat, and Gerald retired into a monastery.

The death of Pope Adrian, mentioned in the list above, caused such joy in Rome that the night after his decease the populace adorned the door of the chief physician's house with garlands bearing the inscription, "To the deliverer of his country."

DUDLEY WRIGHT.

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner.

THIS Dinner (held under the auspices of the National Secular Society) took place on Tuesday, January 9, at the Holborn Restaurant, where upwards of 200 diners enjoyed the good things provided.

The number was not quite so large as last year, but when we consider that a few years ago 100 was supposed to be a large number, we feel that this year's record is an excellent one for the N. S. S., whose "memorial cards" have been circulated so many times by enemies, but which is still a lively body.

A delightful musical program had been arranged. Our old friend Madame Saunders occupied her usual place at the piano. Well-known favorites—Madame Alice Lovenez, Mr. Alec Hardisty, and Mr. Will Edwards, without whose merry songs no Annual Dinner is considered complete—sang at intervals during the evening. We were also glad to welcome a new artiste, Miss Maud Kennedy, whose sympathetic rendering of "Annie Laurie" charmed all hearers, and for which she was heartily encored.

The Chairman's speech was, as usual, the feature of the evening.

Mr. Foote gave a *resumé* of the present Blasphemy prosecutions, and pointed out the necessity for the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, though for his own part he believed that the only successful way of abolishing them was to make Freethought and Freethinkers so strong that they ceased to operate and became ridiculous. The Chairman also expressed the pleasure we all felt at seeing Miss Vance with us that evening. Her recent severe illnesses had made us fear that she would not be able to be present; but he hoped she would be with us, in spite of all she had to contend with, for many years to come. Mr. Foote also expressed our regrets at the absence of our old friend, the veteran Freethinker, Mr. Side,

whose advanced age of eighty-seven years prevented him being with us. But it was cheering to hear that he was with us in thought, and that his mental faculties were as fresh and unimpaired as ever.

The toast of the National Secular Society was proposed by Mr. C. Cohen, and responded to by Mr. J. T. Lloyd and Miss Kough.

"Freethought at Home and Abroad" fell to Mr. A. B. Moss, and was responded to by Mr. W. Heaford and Mr. F. A. Davies.

It having been announced that all speeches, except the President's, were to be limited to five minutes, it was somewhat amusing to hear each speaker in succession taking at least two minutes about being limited to so short a time, Mr. Heaford being the notable exception.

It was a great pleasure to meet so many of the provincial "saints" who make a point of attending these dinners to foregather at least once a year with their London friends.

The evening terminated with all the company joining in the singing of "Auld Lang Syne," and the party broke up, expressing their enjoyment of the evening and their hopes of meeting again next year at an even more successful Annual Dinner.

K. B. K.

Defenders of the Faith.

IN January, 1820, Mrs. Elizabeth Fletcher, a lady of good social standing and benevolent character, wrote to her daughter Mary a letter containing the following passage:—

"On Friday morning we were honored by a visit from Lord Erskine. He sat with us more than an hour, and was very agreeable and entertaining. He has a strong family likeness to his late brother [Hon. H. Erskine], but is less gay, bland, and engaging; his countenance bears strong marks of a life of great emotion—of much wear and tear. He is less courteous than his brother Henry; his manners are plainer. We talked of the State trials in which he was formerly engaged. He asked me if I had ever read his speech on the trial of Williams, the publisher of Paine's *Age of Reason*. He was engaged by the Society for the Prevention of Vice as counsel for the prosecution. He got a verdict against Williams, which proved, he said, that there was no occasion to make new laws against blasphemous publications. A few days after the trial, as he was walking through Holborn, a woman seized him by the skirts of his coat, and dragged him to a miserable room, where Williams the bookseller was laid on a sick-bed with three children in the confluent small-pox. He was so much struck with the poverty and wretchedness of the man's condition that he wrote to the Society for the Prevention of Vice, telling them that, as they had gained a verdict prohibiting the sale of Paine's blasphemous book, now there was a noble opportunity to show a truly Christian spirit, by praying the Court to mitigate the punishment of this miserable man, already afflicted with disease and poverty. The Society, he said, wrote him a letter full of compliments, but declined to relinquish their victim. The next day their agent called on Lord Erskine with a brief and fee, desiring him to crave the judgment of the Court upon Williams. He refused to take the fee, and, asking for his brief, he drew his pen through the retainer as counsel for that Society, because 'they loved judgment rather than mercy.'.....I should mention that Williams was sentenced to two years' imprisonment."—*Autobiography of Mrs. Fletcher*, second edition, 1875; pp. 137, 138.

F. J. GOULD.

Obituary.

It is with regret that I have to record the decease of one of the oldest persons in the ranks of Freethought in the Aberdare Valley—Mr. George Williams (painter), who died in his seventy-fourth year, and was interred at the Aberdare Cemetery on Wednesday last. He had been a Freethinker nearly all his lifetime, and an ardent lover of all the giants of Freethought. His last wish was that no parson, priest, or preacher should utter one word over his open grave. A short Secular Burial Service was read in an impressive manner (the first in the annals of the Aberdare Cemetery) by Mr. J. H. Edwards, of Cardiff.—J. L. WILLIAMS.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON**INDOOR.**

SHOREDITCH TOWN HALL: 7.30, J. T. Lloyd, "The True Meaning of Death."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Green): 7.45, W. Davidson, "The Glorious Damned." (Weather permitting.)

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Highbury Corner): 12 noon, Mrs. Boyce, a Lecture. Wednesday, at 8, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.**INDOOR.**

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, Mrs. H. Bradlaugh Bonner, "Paganism in Modern Christianity."

FAIRSWORTH (Secular School, Pole-lane): J. A. E. Bates, 2.30, "Christ—Messiah, Man, or Myth?" 6.30, "In the Valley of the Shadow."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): G. W. Foote, 12 noon, "Marie Corelli and 'The Life Everlasting'"; 6.30, "Milton and Burns on the Devil."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, F. G. Jones, "The Farce of Christian Socialism."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, J. R. Ferrey, Miscellaneous Dramatic Recital.

Ralph Cricklewood,

**A Twentieth Century Critical and Rational
Exposé of Christian Mythology.**

(IN THE FORM OF A NOVEL.)

By STEPHEN FITZ-STEPHEN.

A Well-Wisher of the Human Family.

388 pages, cloth. Price 3s. 6d.

Post Free.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

SUPPLIES A LONG FELT WANT.

NOW READY.

Determinism

OR

Free Will?

BY

C. COHEN.

Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.

A clear and able exposition of the subject in the only adequate light—the light of evolution.

CONTENTS.

I. The Question Stated.—II. "Freedom" and "Will." III. Consciousness, Deliberation, and Choice.—IV. Some Alleged Consequences of Determinism.—V. Professor James on "The Dilemma of Determinism."—VI. The Nature and Implications of Responsibility.—VII. Determinism and Character.—VIII. A Problem in Determinism.—IX. Environment.

PRICE ONE SHILLING NET

(POSTAGE 2d.)

Published by the WALTER SCOTT COMPANY.

Also on Sale by

THE PIONEER PRESS, 2 NEWCASTLE STREET, LONDON, E.C.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY

(LIMITED)

Company Limited by Guarantee.

Registered Office—2 NEWCASTLE STREET, LONDON, E.C.

Chairman of Board of Directors—MR. G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Society's solicitors are Messrs. Harper and Battcock, 23 Rood-lane, Fenchurch-street, London, E.C.

A Form of Bequest.—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators:—"I give and bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £— free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the said Legacy."

Friends of the Society who have remembered it in their wills, or who intend to do so, should formally notify the Secretary of the fact, or send a private intimation to the Chairman, who will (if desired) treat it as strictly confidential. This is not necessary, but it is advisable, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid, and their contents have to be established by competent testimony.

WORKS BY G. W. FOOTE.

ATHEIST SHOEMAKER, THE, and the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes post ½d. 0 1	s. d.
BIBLE ROMANCES. Popular edition, with portrait, paper post 2½d. 0 6	
BOOK OF GOD, THE, in the Light of the Higher Criticism. With Special Reference to Dean Farrar's Apology. Paper... .. post 2d. 1 0	
Bound in cloth post 2d. 2 0	
CHRISTIANITY AND SECULARISM. Public Debate with Rev. Dr. McCann post 2d. 1 0	
Bound in cloth post 2d. 1 6	
DARWIN ON GOD post 1d. 0 6	
DEFENCE OF FREE SPEECH post 1d. 0 4	
DROPPING THE DEVIL: and other Free Church Performances post ½d. 0 2	
DYING ATHEIST, THE. A Story. post ½d. 0 1	
FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT. First Series, cloth post 3d. 2 6	
GOD SAVE THE KING. An English Republican's Coronation Notes post ½d. 0 2	
HALL OF SCIENCE LIBEL CASE, with Full and True Account of the "Leeds Orgies" post 1d. 0 3	
INFIDEL DEATH-BEDS. Second edition, much enlarged post 1d. 0 8	
Superfine paper, cloth post 1½d. 1 3	
INTERVIEW WITH THE DEVIL post ½d. 0 2	
IS SOCIALISM SOUND? Four Nights' Public Debate with Annie Besant post 1½d. 1 0	
Bound in cloth post 2½d. 2 0	
INGERSOLLISM DEFENDED AGAINST ARCH-DEACON FARRAR post ½d. 0 2	
IMPOSSIBLE CREED, THE. An Open Letter to Bishop Magee on the Sermon on the Mount post ½d. 0 2	
JOHN MORLEY AS A FREETHINKER post ½d. 0 2	
LETTERS TO THE CLERGY (128 pages) post 2d. 1 0	
LETTERS TO JESUS CHRIST post ½d. 0 4	
LIE IN FIVE CHAPTERS, or Hugh Price Hughes' Converted Atheist post ½d. 0 1	
MRS. BESANT'S THEOSOPHY. A Candid Criticism post ½d. 0 2	
MY RESURRECTION. A Missing Chapter from the Gospel of Matthew post ½d. 0 2	
NEW CAGLIOSTRO, THE. An Open Letter to Madame Blavatsky post ½d. 0 2	
PECULIAR PEOPLE. An Open Letter to Mr. Justice Wills post ½d. 0 1	
PHILOSOPHY OF SECULARISM post ½d. 0 8	
REMINISCENCES OF CHARLES BRADLAUGH post 1d. 0 6	
ROME OR ATHEISM? The Great Alternative post 1d. 0 3	
SALVATION SYRUP: or Light on Darkest England. A Reply to General Booth post ½d. 0 2	
SECULARISM AND THEOSOPHY. A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant post ½d. 0 2	
SIGN OF THE CROSS, THE. A Candid Criticism of Mr. Wilson Barret's Play post 1½d. 0 6	
THE PASSING OF JESUS. The Last Adventures of the First Messiah post ½d. 0 2	

THEISM OR ATHEISM. Public Debate post 1½d. 1 0	s. d.
WAS JESUS INSANE? post ½d. 0 1	
WHAT IS AGNOSTICISM? post ½d. 0 3	
WHO WAS THE FATHER OF JESUS? post ½d. 0 2	
WILL CHRIST SAVE US? post 1d. 0 6	

WORKS BY COL. INGERSOLL

A CHRISTIAN CATECHISM post 1d. 0 6	s. d.
A WOODEN GOD post ½d. 0 1	
CHRISTIAN RELIGION, THE... .. post ½d. 0 3	
CREEDS AND SPIRITUALITY... .. post ½d. 0 1	
CRIMES AGAINST CRIMINALS post ½d. 0 3	
DEFENCE OF FREETHOUGHT post ½d. 0 4	
DEVIL, THE post 1d. 0 6	
DO I BLASPHEME? post ½d. 0 2	
ERNEST RENAN post ½d. 0 2	
FAITH AND FACT. Reply to Rev. Dr. Field post ½d. 0 2	
GHOSTS, THE post ½d. 0 3	
GOD AND THE STATE post ½d. 0 2	
HOLY BIBLE, THE... .. post ½d. 0 2	
HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH, THE post ½d. 0 2	
HOUSE OF DEATH (Funeral Orations) post 2d. 1 0	
INGERSOLL'S ADVICE TO PARENTS. — Keep Children out of Church and Sunday-school 0 1	
LAST WORDS ON SUICIDE post ½d. 0 2	
LIVE TOPICS post ½d. 0 1	
LIMITS OF TOLERATION, THE post ½d. 0 2	
MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE. An Agnostic's View post ½d. 0 2	
MYTH AND MIRACLE post ½d. 0 1	
ORATION ON LINCOLN post ½d. 0 8	
ORATION ON THE GODS post 1d. 0 6	
ORATION ON VOLTAIRE post ½d. 0 3	
ORATION ON WALT WHITMAN post 1d. 0 3	
REAL BLASPHEMY... .. post ½d. 0 1	
REPLY TO GLADSTONE post 1d. 0 4	
ROME OR REASON? post 1d. 0 3	
SHAKESPEARE post 1d. 0 6	
SKULLS post ½d. 0 2	
SOCIAL SALVATION post ½d. 0 2	
SUPERSTITION post 1d. 0 6	
TAKE A ROAD OF YOUR OWN post ½d. 0 1	
THREE PHILANTHROPISTS, THE post ½d. 0 2	
WHAT IS RELIGION? post ½d. 0 2	
WHAT MUST WE DO TO BE SAVED?... .. post ½d. 0 2	
WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? post ½d. 0 2	

*Orders to the amount of 5s. sent post free.
Postage must be included for smaller orders.*

THE PIONEER PRESS,
2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

SUNDAY EVENING FREETHOUGHT LECTURES

(Under the Auspices of the Secular Society, Ltd.)

AT

SHOREDITCH TOWN HALL.

January 21.—Mr. J. T. LLOYD:

“The True Meaning of Death.”

„ 28.—Mr. C. COHEN:

“What the World Pays for Religion.”

Doors open at 7.

Chair taken at 7.30.

Admission Free.

Front Reserved Seats 1s.

Questions and Discussion Invited.

A LIBERAL OFFER—NOTHING LIKE IT.

Greatest Popular Family Reference Book and Sexology—Almost Given Away. A Million sold at 3 and 4 dollars—Now Try it Yourself.

Insure Your Life—You Die to Win; Buy this Book, You Learn to Live.



Ignorance kills—knowledge saves—be wise in time. Men weaken, sicken, die—not knowing how to live. “Habits that enslave” wreck thousands—young and old Fathers fail, mothers are “bed-ridden,” babies die. Family feuds, marital miseries, divorces—even murders—All can be avoided by self-knowledge, self-control.

You can discount heaven—dodge hell—here and now, by reading and applying the wisdom of this one book of 1,200 pages, 400 illustrations, 80 lithographs on 18 anatomical color plates, and over 250 prescriptions.

OF COURSE YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT EVERYONE OUGHT TO KNOW.

THE YOUNG—How to choose the best to marry.
THE MARRIED—How to be happy in marriage.
THE FOND PARENT—How to have prize babies.
THE MOTHER—How to have them without pain.
THE CHILDLESS—How to be fruitful and multiply.
THE CURIOUS—How they “grewed” from germ-cell.
THE HEALTHY—How to enjoy life and keep well.
THE INVALID—How to brace up and keep well.

Whatever you'd ask a doctor you find herein, or (if not, Dr. F. will answer your inquiry FREE, any time) Dr. Foote's books have been the popular instructors of the masses in America (often re-written, enlarged) and always kept up-to-date). For twenty years they have sold largely (from London) to all countries where English is spoken, and everywhere highly praised. Last editions are best, largest, and most for the price. You may save the price by not buying, and you may lose your life (or your wife or child) by not knowing some of the vitally important truths it tells.

Most Grateful Testimonials From Everywhere.

Gudivoda, India: “It is a store of medical knowledge in plainest language, and every reader of English would be benefited by it.”—W. L. N.

Triplicane, India: “I have gone through the book many times, and not only benefited myself but many friends also.”—G. W. T.

Somewhat Abridged Editions (800 pp. each) can be had in German, Swedish, Finnish, or Spanish.

Panderma, Turkey: “I can avow frankly there is rarely to be found such an interesting book as yours.”—K. H. (Chemist).
 Calgary, Can.: “The information therein has changed my whole idea of life—to be nobler and happier.”—D. N. M.
 Laverton, W. Aust.: “I consider it worth ten times the price. I have benefited much by it.”—R. M.

Price EIGHT SHILLINGS by Mail to any Address.

ORDER OF THE PIONEER PRESS,
 2 NEWCASTLE STREET, LONDON, E.C.