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PRICE TWOPENCE

Bees will not work except in darkness ; Thought will not work except in Silence ; neither will Virtue work except in secrecy.—CARLYLE.

Immoral Literature.

SWINBURNE, in his young days, when his prose style was so strong, fluent, and graceful, contributed a preface to a pretty little volume of selections from Byron. He had occasion in it to refer to religion and morality as the questionable deities of the average Britisher's superstition. They were not to be approached irreverently, not to be criticised, not even to be explained, but only to be worshiped with blind adoration. Swinburne regarded them as a battered old pair of disreputables. And so they are. Religion is a sort of common prostitute made use of by the worst of men, who flourish in all sorts of parasitical ways upon their fellow mortals ; and morality in the mouths of the same people never includes the essentials of justice and kindness between man and man, but merely the conventions under which really immoral people achieve the highest respectability.

It seems fitting that Mr. McKenna, having vindicated religion by lending his august countenance to the revival of the Blasphemy Laws, and the imprisonment under them of two men who cannot be shown to have inflicted the smallest injury upon any of their neighbors, should proceed to the defence of morality,—which, somehow or other, is perpetually in need of defence. Our vice-hating and vigilant Home Secretary is excogitating a new Bill to make immorality more difficult. He is invited, above all, to stop the publication of immoral literature. Not only priests, parsons, and preachers, but even publishers, are urging this upon him. They know they need not buy such things unless they please, but apparently they want to be protected against themselves. There are also the "other people" about whom public purifiers are always so anxious.

Immoral literature! Can anyone tell us what it is? Who is able to define it? What is one man's meat is often another man's poison; yes, and what is one man's poison is often another man's meat. The difference in taste and susceptibility cuts two ways. Moreover, it is found in practice that slow-minded, bigoted people—who are generally in the majority—are wonderfully apt to fix the brand of "immorality" on every book, pamphlet, or journal that runs counter to what they are pleased to call their convictions. And they are abetted in this by every sinister interest in the community. There is a tacit agreement amongst the rogues, scoundrels, liars, bamboozlers, exploiters, and thieves to oppose the progress of free discussion, upon which every other kind of progress depends. To keep the world at least as dark as it is is the object of all these cunning creatures.

Obscene literature—if it can be called by that honorable name—is a matter about which there may be an easier agreement. One need not draw up a legal definition. Lord Morley once said that he did not know that he could properly define an elephant,

but that he knew one when he saw it. In the same way, there are things that we recognise at sight to be obscene,—things simply and solely designed to inflame sexual passions,—and damnable things when they are manœuvred into the hands of young people, at a time of life when it is so essential that the blood should be kept temperate. Every honest, sane man knows what to do with such things—and the vendors of them, when they have to be dragged into the light of publicity. But unless attempts are made to corrupt young people it is arguable that the policy of the police should be to check a traffic which they know they cannot suppress.

But how on earth is it that Protestant men of God have such keen noses for obscene publications and such resentment against them? We could understand it in a Catholic priest, who listens to moral revelations in the confessional; and who is generally, besides, averse from the indiscriminate reading of the Bible. But the Protestant religion—or, the religion of Protestants, as Chillingworth called it—is the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible; and one is puzzled to understand how a positive rage against obscenity is nurtured and sustained by a frequent reading of the purple parts of the Old Testament. We need not go into particulars. The subject is loathsome, and should be treated with all possible brevity.

Friends of freedom will have to watch the projected new law against immorality with the closest attention. Attempts will be made to use it against advanced literature of all kinds. Prosecutions will not turn upon words but upon ideas. No fault was found with the language of the famous Knowlton pamphlet for which Charles Bradlaugh and Annie Besant were prosecuted. They were indicted for obscene libel in advocating deliberate checks to population. A similar indictment might be framed against any drastic discussion of sex problems. And if the culprit happened to be a well-known Freethinker his fate would be a foregone conclusion. We shudder to think what might become of Mr. Bernard Shaw. Nor would Mr. W. T. Stead be quite out of danger.

Take the case of the greatest Norwegian writer. Ibsen has now taken his place, not as the greatest poet or dramatist of modern times, but as a great fermenting influence in modern literature. Now there is a book of Mr. Shaw's which he does not reprint. It was written before he altered his mind on the subject of marriage enough to marry. It is *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*. And one of its points of interest is a selection of lurid epithets applied by the British press to Ibsen's plays when they first invaded the London stage. "A lazar-house with all its doors and windows open," "Novel and perilous nuisance," "Putrid indecorum"—said the *Daily Telegraph*. The *Standard* advised a "Prosecution under Lord Campbell's Act." Other journals said ditto. We will not indulge in vain repetitions but let these specimens suffice.

It is evident that Ibsen's publishers and actors narrowly escaped prosecution in London. They might not have escaped at all if Mr. McKenna's new Bill had then been placed on the Statute Book. Let us beware now! Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Worship of the Weak.

MR. F. M. DAVENPORT, in his *Primitive Tracts in Religious Revival*, tells a curious and instructive story of a converted American negro. This individual had been entrusted by an old lady with a cart and a horse for the purpose of collecting goods given to a church fund. After he had collected a fair sized load, he sold horse, cart, and goods, and departed. Some time after, the culprit drifted back, duly repentant. He was given a church trial, and the building was crowded. After hearing all that was to be said against him, the culprit took his place on the platform and said:—

"I see a po' mis'able sinner. But, bredren, so is we all mis'able sinners. An' de good book says we must fergib. How many times, bredren? Till seven times? No; till seventy times seven. An' I aint sinned no seventy times seven, and I'm jas' go to sugges' dat we turn dis into a fergibness meetin', an' eberybody in dis great comp'ny dat is willing ter fergib me, come up now, while we sing one of our deah ole hymns, and shake ma hand."

Then he started one of the revival tunes, and one by one all the congregation passed him and shook hands—all but one. She was the old lady who had lost the cart and horse. So the negro tackled her. He said, "Dar's one po' mis'able sinner still lef', she won't fergib. Now I sugges' dat we hab a season ob prayer, an' gib dis po' ole sinner one mo' chance." And, finally, the old lady gave in and came up to the platform.

Mr. Davenport vouches for the accuracy of the story, and the picture of the repentant thief calmly forgiving the people he had robbed, and praying for their improvement, is delicious. It emphasises, unconsciously, an aspect of Christian life and teaching of which I was reminded by a recent article in one of the religious weeklies. The writer put the question: "Is Christianity a religion for the strong man?" He pointed out that so much was said by preachers about the poor, the weak, the helpless, and so little said of other people, that the clean living, helpful, independent person was apt to feel that Christianity had no special message for him, with the result that the Churches lost his support. I question whether this is really a cause of people leaving church or chapel. Strong, healthy men do not go round hungering for a "message" any more than they hunger for a dose of physic. They may have a dislike to the continuous glorification of the weak and helpless and sick, but that is the natural antagonism of health to disease and of strength to weakness. There are many surface reasons why people stay away from church, but the real cause is that they have ceased to believe. Everything else is a mere excuse.

Still, the indictment of Christianity that it is obsessed with the weaker and more undesirable aspects of human nature, is thoroughly justifiable. It has been a constant feature of Christianity from the start, and the social consequences have been great and disastrous. Poverty, humility, submission to injustice, contempt of enjoyment, self sacrifice, have all been emphasised as of value in themselves, with the result that they have usurped the place and importance of more sterling qualities. And its embargo on intellectual independence has still further emphasised the evil. The island society which eked out a livelihood by each member taking in another member's washing, has had its psychological parallel in the Christian society which was to be saved by each member sacrificing himself for someone else. Each Christian was assumed to be in the curious position of calmly annexing the result of someone else's self sacrifice, while thirsting to immolate himself for the benefit of the person he had exploited. The emphasis has been placed on the wrong virtues. A man does not merely owe a duty to others; he owes also a duty to himself. Self development is at least as important as self sacrifice; the latter, indeed, only becomes of real value when it is the result of the former. True, there are times when

self sacrifice is necessary, but its necessity is a symptom of social ill health. It can never, in any case, form a permanent part of any rationally conceived condition of things.

This weakness, as I have said, has dogged Christianity from the start. Its figure-head is a "Man of Sorrows," led like a lamb unresistingly to the slaughter. Its cardinal ethical teaching is that of vicarious sacrifice—the sacrifice of the innocent for the benefit of the guilty. Its greatest teachers have been ascetics or teachers of asceticism. It has made charity—not that of mind or spirit, but mere almsgiving—one of the chief virtues. Mortification of the flesh and contempt for the world have been the marks of true saintliness. It has preached almsgiving to the rich and contentment to the poor. The strong, healthy man could not be saved by himself or by his own efforts; he could only be saved by finding the weak and the sick. The undesirable, in mind and body, thus became the road to salvation; and, as was inevitable, the mentally and physically undesirable increased wherever Christianity had full power. There was a bitter truth in Heine's remark that Christianity was the best of all religions for cripples.

Let anyone look through the religious papers of a single week. He will find appeals for and reports from missions and Christian societies of every kind for the help of the criminal, the drunken, and the diseased. There are societies for looking after criminals when they come out of prison, societies for sheltering waifs and strays, homes for fallen women, missions to drunkards, to thieves, and to would-be suicides. Granted all that may be said as to the good done to the individuals who are relieved, and to the good intentions of the persons engaged (something might be said on the other side of both these pleas), this does not touch the point at issue. It still remains a glorification of the undesirable. Church and chapel keep this side of life so prominent that it amounts to a practical ignoring of other aspects. Let a man commit a crime, or become a confirmed drunkard, or a hopeless loafer, and he is at once surrounded by a crowd of religious agencies competing for his patronage with the pertinacity of insurance agents. The man who is honest and struggling to remain so receives scant attention. The one who stands in danger, through probable lack of employment or other causes, of falling into the ranks of the undesirables has small consideration shown him. Curiously enough, the only direction in which religious organisations pay steady attention to desirable qualities is in the case of emigration. And here another evil results from their depleting the country of the type of men that it would do well to retain.

The truth is that the honest struggling man is not very picturesque material—that is, for missions. The Begbies of the religious and social world could not be roused to enthusiasm, and others could not be induced to subscribe, by being shown men and women who had never been in need of help, financial and otherwise, but had led the lives of decent, useful citizens. But to be shown a man who after a long career of burglary turns at last to Jesus, when age has robbed his muscles of their agility and his mind of its courage, is excellent "copy" for mission platform and newspaper. Consider the value to the Salvation Army or the West London Mission of a man who stands on their platform and proudly acknowledges to having spent a large portion of his life in prison, and most of the time out of it in ill-using his family and making himself a nuisance to the community. The audience gaze at him with devout admiration. The younger ones may even feel tempted to launch out in the same direction, for the sake of the distinction it brings. And the ex-burglar or ex-drunkard smiles on the audience, feeling, like the negro in Mr. Davenport's story, that he is the source of spiritual uplifting to all concerned.

Let the intentions of those who run these missions be what they may—although their admirable character may easily be overestimated—it needs no

elaborate proof that they do positively nothing to remedy any of the evils with which they deal. The same causes that have produced one batch of subjects are producing others as soon as there is room for their operation. All the rescue homes in Christendom have never prevented a woman going the road that leads to their doors. All the homes for waifs and strays have never prevented a case of child desertion or destitution. What they have always done is to deaden the public conscience as to their evil as established facts, by providing the cheap and easy method of a subscription. Half the energy spent by the Churches on relieving destitution during the past fifty years, properly directed, would have gone a long way towards wiping away destitution altogether.

It would, indeed, be an interesting subject of inquiry, both to the psychologist and to the sociologist, how far this Christian dwelling upon the unhealthy aspects of life, and its positive neglect of those ideals of human health and strength that meet us in the old pagan world, have resulted in an actual culture of the undesirable. At any rate, it is certain that, whatever be the nature of the influences at work, Christian society has never yet failed to provide us with a large parasitic class of undesirables. And this may be divided into two groups. I do not mean the common division of the idle rich and the idle poor; that division is plain to all. But it is not always remembered that while the religious charitable missions presuppose a class that are parasitic towards the rest of the community—whether necessarily parasitic or not is of no consequence here—those who minister to their needs represent a class no less parasitic in its nature. There are no figures available concerning the number of people who live by running charitable missions for this, that, and the other. Their number, however, must be very large. And it is evident to those who have studied the subject that many men take to this occupation just as they would to any other means of getting a living. I know myself more than one failure in the pulpit who is reaping a very comfortable livelihood by running missions for the alleviation of this or that social ill. They do nothing to remove the evil, but they live on its existence. That, and impudence, is their capital. And to the student of social morals it is a question whether the evil of this class is not almost as great as that of the class for the benefit of which they are supposed to exist.

The whole matter may be summed up in the title of this article. Christianity has been essentially a worship of the weak. It has held up the ideal of weakness and submission as developing the best and highest characteristics of human nature. It does nothing of the kind, and the more content we are with its existence, the more of it we shall find in our midst. Self-development, not self-sacrifice, ought to be the keynote of our lives. The old pagan ideal of a sane mind in a sound body is a much healthier ideal than that of the man of sorrows. The worship of strength is at least more helpful than the flattering of weakness. Heine said that one day the Christian era would be known as the sickness period of humanity. Certainly, the pagan world would have failed to appreciate the Christian glorification of suffering, the value of saints who proved their saintliness by licking festering wounds, or the later rush of missions for drunkards and reprobates. And they would have stared, not because they had less humanity than the Christians who succeeded them, but because they had more, and of a saner and healthier kind. Helplessness and disease and vice may be the inevitable accompaniments of human aggregation, but our philosophy of life should give first place to those qualities of bodily and mental health upon which social well-being ultimately depends.

C. COHEN.

The Future of Religion.

THE signs of the time are often extremely difficult to read, and those who undertake the task, however well-equipped, are likely to reap bitter discomfiture. Prophets are numerous, and they experience little difficulty in getting a hearing, though it is well known that their prophecies are almost invariably dishonored by history. How many times, during the last twenty or thirty years, have we been confidently assured that the mightiest religious revival ever seen was about to take place? When the last Welsh revival started, it was predicted that it was the commencement of a movement that would shortly become world-wide, and eventuate in the bringing of all mankind to the feet of Christ. The truth about that movement is, however, not only that it did not spread throughout the earth; but that it did more to kill religion and propagate Freethought in South Wales than all other agencies put together. It may, indeed, be laid down as a principle that religious revivals are symptoms of religious decay, and serve to accelerate the process. A revival, like a glass of grog, is resorted to for a fillip; and like the drinker, the Church finds that the fillip—the temporary rousing of her spirits—in the end only increases the depression it was intended to cure. Nothing is easier than to draw cheques upon the future; and, judging by experience, nothing is easier than to forget all about them when their face-value should be demanded at the bank of time. It will be remembered that the late Mr. Baxter, proprietor and editor of the *Christian Herald* for many years, amassed a considerable fortune as a practitioner in prophecy. As one batch of predictions was discredited by time he succeeded in bamboozling his public by the issue of a fresh one. That very large public loves to be gulled, and multitudes there are who fatten on that humiliating characteristic.

In the *British Congregationalist* for January 25 the Rev. E. Shillito tells us all about "Religion in the Coming Age." Mr. Shillito speaks as one who knows, as one before whom the future lies an open book; and doubtless there are readers who will be soothed and comforted by his pedantic predictions. The reverend gentleman is apparently a rapacious believer. He seems to believe that Jesus could cure disease by a mere word. Then he says:—

"That is the manner of faith with which Jesus loves still to be treated. The disciple will believe, if he believes at all, like that. He will set no arbitrary bounds to the Master; he will come to him unfettered by hard and fast presumptions; he will treat Him as Master and Lord, and will take Him seriously."

That is to say, the Christians of the future will be unspeakable improvements upon those of the present. On what fact or facts does Mr. Shillito base such a cocksure prophecy? Is it capable of a reasonable demonstration that the Christians of every past age were superior to those of the preceding age? Surely not even Mr. Shillito is bold enough to make that claim. Then his prediction rests on a foundation of ignorance. When time shall have falsified his present prognostication, he will be busy describing the imaginary Christians of another to-morrow. He foretells only what he would like to see—the universal acceptance of his own views. We gather from certain expressions in his article that at present his opinions are at a discount. He implies that as yet Christ is not obeyed "on the scale of our present age." More, he implies that there are no Christians in the world just now, for he says, "It will be enough to say that he [Christ] has failed when He has been tried." He is out of touch with much of the theology in vogue at present, especially as regards the person of Christ; but he is sure that the believer of to-morrow will adopt his theology and be "ready to take Jesus in all the range of his ageless teaching and to make proof of it in the conditions of modern life. But it will be the whole Christ; not the Christ edited by that noble seer, Tolstoi; not the Christ of the Gospels only, as though He had

When woman was created, a magazine fashion plate was not used for a pattern.

had no living fellowship with living men since the day when a cloud received Him." Just now, "the whole Christ" as conceived by Mr. Shillito is not much in evidence; but, because this preacher believes in him, there is no doubt whatever but that he will be all in all to-morrow.

Mr. Shillito has a strong objection to the reduction of the Gospel to "a social propaganda." To-day, in their "despair" many have committed this grave offence. Fearing that the Gospel, in its primitive purity and simplicity, is no longer acceptable to modern intelligence, they have so modified it as to give it an entirely new character; and they unblushingly call Jesus the first Socialist. But in the coming age the old Galilean Gospel will be restored in all its pristine glory, and people will love and cherish it because it reveals to them a pacified God of love who can save their souls from endless perdition. Because this is the Gospel preached by Mr. Shillito he declares that to-morrow there will be no other. The reverend gentleman puts the Cross, with all that it involves, at the centre of all his thinking and feeling; and he feels quite certain that the Christians of to-morrow will do the same. Let us take this portrayal of the disciple of the future:—

"He must be *unworldly*. He will live in this life, responsive to its interests, quick with hope for it, knowing the beauty of it; he will find it a strange and wonderful place, where great things have happened, for Jesus lived and died here. He will take all the gains that come to him, but he will take them only as so much material for the Kingdom of God; he will value nothing that will not serve the Kingdom; and from all the passing interests of the world he will be detached; he cares not for them, except as they are for the glory of Christ. If, for the sake of Christ, he were told to sell all that he had, he might shrink in his natural weakness, but he would obey. Everything he holds he will hold on the same solemn trust."

What a wonderful paragon he will be, to be sure. As yet he has never made his appearance; he will be here for the first time to-morrow. So Mr. Shillito, at any rate, gives us to understand. But this is by no means a new prophecy. It has been indulged in by innumerable people in every age from that of the Apostles down to our own, and it is as far from fulfilment now as it ever was. Indeed, for a good many ages now its fulfilment has been getting less and less likely. For a hundred years, at least, Christianity has been on the wane, and during the last fifty years the waning process has been most marked. Another reverend gentleman sorrowfully confesses, in the same issue of the *British Congregationalist*, that the arrest of progress in the Christian Churches is by no means at an end. "From what one gathers, travelling up and down the country," he says, "I am afraid that in many places the tide toward success has not yet turned in; and from some of the most recent reports it would appear as if the depression has not yet passed." And yet, in spite of this indisputable fact, Mr. Shillito promises, positively declares, that all shall be well to-morrow.

We do not intend to play the prophet. Superstition is not dead yet, and it is easily within the range of possibility that there may be a recrudescence of blind zeal for it in the immediate future. It will not be the fault of the clergy if this does not prove to be the case. There are plenty of people in the world still who are not at all unwilling to be duped. Supernaturalism still exercises an irresistible fascination over them. They are prepared to believe any idle tales concerning it; and the telling of such tales is still a lucrative profession. When, therefore, Freethinkers are told that a general revival of religion is about to begin, their attitude is not one of total incredulity, but of essential unconcern. We are convinced that such a retrogressive movement is quite possible; but we are convinced, further, that such a revival, if it does come to pass, will, in the long run, but drive another nail into Christianity's coffin. Of the ultimate triumph of science and the consequent defeat of supernatural religion there cannot be even the shadow of a doubt. If you will examine the theological work done to-day you will discover that most

of it consists in paring Christianity away. The field of the recent past is verily strewn with Christian shavings. Mr. Shillito knows this as well as we do; but does he imagine that the shaving process is going suddenly to cease, and that the scattered shavings will be brought back and artificially glued to the mutilated fabric to which they once vitally belonged? This is *not* within the range of possibility. Christianity will never again be what once it was. Its Golden Age lies behind it. The Government that murdered Ferrer may return to power in Spain; but the clock has moved forward even in Spain since that dark crime was committed to such an extent that the persecution of unbelievers is not likely soon to assume the same extreme form again. Even Mr. Shillito admits that the followers of the Lamb may be fewer to-morrow than they are to-day; but they will possess sterner and nobler qualities. The admission is discreet, but the assertion is utterly groundless. What is beyond all doubt is that knowledge is slowly driving ignorance out of the way, and that the overwhelming majority of the people who imbibe knowledge renounce their faith in supernaturalism. It is incontrovertible that Sir Oliver Lodge is an exception among scientists.

Nearly all the present-day defenders of the Christian faith employ the most extravagant language. Having no arguments at their disposal they pour out the wildest asseverations, such as that the disappearance of Christianity would speedily result in a state of degrading lawlessness and unchecked immorality, that without the belief in God and a future life men and women would at once start committing, and to revel in the commission of, all possible crimes, or that in the absence of the Church and its ordinances society would quickly fall to pieces. Such species of special pleading is sheerest moonshine, and not a single fact can be adduced in support of it, while we can marshal dozens of incontestable facts in absolute disproof of it. The world actually teems at this moment with clearest evidences that in proportion as the yoke of superstition slackens its hold, the conditions of life improve. Once it is completely off, humanity will face all the problems that await solution with a new courage and a new sense of responsibility, realising with gladness that its life must be an intelligent struggle to overthrow all that has hitherto hindered its well-being as a social organism.

J. T. LLOYD.

Dr. Furnivall, Freethinker and Humanist.

WITH the death of Dr. F. J. Furnivall the world has lost one of the most fascinating and energetic personalities of our time. As student, scholar, anti-snob, and true friend of all progressive movements his name and fame will endure. As colleague of Maurice he taught in the Working Men's College for ten years, and his enthusiastic example contributed greatly to that institution's success. He was early interested in the study of our wonderful tongue, and in 1864 he founded the Early English Text Society. He presided over the births of the Chaucer and Ballad Societies four years later. He founded the New "Shakespeare" Society in 1874, the Browning Society in 1881, the Wyclif Society in 1882, and the Shelley Society in 1886. Furnivall very ably edited some score of the early manuscripts and rare books printed by the Philological and other learned societies with which he was associated. Probably, however, his most valuable contribution to early English letters was his magnificent edition of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. This was an exact print of six of the seven most important manuscripts. The seventh he subsequently printed separately, in addition to all the manuscripts of Chaucer's Minor Poems. This splendid achievement gave an immense stimulus to the study of English literature, and remains as a monument to Furnivall's patient enthusiasm. His Shakespearean work is also entitled to remembrance.

He and other scholars edited forty-three facsimiles of the quartos of Shakespeare's plays, and his remarkable introduction to the Leopold Shakespeare—which has so greatly influenced later students—has enjoyed as a separate publication a circulation of over 100 000 copies.

Furnivall was born at Egham in Surrey in 1825. His father was Dr. Abernethy's house surgeon at Bart's, and in 1805 became assistant surgeon in the 14th Foot. He afterwards left the Army, and set up a civil practice in Egham. The son was educated at London and Cambridge, and was intended for the law. But the river, the art of teaching, and the world of letters proved metal more attractive. But his lifelong interest in social reform is to be traced to the influence of his friend, J. M. Ludlow.

"The Chartist upheavals of 1840, the Corn Law Agitation, the Act of 1847 regulating factory labor, and the Hungry Forties, Riots in London, and Revolution on the Continent, had turned the attention of all serious men to the sufferings and disabilities of the poor."*

Ludlow brought Furnivall into personal contact with the physiological and social diseases of modern life. Furnivall was firmly persuaded that ignorance was the prolific parent of suffering and sin, and that education is the prime necessity for healthy and happy existence. The foundations of the future Working Men's College were thus laid. These took the form of the Little Ormond Yard School. No time was wasted. One September morning in 1848 Furnivall purchased the desks and furniture for the school. It was opened in the evening of the same day, and elementary instruction was at once given.

Furnivall's father was by no means favorably impressed by these eccentric doings. In one of his letters to his son he says:—

"Your business is Law; mine is Physic. Neither you nor I have any Business with Teachers or Ragged Schools. I am sure there are 100's of rich, lazy, and independent people who have nothing else to do than devote their Time and their passion for praise to such unuseful Employments as instructing their indigent, unformed Brethren and Children. Leave these things to them; it is yours to do your Duty in that State of Life in which it has pleased God to place you."

But young Furnivall was too far committed to draw back, even had he desired to do so. The influences of Ruskin and Carlyle were now powerfully urging him along his true life's road.

Originally an earnest believer in the orthodox religion, Furnivall slowly outgrew it. His rupture with Maurice was largely owing to the fact that, broad as that Christian Socialist undoubtedly was, he appeared narrow when viewed from the standpoint of an expanding humanism. Ruskin was greatly responsible for this.

"Sunday was now devoted to other pursuits than the inscription of Sermon Books. The glorious universe revealed to Furnivall by *Modern Painters* had to be shared with the new-found fellows from the office and workshop, and with their sisters, their sweethearts, or their wives; and only on Sunday were most of these free men and women. Hence the long Sunday rambles, the merry tea-parties some miles from London, and the tramp homeward in the starlight to the time of songs."

But Furnivall's religious pilgrimage was only beginning. The application of the principle of evolution to organic nature by Darwin and his disciples, and the extension of the doctrine of development to the universe as a whole by Herbert Spencer, made a profound impression on Furnivall's mind. His views underwent a complete change, and from 1869 to his death he unfalteringly proclaimed himself an Agnostic.

Having now thoroughly divested himself of all religious incumbrances, he was at liberty to dedicate his entire life to the service of man. He never condescended to conceal his Freethought; all his numerous friends—orthodox, indifferentist, conventional, and freethinking—were made acquainted with his views. He shared Professor Clifford's opinion that truth should be shouted from the housetops,

and not whispered over the rose water when the ladies have gone away.

When the Editor of the *Freethinker* lectured on Shelley at University College, Furnivall occupied the chair, and made one of his characteristic speeches. The present writer vividly remembers how the Agnostic doctor enthusiastically responded to a request for a lecture on Shakespeare, and the treat we enjoyed when he addressed us.

Furnivall's life has been lovingly portrayed by many of his warmest friends and admirers in the recently published volume, *F. J. Furnivall, a Record*. In addition to the excellent biography of Mr. John Munro, forty-nine memorial notices appear from other pens. One of the most novel of these is that of a waitress at the A. B. C. tea-shop in New Oxford-street, where Furnivall held so many of his remarkable receptions. This writer, Miss Blanche Huckle, says:—

"The Doctor was a regular customer at tea-time only. He was very plain with his food, merely ordering very weak coffee, rusks, and butter. We always took the same to him, very rarely asking him if he would like a change. He would invite friends to tea, and could always be found there every afternoon at 4.30, and always had a cheerful nod of recognition for everybody."

The appreciation of Professor Murray, the eminent philologist, who is editor-in-chief of the Oxford New English Dictionary, presents Furnivall from another point of view. He shows that this monumental Dictionary is largely the result of Furnivall's enthusiastic perseverance. The Doctor's industry was simply amazing:—

"He has been by far the most voluminous of our 'readers,' and the slips in his handwriting, and the clippings by him from printed books, and from newspapers and magazines, form a very large fraction of the millions in the Scriptorium."

No broad-minded or enlightened man can afford to forget that Furnivall organised the production of Shelley's magnificent poetical drama, the *Cenci*. The Censor had refused to license this masterpiece. This put the Doctor upon his mettle, and he then arranged a private performance at the Grand Theatre, Islington, under the auspices of the Shelley Society. That splendid actor and elocutionist, the late Herman Vezin, played the part of Count Cenci, and the performance was a great dramatic triumph. George Meredith, Robert Browning, and many other literary leaders witnessed the play.

One can do no more than mention other instances of his beneficent activities. His labor in connection with the Gifford St. Foster Homes testifies to his practical sympathy with suffering children. In the words of Mr. G. S. Offer, "After his name stood many degrees; and one of them was Ph.D., 'Doctor of Philanthropy.'"

This Furnivall volume is so crowded with good things that this article might be indefinitely prolonged. When his medical advisers gave the genial Doctor a few months at the outside for future life, he cheerfully discussed his approaching death with his friends. He was firmly convinced that death ends all, and looked forward to his coming decease without the slightest misgiving. One other picture of Furnivall, as the life and soul of a rowing club for working girls, may be presented from the pen of Richard Whiteing:—

"'What a strange kind of club,' she said to her (male) escort; 'I wonder what it's all about?'"

"'It's the Doctor's idea. You know the Doctor? Everybody knows him.'"

"'I'm afraid I'm not everybody.'"

"'Nothing in Harley-street, you know, and yet, in one way of looking at it, as good as all Harley-street put together. He certainly helps to keep people alive. It's the title of his University Degree.'"

"'I know now; the great philologist who —'"

"'The very man, editor of this, founder of that, but biggest, and I hope proudest, of all as founder of this rowing club for working girls.'"

"'And where do the men come in?'"

"'Oh, we have our modest uses—partners when the girls want to dance, bear a hand in the eight, and all

* *F. J. Furnivall, a Record*, xvii., xviii.

that.....The club is his hobby. He's a great breaker down of barriers in places of this sort; to say "snob" in his hearing is to say "rats" to a terrier.....He solves his life-problems walking, usually with his hat in his hand. He rows at eighty-and-one years as others row at eighteen. He eats like a hermit. His art of happiness is just as simple; he loves and lets others love him—the old rule.

"I'm in love with him already."

"You won't be without rivals; his girls and young men adore him, and one another, whenever they have a mind. Of course, such a club ought to break down in dreary scandal and misunderstanding. It doesn't. He sits among them, patriarch and sage, and rules by his smile."

On the Doctor's table was found a quotation from Xenophon, copied just before his fatal illness, which sums up his attitude towards character and life. "There is no ignorance more shameful than to admit as true that which one does not understand: and there is no advantage so great as that of being set free from error" (Socrates).

T. F. PALMER.

Acid Drops.

Reginald McKenna, Home Secretary and recipient of £5,000 a year of the nation's money, is too high and mighty a person, of course, to have any sympathy with low-class, poor "blasphemers" like Messrs. Gott and Stewart who are tasting the sweets of Christian charity in Armley Prison. After fencing off questions put to him in the House of Commons, and declining to do anything in response to the influentially signed petition sent in to him, he now refuses to receive a deputation on the matter. He has acted precisely as we thought he would,—precisely as the late Sir William Harcourt did in 1883. We understood him and the species to which he belongs. It seems, however, that Mr. J. M. Robertson did not understand either. He is reported to have believed that Mr. McKenna was rather anxious to do something in this case. Mr. Robertson gave his signature to the despised petition. And what has come of it? Nothing. As we said it would.

Having resolved to let the two "blasphemers" in Armley Prison serve every day of their monstrous sentences, Mr. McKenna took up the trumpet of religious liberty and began blowing it on behalf of the Welsh Nonconformists. But he soon gave himself away. He showed that he had no conception whatever of real religious liberty. What he means is simply the right of Nonconformists to keep even with Churchmen. That is the ground on which Welsh Disestablishment was advocated. "We ask for nothing more and nothing less," he said, "than equal treatment by the State of the various denominations in which the religious life of Wales finds its embodiment and expression." That's it. Equal privileges to all Christians. And downright persecution of all non-Christians who look too weak to defend themselves. Equality for all Christians—and outrage for Freethinkers. Such is the noble McKenna policy. And it is worthy of his mind and character.

The Home Secretary has not noticed Mr. W. T. Stead's clever and striking letter calling upon him to serve Mr. Winston Churchill with the Harry Boulter sauce. No doubt he looks down upon the editor of the *Review of Reviews*. But Mr. Stead is an abler man than Mr. McKenna and ten times as honest.

Who was the man that applied at Bow-street Police-court for a summons to prevent Mr. Winston Churchill from speaking at Belfast as Mr. Harry Boulter was prevented from speaking on Streatham Common? Mr. Stead's letter to the *Times* was a keen and clever piece of journalism. The Bow-street application was simply a farce.

Three subscribers of £500 each to the Y. M. C. A. clock begging made their promises contingent on a billiard table being added to the equipment of the sumptuous establishment in Tottenham-court-road. Fancy! Can anyone imagine Jesus Christ playing Simon Peter a hundred up? But your modern Christian is very different from the ancient ones.

We beg to assure a correspondent that there is no "intention on the part of the Secular authorities to imitate those individuals who have been sending round the hat for a

Palace of Prigs." If there were, his suggestion of 100,000 pennies instead of 100,000 pounds might be adopted, and his offer of the first 100 be accepted. Our correspondent appears to have been seriously misled in this matter; for, in addition to offering 8s. 4d., he offers assistance in regard to the advertising timepiece. "I have also an old drum clock," he says, "which might be adapted for announcing the progress of the receipts, and which I would be happy to lend."

The two hundredth anniversary of the birthday of Frederick the Great was celebrated on January 24 throughout Prussia. Naturally the Kaiser had his share in the celebration. He actually chose the text for the Court preacher's sermon in the garrison church at Potsdam. Old Frederick would have had a good laugh at the whole affair. He was an audacious "infidel" himself. And he was all for toleration. He was appealed to once in a squabble over everlasting punishment. But he refused to take sides. He said he was resolved that all his subjects should go to hell in their own way.

Emperor William, good Christian as he is, has had many of his subjects imprisoned for "insulting" him. It appears to be sedition over there to hint that the Kaiser has any imperfections. How different it was under his great "infidel" predecessor. Old Frederick was riding one day in patriarchal fashion, with only one mounted attendant, in Berlin, when he noticed a crowd outside a shop window, and on drawing up he saw that the object of attraction was a caricature of himself. He ordered his attendant to go in and tell the shopkeeper to put the picture lower down as the people were cricking their necks by looking up to it. Wise old fellow!

The real Emperor William was not born in Germany, but in England, and his real name is William Shakespeare. He has written what may be called the Bible of Humanity. And the Bible of his writing needs no costly agencies to push it round the world, like the Bible of Christianity. It pushes itself into every country with a language and a civilisation. All over the globe it is being accepted as the natural revelation of the supreme human genius to his fellow men. When the Labor Conference at Birmingham the other day presented a memento of it to the German visitor, Herr Molkenbuhr, representing the German Socialist party, they selected a finely bound copy of Shakespeare in three handsome volumes. And the recipient in acknowledging the appropriate present said: "Shakespeare was born in this country, but the works of all great spirits are not confined to the land in which they were born; they belong to the whole human race." Herr Molkenbuhr added: "And the more humanity rises in the scale of culture the more it will win for itself." Precisely. That is the real Gospel of Labor. Everything else follows in its train. And more of it will be learnt from Shakespeare than from any other source,—in spite of Shaw's and Harris's nonsense about the "snobbery" of Shakespeare, which only means, at bottom, that he did not belong to a Trade Union and never joined the Fabian Society.

What a limited thing "the press" is according to some interpretations. Mr. William Archer, writing to the *Daily News* under date of January 26, called attention to a fact which had just come to his knowledge, of which he "had not seen any mention in the English Press,"—namely, the vindication of Ferrer by the judgment of the Supreme (Civil) Court of Madrid. Our readers will recollect that this piece of news appeared in last week's *Freethinker*, which left the editor's hands on Tuesday evening, January 23, and was being handed over the publishing office counter on Wednesday afternoon.

The *Catholic Times* maintains strict silence concerning the vindication of the memory by the Spanish Courts of Francisco Ferrer and the restitution of his property. Some people would call this a discreet silence. For our part, we have no hesitation in saying that it is cowardly and contemptible. Week after week paragraphs and articles were written justifying Ferrer's execution. Catholic readers were led to believe that Ferrer richly deserved his fate, and the European agitation against his murderers was represented as an unscrupulous campaign of Atheists and Anarchists. Men who were honestly mistaken would have reported the judgment of the court, expressed regret at being misled, and misleading others. Silence under such circumstances labels the campaign as one of deliberate lying and slander. Where the interests of religion are concerned, ordinary rules of decency no longer obtain.

And Mr. Hillaire Belloc? What of this champion of public order and morality? No one was more energetic than Mr.

Belloc in writing against Ferrer. We have not yet observed any kind of recantation or expression of regret from this gentleman. We hope that some friends of truth and justice will keep Mr. Belloc reminded of his conduct whenever he appears in public. It would be well for Freethinkers to let such men know that men like Ferrer, even though dead, cannot be slandered with absolute impunity. There should be many ways of calling Mr. Belloc's attention to the fact whenever he appears in public.

Founders of religious sects have nearly all been men, and their principal successes have been with female worshipers. But women are naturally more practical minded than men, and may easily be tempted to test their deities and leaders. A case in point has just been reported by Reuter's agent at St. Petersburg. According to a telegram from Lodz, thirty female members of a Moravian community who had formed themselves into a new sect, tried to persuade a man called Kowalski, whom they regarded as their Savior, to allow himself to be crucified in order that they might be enabled, by his resurrection, to prove the truth of their tenets. But the noble Kowalski was "not having any." He positively refused to be nailed up. But the women were in dead earnest, and only the timely intervention of the police saved "the Savior" from a certain death.

Two things the Liberal newspapers omitted in their praise of Robert Applegarth on the occasion of his seventy-eighth birthday; first, that he was a friend and supporter of Charles Bradlaugh; second, that he is a member of the General Council, and one of the founders, of the Secular Education League.

The Bishop of London plays the fool wherever he goes. He reached Khartum and consecrated the new Anglican cathedral there. In the course of his sermon he ventured to sing the praises of self-sacrifice. Self-sacrifice! This man with a job worth £10,000 a year—who has also the audacity to declare how much a year he loses on it!

Charles Herbert Thompson, the fifteen years' old boy who committed suicide at Eccles and left those edifying letters behind him, was not devoid of religious belief and consolation. In a letter to a boy friend he wrote, "I implore you, in God's name, to stick to the principles you have now." To his mother he wrote, "Do not trouble, for I have no fear. I know that He will forgive all and take me to Himself." "Good-bye, mother," were his last words, "until we meet again in a Better Land." The silly lad should have made better use of the "Land" he was in.

While we have soldiers they must learn to shoot, and the Territorials have little time for practice except on Sunday. The Army Council, therefore, has agreed that the day may be used for that purpose. But the Lord's Day Observance Society protests against this arrangement, and says it is likely to lead to "disastrous results for both Church and State." The members, or at least the committee of that Society, would rather that a Territorial couldn't hit a haystack than that he should break the Holy Sabbath.

Rev. James Dunne Parker, of Stevenage, left £39,744. His business in this world was to preach "Blessed be ye poor." His pastime was to get as far away as possible from the blessing.

Cardinal Bourne—as he now is, for the Pope has given him a leg up—announces his intention to organise English pilgrimages to Lourdes and Rome in May. At the former place "Our Blessed Lady"—the Virgin Mary, to wit, likewise the Mother of God—will be the recipient of a very handsome present. Cardinal Bourne and his pilgrims are going to "offer her this land of England and Wales." It is not explained how they became possessed of it. We thought it belonged to the people of England and Wales, who transact their business through their representatives in the House of Commons. But it seems that England and Wales belong, after all, to Bourne & Co. We should like to have an explanation.

The Rev. W. Temple, headmaster of Repton School, delivered a remarkable address at Liverpool a few days ago on "Problems of Society." As reported in the *Burton Evening Gazette*, he referred to a series of articles recently published in a Hindu newspaper, describing the slum-life in great English cities and towns, each article ending with the refrain—"This is what Christianity has done for England; do you want it here?" If foreign missionaries would only tell the truth they would not be rewarded by the infinitesimally

small success of which they now boast so much, and about which they so outrageously exaggerate. It is a good omen that educated natives are beginning to enlighten their brethren as to the real conditions of life in countries where Christianity has been in operation for so many centuries.

Wandsworth paupers kicked up a row over their diet. Mr. W. Winfigeld, one of the Guardians, complained himself of the "awful monotony of the diet meted out to the male inmates of the workhouse. The Chairman said that the petition of the male inmates for a change of diet had their sympathy, but "because of the rumpus they thought it should be adjourned three months." What consideration! What humanity! Our readers will hardly be surprised to learn that the Chairman was Canon Curtis. Clergymen are always so just and tender-hearted.

Mr. Israel Zangwill's new play, *The New Religion*, has been refused a license by the Lord Chamberlain. Being asked by an interviewer what were the main objections raised by the Censor, Mr. Zangwill replied:—

"There were several; but I think one solitary example will suffice. In my play a somewhat Philistine person wants to acquire a hall for ethical purposes, and he says in his characteristic way, 'That hall used to be in the Baptist line.' The Censor does not object to the flippancy of the phrase, as he conceivably might, but he wishes the word 'Baptist' to be replaced by another term—and that is 'Nonconformist.'"

It is noticeable that such a small dispute could hardly arise over anything not connected with religion.

"Christ comfort you" is another expression that the Censor objects to. He wants Mr. Zangwill to substitute "Our Lord comfort you." Even "Christ" is becoming a rude word nowadays. One of these days we shall see some evangelical Boulter arrested for "blasphemy."

"I believe in the theatre," said the Rev. A. J. Waldron, at Bow Church, the other day. No doubt our leading actors will feel greatly cheered by the reverend gentleman's support. Mr. Waldron also added that the stage may have its peculiar temptations, but the clergy "are tempted to play the hypocrite, gull the public, and preach what they don't believe." On this topic, at least, Mr. Waldron is a good authority, and we dare not challenge his judgment.

Some time ago we referred to a friendly "spar" in the *Humanitarian* between Mr. H. S. Salt and Mr. H. M. Hyndman. We joined Mr. Salt in regretting that Mr. Hyndman still clung to such things as Compulsory Vaccination and Licensed Vivisection. Mr. Hyndman does not appear to see our own journal, but seeing our remarks quoted by Mr. Salt he hastens up with the following rejoinder, which appears in the February *Humanitarian*:—

"THE TWIN INFALLIBLES.

"SIR.—H. S. Salt, Esq., M.D., F.R.S., and Monsieur Foote, of the Academie des Sciences, decree that Jenner was a fool and Pasteur an ignoramus. In their next Encyclical they will no doubt proclaim Simpson to have been a charlatan and Lister a quack. H. M. HYNDMAN.

"London, January 12th, 1912."

"Or Hyndman to be antiquated" is the editor's addendum. Anyhow the wit of this effort seems rather heavy-handed. Mr. Hyndman must surely see that Simpson (with chloroform) and Lister (with antiseptics) never knocked at any man's door in company with a policeman. Jennerism did and does that. It tyrannises over honest dissent, it sends men to prison for guarding their children's health against medical outrage, it makes every doctor a despot. We have no belief in Vaccination from any point of view, but our special quarrel with it ends when it calls off its constables and gaolers.

It is all the effect of the grease! The Bishop of Bangor has just informed an ignorant world that "however grand and imposing the ceremony of the Coronation might be made, yet, if the Sovereign were not anointed with oil, there would be lacking the spiritual grace with which he is now endowed to work for the good and well-being of his people." Perhaps "spiritual grace" should read "spiritual grease." At any rate, the information is remarkable, and of inestimable value to both king and people. When the Bishop of London reads this pronouncement, he will feel quite jealous of his brother of Bangor.

Mr. Philip Snowden, M.P., has been enlightening a Manchester audience on "The Meaning of Brotherhood." He seems to think that it means true Christianity. He said it was essentially a religious movement, and was steadily educating public opinion in the Christian way of looking at

things. After this fatuity, it will surprise no one that Mr. Snowden called upon the Christian Churches—as if he thought they would hear him!—to stop the drink traffic and war. He said they could do it easily in twelve months. Well, as they don't and won't, could there be a worse indictment than Mr. Snowden's compliment? And could there be a worse indictment of Mr. Snowden's intellectuals than his statement that man and not the Supreme Being is responsible for the evils of this world? He asserts that these evils are man-made. Suppose they are! *Who made man?* Ay, there's the rub.

One of our readers in the North of Ireland, who is an Atheist himself, and has a great admiration for the *Freethinker* and its editor, sends us a well-written friendly letter taking exception to the "Mad Ulsterites" paragraphs at the beginning of our last week's "Acid Drops"—which he rightly surmises came from our own pen. We have sent the gentleman a reply through the post, and we venture to publish a copy of it in the *Freethinker*, as it may be interesting and serviceable to other Atheists in that troubled part of the United Kingdom. We would gladly have published our correspondent's letter too, but he strictly desired us to do nothing of the kind; in fact, he wished us not to refer to the matter at all publicly, but to regard his letter as "*entre nous*." We conceive, however, that we are observing the spirit if not the letter of his request by publishing our reply in a manner which cannot possibly hint at his identity:—

"2 Newcastle-street, London, E.C.,

"MY DEAR SIR,—

Jan. 27, 1912.

"'Mad Ulsterites of Belfast' only applied, as the paragraph should have suggested, to those who try to promote their own cause, whatever it is, by the suppression of free speech. They talk perpetually about the liberties they will lose under Home Rule, and they show how much liberty they are prepared to allow their dissident fellow-citizens when they are in power themselves.

"I say without the slightest hesitation that Protestantism is as persecuting as Catholicism, only the latter has had greater and longer opportunities of indulgence in such a pleasure. Protestantism arose in Europe *after*, not *before*, the Renaissance. The whole secret of the difference lies in that historical fact.

"Tell me what Protestant in Ireland to day is persecuted by Catholics as badly as the two men now in Armley Gaol are persecuted by the Protestant Christians in England.

"I do not forget Ireland in my mental view of Roman Catholic countries. But do not *you* forget that Ireland is exceptional—that Protestants there have done all the persecuting and Catholics all the suffering?

"I quite understand that you have been led to think, by your mental and moral environment, that your material interests will suffer from Home Rule. Pardon me if I plainly say that I believe you are entirely mistaken. Ireland is naturally a Conservative country, and on the religious side you will not be under the rule of the Catholic Church, even in the matter of education. No Home Rule Bill could possibly be carried at Westminster without ample guarantees for religious liberty, at least between Christians. Freethinkers, of course, will suffer the disabilities over there that they suffer here.

"And now let me say what will probably astonish you. I have *always* been a Home Ruler, partly because I am confident that Home Rule will break the power of the Catholic Church in Ireland, and that nothing else will. It is Protestant bigotry, backed up by the Protestant bigotry of the 'predominant partner,' that has made the Catholic Church a present of the whole spirit of Irish nationality. Every obscure bogtrotting priest in Ireland is able to pose as a patriot. He represents not *one* but *two* of the strongest passions in average men—patriotism as well as religion, and his influence is therefore overwhelming. Under Home Rule he will represent religion only. And the causes that have undermined the power of the Catholic Church in France, in Italy, and even in Spain, will begin at once to undermine it in Ireland. I am simply astounded at some Irish Freethinkers failing to see a thing so plain and obvious.

"I am a very busy man, but I have written you a longish letter because you are a man of intelligence and I wish to remove your misapprehension.—Yours faithfully,

G. W. FOOTE."

We could have lengthened this letter a great deal if we had time. One day, perhaps, in the not too distant future, we may deal with the whole subject more adequately.

Tariff Reform has reached the Isle of Man. The Manx Legislature has passed a resolution imposing a shilling a head on passengers arriving at Douglas or elsewhere on Sundays. Sabbath breaking is to be heavily taxed next

summer. It will only be tolerated for the sake of revenue,—the real Trinity, of course, being £ s. d.

The Archbishop of York naturally refuses to take a rational view of the Bible; it is his profession to see the very opposite. Speaking at a Bible Society meeting in his own city a few evenings ago, he admitted that "during the last hundred years the Bible had been subjected to a process of criticism more drastic, thorough, and continuous than any library of books had ever experienced in the world before." Then, as reported in the *Manchester Evening News*, he added:—

"At the end of this long period, so far from the Bible being displaced in the allegiance of thoughtful men, he ventured to say that it had a place the more assured and the more wonderful."

At *such* a meeting it was safe to sneer at Freethought literature, calling it "extraordinary," and "childish," and "impudent"; but his Grace cannot but know that the superstitious belief in the Bible is steadily dying out, though he is paid £10,000 a year to keep it alive.

Dr. R. F. Horton has just returned from Germany—with a discovery. This is that England can live on terms of friendship with Germany only on "the plane of faith, where alone they have a common standing ground." In that case, we venture to say, the outlook is black indeed. The common faith has been there all the time. But we have never yet discovered that a common belief in Christianity has ever prevented the nations falling out. It does not prevent two individuals falling out who belong to the same Church. It often sets them quarrelling, and keeps them at it. Friendship between England and Germany, or between England and any other nation, is less likely to be based on Christian belief than on any other condition under the sun. And we observe that statesmen seldom, if ever, take it into account.

We have been glancing through a volume of essays by a number of clergymen, entitled *Facing the Facts; or, An Englishman's Religion*. The general conclusion appears to be that his religion does not amount to much, although it is not, of course, stated in this bold manner. The Rev. Conrad Noel, who writes a chapter on "The Working Classes," admits that English Secularism, in the sense of a philosophy that confines itself to this world, "is largely increasing among the working classes, and indeed among all classes." He says that he has found the working classes "vastly amused" at the sentiments of popular hymns, and apparently has little hope of such movements as that of the Labor Church. He also administers a sharp rap over the knuckles to those who are always parading the electioneering piety of certain Labor M.P.'s as proof of the religious character of working men. Mr. Noel says, and we believe correctly, that the support the working classes give these men has nothing whatever to do with their religion. "He gains working class confidence because he represents his class in Labor affairs. They vote for him not because of, but in spite of, his total abstinence and puritanism." We have good reasons for believing this to be the truth, and we commend it to those of the Labor leaders who need it. If they could be only convinced of its truth we fancy many of them would be inclined to kick themselves for wasting so much time in pious posing on puritan platforms. The people we have in mind never really got into touch with their working class constituents on the matter of religion. Their constituents take the leader's religion as a more or less amiable weakness, and say nothing about it; and the leader keeps up the game because he thinks it pleases his constituents. If they were both perfectly frank with each other for a single hour, what a revelation it would be to both!

We need hardly say that we do not agree with Mr. Noel when he says that Secularism, in the sense of anti-Christian propaganda, makes no progress. We fancy that Mr. Noel has his mind fixed upon the mere number of avowed anti-Christian organisations. So far as Christianity goes, the number of churches and chapels affords a test of progress, because that is the practical end of their work. But with Secularism, which is essentially a propaganda of ideas, the test is wholly misleading. Mr. Noel himself remarks that Secularists become Socialists of one school or another, or take up with progressive work. Exactly; and it is the aim of Secular propaganda that they should do so, although we must confess that we often regret their neglect of, to us, important work in other directions. And, certainly, if we take the world of life and letters, the one thing that seems clear is that anti-Christian ideas have gained enormously in strength this last half century, and for that result Secularism may fairly claim a large share of the credit.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

Orders for literature, of whatever kind, should be sent direct to our new Shop Manager (Mr. H. Sall) at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C.—and to no one else.

Complaints of any kind should be sent direct to Mr. Foote.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, February 4, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, London, W.; at 7.30 p.m., "Maeterlinck on Death."

February 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.—February 4, West Ham; 11, Leicester; 18, Queen's Hall; 25, Glasgow. March 3, Queen's Hall.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—February 11, Glasgow; 25, Queen's Hall. March 3, West Ham; 10, Manchester; 31, Queen's Hall. April 21, West Ham.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1912.—Previously acknowledged, £40 5s. 6d. Received since:—T. Thelwall, £1 1s.; G. Taylor, 10s.; Thomas Young, 10s. 6d.; A. H. Deacon, 2s. 6d.; C. J. Habgood, 10d.; A. Harvey, 10s. 6d.; A. Powell, £2; A. W. B. Shaw, £2 2s.; W. A. Yates, 5s.; H. Silverstein, 10s.; R. D. Voss (S. Africa), £2 2s.; B. Black, 2s.; W. Bailey, £6; T. Sutcliffe, 5s.; Edwin Hickman, £1; Frederick Rich, 2s. 6d.; Mrs. E. Adams, £2 2s.

NORMAN MURRAY (Montreal).—We have forwarded your remittance, as you sent it, to Mr. John Grange, one of the N. S. S. vice-presidents, who is a member of the Leeds Defence Committee.

BEN HOLLAND (U.S.A.).—*The Salvation Army and the Public*, by John Manson, is published by Routledge & Sons at sixpence. They have a New York agency, but we can't say if this book is procurable there.

HAROLD ELLIOT.—Jonathan Edwards' powerful treatise is not in print now, we believe, but second-hand copies are sometimes obtainable. Mr. Cohen and Mr. Lloyd are responsible for their own utterances, here or elsewhere, just as we are for ours.

A. H. DEACON.—May your good wishes be realised!

A. HARVEY.—We note your "congratulations on the continued brilliance of the *Freethinker*." We are writing you about the other matter.

S. L. PAGE.—Sending as desired.

D. B.—Six copies being sent as requested.

W. A. YATES.—All we do is for the cause. If you found some sentences of ours useful in fighting the enemy we are glad of it. Don't apologise. Use more. We note your wish that the President's Honorarium Fund may double in 1912. Our necessities do not amount to that.

ALFRED POTTS.—Glad you have derived such mental liberation from reading "that wonderful paper, the *Freethinker*." Leopardi was the son of Count Leopardi. We shall have a new catalogue of publications ready shortly.

E. B.—Much obliged for cuttings.

G. TAYLOR.—Glad to see your handwriting again.

W. P. BALL.—Thanks for welcome cuttings.

E. HICKMAN.—Sorry you have reason to believe that you are the only person who takes the *Freethinker* in Bilston, a town of nearly 30,000 inhabitants.

FREDERICK RICH writes: "After about twenty years' reading of the *Freethinker* my interest in it grows stronger. Should it fail to arrive on Thursday morning I should feel like a fish out of water."

E. (Mrs.) ADAMS.—Pleased to have your sincere good wishes with your subscription.

H. SILVERSTEIN, subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, says: "My faith in you as our leader has never wavered since 1891, and seeing you so often at our meetings my faith becomes stronger, notwithstanding your ruling sometimes clashes with my inclinations." Mr. Silverstein is a member of the N. S. S. Executive.

B. T. LEGGETT has been reading the *Freethinker* for about four years, and "I must say," he writes, "it is the best twopenny-worth I have ever bought. I anxiously look forward to it every Thursday morning."

J. R. HOLMES, with reference to one of last week's "Acid Drops," denies that Whitefield was opposed to slavery, like Wesley. Ingersoll is quoted as saying that Whitefield "believed in slavery and advocated the slave trade."

F. SUTCLIFFE.—The sentence occurs in one of Burns's letters. Sorry we cannot hunt it up just now.

J. ELLISON.—Thanks for your efforts to promote our circulation.

C. SHEPHERD.—Shall be pleased to see them if they call.

R. ALEXANDER (S. Africa).—Passed on to Shop Manager, to whom kindly remit direct in future.

JOHN DICK.—Doubtless there are people left "to whom religion is still an awful reality," but we do not quite see how this rules out a jocular reference to Talmage's mouth, especially when it is in relation to his oratory, for which every public person is open to criticism. But your letter does not annoy us; far from it. We like to know what our readers are thinking.

H. MEREDITH (Calcutta) writes: "I read the *Freethinker* with zest and delight every Sunday.....If I were a rich man or moderately well-off I should be a liberal subscriber."

E. P. BEER (Johannesburg).—Very glad to hear that the South African Rationalist Association's meetings in the Tivoli Theatre are so successful on Sunday evenings, with an average attendance of from 500 to 600, including as many as 100 ladies. The last point is good news indeed. Thanks for personal good wishes.

SOME correspondence stands over unavoidably 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.

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

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.

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.

London Freethinkers are requested to note that the Sunday evening Freethought lectures at the Queen's (Minor) Hall will be resumed to-day (Feb. 4). Mr. Foote occupies the platform on the first two Sundays, and will be followed by Messrs. Cohen and Lloyd. The lectures are to be continued until the end of April. One of the Sunday evenings is booked for Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, whose many friends will be glad of an opportunity to hear her again on a Freethought subject. Throughout the entire course the lecture will be preceded by half-an-hour's music.

"Maeterlinck on Death" is the subject of Mr. Foote's opening lecture at Queen's Hall. The writings of the great Belgian author enjoy a world-wide fame. He is undoubtedly a Freethinker, but with a vein of mysticism in his mind and character, which is responsible for the portions of his new and fascinating volume on Death that Mr. Foote will have to criticise. This lecture should be of much interest to Freethinkers, as well as to liberal-minded people of a less heterodox tendency.

Now that the Annual Dinner has passed into history the London Freethinkers will be looking forward to the next "social" under the auspices of the National Secular Society's Executive. It is to be held on Monday evening, February 12, at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet-street. No charge is made for admission at these particular functions. Members of the N. S. S. may not only attend themselves but also introduce a friend. Non-members who cannot get introduced in that way will be able to obtain a ticket of admission from Miss E. M. Vance, 2 Newcastle-street, E.C. The evening's program will include vocal and instrumental music, and other varieties—a little dancing for the younger people, or light-heeled elders if they care to join—and a brief speech from the President, who serves the purpose of the mummy that was carried round ancient Egyptian feasts.

The Annual Meeting of the Rationalist Peace Society will be held on Thursday evening, February 8, at 7.80, at 167 St. Stephen's House, Westminster. Members are earnestly invited to attend. Mr. Foote hopes to be present. We should

add, perhaps, that St. Stephen's House is just round the corner, on the Embankment, from Westminster Bridge.

The Annual Meeting of the Secular Education League will be held on Wednesday evening, March 6, at Caxton Hall, Westminster, at 8 o'clock. Mr. Foote and Mr. Cohen will be present with other members of the League Executive. Mr. Halley Stewart will preside. There should be a good attendance of members.

The South African Rationalist Association, on hearing of the result of the trial of Messrs. Stewart and Gott, had the following resolution passed with enthusiasm and unanimity at a meeting in the Tivoli Theatre, Johannesburg:—"That in the interests of Freethought and Free Speech this meeting declares its indignation at the sentences imposed on Messrs. J. W. Gott and W. T. Stewart at Leeds, and desires to express its thanks to Sir Wm. Byles, M.P., for his action in bringing the matter before the House of Commons with the object of obtaining their immediate release. In the opinion of this meeting all blasphemy laws are relics of barbarism and should be abolished."

Mr. E. P. Beere, the secretary of the Association, in his covering letter, says: "It is a source of great satisfaction to us here to see in the *Freethinker* that you have provided through the N. S. S. for the wives and children of Messrs. Gott and Stewart." "Of one thing," he adds, "I am dead sure: if funds were needed we should not be weighed out and found wanting." We quite believe it. And we feel sure our South African friends must have afterwards read with deep regret that the proffered assistance of the N. S. S. was rejected; and that, too, at a point where, if anywhere, a common agreement might have been found. That our view of the matter was correct has been proved by the course of events. We understand that the Leeds committee has been perfectly useless, that the grandiose appeal made in a special new issue of Mr. Gott's paper realised the trifling sum of £3, and that if it had not been for the personal interest and energy of Mr. John Grange there would have been next to nothing for Mrs. Stewart. Mrs. Gott appears not to have had any assistance at all, nor to have asked for any.

We think it right to state, for it is always best to be open in these matters, that the advertisement of Mr. Gott's business in this week's *Freethinker* is inserted free of charge, and will continue to be so inserted until he is released from prison. Miss Vance approached us on the matter and we readily consented to this arrangement. Freethinkers differ over Mr. Gott's propagandist policy, but there is common agreement amongst them that he is an honest tradesman, that his goods are what he represents them to be, and that he always gives fair value for money. Freethinkers might very well sink every other consideration for the present, and send orders to Mrs. Gott during her husband's absence from home.

We beg to call attention once more to the advertisement on another page of the Leicester Secular Society's forthcoming bazaar. All the help this Society receives will be well deserved. A grant of £5 was voted to it at the last Board meeting of the Secular Society, Ltd.

The *Market Mail*, a weekly financial paper, devotes an article to "The Y. M. C. A. Clock" and remarks: "Why this institution should collect thousands of pounds for a building when there are hundreds of poor wretches in a state of destitution in our cities is a complete mystery to us." Such a sentence in such a paper is a welcome sign of the times.

The Political Council of the North Lambeth Liberal and Radical Club has carried unanimously a resolution condemning the recent revival of the Blasphemy Laws in London and Leeds, and calling for their abolition as simply a bad legacy from the old days of general bigotry and persecution.

"Some time ago," one of our Irish friends writes, "I was sitting in a railway carriage reading the *Freethinker*, when I felt a slight touch on my knee, and lowering the paper my sole fellow-traveller asked me if the paper in my hand were the *Freethinker*. I said Yes, and he asked me Did I read it regularly? My reply was that Thursday was the red-letter day in the week to me. He then said, 'I am a newspaper man myself, and I can assure you that there is more intellect behind that little paper than behind all the press of the United Kingdom.'" The man who said that had been

trained for the priesthood, had left the Church and gone into journalism, had lost a good post by expressing his opinions too freely, and had found out that "it does not do to be a Freethinker in Ireland." Not at present. But it will some day. And perhaps before many people imagine.

Our old friend, Mr. W. Bailey, of Manchester, subscribing generously to the President's Honorarium Fund, writes:—

"There is not a Freethinker who has read your work for a year but knows what a loss the movement would suffer if (as the Christians say) you were taken away from us. I often think what your journal, splendid as it is, might be under your guidance if you were relieved of a lot of routine which a less able person might take in hand. A long pull and a pull altogether would achieve the desired object, and the effort would bring its reward."

This is hitting the nail on the head. We have often had that thought ourselves. Too much of our life has been spent on drudgery. The razor, so to speak, has been chopping wood.

The President's Honorarium Fund.

To the Freethinkers of Great Britain.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,— January 1, 1912.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yours faithfully,

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

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

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

Spain and the Inquisition.

I SHALL not apologise for recurring to the subject of the Holy Inquisition. It was an established principle of the Holy Office—as Nakens points out—that the heretic could not be tortured more than once, but, for all that, the cruel Inquisitors were permitted to *continue* the application of the torture from time to time, for fear that “the patient” might die of pain and exhaustion, the repeated process counting only as one in their sacred arithmetic. In like manner, the heretical reader must not count the present article as a fresh infliction, but only as the continuation of the instalment of the torture bestowed upon him in the *Freethinker* of January 28 by the unholy permission of the Editor.

Nakens dedicates his *Almanack** to the illustrious worthies Torquemada, who burnt alive 8,800 Spaniards, besides 6,500 in effigy, and tortured and imprisoned 90,004; to Deza, whose victims were 1,664 burnt alive and 892 in effigy, besides 92,456 sentenced as above; to Cisneros, who burnt alive 2,536, in effigy 1,368, and sentenced 47,286; to Adriano Florencio, who burnt alive 1,344, in effigy 672, and sentenced 26,214; to Alfonso Manrique, who burnt alive 2,250, in effigy 1,125, and sentenced 11,250; and to the other pious Inquisitors who from 1481 to 1808 aided these men of God in their humanitarian and civilising work, sharing between them the glory of having burnt alive 31,912 Spaniards, besides consuming 17,659 in effigy, and sentencing, after ignominious imprisonment and painful torture, 291,450 heretics—in all, 941,021, of whom many thousands perished in the dungeons or chained to the galleys. The reader must remember that these abominations were not the outcome of sudden panic, during moments of revolutionary fear or stress, nor were they wrought by the hands of ignorant, ill-fed men full of the consciousness of some foul wrong. They were the deliberate acts of full-fed, fat-paunched priests, the chief depositories of the learning of the times, acting as the ministers of Christ and the defenders of the majesty of God; that their inhumanities were sanctified by the holy offices of religion and enacted in presence of the effigy of the agonised Christ, who must have laughed as he saw through tears of blood the holocaust through the ages of the victims tortured in his name. Whilst other people are cruel by accident—surprised, so to speak, into an abnormal aberration of brutality—the religious fanatic, robed with the insignia of heaven, and like Elijah, himself a sort of Torquemada, “very jealous for the Lord God of Hosts,” is normally cruel when he wields the sceptre of power. He is then brutal on principle, and becomes scientifically and systematically ingenious in the discovery and application of the most diabolic—or godly—refinements of torture. The study of religious persecution, especially as seen in the annals of the Inquisition, brings out this dreadful feature of true religiosity—*i.e.*, the religiosity that attempts to vie with the sleepless vindictiveness attributed to the divine Inquisitor of Hell.

Valencia, where Inquisitorial horrors have recently been revived in the torture of the prisoners at Callera, was—as Nakens points out—the last place in Spain where the Inquisition proper was in operation. We learn that in 1819, Elio, under pretext of the conspiracy of Vidal, handed over 119 persons to the Inquisition of Valencia, in whose dungeons they suffered horrible tortures. And, later, on July 31, 1826, the Rationalist schoolmaster, D. Antonio Ripoll (a name still venerated in Spain), was hanged and his body afterwards burnt for his heresy. History, in these modern days, has repeated itself in these fair Andalusian lands long blighted by the Inquisition. Our readers are already aware that, in 1911, the clericals took advantage of the disturbances at Callera—a sort of rict exaggerated into a

revolution—in order to secure the wholesale arrest of Radicals and Freethinkers, to organise an orgie of torture in the prisons and procure from the military judges a vindictive sentence of death upon seven men, after securing the closure of the Rationalist schools and the incarceration of the modern Ripoll, Don T. Casasola, the friend of Ferrer and the director of the Escuela Moderna at Valencia. Happily, public opinion was able to rob the clericals of their victim, not because the Church has forgotten to mumble her once all-powerful curses, but because her decrepit hands are feebler to strike. The school was reopened on January 8, and Casasola was released from prison after forty-four days of privation and confinement, with his innocence acknowledged and freedom to resume his educational work. The royal pardon, refused in 1909 to Ferrer, now acknowledged to be an innocent man, was, in 1912, wrung from King Alfonso, in favor of the seven men, by the imperious voice of public opinion, and the dread of a universal strike, with all its dangers and uncertainties of a dynastic character.

On reading in *El Almanaque* the procedure adopted against the victims of the Inquisition, one is struck rather by its barefaced hypocrisy than by its refinements of cruelty. The notarial records set down the details of the “Acts of torment,” as they are uniformly termed, with circumstantial formality—indeed, after reading a number of these “Acta,” it is quite clear that the officials of the Inquisition (see *El Motin* of January 4, 11, and 18, where several of these “Acta” are, for the first time, published *verbatim*) used stereotyped forms and a set phraseology in recording the name of the heretic, the names of the Inquisitors and subordinate officers in whose presence the torture was administered, the form of words in which the Inquisitor required the victim to confess his crime, the administration of the oath of secrecy to the executioner, the formal undressing of the prisoner (male or female) in the presence of the holy judges, the application of the cord binding hands and feet to the place or instrument of torture, the ceremony of extracting confession before the first turn was given to the pulley, the questioning after each wrench had taken place, and the subsequent application of torture to the verge of the patient’s exhaustion. During the enactment of these brutalities the surgeon is in attendance, and the notary takes stock of the utterances and responses of the victim, either during the process of torture or in the brief intervals between one turn of the pulley and another, and all these words of the distraught wretch are calmly set forth with unimpassioned detail in the record, which is duly signed and sealed as a formal legal document by these fiends incarnate.

As *Fray Gerundio* (himself a former priest, now Freethinker, and the well-known author of *El tormento en los Conventos*) points out, the nakedness of the victim before the Inquisitors was a touch of horror added in order to flavor and give zest to these tortures. Under the libidinous eyes of the Fathers Inquisitors, of friars, bishops and arch-bishops, with their notaries, clerks, executioners, gaolers, and other hangers-on, the frightened women—often ladies of taste and refinement—were stripped of every rag, and stood with burning shame before the prying eyes of the holy men. One of these cases is given in the *Acta del tormento*, applied to Dona Maria de Carlos, in 1652, in the presence of the Delegate of the Archbishop of Toledo. The original is in the *Archivo Historico Nacional* at Madrid, and readers of *El Motin* (January 4) can now read it for the first time, as Pey y Ordeix only recently exhumed it from amidst a heap of similar records composed by the officers of the Inquisition. The notarial record sets out a very pathetic incident that occurred in the course of this shocking case. Dona Maria was a young woman of twenty-two, who, during her incarceration, was suckling her infant boy, to whose baby eyes the only “light of the world” was the darkness of the dungeon and the sinister torch held by the bloody hands of the executioner. Her crime was

* *Almanaque de la Inquisición*, por *El Motin*. (Madrid. 1911. Pp. 204. 1 peseta.)

that of having married her uncle, Don Baltasar Rodriguez Cardosa, without the dispensation of the Pope. The record reads:—

"*She is Told to Undress Herself.*—She was commanded to undress, and told 'to tell the truth,' and this having been done, she said: 'God have mercy on me!' with many tears. 'Oh dear! that I should have to be stripped and exposed to be seen in my nakedness! My God! When was I ever a disgraceful creature that I should be thus seen in nakedness, my Lord? For the love of God let them kill me rather than I be seen stripped before them! Give me the garotte first, rather than make me uncover my nakedness!'"

Despite her entreaties, the poor creature was duly and truly stripped, in the sanctimonious presence of her torturers, and the meticulously circumstantial record sets forth that for two mortal hours of agony the form of the young mother, whose breasts, we are told, were full of milk, writhed in torture under what, no doubt, were the greedily lustful eyes of these holy monsters.

As Pey y Ordeix says, we can see by these records what uses may be subserved, so far as sanctity of conduct and respect for decency and human life are concerned, by confession and daily communion, by wearing scapularies, or having holy visions, or working miracles! In these records we shall see not merely the Judaizer, or the relapsed Moor, or the heretic in the bloody grip of the Holy Office, but we shall see what, from the Christian point of view, may conceivably be a more sympathetic spectacle: We shall behold the "virgin spouses of the Lord," the white doves of the Holy Spirit, abbesses, prioresses, novitiates, "Daughters of Mary," old respectable dames, sweet mothers, young girls, and young wives expecting soon to be mothers, exhibited in these chambers of horror in full nakedness before the eyes of the Inquisitors, and witness their frames lashed into contortions of agony in the cruel embrace of the rack, the pulley, the cord, or the wheel. For it must not be forgotten that if the priests and bishops were the executioners, a great number of nuns and holy women and holy men were among their victims.

It is not surprising to know that the patience of the Spaniards was sometimes exhausted by these abominations. For centuries they had around and about them a locust swarm of familiars of the Inquisition, watching every opportunity to ravage and destroy the national life. A royal decree of Carlos II. (May 21, 1696), declared:—

"If to a coachman or lackey of an Inquisitor the lightest offence, even by word of mouth, be done; if to his steward or servant the best article in the shop be not tendered; or if there be any delay in so doing, or if any the least respectful word be uttered to him, the Inquisitors shall at once employ their summonses, censures, and prisons against the delinquent."

It was a veritable reign of terror in Spain, without the colorable justification that can be claimed for the short-lived reign of terror in France. The torrent of popular indignation sometimes broke its bounds. For instance, one of the most cruel and licentious of the holy Inquisitors, Pedro de Arbués, was assassinated on September 15, 1485; and in 1664 that scoundrel, in whom it was known that lubricity and the love of God went hand in hand, was duly beatified in order that the Spanish people might for ever sink on its knees before this symbol of their degradation. Arbués was not the only Inquisitor who was cut short in his virtuous career before he had made a sufficient holocaust of victims.

We must always remember that the Spaniard has borne through the centuries a load of ill-concealed hatred against the Holy Office. The slaughter of monks, the burning down of convents in 1886 and 1869, and the later excesses in 1909 were but the tardy explosions of the long pent-up hatred of the people against the Inquisition, which, as we have seen, was in full working order in Spain so late as in 1826. Before we hold up our hands to heaven in horror at these reprisals, we have to remember that in Spain the memory of the misdeeds of religion do not deserve to be so easily forgotten.

When, in 1814, Fernando II. re-established the Inquisition—Fernando who, be it noted, hanged 7,000 reformers, mostly Freethinkers, assassinated 8,000 of his subjects, proscribed 36,000 others, and clapped 24,000 in prison; a crowned monster whose vices and whose cruelties excelled those of Caligula and Domitian—the priests extolled him in their writings—one of them issued a panegyric of him entitled *The Triumphs of God and Fernando VII.*—and all acclaimed him as *the restorer of religion, the scourge of heretics, and the flagellator of the impious.* One of the greatest publicists in Spain, Ricardo Fuente (the co-editor of *El Pais*) in his splendid *Vulgarizaciones historicas*,* tells us (p. 135), and gives terrible facts in verification, that "there are no words in the rich Spanish language in which adequately to depict the avarice, the concupiscence, and the studied fanaticism of Fernando." It was this holy and lustful monarch who extended throughout Spain the secret societies—offshoots of the Inquisition—known as the *Destroying Angel* and the *Conception*, by whose hands he was enabled to organise the assassination of reformers. These turpitudes belong to the enlightened nineteenth century and to the experiences of the fathers of the present generation, and the deep-rooted antipathy of the cultivated Spaniard against the Church and against religion and against all its flummeries and familiars cannot be understood or conceived unless we take these appalling records into account. The timely book written by Nakens and Pey y Ordeix helps us materially to this understanding, not only by exciting in our minds renewed horror of these crimes of Christianity, but also by furnishing us with fresh historical grounds for rejecting the heavenly origin of a religion which, as we have seen, reveals itself to our senses girt with the flames of hell.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

Correspondence

A NOTE FROM THE EAST.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Please find enclosed the sum of one pound (£1) as my small donation towards your President's Honorarium Fund for 1912. It was a pleasure to read that it got beyond the £300 last year, and it is to be hoped that it will reach the £400 this year. I suppose that the majority of your ardent admirers and subscribers are not blessed with the millions that our Christian opponents are possessed of; if they were, I believe that you would not have to rely so much upon the small contributions that come in slowly but surely. The last two or three issues have been excellent, I have put them upon the table of our Moslem friends, and I have asked them to get their Society to become a subscriber to your paper. I have promised to place it upon their reading-room table every week until they receive their own copy direct from the office of the *Freethinker*. When I showed your article, "The Bible and the Koran," to my Mohammedan friends, they were highly delighted with it, and appreciated the spirit that you wrote it in; in fact I have asked them to have it published in leaflet form for distribution broadcast. I showed them a former issue of your paper, where I was at liberty to use anything that was of interest to the cause of Freethought and Humanity. Your paper is getting better and better every issue. Perhaps it is because as it is growing older, each year it becomes wiser. I shall not take up your time, but I wish you a happy and prosperous New Year.

Rangoon, India.

REV. U. DHAMMALOKA.

BLASPHEMY TRIALS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I followed with much interest your account and comments in the Blasphemy Trials at Leeds. As I had considerable experience along these lines, perhaps personal reminiscences of them may be useful to others.

I have been twice prosecuted for religious disputes: about a Roman Catholic procession and again for some verses on the Garden of Eden story. Prosecution for heresy is a good move for the heresy, provided there are any heretics who are willing to suffer for the cause. In the last trial of over ten years ago, what the late Judge Wurtelle told me

* Madrid (1909), Madera, 8; pp. 264, 1.50 pesetas.

in private after the trial is worthy of note. "Murray," he said, "as long as the law is on the Statute Book neither the judge nor the jury have any alternative but to enforce it." Even the jury may think the law foolish, but they are summoned to enforce it. In my case it was a suspended sentence, and I told the judge in my address that as long as the law existed I should be careful in future to keep as close to it as possible, which I have done since in a manner that they now admit is more destructive to the Church than my former method. For instance, there are many passages in the Bible which, when read publicly, will be considered obscene, but there is no law to prevent a propagandist from referring to several of the passages and explaining to the public that under our present public view of culture such passages are considered obscene in any book but the Bible.

I therefore enclose four shillings as my contribution to the fund for the support of Mrs. Gott and Mrs. Stewart during their husbands' incarceration.

If there are sufficient brave volunteers willing to suffer incarceration in gaol for describing the Jehovah of the Jews in plain language, we ought to pay them well for their trouble. As I have a general bookselling business, and I "made well" on the Christmas numbers of the *Illustrated London News* and others, one of my long-standing jokes is to use some of it for Pagan propaganda. Though I belong rather to the school of Hume than Bradlaugh, it makes my Norman-Celtic-Highland blood boil sometimes to think that my countrymen in this stage of the world's history should still be slaves to Hebrew folk-lore. I consider Thor—after which, strange to say, I am called—a much better type of a god than Jehovah.

NORMAN MURRAY.

Montreal, Canada.

"OPINION" OR "CONVICTION"?

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Permit me to thank Mr. Cohen for his interesting article on Dean Pigou's references to militant Atheism. I was particularly impressed with that part of it in which he so eloquently upholds the necessity for militancy and tenacity in holding one's opinions. About that word "opinion" as representing the "Freethinker's" attitude to the great problems, I am not satisfied that it is sufficiently strong and expressive. I have looked up Chambers' Dictionary, and I find the meanings of "opinion" given there are: "one's belief, judgment, favorable estimation." "Opinionative" is described as: "unduly attached to one's opinions; stubborn." "To opine" is merely "to suppose." Turning to "conviction," I find the meanings given are: "act of convincing; strong belief; a proving guilty, and (*theol.*) the condition of being consciously convicted of sin." "To carry conviction" is "to bear irresistibly the stamp or proof of truth."

Though it may be argued that the distinction drawn is rather fine, I think the point is one that may not be without interest to an eminent exponent of Determinism like Mr. Cohen. It may also have some importance as indicating more clearly the attitude of the orthodox to uncompromising unbelievers. It is a common charge against Atheists that they are shallow-minded or mentally perverted, and that they have no strength of conviction.

I think the distinction is a fair one. "Opinion" is really used to describe a view about ordinary matters and passing fashions and phases of social life, or points and details of business—whether legal, medical, or commercial; a view that may be changed or modified without involving any serious or fundamental problem. But one's view on the great things, the things that matter—man's origin, development, conduct, and destiny—is surely in a different category. "Opinion" is a term too much associated with the incidents of life to be fitly applied to the essentials. Determinism is as much divorced from "gloomy fatalism" as it is from Freewill; and there is no one who holds his opinions more tenaciously than the Determinist.

SIMPLE SANDY.

PERSONAL TESTIMONY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—While at home in London, a short time ago, I was looking through some of my old *Freethinker's* of the year 1905; I noticed in one of them a letter from a correspondent, and you had headed it "A Sad Case." The correspondent told you he was a young man engaged to be married; he had previously been a fervent Christian, but had altered his opinion since reading the *Freethinker*. His prospective wife was a Christian, and, knowing his Atheistic views, had threatened to break the engagement off unless he altered. From what I can remember of the letter he was not asking you what he should do—he seemed to have made up his mind about that, and that appeared to be he would remain a *Freethinker*—but he gave you permission to publish it if you thought it of sufficient general interest. You commented

on it by saying that the loss of self respect he would suffer by renouncing his settled convictions would not be paid for by the happiness he expected to get from his marriage. I am mentioning this letter because my own case was almost similar, with the exception that my wife realised that I might be a decent husband and passable father without being a Christian. My wife consented to being married at a registry office on condition that I did not try to influence the children, if any arrived. I felt fairly safe in agreeing to that, as I feel certain that Secular Education will be adopted in the schools before very long; and then, of course, the wife's views may change also. She does not care to admit it, but there certainly is a change.

I am a steeplejack by trade. I have some lively times with the parsons' when I am estimating for work to be done. It is amusing to find how they will always have the work done when they are sure they can get the amount from the congregation; but as soon as it threatens to touch their own pocket, no matter how wealthy they are, what a difference! I do not forget to tell them about it. One parson at a church in Devonshire told me his salary only worked out at about £2 per week. I asked him if he did not think he had a good job. I told him I wished I could earn £2 a week as easily as he did. Needless to say, I did not get a job there. One parson asked me if I ever thought of my soul when I am up those great heights. I told him I was fairly well satisfied so long as the ropes were secure. Naturally, he was shocked, but he was a decent fellow and was not afraid to read my *Freethinker* and *Bible Romances*. I got a job off him and we had some nice little arguments. I have some fun, while travelling, with my *Freethinker*. If I am by myself in a carriage I put the *Freethinker* on the seat and go to the opposite end and apparently go to sleep. It is amusing to watch a man get in the carriage and pick the paper up, and note the look of horror on his face, which, if he has pluck enough to read it, change to interest. I let him get thoroughly into it, then I "wake up," get into conversation, and pass a long journey comfortably. I had the pleasure of hearing you speak about four years ago at Birmingham Town Hall.

W. WAINWRIGHT.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON JAN. 25.

The President, Mr. G. W. Footc, in the chair. There were also present:—Messrs. Baker, Barry, Bowman, Cohen, Davey, Davies, Heaford, Lloyd, Moss, Neate, Quinton, Samuels, Silverstein, Rosetti, Wood, and Miss Kough.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed.

The monthly balance-sheet was presented and adopted.

New members were received for the Liverpool Branch and the Parent Society.

The highly successful meeting of Protest against the Blasphemy Laws, held at South-place on January 15, was reported, a copy of the resolution passed having been sent to the Home Secretary. Promises from several influential persons outside the Society to form a deputation to the Home Secretary had been received, but Mr. McKenna had declined to receive such a deputation.

Mr. Heaford introduced the subject of the vindication of Ferrer, and moved the following resolution, which was carried unanimously:—

"That this Executive learns with satisfaction that the Supreme Civil Tribunal at Madrid has recently given judgment defeating the claim of the conventual homes at Barcelona and others for damages against the heirs of Ferrer's estate. It rejoices that the decree of the Court based its judgment on the grounds that there was no proof of Ferrer's participation, directly or indirectly, with the disorders of July, 1909; and that no discovery has been made in any of the 2,000 military trials arising out of the Barcelona insurrection that any of the participants in that movement acted on the instigation of Ferrer or under his orders. This Executive recognises that this judgment virtually entails and requires the civil rehabilitation of Ferrer, and emphatically justifies the world-wide movement on Ferrer's behalf. In recording this view, this Executive takes the opportunity of thanking M. Georges Lorand for his invaluable labors in procuring this judgment, and congratulates him upon the success which has crowned his distinguished and disinterested labors for the vindicating of Ferrer's name and honor."

Other minor matters of business were dealt with, and the meeting then adjourned.

E. M. VANCE, Secretary.

The Laws of Nature do not exist except in human brains and books. They are purely subjective not objective.—*J. Symes.*

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON**INDOOR.**

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham-place, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Maeterlinck on Death."

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Schindle's, 91 Church-road, Stoke Newington): 7.30, Business—*Re* Season's Propaganda, etc.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, C. Cohen, "Some Curiosities of Christian Evidence."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Green): 7.45, Mrs. E. Boyce, a Lecture. (Weather permitting.)

COUNTRY.**INDOOR.**

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, J. Fredk. Green, "The Need of an Open Foreign Policy."

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): Joseph McCabe, 3, "Christ in Modern Scholarship"; 7, "The Evolution of Religion."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Arthur E. Piggott, "Cremation." Lantern illustrations.

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

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

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

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

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

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