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THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXII.—No. 4

SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 1912

PRICE TWOPENCE

It is silent Sunday; the populace, not yet admitted to their beer-shops, till the respectabilities conclude their rubric mummeries,—a much more audacious feat than beer.—THOMAS CARLYLE.

Room in Heaven.

TALMAGE, the great Talmage, came to England. He came over from America with his large mouth and his large style. We are not in the habit of referring to personal peculiarities, but Talmage's mouth was so striking. You could not escape it. It fascinated you—not like a Venus, but like a python. It reminded us of a text in the prelude to the Sermon on the Mount. The evangelist says of the preacher—to wit, Jesus—that “he opened his mouth.” But most people do that when they speak. There must have been something peculiar about that of the Nazarene to attract the reporter's special attention. Was it wide? Was it deep? What was its peculiarity? We cannot tell, alas, for the reporter did not work on the penny-a-line system. In this instance it was—as Carlyle says of Dante's style—one smiting word, and then silence. “He opened his mouth.” That is all. You must imagine the rest for yourself. But you need not imagine a Talmage's mouth. You can see it. Indeed, you could not help seeing it, if you looked at him at all. Old Archbishop Temple had a very fine aperture. When it was shut, as one critic said, it suggested a rat-trap. Talmage's mouth, however, while something like our Archbishop's, was like it with a difference. It was less cold, rigid, and cruel; and more ductile and fluent; reminding one of a prognathous Hibernian after kissing the Blarney Stone. And this gentleman's mouth was the key to his style. His oratory might be inferred from its instrument. Delicacy, subtlety, beauty, could never come from such a source; only resonant commonplace and melodramatic vulgarity. Listening to this orator was like watching a coarse display of fireworks. You may be dazzled for a minute, but you soon wish for less glare and more refinement.

When the great Talmage came to England before he was “on the make.” He had not then married a rich wife. His terms were exacting. Cash down, and plenty of it, before mounting the rostrum. Report said that he cleared out the exchequers of half the Young Men's Christian Associations in this country. Some of them, perhaps, have had a balance on the wrong side ever since. Colonel Ingersoll made a big income by lecturing, but he did not work the “free admission” ticket at his meetings and bleed the promoters like veal. He charged for admission at the doors. Those who heard him paid him for speaking. That was fair and square, and he went on the platform to time whether the audience was large or small—and it wasn't often small, for more people paid to hear him than any other speaker in the United States, or, for that matter, in the world.

Talmage was not so badly in want of money later. He could afford to preach sometimes for nothing—perhaps as an advertisement. His first address, on that second visit to England, was delivered in a church at Manchester; where, by the way, a charge

would have been illegal. Naturally the “free admission” brought a big crowd of Christians, many of whom had to remain outside the sacred edifice. Still, they heard the great man's sublime accents; for he addressed a few words to an overflowing meeting. And what he said was characteristic. He told them that there was no room inside, but there was plenty of room in heaven.

We quite believe Talmage for once. There's many a true word spoken in jest, and the proverb was justified on this occasion. There is plenty of room in heaven. Not because it is big, but because it is empty. It is hell that is full. In the time of Isaiah, if the prophet is to be believed, hell enlarged itself. It was full to bursting, and something had to give way. Perhaps it has been enlarged several times since. Since the Christian era began—or at least since Christianity triumphed—the emigration to Hades has been strong and steady. Was it not Jesus himself—that is to say, God Almighty in the flesh—who declared that the road to hell is broad and easy, and profusely patronised? And is it not downhill all the way? Was it not the same Jesus who declared that the road to heaven is narrow and difficult and hard to find? And is it not uphill all the way? Yea, and if it be true, as the late Professor Mivart said, that there is plenty of happiness in hell, why should anybody take the trouble to climb up to heaven? Happiness is happiness anywhere, and as good in the pit as up amongst the gods.

Many are called, said Jesus, and few chosen. Those who are saved under the Christian scheme are called the elect. They must therefore bear a very small proportion to the lost. “In my father's house are many mansions.” Yes, and most of them are “to let.” Corner lots go cheap there. An everlasting lease, on a peppercorn rent, can be had for the asking—if you once get inside.

Saint Peter, who sits at the gate of heaven, holding the keys, must have almost a sinecure. He can hardly be roused up once a month. For what is the condition of access to that establishment? You must believe. Yes, but what? Why, all the miracles and nonsense of the Gospels, and perhaps all the miracles and nonsense of the rest of the Bible. You must believe—not merely say that you believe, but *actually* believe—that a boy was born without a father; that when he grew up to manhood he performed wonders which modern science is unable to imitate; that he cured even cripples by talking at them; that he put clay plugs in blind men's eye-sockets, and gave them sight; that he raised the very dead from their biers and graves; that he changed water into wine, and multiplied a few loaves and fishes into a luncheon for thousands; that he rose from the dead himself, and ascended into heaven, with an undigested meal in his stomach. You must also believe what he taught as well as what he did. You must accept a creed which, as the late Bishop of Peterborough said, cannot be practised without ruining society. You must believe it to be your duty to do what no man ever thinks of doing outside a lunatic asylum. That is the way, and the only way, to get to heaven. Is it any wonder, then, that the place has “plenty of room”? No wonder the ghost said “I've wandered here for hours and met nobody; this *must* be heaven.”

G. W. FOOTE.

Gods.

IT is an old observation that deposed kings make bad subjects. A man who has held the position of supreme power by divine right cannot be expected to sink gracefully into the position of a mere subject, of no greater importance than the people around him. He will never realise that the people were justified in their revolution, and so long as he is in the country that he formerly ruled he will remain a centre of disaffection. For this reason dethroned monarchs have nearly always been banished the country—or existence. This course was safest for the people, and in the end more dignified for the ex-monarch. It spared him even the appearance of passive acquiescence to his own degradation.

If people were as logical with their gods as with dethroned kings, religion would cause little trouble in a civilised country. The policy pursued, however, is of quite another order. Their gods are dethroned in fact, but they are perpetuated in theory. Their civil list remains a colossal charge on the nation, although few pretend that they now discharge the functions for which they were originally subsidised. The control of physical nature has been taken completely out of their hands, and only ignorance or mendacity attributes anything to their agency. Religious leaders spend part of their time proving to their followers how little God does. They point out the absurdity of expecting God to give a direct answer to prayer, or to interfere with the settled course of nature. Christians imprison men whose only offence is their belief that God will cure disease without the assistance of a doctor. In a score of different ways they admit that God does nothing—except exist.

There's the rub! God, apparently, does nothing but exist, although existence being in any case an inference, it is hard to see how the conclusion is reached. Still, God, they say, exists, and although believers submit to his dethronement in the natural world, they tax their ingenuity to the utmost for reasons why he should go on existing. Having adopted the Lucretian conclusion that "Nature does all things of herself, and without the aid of the gods," one would imagine that the concern of sensible men with them would end. For between a god who does nothing and a god who does not exist the practical difference is nil. A god who speaks to mankind through health and disease, through sunshine and storm, and on whose activity the course of nature and human welfare depends, is a god whom no one can afford to ignore. But a god who does nothing, who *may* have created nature, but having created it ever after does nothing, is not a fruitful subject for speculation. Whatever things happen do so because it is in the nature of things that they should happen. On this, educated believers and unbelievers are at one. But, admitting this, why all this bother about "God's will" or "God's plan." All we can know is to be known by a study of natural forces. These affect all alike; and the Freethinker not unreasonably concludes that in that case our practical interest stops altogether this side of deity. God may have some interest in finding out about man. Man can have no vital interest in finding out God.

Now, I suggest that we should do with our gods as people have done with their kings. That is, to put fact for metaphor; having decided that events may be explained as due to the operation of natural forces, we should put the *idea* of God on one side, as we have already done with the *fact* of God. Unfortunately, instead of this logical course being followed, we find people devoting their energies to discovering some way in which the idea of God can still be put to a useful purpose. Believers of the cruder kind do not attribute earthquakes, or comets, or the growth of worlds, to Deity, but they seem inclined to find a use for him in the department of meteorology. As though a deity that once presided over the birth and death of planetary systems could

ever fulfil a dignified position looking after the weather. Others, with a more philosophic air, dismiss God from the known universe altogether, and rediscover him in some utterly unknown and incomprehensible beyond. Again, as though the Deity who once acted through all events could be compensated by a dominion "at the back of the beyond." It is like dethroning the Emperor of all the Russias and offering him in satisfaction the headship of a petty African tribe.

There are others, like Sir Oliver Lodge and Professor Thomson, who solemnly assure us that our explanation and understanding of Nature break down unless we assume something in the nature of a deity. By this they mean no more than that our knowledge is inadequate to tell us all we would like to know, and that our widest generalisation leaves us face to face with an unexplained residuum. No one is more conscious of this than those who have dismissed the idea of God from their minds; but they decline to admit ignorance is a safe basis on which to build an assertion. That we cannot explain a thing is an excellent reason for further search; it is an unanswerable argument in favor of silence; it is no argument whatever in favor of belief. Besides, people are not in the practical world conscious of any such perplexity. The difficulty is a metaphysical one. In practical life people see that scientific generalisations work in a quite dependable manner. They see that, even though it be theoretically true that God exists, he is of no practical value. Belief in God without a knowledge of natural forces is of no use to anyone. Given a knowledge of natural forces, a man loses nothing by being without a belief in God. The belief in Deity neither adds to nor detracts from our capacity for knowing, or the value of our knowledge. It is a piece of pure decoration which some people desire to see used because it always has been used.

This truth is hidden from many because of the vague talk current about the belief in God, and because of the temper in which people approach the subject. It is psychologically interesting, but none the less amusing, to note the change in people's demeanor and voice when "God" is mentioned. Their faces lengthen and their voices drop. Instinctively they half close their eyes. Their critical powers are put to sleep, so to speak; the common sense that is allowed to rule in other directions is held in abeyance here. An illustration of the temper evoked in this way is seen in the horror expressed by those who assert that So-and-so denied the existence of a God, or in the famous and fabulous watch story in which the Atheist gave the Deity a limited time in which to strike him dead. I could never appreciate the horror with which this story is told, or the moral indignation with which it has been repudiated. It is more a story for a smile than anything else. The Atheist knows he is running no risks were he to offer the challenge; and it is clearly the business of the Deity to attend to the challenge, if he is affronted, not that of the Deity's followers. Such stories are only of value as indications of how difficult it is to get people to approach the subject of Deity in the same spirit as they discuss other subjects.

If the subject of Deity were of first-rate importance it would still be unnecessary to approach it in a spirit of mental abnegation. The more important the topic, the greater the need to keep our faculties on the alert for error, and to be on our guard against self-deception. But it really is not of any great importance in itself. In science an Atheist does not find his investigations hampered because he does not believe in a God; and a Theist does not find himself in any way helped by his belief. The commercial man, the man of letters, the man of the world—other things equal—finds himself not at all incommoded by not having a belief in God. It has never helped to turn a fool into a wise man; it has often prevented a fool losing some of his folly, and it has often made a wise man say stupid things. Newton the mathematician gained no help from Newton the writer on Prophecies. Darwin the Agnostic would

not have written a better account of the origin of species had he been a devout member of church or chapel. It is surely absurd to speak of a belief as of great importance when there is not a single aspect of life's work that cannot be effectively carried on in its absence.

A despairing attempt to find some use for a god is made by those who seek to identify belief in deity with faith in an ideal. We cannot, say they, escape God, because God is embodied in each person's ideal. Well, I suppose we all have ideals of some sort. Even the confirmed inebriate, looking forward to his next great burst, has his ideal. But is that really God? Is it what anyone has ever meant by God? Does anyone mean that to-day when they talk about God? When people talk about God creating, or helping, or when they pray to God, do they mean no more than their ideal conception of man or things? The absurdity of the plea is seen the moment one puts a straight question or two. It is an apology by people who, for the most part, have enough brains to see the weakness of the belief, but have not enough strength to cut themselves adrift from an established doctrine. At its very lowest, the belief in God means the belief in a person. It means that also at its highest. You cannot disbelieve in a personal Deity without sacrificing all legitimate claim to be called a Theist. The fashionable theological talk about the "immanence" of God is really no more than a fog of words which some people raise to prevent themselves seeing the outlines of their own position. The only intelligible God, the only possible God, is a personal God. And a personal God is precisely the kind of Deity that modern thought pronounces an impossibility.

Years ago, Emerson called theological doctrines the "soul's" mumps and measles and whooping cough. He said that a simple mind, that is, one that had not been distorted by training, would know nothing of these enemies. Unfortunately, few of us are permitted to grow up the possessors of a "simple mind." Our training from infancy to maturity, and social forces from maturity to the grave, lead us to place things first that should come last, and emphasize as of the greatest importance things that are of very small consequence indeed. Apart from these inculcated notions I am convinced that no one would imagine to-day that the question of a God had any value whatever. Atheists certainly get on well enough without any such belief, and most believers act as though it is of no real value to them. Yet neither Atheist nor professing Theist could go on in this way without being penalised, if the belief in God were of value. If you live over bad drains, or breathe impure air, or practice vicious habits of living, you are reminded of your faults by the price you have to pay. Real facts cannot be ignored. They must be reckoned with sooner or later. But we can, and many do, ignore the belief in God. And no one can show in what respect we are the worse for doing so. On the other hand, the very fears of believers imply an uneasy consciousness that gods are like kings—they exist only so long as people believe in them. Disbelieve in them and you have signed their death warrant.

C. COHEN.

The Alleged Friendliness of the Universe.

IN an exceedingly able and readable essay in the current number of the *Hibbert Journal*, the Rev. Dr. George T. Ladd, of New Haven, U.S.A., makes a bold attempt to show that, in spite of all appearances to the contrary, Nature is positively amicable in its attitude to the human race. If the attempt is not crowned with complete success it is certainly not Dr. Ladd's fault. He is one of America's most famous scholars. He was for many years Professor of Philosophy in Yale University, and had previously been lecturer on intellectual and moral philosophy, church polity, and systematic theology; and he has

published many learned works on such subjects as psychology, philosophy of mind, and the Bible. He has also attained to the ripe age of seventy years and lives in retirement. In short, no one is more competent to discuss the subject under consideration than Dr. Ladd; and for a professional theologian it must be admitted that he deals with it in a remarkably fair and impartial manner. He even makes the following candid confession:—

"We cannot demonstrate. We cannot argue so as to retire in shame from the field of wordy contest the Agnostic or Sceptic."

All he expects to accomplish is to strengthen faith and encourage hope already existing, "with reasons the intrinsic worth of which cannot be for long successfully resisted or denied." The object of this article is to critically examine some of the "reasons" advanced. The nature of the problem is courageously stated thus:—

"Surely never before did the vastness of the Universe stand in such oppressive contrast with the littleness of man. Never before did the sphere in which he moves with a relative independence seem so small. Never before did the spirit seem so powerless to enforce its ideals on the rigid mechanism of material things. And how pitiless is the Universe in its remorseless waste of human life, as though it made no distinction between it and the most worthless of the materials it moulds in fragile shapes, then breaks and throws away! How hideous are its contrivances for disseminating among human beings the seeds of suffering, disease, and death! Nor can we fail to notice the inescapable nature of so much of this suffering and disease: the cunningly devised traps Nature has set for man at every turn in his existence, and the seemingly malicious craft with which they are baited with the most alluring of enticements."

With these grim facts in mind, Dr. Ladd frankly acknowledges the supreme difficulty of reasonably supporting the thesis that the Universe is friendly to man. Besides, the Universe as such, being impersonal, can be neither friendly nor unfriendly. As our divine rightly puts it, "Friendliness and unfriendliness are personal attributes; the terms are meaningless when we try to use them of impersonal beings and impersonal relations. With things, as mere things, we cannot fitly speak of our relations as friendly or unfriendly." Then he adds:—

"If the big World, the one that includes the totality of existences as set in a system of relations and especially as constituting man's environment, is unpenetrated, uncontrolled, unappreciative, as respects the feelings, thoughts, and practical interests of humanity; then, even to ask after its attitude to man, or to consider what responsive attitude of a sentimental or moral sort is fitting on man's part, is to be absurd. *Friend* of mine, I will not call a Universe that does not know what it is about, or in some sort choose what it is about; but neither can I regard such a Universe as unfriendly."

With Freethinkers, this is the most hoary of truisms. The Universe does not know what it is about, and maintains no attitude whatever to anything. It is true that primitive man regarded it as consciously alive, or as being inhabited and controlled by mysterious spirits, and that a Freethinking poet, like George Meredith, speaks of it in terms of personality; but the fact remains that man is the recipient of no special favors from its lap. His treatment is in no sense or degree distinguishable from that which the formless moneron receives. It is useless to point out that the majority of mankind have always believed that there is a spirit of the Universe with which it is possible to get on good terms, and that it has been customary to praise or blame that spirit for its behavior, because it is well known that men have held many beliefs which have been proved to be entirely false. What we demand is some positive evidence, some valid reasons that the Universe is governed by a spirit friendly to the human race. Atheists neither praise nor blame the order of Nature, but merely endeavor to understand and conform to it. Dr. Ladd takes for granted that the Universe possesses personal characteristics, and then builds up a theory of friendliness which finds a beneficent purpose behind even "the cunningly-

devised traps Nature has set for man at every turn in his existence, and the seemingly malicious craft with which they are baited with the most alluring of enticements." But this theory of friendliness rests on another specially constructed theory as to the object of human life. According to this theory, the chief end of man is not to be happy, or free from pain and sorrow. What exactly it is we are not told, the only indisputable point being that Pope was wrong when he exclaimed, "O happiness! our being's end and aim"; and he was wrong simply because, if he were right, it would be impossible to hold the view that the Universe is friendly to man. Dr. Ladd does not hesitate to say:—

"So long as we hold this hedonistic or utilitarian view of the ends to be preferred for human life, there is abundant evidence that the Universe is largely engaged in thwarting the attainment of just these ends. How then can it be called friendly?"

He speaks of "the higher ethical and æsthetic ideals," of "something far more than the common pursuit of freedom from pain and the increase of happiness," and of "the highest ideals, the supreme interests of human endeavor;" but what all these really are is not revealed. They are vague commodities vaguely treated in the interest of a theory framed solely for the defence of religion. After all, Dr. Ladd is a brief-holder on behalf of supernaturalism, and he is honest enough to admit it. He concedes that he has no right to construe the Universe in terms satisfactory to his religious faith, "when these terms are so different from those inexorably dictated to us by the plain truth of the facts." "And the reasonableness of such a contention," he adds, "must, in general, be conceded as beyond all doubt." Take the following frank passage:—

"Against a hostile or indifferent Universe it is difficult, if not impossible, to maintain a life of loving trust and devotion towards the ideals of morals and the essential tenets and inspiring cult of true religion. Indeed, unless the World be regarded as the embodiment or manifestation of Divine Good-will, religion becomes degraded to a slavish superstition, or else loses all hold on the reason and conduct of man. Prayer ceases to be spiritual communion, and becomes either cowardly or grotesque. Indeed, that attitude of filial piety in which the very essence of subjective religion has come to consist becomes incompatible with a rational regard for the facts."

If that is not a wholesale giving of the case for God and religion away, what on earth is it? Taking the facts of the Universe as they are, they clearly testify against the truth of religion; but Dr. Ladd values religion so much that he adopts a theory in its defence which is admittedly "incompatible with a rational regard for the facts."

Dr. Ladd reasons from false premises. He labors under the delusion that unless he believes in the friendliness of the Universe he must fall into pessimism, because "a life of loving trust and devotion towards the ideals of morals" becomes difficult, if not impossible. But, happily, he is completely mistaken on both points. The fact that the Universe is profoundly indifferent to what happens to humanity, only stimulates humanity's intelligence to discover ways and means by which it can protect its own interests, diminishing its sorrows and multiplying its joys. Because Nature, as differentiated from man, is without sympathy and altruistic love, man's reason urges him to do his utmost for himself by drawing upon and controlling whatever resources in Nature are available for him, in other words, to learn to live by his wits. There is nothing here to encourage pessimism. Again, the moral life is dependent upon neither the friendliness nor the unfriendliness of the extra-human Universe, but upon man's sense of his own needs as a gregarious animal. Morality is merely the collective name of those relations which are considered essential to social well-being, and social well-being is only another word for social happiness. The extra-human system of Nature has no attitude at all in the figurative acceptance of the term, the only thing

that matters being man's attitude to Nature. By cultivating his intelligence he can convert Nature into a servant, and derive from her incalculable benefits. He, Nature's product, has it within him to become Nature's king; and that is what he is now slowly learning to be. The way to the throne is through much suffering and sorrow; but it is in the struggle to conquer suffering and sorrow that the chief joy of life consists. Dr. Ladd draws his consolation from the hope of immortality, though in him, Christian though he be, it seems to burn low. "A friendly Universe," he says, "may perhaps be trusted to furnish another vehicle for the spiritual life, after the vehicle for the psychological life has broken down." He admits, however, that believers in a friendly Universe have always been a small minority, and that their faith in it contradicts the plain testimony of the facts. Instead of cherishing such an unsubstantial, misty hope, the scientific thinker valiantly faces the facts, and resolves to turn them to the best advantage as he struggles upwards into his kingdom. Poetically speaking, he and Nature become lovers, and beautifully play into each others' hands.

"Accept, she says; it is not hard
In woods; but she in towns
Repeats, accept; and have we wept,
And have we quailed with fears,
Or shrunk with horrors, sure reward
We have whom knowledge crowns;
Who see in mould the rose unfold,
The soul through blood and tears."

J. T. LLOYD.

The Spanish Inquisition.

THE infliction of torture upon political prisoners in Spain is a penological abomination that belongs rather to the domain of religion than to that of politics proper. Spain is not the only "civilised" country where political passions run high, but Spain can claim with Russia the proud but infamous distinction of being the only country in Europe where torture is adopted to-day as an implement of justice. To say this is not to impeach the Russian people or the Spanish people; the statement, which unfortunately is a statement of fact, only means that the Spanish Government, like that of Russia, lags behind in the march of the modern spirit, and deliberately retains in its hands the weapons of torture and calculated inhumanity which the Church wielded through ages of tyranny and superstition, using them as the supreme symbols of her dreaded power.

The famous saying of Canalejas, "All Spain is Montjuich," is but another mode of saying that every Spanish Government is a sort of Holy Office of the Inquisition. The dreadful associations of Montjuich, the savage attitude of Maura's Government towards Ferrer and the Escuela Moderna in 1906 and 1909, and the recent inhumanities upon the political prisoners at Cullera all point the moral and adorn the tale of the infamous exploits of the modern descendants of Torquemada.

The Spanish clericals and their political abettors, as found in the ranks of Conservatives like Maura, or amongst renegades like Canalejas, affect an air of virtuous indignation when the name of the Inquisition is breathed in their presence. Nothing irritated the Spanish reactionaries so much in connection with the fizgig outbreak of the Princess Eulalia as the outcry, made by the wayward Infanta, that the attitude adopted towards her book by the court was inquisitorial in character. The taunt was a true one, and the fact that its royal authoress stood metaphorically on the stool of repentance for fear of losing, not her life, but £10,000 a year, may serve to remind us that the Holy Tribunal had many strings to its bow, but that its one guiding principle of action was that of repression by violence or the threat of violence.

I am led to make these observations after reading an informing article in *El Pais** dealing with the

* Madrid, December 14, 1911. *El Pais* is a fine Radical paper, pronouncedly Freethought in character. It has lived through twenty-five years of strenuous fight.

manifestations of the spirit of the Inquisition in modern Spain. The democracy of that unhappy land, as also its friends and well-wishers throughout the world, need to be reminded that nowhere more than in Spain does Gambetta's soul-cry, "*Clericalism is the enemy*," find its verification in the institutions, laws, and methods of government.

The writer in *El Pais* points out that the Inquisition was so called by virtue of its mode of procedure, its method of investigating and verifying offences, whether by anonymous denunciations or by secret delation. The basis of the Inquisitorial trials was the investigation made in secrecy, under prompting of some informer, often that of the father, the wife, or the child of the victim, whose motive in many cases was abject fear of the Inquisition rather than hatred of their relatives. The alternative was, burn or give to be burnt. It was after these investigations had been followed out that the infamous work of torture was begun (in all cases the victim, male or female, was stripped stark naked, the moral torture preceding the physical), and when the accused had made his confession, wrung out of him by these ingeniously cruel devices, he was condemned without any other proofs of guilt.

But the Inquisition was more than a mode of procedure; it was a "Holy Office" and a "Tribunal of the Faith."

Its office was a holy one, not because its ends consisted in chastising crime and correcting the evildoer, as contemplated in our modern legislation, but because its work was devoted to the salvation of souls by the method of burning the bodies of heretics, and so, by means of widespread terrorism, preventing the social contagion of unbelief. By these salutary measures, Protestantism and every other form of heresy were rooted out, extirpated by torture and flame.

The Inquisition, first established in 1233, ruled over Spain for long weary centuries, and cast the shadow of pain and terrorism over twenty-four generations of Spaniards. It fell not under the flagellation of human reason; it withered at the breath of the French Revolution, and fell at last as an instrument of government under the bullets of the great Napoleon. His victorious arms suppressed, on December 8, 1808, the infamous Tribunal which called itself Holy. On February 12, 1813, the hateful institution was legally suppressed by the general Cortès of Spain as incompatible with the new political constitution set up by the Napoleonic monarchy in Spain. But in March, 1814, the Catholic reaction, supported by the arms of England and the Allies, placed Fernando VII. on the throne of Spain and allowed him to re-establish the Tribunal of the Inquisition, and initiate his unscrupulous career of repression against the newly awakened spirit of liberty and Freethought. From the restoration of this fiend in human form dates all the modern misfortunes of Spain.

To-day, as in the dark days of the Inquisition, robbery, rape, and murder are accounted by the Spanish clergy, who rule the country, as of inferior spiritual and social turpitude to the crime of heresy. Conversely, heretics were considered by the Holy Inquisitors as much more worthy of quartering, mutilation, and burning than the thief and assassin. For the genuine criminal, Rome was rich with mercy; there were Bulls in the Holy City and pardons at the Catholic courts of Spain obtainable for the parricide and the common assassin, but nowhere was there pity or pardon for the heretic.

The same hateful spirit is rampant to-day in Spain. A Jesuit Father, preaching at Gijon against Ferrer and his schools and publications, declared "that it is a sin a thousand times greater than adultery or fornication to read the publications prohibited by our holy Mother, the Church." This was in 1906, and now, quite recently, that pious organ, *La Epoca*, declared in the course of its campaign against the movement for indulgence towards the Cullera prisoners, that "the crimes of individuals, even those committed in Cetina,* are pardonable

because their social influence is less dangerous than that produced by modern heretics—by men who, under the impulse of some social or political ideal, fight against the faith as an element of social order." After open confessions of this kind, the less we hear of Christianity as the friend of morality the better, especially when we remember that Protestantism is merely a defecated form of Catholicism.

One of the most terrible documents I have ever read on the question of torture for religion's sake is the handsome volume entitled the *Almanack of the Inquisition*,* just issued at Madrid. I admit there is very little almanack, but there is plenty of rare information in rich abundance about the Inquisition, in this remarkable book, one of the most crushing pieces of propaganda literature ever issued from the Freethought press in any country. It is written by the Grand Old Man of Spanish Freethought, José Nakens, and the redoubtable co-editor with him of *El Motin*, the late Catholic priest Segismundo Pey y Ordeix; and contains disclosures about the Inquisition, its turpitudes, and its tortures not elsewhere obtainable in such handy form, and nowhere more authoritatively.

In publishing this unique indictment of the Inquisition, Nakens has done excellent work for Freethought. In England and elsewhere under Protestantism we seem to forget that outside the Nonconformist Conscience and the mitigated superstitionism that is called Anglican Christianity, we have lurking in the background the Church of Rome, relentless, unrepentant, *semper eadem*, as enamored as ever of fire and flame as evidences of Christianity. Our slumbering over-confidence needs to be reminded, by these terrible pages, that Rome, like Christ, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever; that she has no word of reprobation in her vocabulary for the Torquemadas and other Holy Inquisitors, although her language remains as virulent as ever concerning the sinfulness of the great heretics of the past, and the damnableness of their doctrines. As Pey y Ordeix points out, the Inquisition is still alive. The Pope still retains at Rome the Congregations of the Index, of the Holy Office, and of the Holy Inquisition, the direct descendants and continuators of those established in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with identical titles, and having the same aims and processes. All the machinery for the revival on a mediæval scale of the horrors of the Inquisition exist to-day in the convents and monasteries of Spain. The dungeons are still there, and in those haunts of cruelty incarceration for life, with physical and moral tortures superadded, are still frequent. Pey gives many references and cites many recent cases in proof of this. Certain it is that when the Convent of the Jeronimas was broken into at Barcelona in July, 1909, an up-to-date apparatus for roasting the body of the penitent was discovered. In this connection, be it remembered, that by Article 29 of the Concordat with Spain, the Church was specially allowed to use the convents as places for "spiritual exercises and other pious uses"—in other words, as places of imprisonment and torment. We must not be deceived by innocent phraseology. The Church always was an adept at euphemism. She had horror of "the effusion of blood," so she burned the heretic—the "holy burning," as she called it, at what she termed "the holy stake."

El Motin, under whose beneficent auspices this much-needed work is issued, has begun the thirty-second volume of its chequered existence with a series of unique articles on the blood-curdling abominations wrought by the Spanish Inquisition in the name of God and his Christ. Pey y Ordeix has disinterred from the *Archivo Historico Nacional* at Madrid a number of hitherto unpublished reports, made by the officials of the "Holy Office," of the prosecution of a number of heretics. These reports are being published week by week by *El Motin*, in the cold-blooded legal language of the officers of the Inquisition of

* *Almanaque de la Inquisición*, por *El Motin*. (Madrid: Domingo Blanco-Libertad, 31. Pp. 206. 1 peseta.)

* Here a whole family was wiped out by a gang of brigands.

two hundred and fifty years ago. As one reads these terrible accounts of the details of torture, as told in the quaint, unfeeling terminology of the Inquisitorial notary, and as one remembers that these atrocities were committed in the actual presence of the prelates and high officers of the Inquisition, who watched through all the processes of torture, heard the piercing cries of the victim, and gloated over their quivering frames during the torments, which are set forth in all their particularities in these harrowing documents, one can well understand how it is that the Inquisition has burnt itself into the soul of Spain, and why it continues to-day to bake the conscience of its rulers hard as flint against the softening influences of humanity. But when we reflect that, after all, the cardinal doctrine of Christianity is the doctrine of hell fire, to which these Inquisitorial horrors were but the vestibule, it becomes as clear as the flames of the Christian inferno itself that the ethic of Christianity is essentially an ethic of terrorism and torture, and that its chief appeal to its believers is an appeal to their fear of everlasting burning and to their dread of eternal torment.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

A Christ Who Smiles.

The Man of No Sorrows, by Coulson Kernahan. Cassell & Co.

THE religion of Otherworldliness is as dead as mutton. The Freethinkers have sounded a march to fresher fields and greener pastures, and the orthodox herd has stampeded from the barren wastes it has occupied so long. Pleasant Sunday afternoons have replaced painful Sabbaths, and tame politicians now bleat in the place of the old clerical bell-wethers. Dogma everywhere is being replaced by Secularism. Even the avowedly religious writers have caught the infection of humanitarianism and devote their tiny talents to a humorous restatement of the platitudes of Christianity. The late lamented Dean Farrar was one of the first to lead the way. He published a life of Christ, which has been wittily described as "Cook's excursions through the Gospels," and he playfully and prayerfully insisted that hell was no hotter than a cold storage department. After a long interval, Mr. Coulson Kernahan has obliged the religious public with a delightful *brochure* in which he portrays the coming of a new Messiah with an evangel of joy, which replaces the thumb-screw tenderness of the original Man of Sorrows. It is a thousand pities that the artist and the author have not worked together in this *brochure*. The title-picture, which shows a portrait of the new Messiah, is very disappointing in so far as the facial joy is so restrained. The smile is "not so wide as a church door"; but it is better than the expression of a tired cab-horse which was so frequently associated with the features of his predecessor.

However, the book is the thing. With his well-known power of imagery and graphic description, the author portrays the triumphal progress of the new Messiah, who has a message of no sorrow. With loyal art, Mr. Kernahan introduces the new prophet at a meeting at Windsor, and describes the people as "white and trembling with awe or flushed with eager joy" at the new teacher's approach. The reader will notice that, as of old, the Freethinkers had not troubled the pew-openers. The new teacher is "clad in a robe of royal purple, embroidered with precious stones and pearls," and walks bareheaded and wears sandals. In fact, he is as like his Jewish predecessor as the two Dromios resembled one another. But, unlike his forerunner, the new Messiah's sermons have the desired effect, and the people obey his wishes. So the people cease to worship the Man of Sorrows and put their faith on the Messiah with half a smile. For a season the people make merry in a "hunt-the-slipper" sort of way; but finally they go "on the burst" and paint the world red. The people get out of hand, and the

new Messiah has his Gethsemane in seeing the "blood drunken and murderous mob," and he barely escapes crucifixion. The new Messiah meets the founder of the first Salvation Army, who informs him that the whole thing was part of a plan for shaking Christianity out of its indifference.

It has cost the reviewer some fever of the brow and much toilsome reading to pick out his theological gem from the tedious volumes which cumber the bookseller's shelves. Looking at the whole work, one feels as one does in presence of a dummy book with a make-believe title such as Dickens loved. It may be full of fun; but nobody can decipher it. There may be, after all, real humor in some passages of Mr. Kernahan's booklet, which convey no pleasantries to persons not accustomed to put three-penny-bits in the plate on Sundays. A work called "The Holy Bible" has often been cited as cryptic in its utterance, but a Teutonic student, perhaps, might pick a few plums out of the mass. In the same way, *The Man of No Sorrows* may entertain the dwellers in tin tabernacles and jerry-built cathedrals, and it takes all sorts to appreciate all jokes.

MIMNERMUS.

Tales of Our Times.

BY A CYNIC.

"THERE is no doubt that the universe was made for us. Look at our colonies spreading all over the world."

This remark was made, not by a British Imperialist, but by a robust member of a group of hydrozoa growing on the sides of a rocky basin on the shore of a Silurian sea. He was not even an up-to-date hydrozoan, for he belonged to the extinct order of the stromatoporidae, but he was quite an important member of Silurian society.

"The universe is eternal," he went on, "and we have never known the universe to be without hydrozoa. It follows, therefore, that we are eternal, too."

"Your arguments are excellent," said a brachiopod who was sticking to another part of the rocky basin, "but they apply equally well to us. We hold that not only was the universe specially made for us, but that it is the work of an almighty and beneficent Creator. Otherwise, how can one account for this rock surface dipping down into the water at just the most suitable slope for us, and how account for the existence of the diatoms, rhizopods, and other articles of food which we are continually sweeping into our mouths with our tentacles? For all these mercies we are indebted to none other than the Heavenly Father who made us and watches over us. No doubt he has an eye on you stromatoporidae also, but we are certainly the nobler creatures, and must, therefore, be the immediate objects of his care."

For, of course, this highly enlightened "Lamp Shell" had no idea that he was really only a sort of tentative experiment in the molluscan type, and, indeed, was scarcely entitled to call himself a mollusc at all.

"It is amusing to hear people who are fastened all their lives to rocks discussing the universe," remarked a trilobite who was crawling over the sand at the bottom of the basin. "What can be your knowledge of the universe compared with ours, who have had opportunities for discovery and research which you can never possess? We have discovered that this universe of ours is circular in shape, with a diameter of about 30 yds. and a depth of water in the middle which varies from about 10 to 15 ft., and that this depth reaches its maximum and minimum twice a day. This beautiful uniformity in the order of nature throughout the universe assures us that it is the result of intelligent design. But whether the designer be a Personal God or a Pantheistic Principle of Infinite Intelligence we have not yet been able to find out, though we hope to do so in time. In any case, it is certain that the development of the entomostracous crustacea has been the ultimate purpose of the cosmic scheme, and that we trilobites are the final goal of organic evolution."

While the trilobite was thus delivering himself, a ganoid fish happened to swim into the basin through an opening in the rocks.

"Your cosmology is very primitive," he observed with a superior smile, "but one could expect nothing else from such inadequate knowledge of the world as you possess. This shallow basin in which you live is not the entire universe; it is only one of many similar rock basins along the coasts which fringe the real universe, namely, this entire ocean of which we ganoid fishes have explored every part, and of

which we are the principal occupants. And I am equally well qualified to correct your theological errors, for I can assure you that the universe is not regulated by a Personal Being, nor yet, on the other hand, can we regard the Pantheistic interpretation as quite satisfactory. All we can affirm with any certainty is that the ruling principle of the universe is something, not ourselves, that makes for the general advantage of ganoid fishes. For we ganoids are the crown and summit of animated nature, and no higher organisms exist."

This last statement was true enough as far as that particular geological epoch was concerned; and, of course, the poor ganoid could not be expected to see the unwisdom of a dogmatic finality of statement, especially in Silurian times.

Meanwhile, the shores of that Silurian sea were undergoing a slow upheaval. A fine silt gradually filled the rock basin and covered the remains of these palaeontological philosophers till, about a hundred million years later, a geologist came across them on a mountain side in Wales.

Acid Drops.

The mad Ulsterites at Belfast seem to have borrowed a leaf from the book of the London police, whose idea is that unpopular speakers should be arrested and punished, and not the rowdies who oppose them with organised physical violence. The Standing Committee of the Ulster Unionist Council has resolved to "take steps to prevent" the holding of the announced Home Rule meeting in Belfast, at which Mr. Winston Churchill and Mr. John Redmond will be the principal speakers. The committee "observe with astonishment" (heavens!) that such a meeting is even contemplated in such a "loyal city." Well, they should be allowed to indulge that feeling to their hearts' content, but they should not be allowed to prevent the meeting from being held. The right of free public speech should be maintained if it takes half the police and all the soldiers in Ireland to do it.

It is one of the most foolish ideas in the Christian world that all the persecution worth talking about is and has been done by the Catholic Church, and that the Protestants have been the friends of civil and religious liberty. History denies this in the most peremptory manner. Catholicism has had more opportunities of persecuting, but Protestantism has used all the opportunities it had. From the age of Elizabeth to (nearly) the age of Victoria the Catholics in England were under the ban of the law. They could hold no public office and they were not allowed at any university. Pope, for instance, one of the most perfect of English poets in the matter of form, could not get a university education because his father was a Catholic. It was worse still in Ireland where English bayonets enabled the Protestant minority to hold the Catholic majority under a despotism which, lasting as it did for a hundred and fifty years on a stretch, was almost without parallel in human history. Even nowadays the Ulster Orangemen persecute the Catholics just as far as they dare. They pretend that religious liberty will be at an end in Belfast if Home Rule is carried. But they have no idea of civil and religious liberty—except for themselves; and they make all the personal profit they can out of their intolerance. Figures are just being circulated to show that while the Catholics form nearly one-third of the inhabitants of Belfast, they are not allowed to have a single member on the Harbor Board; of the 439 salaried officials in the service of the Belfast Corporation only 9 are Roman Catholics; the sum paid in salaries is £67,723, of which the total received by the nine Roman Catholic officials is £765. Here is another illustration. The Belfast Poor Law Board spends £10,000 a year in salaries, and in its official list of "officers required to give security" there appears the name of one Catholic, who receives £45 a year! The men who are gluttons for public money, and treat their fellow citizens in this mean and thievish manner, are the men who boast of being the guardians of "loyalty" and "religious liberty" for all Ireland. No wonder they don't want too many opposition meetings in Belfast.

The clerical party in the recent elections in Germany has decreased by nearly 70,000 votes. The aggregate vote is not quite half that of the Socialists.

"If George Whitefield and John Wesley had never preached," says the Rev. L. D. Beavan, "the slave would still have had his manacles, and you would have had to sell colored men, even in the Christian markets of the world." Well, but what of the influence of Christianity in all the

preceding centuries? Christians had gone on buying and selling slaves for centuries, and would have gone on buying and selling them, but for Whitefield and Wesley! Rubbish! Mr. Beavan is wide of the facts, and as a result, talking nonsense. Black slavery, which Mr. Beavan has specially in mind, was not something against which Christians had to fight; it was instituted by Christians. And Christians upheld it as long as they could. Whitefield and Wesley deserve all credit for repudiating slavery, but the Quakers were before them; while the first country in Europe to liberate its slaves was "infidel" and revolutionary France. And in America the first to publicly demand the liberation of the slaves was Thomas Paine. Paine also partly drafted and signed the Act of Pennsylvania abolishing slavery—the first of its kind in the whole of Christendom. Slavery would have died out had Christianity never been heard of—and in that case perhaps earlier than it did.

Mr. Beavan is equally fantastic in referring to the Reformation, "with its working in the direction of human unity." If there is one thing that has made for disunity it is the Protestant Reformation. We question if there is any historian worth talking about who would not say that, for good or ill, the Reformation was the most divisive of modern forces. It diminished the power of none and aggravated the strength of many. One need not go abroad to Germany; England and Ireland and Scotland and Wales will give instances enough. The unity that is developing between the peoples of Europe owes nothing to Christianity. It owes nothing even to religion. Its principal apostles have been Freethinkers, and its most ardent advocates to-day are outside the Churches. Mr. Beavan is rather fortunate in talking from a pulpit, where the audience may listen only. Still, they can think, and it would be interesting to know what an informed and thoughtful hearer of his thought of the preacher.

The petition for the release of the two prisoners for "blasphemy" in Armley Gaol, got up by the Rationalist Press Association, has produced no effect upon that highly superior person, Mr. McKenna, who is Home Secretary to-day and is ready to take any other public job at the same salary to-morrow. Here is the Home Office reply:—

"Home Office, Whitehall.
January 18, 1912.

"Sir,—The Secretary of State having carefully considered the petition forwarded by you on behalf of John William Gott and Thomas William Stewart, I am directed to express to you his regret that he can find no sufficient ground to justify him, consistently with his public duty, in advising His Majesty to interfere in this case.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
E. BLACKWELL."

Our readers may recollect that this is exactly what we expected.

The starving peasantry in the Orenburg government in Russia are actually selling their children to foreigners. More than seventy per cent. of the youngsters are suffering from hunger-typhus. Owing to the failure of crops and want of fodder the peasants are slaughtering their cattle and selling their land for next to nothing. The Czar's government interference is limited to stopping cinematograph pictures of these dreadful scenes in other parts of the country. "Providence" of course does nothing.

Under the heading of "A Crowd's Devoutness," the *Manchester Guardian* reported an incident at Nelson on January 16. A large crowd was gathered outside a newspaper office, awaiting the decision of the Cotton Conference on the Monday night. When the announcement was put up that the Conference was adjourned without having arrived at a decision the immense crowd spontaneously sang, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." Surely the "devoutness" was *ironical*. You can't expect every reporter to be a humorist—but what was the editor doing?

Rev. H. E. Jennings' motion that the Camberwell Borough Council's meetings should open with prayer has been proposed a second time. It was discussed for more than half an hour, and finally rejected by a large majority. Yet they still exclude the *Freethinker* from the Free Libraries.

A *Christian World* writer asks the question whether the Churches are not overstaffed. He suggests that the clerical training colleges should only turn out sufficient ministers to meet the demand. The suggestion is a good one from one point of view, but from another standpoint we are afraid it would not suit. In some cases it is the demand that

creates the supply. In the case of the clergy it is the supply that creates the demand. The policy is to provide a good supply of clergy, and trust to the working up of a demand for their ministrations. The result of limiting the supply, therefore, would be to decrease the demand. One never reads of a district crying out for more parsons, it is the parsons that discover the districts need them. And sometimes they succeed in making people believe they are necessary. It is very much like drug-taking. In the beginning one has little taste for it. Then one likes it. Later on one feels one cannot do without it. Then, when it is discontinued, the discovery is made that it would have been better never to have acquired the taste.

In the current *Hibbert Journal*, Professor T. Ladd asks the question: "Is the Universe Friendly?" He admits that the question is only intelligible so long as we feel we are warranted in attributing personal characteristics to the universe. Which is precisely the thing we are not warranted in doing. Personality is a human conception; it originates with man, and it belongs to man. It is quite indefensible to apply it elsewhere. The religious argument moves in a circle. First, it is argued that the universe is personal because it has indications of friendliness to man. Then, it is argued that it is friendly because it is personal. It must be personal because it is friendly; it must be friendly because it is personal. Professor Ladd admits that no argument can drive from the field the Agnostic or sceptic, which is only another way of admitting that there are no very strong reasons on behalf of religious hypotheses. But religious people can, he says, always fall back upon the experience of "the choicest and best of earth;" that "towards them, at least," the world is really and profoundly friendly.

We hardly think that the choicest and best of earth, even from Professor Ladd's point of view, have always arrived at that conclusion. Many have been profoundly impressed with the feeling that the world is anything but friendly to human effort. But even though a limited number were so satisfied, their evidence would not decide the point at issue. If the universe is personal, in the religious sense of the expression, the claim for happiness and well-being is not made on behalf of a few select specimens, but on behalf of all. All have an equal claim to consideration, and the claim of all is not invalidated because it is satisfied in particular instances. Professor Ladd replies that if the universe is leading the race towards the goal of a redeemed humanity, then it is ultimately favorable to the race. Not so. The human race comprises not only human beings that may be living at some remote period, but also those who have lived prior to that period. And how, in the name of all that is reasonable, can the universe be said to be friendly to the race because at some remote period an infinitesimal fragment of it comes out of the process all right? As a philosophic writer, Professor Ladd would have been better advised to have pointed out to readers the glaring absurdity of addressing the universe in terms of personality. Readers and writers in the *Hibbert Journal* sadly need the lesson. Only if he had written a straightforward logical article the editor of that journal would probably have declined its insertion.

The Thanksgiving Service on the return of the King and Queen, which is to be held on Tuesday, February 6, at St. Paul's Cathedral, seems an unmerited reflection on His Majesty's Indian subjects. It looks as if some outrage had been expected, but as it did not occur, and the King's person is safe, God is to be thanked for his protection. Perhaps it would be too ironical if the people of India were to hold a Thanksgiving Service of their own. It might look too much like thanking God that the King is in his proper place again.

Bishop Welldon has just been saying that "a non-miraculous Christianity is no Christianity at all." We agree with him. That is why we say that Christianity is dying.

In a late issue of the *Standard* we noticed a letter on "Atheism Rampant" by Henry A. Marsh. We wonder if this is the leather-lunged Christian Evidence speaker who organised the rowdy opposition to Boulter at Streatham Common. He used to tell his rowdy crew that Boulter's language was obscene, and that the interest of their wives and daughters (half of them being mere lads!) demanded that he should be swept out of Streatham. In the *Standard*, however, he simply refers to Boulter's views as "crudely expressed." Mr. Marsh seems to be anxious to devote his wonderful talents—and his leather-lungs—to the *Standard's* crusade against "Atheistic Socialism"; in short, he seems to be on the make.

Mrs. Blumer Harris, aged sixty, of Durham-row, High-street, Stepney, has been sentenced to nine months' hard labor as a receiver of stolen goods. The police had had complaints about her for several years. Her children were highly respectable and her husband had been in one situation for twenty-four years. She herself belonged to the Mildmay Mission, Whitechapel-road, and associated with women of good character. Yet her own house was used as a resort for thieves, and apparently even for a worse purpose. Such is the restraining power of religion over the passions of greed and lust! What a hubbub there would be if the prisoner had been a *Freethinker*! Her being a Christian attracts no particular attention. The association of piety and immorality is only too common.

Joseph Chapman, a Sunday-school superintendent, has been sent to prison by the Salford Stipendiary Magistrate for twelve months for indecently assaulting young girls at various places, including the church, on Sundays. There is no moral. There would be if he were not a Christian.

Sunday picture shows are not to go on at Porthcawl unchallenged. A deputation of Free Churchmen have just waited on the Urban District Council to inform that body that it has "betrayed the best interests of the community" in licensing them. One reverend gentleman had the face to talk about "equal justice to all," which is precisely what the Council is meting out. The Sunday pictures will continue.

The Glasgow "godly" fought tooth and nails, in the long, long ago, against Sunday tram-cars. At last they came to a compromise, and agreed that the cars should run just in time to *take people to and from the kirk!* It was a master-stroke of pious hypocrisy. We see that the same compromise has just been effected at Southampton. Bless the dear Christians! They call themselves the salt of the earth. They are the pepper and mustard too.

Speaking on behalf of the impudent attempt to raise £100,000 for the new Y. M. C. A. building, the Rev. W. H. Davies said the building was placed in "the centre of one of the most immoral quarters of the world." If that is true, what a compliment to Christian influences! One of the most immoral quarters of the world is to be found in a Christian country! And that country Christian England, where the Christianity is so strong and so pure, and has such refining influences! Really, that is letting the cat out of the bag with a vengeance. Perhaps, however, there is a little exaggeration. Parsons are not over scrupulous about the truth in such situations. And to cadge £100,000 for the benefit of young men of a class who are mostly able to pay for all their legitimate entertainments needs a deal of talk—and other things.

"The clock stopped, never to go again"—and the £100,000 wasn't registered for the Y. M. C. A. hustlers.

Mr. A. B. Moss was well to the front in the Camberwell discussion on the "prayers" proposal, and the word "laughter" occurs frequently in the local newspapers' report of his speech. We hope the reverend gentleman will give our old friend further opportunities.

Tuesday's *Daily Mirror* gave an unintentionally amusing account of an address by Mr. Daniel Crawford, a Central African missionary of the Plymouth Brethren persuasion. It appears that the more up-to-date blacks are not easily converted; we gather that they rather enjoy what the good missionary chooses to call a "vulgar Ingersoll joke." But the older blacks, especially the cannibal ones, are "nuts" on the Bible. The boy who reads it to them appears to be sick of it, but "those old cannibals make him go on." Good old cannibals, how they must enjoy *some* parts of the Bible! When they come to "the blood" they must be in the seventh heaven.

A MUCH ILL-USED QUOTATION.

"First catch you hare," as Mrs. Glasse said, is a quotation one often reads, but the witticism was never uttered by the prosaic lady. What Mrs. Glasse did write was, "Take a full-grown hare and let it hang for four or five days before you *case* it," which sentence will be found in her book, *Cookery* (1796), chapter VI. line 126. The word "case" simply means to strip the skin off an animal.

We find it in Shakespeare also: "We'll make you some sport with the fox ere we *case* him" (*All's Well That Ends Well*, III. 6).

SPECIAL NOTICE.

Orders for literature, of whatever kind, should be sent direct to our new Shop Manager (Mr. H. Sail) 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

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.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—January 28, Shoreditch Town Hall. February 4, West Ham; 11, Leicester; 18, Queen's Hall; 25, Glasgow. March 3, Queen's Hall.
 J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—January 28, Battersea. February 11, Glasgow; 25, Queen's Hall. March 31, Queen's Hall.
 PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1912.—Previously acknowledged. £20 17s. 6d. Received since:—Clifford Williams, 5s.; S. A. Gimson, £2 2s.; Rev. U. Dhammaloka (Rangoon), £1; C. E. Round, 2s. 6d.; M. Ringrose, £1 1s.; Mac, 10s. 6d.; John Sumner, 10s. 6d.; Dr. Archer Martin, £3; R. Young, 10s.; Thomas Hayes, £1 1s.; L. B. E., 2s. 6d.; G. F. H. McCluskey, £1; Henry Tucker, £1; "Pendleton," 2s. 6d.; Three Birmingham "Saints," 12s.; W. Palmer, 2s. 6d.; Iconoclast, £2 2s.; L. Gjimra, £2; N. M. X., £1; Col. B. L. Reilly, £1; W. H. Harrap, 4s.
 N. S. S. GENERAL FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges: Miss Elizabeth Lechmere, 9s. 6d.
 N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges: Mr. A. J. Fincken, 4s.
 E. SMEDLEY.—Sorry we cannot give an article to it at present.
 CLIFFORD WILLIAMS.—Shall be pleased to shake hands with you at Birmingham.
 J. ROLLISON.—Shall be sent. Thanks. The Bishop of London is—well, it is impossible to say *what* he is without fear of libel and perhaps the blasphemy laws.
 STANLEY BROWN.—A pleasant offer, but we don't get that way. Thanks all the same.
 MAC (Glasgow).—We take it that this is the acknowledgment you desire. You have our best wishes in the struggle.
 JOHN SUMNER.—We quite understand. Thanks.
 J. D. JACKSON.—See paragraph. So you have been reading *The Ring and the Book*? A great work, with imperishable things in it. It is good to meet with a lover of Browning.
 W. GRIFFETHS.—Glad to hear you have a "small body of 'saints'" at Troedyrhin which you are "endeavoring to increase."
 W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.
 POSTMAN.—Order passed on. We have not heard of any published report of Mr. Bates's debate at Ripley.
 M. RINGROSE writes: "I have doubled by contribution this year because I believe you deserve it. Your work always impresses me with the feeling that it is *sincere* and *honest*, and so unlike the *parsons'* work."
 W. W. KENSSET.—Both, please.
 E. B.—Much obliged for cuttings.
 G. F. H. MCCLUSKEY AND HENRY TUCKER (Plymouth), subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, say: "We should like to see the Fund completed more quickly, say, within the first half of the year, instead of dragging on to the very end of December. That the amount asked for was exceeded last year by such a liberal margin is a good sign of the improving fortunes of the party, and a fine compliment to yourself, especially when we remember the liberal response on behalf of Miss Vance."
 M. E. PEGG.—We had already written a paragraph.
 G. MANCO.—That is an old story—not a true one, we believe—about Labouchere once playing a joke on Bradlaugh by delivering a speech from his notes. Bradlaugh's notes, like

our own, would have been of very little use to any other speaker. Labouchere played his part gallantly enough in the Bradlaugh struggle; yet, as you note, it was at last the action of Mr. Speaker Peel that caused the member for Northampton to take his seat without further challenge.

THREE BIRMINGHAM "SAINTS."—Yours is a *practical* wish for "the success of the movement."

G. GROVE.—Malicious Christian gossip of that kind will never be stopped while there are Christians—and Freethinkers.

ICONOCLAST (Birmingham).—Yes, we do contemplate something in the shape of an Autobiography. You are right as to Mr. Joseph McCabe's references to us in his *Life of Holyoake*. We have been very patient, but we cannot let them pass as true history. We shall have to deal with them, and perhaps shortly.

R. IRVING.—The new, and cheaper edition, of our *Bible Handbook*, is in hand and will be published early in the spring. There is wide testimony to its value.

R. D. MORRIS.—Too late for this week.

KAY.—We don't remember it. But aren't you taking Harold Begbie too seriously?

A. HURAM.—Shall be set right. Thanks.

A. N. BEDLOW.—Others have drawn our attention to advertisements of Mr. Foote's publications being distributed by strange persons (in no way connected with our business) outside N. S. S. meetings, and the matter is having our serious attention.

T. W. HAUGHTON.—Very useful. Thanks.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Glad to hear Mrs. Bonner had so good a meeting at Birmingham in such weather.

W. E. HICKMAN.—Pleased you regard the *Freethinker* as "a weekly treat" after reading it for three years. Thanks for cuttings.

COL. B. L. REILLY, forwarding his cheque to the President's Honorarium Fund, adds "best wishes for a rapid advancement, during the new year, of the noble cause of Freethought, which you so ably represent."

SOME correspondence stands over till next week.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.

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.

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

A new course of Sunday evening Freethought lectures under the auspices of the Secular Society, Ltd., will take place at the Queen's (Minor) Hall during February, March, and April. Mr. Foote delivers the two opening lectures on Feb. 4 and 11. His subjects will be advertised in our next issue.

Mr. Foote opened the second half of the winter session for the Glasgow Branch on Sunday. The weather was—well we had better not begin describing it, for we don't know where we might finish. It made some difference, though not nearly as much as was expected, to the midday audience, but the hall was packed from end to end in the evening with a most alert, appreciative, and enthusiastic meeting. Mr. Turnbull took the chair on both occasions. There were two opponents after the morning lecture, both of the male sex, and both unmannerly and noisy; which caused Mr. Foote to say—in view of the number of ladies sitting with bright, serene faces—how absurd it seemed for men still to be calling women the excitable sex. One of the ladies was Mrs. Billington Greig (Miss Teresa Billington) who afterwards scored with a satiric question about some of the labor leaders and their "God." Was it political policy or mental debility? The lecturer thought it might possibly be both.

Mr. J. T. Lloyd lectures this evening (Jan. 28) in the Lower Town Hall, Battersea.

The Shoreditch Town Hall platform was occupied on Sunday evening by Mr. J. T. Lloyd, who delivered a very fine lecture to a good audience.

We hope there will be a very good audience at Shoreditch Town Hall this evening (Jan. 28) when Mr. Cohen concludes the present course of lectures there.

Mr. Stead's clever and striking letter to the *Times*—reproduced on another page of our present issue—will be found very interesting by our readers, who should show it round to their friends.

"It is really about time," Mr. W. T. Stead says in the *January Review of Reviews*, "that something definite were done to put a stop to the continual encroachment of authority upon the right of free speech. The attack is usually made from the shelter of the blasphemy laws, which are in themselves enough to make any honest man blaspheme, but which still continue to cumber the Statute Book."

The next N. S. S. "Social" will take place at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet-street, on Monday evening, February 12. The program will be as usual—vocal and instrumental music, some dancing, and a brief address by the President. There is no charge for admission, and members of the N. S. S. are free to introduce a friend. Non-members who cannot get introduced in that way should apply to the Secretary (Miss E. M. Vance), at 2 Newcastle-street, E.C., for a ticket.

Miss K. B. Kough lectures to-day (Jan. 28) afternoon and evening, at the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints, Manchester. We hope the local "saints" will see that she has good audiences and a hearty welcome.

The Leicester Secular Society (see advertisement on another page) finds a bazaar a good way of raising money. The next is arranged to open on Saturday, March 2. Contributions in the form of cheques, postal orders, etc., will be very welcome, of course; but dependence is chiefly placed on a good contribution of articles that can be turned into cash by sale at the bazaar. Ladies throughout the Free-thought movement may take our word for it that any contributions they can make in this way will help a deserving Society to continue its valuable work. It may be said that charity begins at home. Certainly; but it's a very mean idea that charity should end there.

The *Daily Chronicle* was good enough to admit that the late Henry Labouchere was "not orthodox" and that this fact gave piquancy to his description of himself during the Bradlaugh struggle as "the Christian member" for Northampton. Freethinkers gratefully recollect how Labouchere stood by Bradlaugh inside the House of Commons during what the *Chronicle* calls "the whole equal struggle that disfigured the first two years of Gladstone's second Administration, when Bradlaugh was the victim of an odious persecution." But why does the *Chronicle* refer to Bradlaugh as "the so-called atheist"? He was an Atheist. He called himself an Atheist. Surely he may be allowed to know his own mind.

We saw a good deal of Labouchere in the 'eighties, when we were mixed up in London politics on the ultra-Radical side. We concluded that his religion was like our own—a negative quantity. He once passed a very high tribute to our platform oratory—if a man may use such a big word of himself. His wife was a fine and charming woman, who had made a name on the stage as Henrietta Hodson. We met her at the unveiling of the Bradlaugh Memorial at Northampton in the early 'nineties, her husband not being well enough to attend. We ceased to take any active part in politics soon afterwards and we rarely saw Labouchere again.

The Personal Rights Association has forwarded a memorial to Mr. McKenna for the release of Messrs. Stewart and Gott. Objection is taken to using the Blasphemy Laws to penalise bad taste, and the danger of this kind of policy is pointed out most effectively. The memorial is extremely well drafted, but too long for reproduction in our columns. It is signed on behalf of the Personal Rights Association by Franklin Thomasson, president, and J. H. Levy, hon. secretary.

M. Georges Lorand announces in the *Express de Liège* (Mr. Heaford writes us) that he has now obtained from the

Supreme Court of Madrid the raising of the embargo on the property left by Ferrer. The sentence of the Court constitutes a veritable revision imposed indirectly by the Supreme (Civil) Court on the assassins who sat on the court-martial. It ordains the restoration to Ferrer's heirs of the property of the condemned man, and of the Escuela Moderna of Barcelona. The judgment recognises:—

- "1. That Ferrer was not in any way mixed up with the events of Barcelona.
- "2. That none of the persons prosecuted acted under his orders.
- "3. That in none of the 2,000 trials that followed upon the events has any trace been found either of the participation or of the instigation of Ferrer."

This amounts to the full rehabilitation of Ferrer and the proclamation of his innocence by the highest jurisdiction of Spain. In consequence, the supreme tribunal of Madrid ordains the restitution of the property of Ferrer and of the Escuela Moderna to the heirs of the Martyr, and nonsuits the convents in their action for damages against the dead man's estate. All friends of Ferrer will rejoice at this result, and will join with me in thanking M. Georges Lorand for the skill with which he has conducted the case. I feel more than ever satisfied in having resigned the post of testamentary executor in his able and successful hands. No one could have procured this issue but Lorand. I hope our friends will give the widest possible publicity, through the press and at their meetings, to this excellent news.

The West Ham Branch has secured the Workman's Hall Romford-road, Stratford, for Sunday evening Free-thought lectures from February 4 till April 28. Local "saints" will please note.

A Birkenhead reader writes: "Perhaps it will interest you to know that although but a youth of sixteen I am a keen supporter of Free-thought and a regular subscriber to the *Freethinker*. I look forward each week eagerly for the intellectual material which is embodied in the articles contributed to your journal, which is by far the most sensible periodical published, in my opinion. I feel its value so great that I would not miss one single issue of it."

The January number of the *Humanitarian*, the monthly organ of the Humanitarian League, sustains the reputation of this interesting and important periodical. We wish our gallant contemporary an increased success in the new year. The present number contains a bright summary report of Mr. Edward Carpenter's lecture on "Beauty in Civic Life," and a review of Dr. James Devon's striking book, *The Criminal and the Community*. A pertinent extract from the *Freethinker* shows that our contemporary's editor is not bitten with the cowardice or prejudice shown in the common press conspiracy of silence against us. The price of the *Humanitarian* is only a penny, and it is published at the Humanitarian League's office, 53 Chancery-lane.

"Round the Churches," by Ladbroke Black, in last week's *Sunday Times*, was devoted to Mr. G. W. Foote and his last lecture at Shoreditch Town Hall. The main thing is that an audience of 800 persons is admitted—"the vast majority being men—in glaring contrast to a Christian congregation." The writer has to keep up his reputation as a Christian, so the critical part of his article may pass without comment. He finds fault with Mr. Foote's humor, but he gives some samples, which his readers may enjoy more than he fancies. We blush at quoting that Mr. Foote has "an interesting reflective face," but his "medium height" reminds us of the *Christian Commonwealth's* description of his "black hair turning grey." Clear sight is not the strong point of Christian journalism.

The late August Specht, of Gotha, Germany, an author of freethinking tendency, who died in 1909, left under his will a special capital, the interest of which, amounting to about £150 a year, should be presented annually to the best writer of a work of advanced character. The trustees have made the first presentation to Dr. Penzig on account of his book *Without Church*. His prize being £100, the sum of £50 was left, which the trustees decided should be devoted to promoting the circulation of the writings of Dr. Kohut Berlin, Ludwig Feuerbach, and Kurt Roding, author of *Rome or Athens*.

Belief in the Devil is the reverse side of faith in God. The one proves the other. He who does not believe a little in the Devil does not believe much in God. He who believes in the sun must believe in the shadow. The Devil is the night of God. What is night? The proof of day.—Victor Hugo.

The Christian Death-Bed Fiasco.

CHRISTIANS, particularly their professional mouth-pieces, seem, to use an obsolete but expressive phrase, possessed of the very Devil in their attempts to make Christianity indispensable. They hesitate at nothing if they can only emphasise some advantage, however minute in its scope, derivable from their beliefs. The Christian will smile with oily self-satisfaction when he can educe what he ostentatiously names a case in point. He gloats over it, as a child does over the accomplishment of something well done. He returns to it again and again. He literally fawns upon it. Seeing in it some justification for the existence of his creed, some warranty for his sponsorship, some paltry victory over his own doubt, he runs the case in point to the death, glorying in it all the way. He is quite dull to the clamorous fact that the extent of his pleasure merely signifies his extremity of endeavor in educing the advantage.

Regardless of antecedents, of education, of environment, of inclination, of all the sundries that go to make our minds what they are, the Christian boastfully says, "There; nothing but Christ could have done that." He jumps to his conclusion from his desire, without the slightest endeavor to trace the precedence either of the one or the other. The whole host of demonstrable conditions that gave birth to the latter is treated as if non-existent; while the welter of contradicting positions that lies between the desire and the conclusion is entirely ignored. He mistakes moonshine for sunshine, and bathes in the beams with the complacency of self-sufficiency that mocks his professed humility. Reasoned arguments are pearls thrown to a pig when the Christian affects the superiority of the sixth sense: keen and cutting ridicule only is the spice that can make him sneeze, and so to awake.

We cannot deny that religion helps to heal some mental wounds. But our admittance of a limited number of partial benefits, arising from religious beliefs, is no contradiction to our advocacy of Free-thought. Rather does it strengthen our hatred to Christianity. For these benefits are magnified by its disciples to proportions altogether absurd; which tends towards the placing of a false survival value upon supernatural beliefs that can never, however great the advantage may be to several individuals, compensate for the mental destruction religion brings in its train. We weigh the good and evil that hang around religion in the scales of our reason, and our judgment is based on the result.

But our admittance is given half-heartedly. Common experience forces us to question whether the advantage is real or assumed. However thoroughly convinced a Christian may be of the power of Christ to soothe all human ills, conduct does not generally supplement the conviction. And it is in conduct that we find the real value of beliefs. Here, if anywhere, the Christian becomes a chameleon. Comparatively, it is easy for him, so far as opinions alone are concerned, to remain steadfastly attached to his beliefs; but when those beliefs, relating directly to common conduct, receive unmistakable opportunities for fulfilment, we find the Christian to be the most hopeless of paltry sciolists. Face to face with immediately personal suffering, he flings his highly-colored Christly comforts into the mud, leaving them there, to the hidden scorn of the sympathetic but clear-witted Atheist.

Circumstances placed me, not very long ago, at the bedside of a dying Christian. He had been a staunch support of the Scottish Presbyterian Church for over sixty years. In religious opinions he was truly conservative, listening Sunday after Sunday to a diluted Christianity that he secretly but vehemently despised. He called it "braw for weemin and coards! but fashionless stuff for men." Mentally, he was Calvinistic; and could interpret wishywashy love-texts with a marvellously acute power of insight, or, rather, ingeniousness, so as to show forth their applicability to his own predisposi-

tion; for he never forgot the context. He wholeheartedly distrusted the modern ministers. In rough and ready private conversation he tore their sermonising to tatters, and named them "doos fed on dung," with a disgust as strong as his character.

He never had experienced doubt; and was sure he would find an eternal happy home in heaven. But he hung on to life with a tenacity commensurate with his age, showing no signs of great exaltation as he drew nearer towards the portals of everlasting bliss. During the last weeks of his life pain was his constant companion. He suffered agonies of internal expansion without the requisite relief. Religious consolation was showered upon him with as much effect as rain on a desert. The saving grace of Christ, the great burden-bearer, seemed a pitiable expression of abject futility as it was punctuated by his groans of anguish. God's love for his elect had become a clot of mud in a quagmire. The old dogmatism had vanished before the very suffering and hardship over which Christ is supposed to have so great an influence. The old Calvinist labored through four weeks of indescribable torture. Then, with many tears, his daughters said Jesus had eased him of his pain. In other, and more reasonable words, he was dead. The end—a peculiarly contradictory expression invariably used by Christians when they forget, which is nearly always, that they are Christians—came peacefully in sleep brought on by excessive suffering; and for this also Christ was effusively thanked.

If we had not been repeatedly informed, on reliable authority, verified beyond all question, that one plus one plus one totals one, we might well be pardoned asking where the Father and the Ghost came in, what they thought about Christ getting all the bonbons, and what was the nature of the family feud when a difference of opinion complicated matters. But these questions must be judiciously kept secret until fit occasion.

The relations of the old gentleman were just as thoroughly convinced he was in heaven, as he had been that he would go there when he died. Yet they mourned and wept, and made life a melancholy madhouse for everyone whose misfortune it was to be with them, just as if they had been absolutely sure he was in hell. They could not be happy in his happiness, nor joyful in his joy. Such merriment would have been as cruel as displeasing and unconventional. But cruel to whom? He was revelling in ecstasies of exceptional bliss, relieved from all wrong, wiped clean of the stains of woe, and, having bathed in the white blood of the Lamb, was purged of all sin. While they, believing all this, instead of rejoicing at his deliverance and joining their praises on earth to his in heaven, were turning their hairs grey in sorrow.

Where was the consolation of religion? Where was the balsam Christianity pours over the aching wounds? Where the soothing syrup Jesus bequeathed, in labelled bottles, sold for an old song, in terms of faith, to his followers? Where the happy hope that lightens up the darkest and dreariest corners of mortal suffering, bringing warmth and radiance to the cold and clouded heart, and stilling the racked and troubled breast?

No greater opportunity than that which death gives can Christians find to prove for us the reality of the advantage they claim for their beliefs. And yet what a farce they make of it! With such a glorious prospect before them, the weeping and wailing of Christians over the departure of a friend is a palpable absurdity. It is a blasphemous indictment against their Lord and Master. It teems with the basest disrespect of his saving grace. It mocks his majesty and calumnies his sovereignty; and is an abject display of the impotence of a religious belief where its beneficent influence should be most in evidence. To say, in extenuation, that Christians are weak, and are dominated by feelings, because their faith is weak, is to beg the question. For, assuredly, a faith that is reasonable and strongly determined will never be a-visiting when it is required at home.

The least we wish in sincerity for our friends is the best. To mourn because they have obtained that best seems nothing less than blatant hypocrisy, nothing more than the stultification of our love. A moaning accompaniment to our friends' rejoicing makes a laughing-stock of common sense. Christians ignominiously characterise themselves or their beliefs when they wail over the entrance of their friends into the best, which is Paradise. They reduce their arrogantly held beliefs to the lowest levels of mean ridicule in such cases.

Either their love is hypocritical or their beliefs are useless and foolish fancies. We cannot doubt their love is real. It is woven in the tissues of their beings. And Christian sorrow proves the reality of their natural love as surely as it falsifies their supernatural beliefs. If the latter were truly believed, the pangs of the death-parting would be quite unknown to Christians: they would see only happiness in it; and feel gladness of heart instead of enduring, as they do, misery of mind.

We were wrong in admitting that religious beliefs exercised a solacious influence upon mental wounds. The assertion does not stand the test of proof; but the generally accepted, because generally emphasised by self-interested persons, idea is retailed with so much relish that one can be pardoned amazement at the seemingly infinite amount of credulity that exists. What a ponderous, motionless mass of lifelessness our men of genius have set themselves up to quicken! What a mighty task is theirs! What heroism and what self-sacrifice, what gigantic efforts are required! But as their labors are great, so also, perhaps, will our admiration be; and it may happen that from the richness of our regard they may, in the present, draw some of the reward that is yet to ripen to its fullness, in days to come, when they and we have returned to the Mother that gave us birth, to sleep in the silence for ever.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Forces Against Christianity.

CORRECTLY speaking, all the instruments of our civilisation may be considered as so many forces against Christianity.

Education is the primary force. As the people become more enlightened, they believe less and less in the supernatural; and as Christianity is made up largely of myth and miracle, Christianity will have to undergo a complete transformation, or die the death of all discredited systems. The clergy of every religion have been uniformly against the education of the masses in the past, or, at all events, against any kind of education that would give them a comprehensive knowledge of the facts of nature and of man. But now that every child in the kingdom is bound to attend school regularly from the tender age of five up to fourteen, and receive all the instruction the teachers are capable of imparting, and the child is capable of acquiring, the educational force becomes stronger and stronger every year. Even in the schools in which sectarian instruction is given (the non-provided schools, as they are called), instruction in elementary science is also given, which is in direct conflict with the teachings they receive on the Bible and Christianity; and thus it often happens that the most sceptical minds on matters of religion are those who have received their early education in Church schools.

In the higher elementary and secondary schools a more systematic teaching of science is given, and the teachers are compelled to have a special training in various branches of science in order to qualify themselves to impart accurate knowledge on these subjects. Who can doubt that in the course of a very few years this knowledge in the minds of the rising generation, properly directed, will become a mighty force against all forms of superstition? From these, by a natural step, we go to our colleges

and universities, and it is safe to assume that in such centres of learning the works of the great scientists like Darwin and Haeckel, as well as such philosophers as Mill and Spencer, are not relegated into the background as they were a decade or two ago. If we turn to art, we find that our painters and sculptors are no longer engaged in putting on canvas or working upon marble such Biblical or theological subjects as they did even a quarter of a century ago. A very much larger proportion of the work done to-day deals with subjects relating entirely to this world and to this life—the only life of which we have any real knowledge. In the days when Christianity dominated every department of human activity all the great musicians had no option but to write sacred music, and it was only when they turned their attention towards the theatre and began to write opera, that the great musicians composed delightful melodies to purely secular subjects. Thus Handel, Hadyn, and Mendelssohn wrote mainly what is called sacred music; but Mozart, Rossini, Verdi, Gounod, Meyerbeer, Mascagni, and Wagner wrote immortal melodies for the operatic stage. Although, no doubt, the music of the oratorios of the *Messiah*, *The Creation*, and *Elijah* will be reproduced at Easter for the delectation of religious folk for many years to come, it is safe to say, with the decay of faith, the interest in such works will gradually die out; but the great operas of the masters will grow in public favor with the development of the musical tastes of each succeeding generation.

Then let us consider what a powerful force against Christianity our theatres have become in recent years. Not only do they attract hundreds of thousands of people during the year to witness plays of entirely secular character, but in many of them the clergy are caricatured in a most grotesque fashion; but some of the plays are of a distinctly Free-thought tendency, and where they do not directly attack the Christian religion they undermine the fundamentals of all religions by implication. In London alone, that is to say, in the administrative County of London—excluding what is called Greater London—there are 50 theatres, with a seating capacity of 60,848. Assuming that these theatres are open only 30 weeks in the year, nearly half the population of London must pay them a visit some time during the year, and some of them many times during the twelve months. People who patronise theatres do not, as a rule, trouble the churches and chapels over much with their attendance.

Consider, then, the music-halls. There are 50 of them in the administrative County of London, and these have a seating capacity of 68,783 (see London County Council "London Statistics," p. 237). Then think of the vast number of picture palaces that are springing up all over London and the provinces, and the enormous crowd of people that nightly patronise these shows. When we further consider the number of these places that are open on Sundays, and the number of theatres and music-halls that are open on Sunday, under the auspices of the National Sunday League and the Society of Musicians, we are able to understand, in some measure, the vast forces the churches and chapels have to contend with, or compete with, in trying to secure the patronage of the people. These are forces which they cannot ignore, and which many of the clergy would like to suppress by law if they could.

The recent action of the Rev. F. B. Meyer in calling attention to the performance of a variety entertainment on Sunday at the Coliseum to celebrate the Dickens Centenary, contained also a veiled threat that if such performances were repeated the Free Churches would take action and try to deprive the management of their licence.

The reference to "the wanton invasion of the rest-day as alien to the spirit of the great novelist, who always treated religious sentiment with respect," showed the bitterness of these narrow-minded bigots, who, after all, feared more the loss of members of their congregation from chapel and the growth of the secular spirit of the age than anything else.

In point of truth, Dickens had no respect for the so-called sacredness of Sunday. He believed it was the best day for the general enjoyment of the people. He thought that the people ought to play cricket, row and run races on Sunday, and engage in any amusement that was conducive to good health and spirit. And what he preached he practised.

Over twenty years ago, when I used to lecture frequently at New Brompton, one of the Vice-Presidents of the National Secular Society, who used to live very near to Dickens at Gad's Hill, told me that when he was a young man the great novelist held all his party's on Sunday, and he had frequently heard very pious people describe Dickens as "a heathen."

But we have made some progress since then, and I feel certain that if Dickens were alive to-day he would rejoice that so many places of entertainment are open on Sunday. Nor must I omit to mention the fact that many of our West-End clubs are open on Sundays, and that social and instrumental music is given for the gratification of their worldly minded members and friends. Sunday, too, is a great day in all the working men's clubs in London and the provinces, and I have not only witnessed variety shows on Sunday mornings that would shock the tender susceptibilities of most of the pious members of the National Free Church Council, but also many dramatic performances of comedy and drama that would, like the speech of the ghost of Hamlet's father, make their "hair stand on end like quills upon the fretful porcupine." And, finally, the lectures delivered under the auspices of the National Secular Society, the Ethical Societies, and the various Socialist bodies must weigh in the balance with the other great forces against Christianity. When the Christians thought that their religion was absolutely true, they were ready and willing to do everything they could to suppress and exterminate any movement that was opposed to it; but as soon as they began to be doubtful about the truth of any part of it, they began to be more tolerant and relaxed their persecuting spirit. With the decay of faith the secular forces have gained in strength, and, when the masses of the people once have the light of freethought shed upon their minds, the day of real emancipation from theological thralldom will be at hand.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

[Reprinted.]

Should Mr. Churchill Be Forbidden to Speak?

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "TIMES."

SIR,—I see with some interest, but no surprise, that the Unionists of Belfast and the Orange environs thereof have decided to prevent Mr. Winston Churchill from addressing a meeting on Home Rule in the Ulster capital.

To begin a civil war by an attack on a Minister of the Crown is natural to the men who swore so often to kick the Crown itself into the Boyne.

But there is method in the madness of these rebels. Recent judicial decisions in London, the justice and wisdom of which have been expressly affirmed in Parliament by the Home Secretary, justify them in believing that they have only to threaten to make a riot in order to have Mr. Winston Churchill bound over to keep the peace by holding his tongue about Home Rule in Belfast.

The facts of the case are on record. On November 10, 1911, a British citizen who did not happen to be a Minister of the Crown was charged at Bow-street before Mr. Curtis Bennett for being guilty of conduct which provoked a breach of the peace. It appeared from the evidence given on behalf of the Commissioner of Police that the citizen in question, whose name was not Winston Churchill but Harry Boulter, had declared his intention of proceeding on the following Sunday, not to Belfast, but to Streatham Common, to discuss, not Home Rule, but the evidences of the Christian religion. "A number of students and fish-porters" had sworn that if the said Harry Boulter carried out his intention they would attend in force to oppose it and to throw him into the pond. So determined were the aforesaid "students and

fish-porters" to defend their holy religion against the freethinking Harry Boulter that Sub-divisional Inspector Pratt declared on oath that "500 policemen would not be sufficient to prevent a riot." Thereupon Mr. Curtis Bennett ordered Harry Boulter to desist from his intended speech at Streatham Common, binding him over in heavy recognisances to keep the peace or to undergo three months' imprisonment. Here, then, is the precedent which justifies the action of the Ulster Unionists.

If a conspiracy of "students and fish-porters" can secure the gagging by law of a freethinking disputant in Streatham, surely the unanimous and resolute stalwarts of Belfast may count upon the gagging of Mr. Winston Churchill in order to prevent a riot which even 500 policemen could not quell. It may be objected by some Liberal that the Government is not bound by the decisions of a Bow-street magistrate; that Mr. Curtis Bennett's ruling was a monstrous and absolutely indefensible outrage upon the right of free speech. Both objections are sound. But the Government cannot avail itself of either of them. And for this reason. On November 16, Mr. Lansbury brought the case of Boulter before the House of Commons. The Home Secretary, in a lengthy reply, justified the action of the police, defended the verdict of the magistrate, and in the name of the Government declared that "it was necessary if the man was to be prevented from making a disturbance on Sunday, that he should be bound over to keep the peace before that day." The fact that it was not Boulter, but a mob of "students and fish-porters" who proposed to make a disturbance did not apparently disturb Mr. McKenna. It was clear that if Boulter went to Streatham-common to deliver a speech against religion there would be "a riot which 500 policemen could not quell." Therefore, said Mr. McKenna, "he was bound to say, on an investigation of the whole case, that he was satisfied that the police took a wise and prudent course."

Now what is sauce for the Streatham goose is also sauce for the Belfast gander. On the principles invoked by Scotland Yard, affirmed by Bow-street, and solemnly endorsed by the Home Office, Mr. Birrell's duty is clear. On the decision of the Ulster Unionists to make a disturbance if Mr. Winston Churchill goes to Belfast to speak on Home Rule, he must put the law in motion, arrest the First Lord by a warrant, haul him up before a magistrate, and send him to gaol for three months if he should refuse to enter into recognisances to keep the peace by staying away from Belfast and holding his tongue about Home Rule. The only reason this course was taken with Harry Boulter in London was the sworn evidence of a policeman that if Boulter was permitted to speak a riot would ensue which 500 constables could not suppress. There would be no lack of sworn evidence that if Mr. Winston Churchill goes to Belfast a riot will ensue which twice 500 constables will be unable to suppress. That being the case, unless there is one law for a Minister and another law for the humble citizen, Mr. Birrell and Mr. McKenna are bound to give effect to the principle of mob rule laid down at Bow-street by promptly interposing to stop Mr. Winston Churchill speaking in Belfast.

I am, yours truly,
W. T. STEAD.

Bank-buildings, Kingsway, W.C., Jan. 17.

EXPENSIVE DEVOTION.

"How can you be so cold to me? I would die for you," sobbed his wife.

"I know it," he answered cruelly; "you'd do anything to put me to expense."

AN EARLY START.

A little boy asked his mother: "Ma, when will baby talk?" "Oh," said the mother, "babies don't talk till they are a year old or more." "Well, ma, that's funny, for I've just had my Bible lesson from Miss Marshall, and she says that 'Job cursed the day he was born.'"

FIRST AND LAST.

"Have you read the Bible?" asked the serious young man. "Well," replied the frank young woman, "I can't say that I have read all of it."

"I see; you have read Genesis and Revelations."

"How do you know?"

"That's the way a woman always reads any book."

The only point upon which we feel inclined to quarrel with the good doctor [Dr. A. T. Schofield, who has just published *Health for Young and Old*] is his apparent notion that it is necessary to be a believer in Christianity to enjoy good health, or to be happy in old age.—*Westminster Review*, November, 1911.

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, C. Cohen, "What the World Pays for Religion."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, E. Morris Young, "Reason *versus* Theology."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, E. Egerton Stafford, "The Will to Doubt."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Miss Kathleen B. Kough, 3, "What is Belief?" 6.30, "Immortality." Tea at 5.

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