

# THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

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PRICE TWOPENCE

*It is Humanity alone that can remedy the powerlessness of God.*—AUGUSTE COMTE.

## Another "Death" of Secularism.

BISHOP WELLDON, the Dean of Manchester, has been delivering some mid-day addresses at St. Anne's Church in that city. One of them was devoted to Secularism. It was, of course, reported in the local newspapers. Those organs of what is rather facetiously called "public opinion" have their own way of dealing with such matters. They are all in the swim of Christianity and respectability. They report what Bishop Welldon says against Secularism, but they never report what any leading Secularist says against Christianity.

We take the report of Bishop Welldon's address on Secularism which appeared in the local *Evening News* (Feb. 21)—and the following passage first:—

"Secularism, he said, expressed as a creed was dying out. Nothing had struck him more when he came to Manchester than the divergence of tone pervading among the working-classes there to-day from the tone which he knew in South London a quarter of a century ago. At that time the opinions of the late Mr. Bradlaugh were in the ascendant; he was lecturing up and down the country, a well-known popular figure, halls of science were multiplying in the great cities, and the *National Reformer* was a widely read newspaper. To-day the *National Reformer* was dead, halls of science were almost shut up, Mr. Bradlaugh's name had passed into history, and Colonel Ingersoll's name, on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, had passed away also. If he was right they would not now find among the working-classes of Manchester and Salford, or they would only find it here and there, that spirit of hostility to religion that was so rife in South London a quarter of a century ago."

This is the way that Christian preachers bamboozle Christian audiences. It is clever in its contemptible way, and we give Bishop Welldon credit for practising it very effectually. His performance is good of its kind. Only the kind is detestably immoral.

Many of our readers who are well conversant with the history of Secularism will notice the confusion of Bishop Welldon's chronology. Ordinary readers of the report we are using would imagine that twenty-five years ago was the heyday of Bradlaugh's power, whereas he was then a heavily-stricken and practically a dying man. He did die in fact in the first month of 1891—which is over twenty-one years ago. It is certainly true that Bradlaugh was not immortal. He was not able to live for ever. He had to pass into history, as Bishop Welldon puts it. But it is not given to every man to do that. History will hardly concern itself with the present Dean of Manchester. Who will be talking about *him*, and bringing his name into all sorts of controversies, a quarter of a century after *his* death? Bradlaugh is only dead in the flesh; he lives on in the hearts and minds of the myriads for whom he brightened and ennobled human existence.

Bishop Welldon's statement that Bradlaugh's opinions were in the ascendant twenty-five years ago—or any other number of years ago—is perfectly nonsensical. He had a large following as a Radical politician, and even as a practical sociologist, but he was not capable of converting the English people to Atheism. That is a work of time. Bradlaugh had his share in it—a great share; but Atheism is not

dependent on any one man, dead or alive; it progresses with the growth of knowledge and reflection; it is advancing more rapidly than ever; there are ten Atheists to-day for every one that Bradlaugh left behind when death removed him from the scene. This is virtually admitted by Bishop Welldon himself; for after representing Secularism as nearly dead, and declaring that the English nature has a natural reverence for religion, he proceeds to bewail the spread of practical Atheism to-day. "An indifference," he says, "is spreading over society, and men do not take account of God as they used to."

Secularism has few halls of its own at present. Bishop Welldon tries to make out that it had many in the past. He says that halls of science multiplied under Bradlaugh's influence. But this is not true. Bradlaugh's influence raised one Hall of Science, in Old-street, London. It never raised another. Secularists have learnt that hiring halls is a better policy than buying them. They have a few halls still, however, and one of them is in Manchester. It was a Christian chapel formerly, and when the present writer opened it as a Secular Hall the christening font had not yet been removed. Bishop Welldon will perhaps mention these facts the next time he addresses a Manchester audience on the subject of Secularism.

We frankly admit, of course, that Bradlaugh is dead, and that Ingersoll is dead. But how in the name of common sense does this prove that Secularism is dead? The Society that Bradlaugh founded lives still, and the Secular Society, Ltd., has command of funds that Bradlaugh himself would not have deemed possible. The *National Reformer* is dead as well as Bradlaugh, but the *Freethinker* carries on the same work. Bishop Welldon pretends not to know it, but his name has appeared in our pages over a letter from his own pen.

When the Dean came to lecture on "The True Socialism" he treated his audience to the following introduction, which we take from the *Manchester Guardian*:—

"The Dean said he was living through a very bad time just now. They might have seen that he had lately delivered some lectures on Secularism, Socialism, and Spiritualism, and the result was that the Secularists were in hot haste after him—(laughter),—the Socialists had just set up a 'view hallo,' and the spiritualists, he did not doubt, would be after him to-morrow. He assured the meeting that his correspondence was of a most fascinating character. (Laughter.) Only on Saturday he received a letter from a Secularist saying that he was the greatest windbag in Manchester. (Loud laughter.) He did not altogether dissent from that criticism—(renewed laughter),—but when the writer went on to become personal he felt somewhat hurt. He referred to a part of his body—(laughter)—which for the sake of the ladies present he might perhaps describe scientifically as the thorax or abdomen (laughter), and he told him that there was a certain Mr. Foote lecturing in Manchester on the preceding Sunday who was five million times as good as he was—(laughter),—and that if he had gone to hear Mr. Foote he would for once in a way have been doing a good bit of work. (Laughter.)"

"A certain Mr. Foote" is rich. It is not Bishop Welldon's ignorance,—it is his impudence. This is a common characteristic of the apostles of the meek and lowly Jesus. You generally find at the finish that their manners are a match for their accuracy.

G. W. FOOTE.

## Religion.—II.

(Concluded from p. 114.)

It may be replied to what has been said that I have only proven my point by defining religion in a peculiar manner, or at least by taking a peculiar definition for granted. Instead of this being the case, I have been careful to consider religion from what I believe is the only correct point of view. It is, of course, possible to so define religion as to make it mean anything, or everything. By this one can justify calling any view of life that one happens to hold a religion. But this is to lose sight of the historic association of the word, and to ignore all that the mass of mankind mean when they talk about religion. Tell a hundred separate individuals that So-and-so is a religious man, and ninety-nine of that number will at once conclude that he believes in a God and a future life, or in some supernaturalism. Assume that the person in question does not believe in any of these things, and they will at once find the correct name for him. They will call him an Atheist. In the case of such a word as "Atheism" it is the misunderstandings of the ordinary man that we have to correct. In the case under discussion it is the ordinary man who is right, and the abnormal man who is wrong. It is the non-believer in religion who misrepresents its character—that is, when he seeks to give it a meaning that will enable him to so label his own altered beliefs.

To this method of ignoring the historic associations of a thing, and defining it so as to make it fit in with one's own prepossessions, belongs Matthew Arnold's definition of "Morality touched with emotion"—as though all morality is not connected with emotion—John Stuart Mill's definition, "The strong and earnest direction of the emotions and desires towards an ideal object, recognised as of the highest excellence, and as rightfully paramount over all selfish objects of desire"; Mr. Frederic Harrison's description of religion as "the complex synthesis of heart, intellect, and moral energy, resulting in a practical scheme of personal and social duty"; and Professor J. R. Seeley's statement that we are justified in calling religions "Any habitual and permanent admiration." None of these definitions are the product of a careful collection of the facts of religion and a study of their essential features. They are nothing more than definitions framed so that the writers' own theory of things may be called religious. They are in fact, even though not in words, replying to the charge that they are without a religion. And the substance of their reply is that their own outlook on life has as much right to be called religious as has that of other people. In this I believe they are wholly wrong. They relinquished their right to the word when they gave up that for which the word really stands. And why cling to the name when the thing has been surrendered? If Freethinkers are to give the world a much-needed lesson in mental independence, we can hardly make a better start than by cleansing our vocabulary of all misleading, and even meaningless, expressions.

None of these definitions of religion can justify themselves save on purely arbitrary grounds, or by excluding a large part of religious phenomena. Mill's definition, for instance, can only apply to certain highly rarefied forms of religion, if to any. If we take the large world of savage religion, how can we reasonably say that the "direction of the emotions and desires towards an ideal object, recognised as of the highest excellence, and as rightfully paramount over all selfish objects of desire"? Uncivilised humanity does not take its objects of worship as ideal characters at all. How many do so even among civilised people? And how can we call a definition of religion one that excludes such a large part of religious phenomena? The Freethinker is simply repeating here the tactics of those Christians who define Christianity so as to make it square with their

own special sociological or political theory. All such definitions may be properly described as tendency definitions. They indicate merely the views held by the writer, but they have not the slightest scientific value.

No greater lapse ever occurred to a great and original thinker than was illustrated in Spencer's description of religion as consisting in a worship of the Unknowable, or as due to an attempt to explain a mystery pressing for interpretation. I call this a lapse because, in the light of Spencer's own account of the origin of religion, there is really no other name for it. No one has pointed out more clearly than Spencer the error of picturing primitive man as manifesting a lively speculative curiosity concerning phenomena and their causes. His belief in gods and ghosts and souls and an after life, do not result from any sense of the mystery of existence, or from any active speculation. They result rather from what one writer has well called "physiological thinking"—the unconscious generation of beliefs through the constant experience of phenomena that in a pre-scientific state admit of none but a religious interpretation. The metaphysical and mystical aspects of religion belong to the periods of its disintegration, not to that of its origin. Primitive man knows none of those distinctions with which religious writings abound at a later stage. The soul or double he believes in is identical with the body he is familiar with. The unseen forces he believes in and fears are of a kind with the human nature around him. And it is idle to read our meanings into his beliefs because we use similar expressions. Doing this, we fail to understand religion in either its primitive or in its modern form.

Scientifically more objectionable than Spencer's attempt to define religion in terms of philosophy, is that of defining religion in terms of ethics. There is a very strong tendency to-day to make the moral teaching of religion its essential characteristic. Of course, there is a sense in which religion includes ethics, and that is, in the sense that among primitive peoples religion includes everything. The fear of the ghost is one of the most powerful factors in primitive life, and as it gradually develops towards godhood the necessity for conciliation is continually present. There are religious ceremonies connected with practically every event in life, and only very gradually is this influence shaken off. Ethics, like everything else, is in the beginning overshadowed by religion, although the conflict between a growing moral sense and religious theory is one of the largest of historical facts.

In its earlier stages, religion is neither moral nor immoral. It is simply non-moral. Early religion is not concerned with the moral character of its deities. It is impossible to even rationally conceive man giving his gods moral qualities until he is conscious of their development in himself. The savage has no moral reverence for his gods. They are there, and they must be obeyed. His worship is based on fear, not admiration. And a vital truth, quite ignored by those who seek to base religion on ethics, is that while religion commences in a reasoned process, however crude, morality is established before mankind becomes conscious of its existence. The essential fact about religion is a belief. The essential thing about morality is a practice. Human morality is a development of habits and instincts that begin in the animal world, and is practised long before reason inquires into its nature and meaning. And it is precisely because morality rests upon a deeper and sounder basis than religion, that it ultimately overcomes religion, and all along serves to purify it of its lower and grosser elements.

If we are then to use the word "religion" in its proper sense, it will no more do to define it in terms of ethics than it will do to define it in terms of medicine. If we mean that we believe in the importance of ethics, let us say so. Nothing is gained by calling it a religion, and then having to explain—when pressed—that we do not mean religion as the vast majority of people have always

understood it. For the curious and instructive thing is that in this instance it is the vast majority who are right, and the few who are wrong. When people refer to religion in ordinary conversation, or when someone is referred to as being religious, what is always understood is the belief in supernaturalism in some form or other. The quantity of supernaturalism may be great or small, but it is there. Always understanding that by "spiritual," when applied to the lower races, there is no intention of connoting the metaphysical "spirit" of later days. Tylor's definition of religion as "the belief in spiritual beings" is the only one that will withstand a scientific test.

I have already quoted once from Locke's pregnant chapters on Words, in his *Essay on the Human Understanding*. I conclude with one more passage. "Language," he says,

"being the great conduit whereby men convey their discoveries, reasonings, and knowledge from one to another, he that makes an ill use of it, though he does not corrupt the fountains of knowledge, which are in things themselves, yet he does as much as in him lies—break or stop the pipes whereby it is distributed to mankind. He that uses words without any clear and steady meaning, what does he but lead himself and others into error? And he that designedly does it ought to be looked on as an enemy to truth and knowledge."

Had these words been well pondered, many of those who have used the word "religion" so misleadingly would have been far more on their guard. Even though the history of religion did not amply justify the popular meaning of the word, still the popular meaning should have some influence in determining its use. But the popular meaning is really the right one. What many writers have really been trying to do is to popularise new things under an old name. And in this instance the policy is certainly a mistaken one. We do not deceive the real religionist, we merely convince him that he has something so valuable that we cannot do without at least some imitation of it. And it is this pseudo-homage to religion that, as much as anything else, helps to perpetuate the timidity manifested by so many writers who consider themselves advanced. If we really believe in religion, let us say so, openly and boldly. If we do not, let us be at least as plain and as courageous in expressing our opinions. This is a duty we owe quite as much to others as to ourselves.

C. COHEN.

### The Spiritual Life.

IN last week's article it was stated that "the only spirit known to us is breath," and that "the only spiritual faculty of which we have knowledge is the faculty of automatic breathing." In the Hebrew Bible *ruah* (breath, spirit) occurs upwards of a hundred times; but in seventy-three instances it is used in the feminine gender. No wonder that in one of the uncanonical Gospels the Holy Ghost is mentioned as the mother of Jesus Christ. In Genesis i. 2, we read that "the spirit [breath] of God moved upon the face of the waters"; and in chapter ii. verse 7 we are told that "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life," and that, in consequence of that breathing, "man became a living soul." Curiously enough, the Rev. F. W. Macdonald, secretary of the Wesleyan Missionary Society, commenting on the phrase, "and man became a living soul," in a sermon on "The Needs of the Spiritual Life," which appears in the *Christian World Pulpit* for February 21, says: "Henceforth man has a great nature and a great destiny. He is capable of indefinite promotion and degradation. His nature has a scale of ascent and descent that has nothing corresponding to it in the order of beings that surround him." The utter irrelevancy of such a comment is clearly seen the moment we turn to the

first chapter, and read (verse 20): "And God said, Let the waters swarm with swarming things, [even] living souls." Thus the comment is not only irrelevant, but false as well. According to the writers of Genesis, soul was the common property of all living things. The Hebrew for soul is *nephesh*; and, like *ruah*, *nephesh* means breath, and breath, of course, means life. If Mr. Macdonald questions the accuracy of our renderings, let him consider the following relevant comment by Canon Driver:—

"A 'soul' is in Hebrew psychology common to both animals and men; hence no pre-eminence of man is declared in these words: they simply state that he became a living being" (*The Book of Genesis*, p. 38).

Now, on the basis of that irrelevant and false comment or inference, Mr. Macdonald erects an unnatural and piously imaginary structure which he calls the spiritual life and its needs. He begins by expatiating on the hackneyed assertion that "there is that in the poorest of us which demands more than the whole earth can supply." As a matter of simple fact, a great deal less than the whole earth does supply the demands of the vast majority of human beings. If this were universally believed, there would no longer be any use for the reverend gentleman's profession. Of this he is himself aware, as the following oracular deliverance abundantly shows:—

"Man may deny his own spiritual nature, he may oppress it, he may betray it, but it is there, great in its original creation, great in its capacity, great in its ruin, great, inconceivably great, in its redemption and restoration."

"But it is there," cries the preacher, as if he knew much better than the man who denies its existence; and certainly if the spiritual nature does not exist it is impossible to oppress, betray, or ruin it. And according to the creation myth, if man has a spiritual nature, so have all the animals, all the fishes, and other small quadrupeds, as the weasel and the mouse, because they are all alike "living souls," the same as men. The writer of the second account of man's creation in Genesis believed that man was superior to the animals, not because he had a soul, but because God had breathed into him, which he is not said to have done into them. In any case, all the things that move are "living souls," so that in this respect man has no pre-eminence.

When we come to examine the needs of man's spiritual life we find that they are quite as imaginary as itself. They are described as being wonderfully vast. Mr. Macdonald informs us that "it is, for instance, a primary requisite of the spirit of man to be right with God." We have heard and read that thousands of times before; but there is no man living who can speak on the subject with the authority of a single grain of knowledge. It is very true, as Montaigne says, that "nothing is so firmly believed as that which is least known," and such is doubtless the case in regard to the belief in God. The preacher is able to talk so much and so intimately about God simply because he is destitute of any knowledge of him. He does not know even that he exists; and, therefore, he recklessly says whatever he likes about him without fear of interruption or contradiction from above. Now, to tell people that it is their first duty to be right with God is equivalent to urging them to become just what the preacher thinks they ought to be. Another thing needed by man's spirit is appropriate nourishment; and we are assured that the only nourishment suited to the spirit's requirements is God. One of the most ancient of superstitions is that about killing and eating the God. No great religion was ever without it. The fundamental idea is that they who eat the God share in his attributes and powers. As Professor Frazer says in his *Golden Bough*:—

"When the god is a corn-god, the corn is his proper body; when he is a vine-god, the juice of the grape is his blood; and so by eating the blood and drinking the wine the worshiper partakes of the real body and blood of his god. Thus the drinking of wine in the rites of a wine-god like Dionysus is not an act of revelry; it is a solemn sacrament."

It is the same superstition that persists in the Holy Communion of the Christian religion. On the table lies a representation of the slain deity ready for consumption; and to prove that the superstition is as absurd in its Christian form as it ever was in any Pagan religion, we only need to reflect on the following incident, which was related in the *British Weekly* some years ago. It concerns an early morning celebration of Holy Communion at Hawarden Church, where a son of Mr. Gladstone was the officiating minister.

"When the point was reached for the communicants to partake, cards containing a hymn to be sung after Communion were distributed among the congregation. This hymn opened with the following couplet:—

'Jesu, mighty Savior,  
Thou art *in us now*.'

And my attention was arrested by an asterisk referring to a footnote. The word 'in,' in the second line, was printed in italics, and the note intimated that those who had *not* communicated should sing 'with' instead of 'in'—i.e., those who had taken the consecrated elements to sing 'Thou art *in us now*,' and those who had not to sing 'Thou art *with us now*.'

The truth is that in no essential respect does Christianity differ from the great religions that preceded and for a time coexisted with it. The spiritual life so extravagantly glorified in it is the most artificial life conceivable; and there are many distinct species of it in existence. There are the Western and the Eastern, the Catholic and the Protestant species; and the Protestant species is broken up into a great multitude of families, all differing from one another. But there is one respect in which all forms of the spiritual life are identical, whether Catholic or Protestant, Anglican or Nonconformist, namely, in their artificiality. In no form is the spiritual life a natural development of human nature. It is a cultivated growth, not an indigenous fruit; a manufactured product, not a spontaneous phenomenon. Its artificiality manifests itself in its constant tendency to disappear. In this country alone there are hundreds of thousands of people whose sole business it is to produce it, and when produced, to tend it with the most unremitting care lest the winds of worldliness extinguish it. Christians are being constantly warned that unless they abstain from this, that, and the other pleasure, their spiritual life will be destroyed. Theatre-going, week-end excursions, balls, Sunday concerts, Sunday golfing, and many other health-giving diversions are violently denounced as things calculated to slay the spiritual life. Now, from all these facts the only legitimate inference is that the spiritual life is not congruous to our nature, or is an alien or foreigner that never succeeds in getting to feel perfectly at home in us, and from which we naturally shrink. This the preacher puts down to our fallen and sinful condition, to the complicated weaknesses and follies, the deep degradations and wide wanderings of our spiritual nature through sin, and to the baneful influence of some mysterious and malignant spiritual forces said to be perpetually at work; but we ascribe it to the healthy revolt of human nature against what it instinctively knows to be uncongenial and hurtful to it. In our day this constitutional rebellion against the tyrannical domination of spiritual religion is becoming more and more intelligent and deliberate in its action, and this adequately explains the decline of power and arrest of progress in all the Churches.

We owe the belief in the existence of spirit and in the spiritual life to Platonism and Paulinism, and both are now decidedly on the wane. The spiritual man is slowly going out, thoroughly discredited, while the natural man is as steadily coming in, with his credentials legibly visible on his forehead. This is the man of to-morrow, who is destined to set all things right. He is in possession of the key that shall open, one by one, Nature's locked doors, and disclose her now hidden treasures. The spiritual man was an usurper from the first, and always played the tyrant. He cruelly oppressed the natural man,

kept him severely under, and beat him till he was black and blue. The two are now at close quarters, desperately fighting for the throne; and it is already a practical certainty that the under man of the ages of faith shall be the upper man, the only man, the supreme monarch, of the coming ages of knowledge; and no sooner shall the crown be on his head than he will undertake the task of getting right, not with a fancy-made God in a phantom heaven, but with his real fellow-beings on this real earth.

J. T. LLOYD.

### The Reaction in Ecuador: Its Atrocities and Its Causes.

THERE is one part of the world to-day where not only the spirit of the Inquisition, but its very form and substance, are in full force and vigor. Sad to say, the twentieth century has just seen revived, in Ecuador, some of the worst types of religious ferocity, as witnessed in Spain during the Middle Ages. The almost incredible savageries committed at Quito by the Catholics upon the Freethinking General Alfaro and his fellow victims should suffice to remind us that the Papal boast, *semper eadem*, is something more than an ornamental piece of Latin—that it describes the native inerradicable ferocity of Mother Church.

According to a recent telegram (February 14) from New York, the Inquisition is in working order at Quito, and the white terror is in operation at Guayaquil. A Clericalist revolution has broken out and has succeeded by dint of murder of the captured prisoners.

"The victims were subjected to revolting tortures, which were carried out by various mechanical devices. When the victims' tongues were cut out, their torturers mockingly called upon them to make speeches. Finally, the hearts were torn from the bodies, which, after being decapitated, were burned with the aid of kerosene. The head and heart of General Alfaro were taken possession of by the murderers as trophies of war."

The Clericals are conducting a dragonnading policy in the country. Amongst the hundreds of prisoners massacred in the military prison at Quito, two were burned by a slow fire: the ex-president, Eloy Alfaro, and the Radical journalist, Luis Coral, the chief editor of the anti-Clerical daily, *El Tiempo*.

The political history of Ecuador for the last fifty years is a shameful chapter in the long annals of religious crime. Under the tyrant Garcia Moreno (1861-1875) the Republic might very well have been styled a dependency of the Vatican. The fanatical Moreno seized the reins of power in 1861, and in 1863 signed an ignoble Concordat with Rome, in which he proclaimed the Roman Catholic religion the State religion, to the exclusion of every other mode of worship. He, moreover, gave to the clergy the exclusive right of indicating the books entitled to publication, and gave them the much-coveted power of proscribing all books contrary to religion. In addition to this, he conferred upon the bishops (somebody ought to write a book on the turpitudes of bishops) the right of supreme inspection of all primary schools, as well as of all colleges and universities. In 1873 he consecrated the Republic to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, recalled the Jesuits (who had been expelled from the country since 1790), invited the "Christian Brothers" and the nuns to take charge of the primary schools, organised the persecution throughout the country of unbelievers, and gave a million francs to the Pope out of the coffers of the State. Ecuador became the ideal State in the eyes of the Church.

Moreno was assassinated in 1875. But Ecuador remained a theocratic Republic right up to 1895. The monks were omnipotent and ubiquitous, and all branches of the administration were controlled by the hands of their creatures and humble servants.

The revolution of 1895, headed by General Alfaro (late so foully murdered) made a clean sweep—for a

long time—of these turpitudes and stupidities. General Alfaro converted the whilom Republic of the Sacred Heart into a Secular State, and in a few years made the country a free and progressive Republic. The Concordat was abolished, and this, of course, caused a spasm in the heart and a rent in the breeches pocket of the Holy Father. The Legation to the Vatican was suppressed, the foundation of further convents and monasteries was interdicted, and the old institutions of that anti-social type were doomed to extinction on the death of the existing members. For all that, there still remained as many as 50,000 monks of various orders out of a population of 1,800,000 inhabitants—enough, as we have seen, to fanaticise a brutal soldiery and revive the horrid abominations of religious fanaticism.

Against this holy horde there already existed, in 1908, a National Freethought Association. In 1909 a Rationalist organ, *El Propagandista*, was founded, and I find that in the same year a great Rationalist fête was organised at Quito by the Freethought Society named after Vargas Torres, and that the festivities were honored by the presence, as President, of the late martyred General Alfaro.

Some idea of the enlightened principles which animated the new administration may be gleaned from the program of primary education which was promulgated for the province of Pichincha, which includes Quito, the capital of the Republic. As M. Hins points out, that program is based on broad principles, and proceeds on lines that meet all the requirements of modern pedagogy. Religious instruction was replaced by a course of moral training. The Manual of Moral Instruction was drawn up by Francisco de Paula Soria, the Secretary of the Education Department in the above province. An extract from the author's preface may not, perhaps, be out of place:—

"Not many years ago we were taught under the name of morality a series of precepts more human than divine—an inconvenient blend, to say nothing more, of the law of God and the interests of the Church. To lift up one's eyes so as to admire beauty; to go to the theatre; the reading of this or that publication, constituted so many great acts of immorality. On the other hand, certain people erected into virtues—nay, into great virtues—such things as fasting, monastic discipline, and all sorts of privations, reckless as to whether they might be contrary to the preservation and development of society."

Under the auspices of General Alfaro and L. Plaza Gutierrez, Ecuador was preparing to take its rightful place amongst civilised communities. The separation of the Church and State was in the near future; Freemasonry (not the sycophantic—and sacred—guzzling establishment that prevails in England, but an institution imbued with the sound Rationalist principles that actuate the Grand Orient de France) was well organised, and Freethought was growing under the auspices of the Central Committee, Vargas Torres, over whose deliberations, indeed, General Alfaro presided. And now the reaction has come, stirred up by the Clericals, and made successful by their ruthlessness and ferocity.

The martyrdom of General Alfaro, and the white terror, now instituted by the triumphant jackals who have crawled out of the churches with the name of Jesus on their lips and the blood of their victims on their hands, should teach us to beware of entrusting too much freedom to the machinations of, the enemy. An institution which denies the exercise of liberty to its opponents, and as often as possible quenches the torch of liberty in the blood of the Freethinker, the heretic, or the schismatic, has no just claim to common citizenship with the rest of the community. No institution deserves hospitality and free quarters within the borders of civilisation unless it is prepared to claim no privileges for its principles, and no greater freedom for their exercise, than those which any other institution may enjoy. And certainly, in view of this *Do ut des* doctrine, this doctrine of sound political reciprocity, it is clear that if the ex-President Alfaro had made a wholesale clearance of the conspiring monks and religious

orders, as was lately made in Portugal, the Inquisition and its tortures would not have sprung, during the last week or so, into murderous activity in Quito. The drastic nature of Alfaro's policy explains why the 50,000 monks broke out into rebellion, and why they used the corrupting influence of their immense wealth and social influence in order to make possible the renewal of the Inquisition. A small, ill-educated country, long enslaved by superstition, will always have plenty of religion in it when so large a proportion of its inhabitants, as in Ecuador, are the feared and pampered ministers at the altar of God; and with plenty of religion in the people's hearts, and plenty of power in the hands of the priests, no Freethinker, in any country, can esteem himself safe from a fate similar to that which has befallen the Freethinking General Alfaro.

The Freethinkers throughout the world must raise their voices—while tongues are still left in their heads—against these abominations. And our friends and fellow-thinkers in the United States, who are nearer the spot, and living on the same Continent, may, no doubt, be trusted to use all diplomatic means and every kind of pressure in the press to stop the further perpetration of these crimes.\*

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

### Cornering a Preacher.

SIR,—Your readers will probably be interested in the following correspondence. I should explain that the Rev. E. W. C. — is a gentleman fresh from a ministerial training college, and it may therefore be presumed that he is acquainted with the best methods of theological controversy. With this remark I leave those readers of impartial judgment to conclude how far the extravagance of which I complained has been substantiated:—

"MY DEAR SIR,—

Feb. 5, 1912.

I gathered from your last evening's discourse that I am not a sensible man. You made the statement (and you repeated it with some emphasis) that any sensible man would pray. Now, I do not pray; therefore, if your assertion be correct, I am not a sensible man.

I think a pronouncement of so highly controversial a character should have been supported by reasons; but, in the absence of such reasons, might not an opportunity have been afforded for your audience to ask for them? But I suppose it is not your habit to invite questions.

May I be permitted, however, to ask you whether your assertion was a chance, impromptu utterance or the result of a deliberate judgment? For the adjective 'sensible' is not a little astonishing. It would certainly appear that there must be hundreds of thousands of ordinary bread-and-butter citizens who do not pray and who yet manage to lead a pretty 'sensible' sort of life. And I can recall the names of many non-praying men with whom I should be most happy to find myself associated even at the risk of placing myself under the operation of your exclusive proposition.

Yours faithfully, R. NORTH."

"MY DEAR SIR,—

Feb. 6, 1912.

I am much pleased to be in receipt of yours of the 5th inst., and am interested to hear that you gathered from my Sunday evening's discourse that you are not a sensible man.

It is certainly my habit to invite questions from my audience, and it is partly for that purpose that I am in my vestry at the close of public worship, and am constantly asking people to meet me there. Unfortunately, I omitted to announce the fact on Sunday, but we had a communion service immediately after public worship.

It must be obvious to you that a speaker cannot in one address substantiate every remark he makes to the satisfaction of a heterogeneous audience, and must be content to fulfil the primary purpose of his discourse, leaving it as the work of years' ministry to consider adverse propositions.

Now, the remark concerning which you write was certainly a 'chance, impromptu utterance,' but it was also 'the

\* I am indebted for many historical particulars above noted to the following sources: (1) *Almanach-Annuaire de la L. P.*, 1908-1909; (2) *Album biografico de los Libre Pensadores*, pp. 320 (a Freethought survey of the world, but especially of the Latin Republics), Buenos Aires, 1910; (3) *La Libre Pensée internationale* (Hins), 1910.

result of a deliberate judgment,' the issue of many years' study on the deepest problems of life.

Of course, all depends on the connotation of 'sensible.' After facing the questions of being from as many standpoints as possible to me—including that of pragmatism—I am assured of the fact of God and of every man's kinship with Him. Seeing that I hold the common Christian conception of the Deity it at once follows that in my view any sensible man would seek communion with Him, unless he be ignorant of Him, in which case, as a sensible man, he would take pains to find Him.

To explain this position fully would demand rewriting many of the volumes which have already been written, but let me say, Sir, how delighted I shall be to meet you at any time possible to us both. Obviously you are a man who thinks on life and such is always pleasurable company to me who do the same.

Believe me, sincerely yours, E. W. C —."

"MY DEAR SIR,—

Feb. 9, 1912.

I must thank you for so promptly replying to my letter of the 5th inst., and the admirable temper in which you have dealt with it leads me to trouble you again.

The argument, as you have set it down, by which you support your proposition runs thus: you believe in the fact of God and of man's kinship with Him; you hold the common Christian conception of the Deity; and it therefore follows that any sensible man would pray. Now, I cannot help thinking that, on reconsidering that syllogism, you will agree with me that it looks a little out of plumb. The premises do not justify the conclusion. The conclusion they lead to is that any sensible man *who held your belief in God and your conception of Him* would pray—which is only another way of saying that any sensible *Theist* would pray. But that is a very different statement from your pulpit utterance that any sensible *man* would pray. For there are many men, including some in science, art, and literature, to whom we must bow our heads in respectful admiration, who do not hold your belief in God nor your conception of Him; and I hope you would not be so rash as to say they were without sense on that account. (I agree with you that any sensible man who is ignorant of God should make it his duty to try to discover Him, but that is another point).

It is a good rule that the strength of an argument should be proportionate to the importance of the conclusion. You have advanced a proposition of considerable moment. Its effect is to divide men into two categories—the praying men, who are sensible, and the non-praying men, who are not sensible. You will admit, I think, that one is justified in demanding of you the strictest care in arriving at such a conclusion, and candor compels me to say that the strength of your argument does not seem to me to be worthy of the gravity of your charge. The logic which leads you to so far-reaching a conclusion should be impregnable—and I think any intelligent layman could see that it is not.

A question of some interest, though not germane to our present correspondence, occurs to me. What is the 'common Christian conception' of the Deity? Is it the conception that Matthew Arnold described as the 'fairy tale of the three supernatural men'? Or is it Sir Oliver Lodge's conception of a Deity in whose blood men are the phagocytes? Or how, between these extremes, can it be defined?

Yours very truly, R. NORTH."

"MY DEAR SIR,—

Feb. 12, 1912

I regret that pressure of time will forbid my doing full justice to yours of the 9th inst.

You deal with my argument as a matter of formal logic and state it thus: I believe in the fact of God, and of man's kinship with Him.

Now surely the inference from this is, not that all *sensible* men will pray, but that *all* men will pray! (For prayer is the recognition of that kinship). This conclusion is the one justified by the premises; but of course to reach the conclusion the truth of those premises is assumed. Your own statement of the inference repeats a premise. Certainly my statement has no foundation unless these be true.

I might call attention to the fact that public utterance is the expression of one's own convictions and my statement of which you write is based on my views as embodied in the premises I offer. You would not ask a speaker to preface his remarks by 'in my view' which is always understood.

Concerning the question as to what is the common Christian conception of the Deity, I go neither to Matthew Arnold nor to Sir Oliver Lodge for it—the word 'common' should indicate that. I should think it would be preferable to go to the Founder of the Religion Himself, shouldn't you? By the 'common Christian conception of the Deity' I mean

that conception which anyone may gain by an intelligent and sympathetic reading of what Jesus has to say concerning God in His words and life as recorded in the synoptic Gospels.

Believe me, sincerely yours, E. W. C —."

"MY DEAR SIR,

Feb. 14, 1912.

I regret that our correspondence is proving so fruitless, and, as you appear to be disinclined to continue it, I will, out of courtesy, pursue the subject no further, especially as I have no taste for metaphysical speculations which lead to no practical good.

I should like, however, to repeat my two contentions: (1) That your stricture should apply only to men who hold some definite belief in a Deity, and (2) That there are many sensible men who hold no such belief. Neither of these points has been answered.

You were cautious in avoiding a definition of your conception of the Deity, but incautious in referring me to the Bible. The conclusions to be drawn from the gospels are as many and as varied as the capacities and temperaments of the readers.

I must apologise for opening a correspondence which I fear has wasted both your time and mine. I was hoping you would make some adequate defence of the remark which I questioned, but from the poverty of your argument I suspect that there is no defence to make.

Yours very truly, R. NORTH."

"MY DEAR SIR,—

Feb. 15, 1912.

Many thanks for yours. I really fear that such a discussion is most likely to be very lengthy, and somewhat fruitless—but perchance we shall meet one day.

Yours sincerely, E. W. C —."

The correspondence is instructive as it stands, but my main reason for sending it to you is to convey a hint to the many Freethinkers whose activity is impaired by isolation. There are views advanced in almost every sermon which an instructed unbeliever would have no difficulty in showing to be fallacious; and I suggest that Freethinkers should take advantage of whatever opportunities arise for bringing obvious errors to the notice of their authors. Religious preachers almost invariably talk to uncritical audiences, and to the loosenesses and over-statements which such a condition favors a wholesome check can be administered by a body of men sufficiently informed and intelligent to offer a criticism which is neither captious nor infirm. R. NORTH.

#### THE SONG OF PASTOR WILLIAMS.

Pastor Williams was a singer—he could beat 'em all at that!—

An' he always sung the loudest when they passed around the hat.

Then he'd shut his eyes, throw back his head unconscious as could be,

An' shake the roof an' rafters with "I'm Glad Salvation's Free!"

"We're a-needin' a subscription," says the preacher, "for the poor

An' on'regenerit heathen on the missionary shore:

It takes cash to send the Gospel to give 'em light to see"

(Then Pastor Williams raised the tune "I'm Glad Salvation's Free!")

No matter what the cause was—if cash was in demand, For Greenland's icy mountains or India's coral strand, He'd always shut his eyes and sing, as loud as loud could be, That same ol'-time, convenient song, "I'm Glad Salvation's Free!"

An' I reckon when at last he passed an' reached the shinin' shore

Where there'll never be no sighing an' no sorrow any more, As they let him in at the Gates of Gold, as happy as could be,

He shook the walls of Glory with "I'm Glad Salvation's Free!"

—Watch Dog.

#### WHERE THEY GET OFF.

Some time ago a German was riding out on the Hill City Branch of the Union Pacific. Paradise, Kan., is on that branch. The German afterwards remarked: "Vat kind of a country is this, nohow? Ven the drain reached one town, the brakeman yelled Paradise and no one gots off. Purty soon he yelled Hell City and everybody got off."

## Acid Drops.

The Church must have a finger in every pie. Just as the Archbishops of Canterbury and York issued a special prayer to the Almighty to look alive and behave himself in connection with the great railway strike, so they have issued another special prayer in connection with the threatened coal strike. Here it is in all its wisdom and glory:—

"O God, Who art the Father of all, and Who alone makest men to be of one mind in an house; we beseech Thee, at this time of strife and unrest, to grant to us, by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, a fuller realisation of our brotherhood man with man in Thee; allay all anger and bitterness, and deepen in us a sense in truth and equity in our dealings one with another, for the sake of Thy Son our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen."

Who but hypocrites—and Christianity breeds them wholesale—would have thought of talking about the brotherhood of man as between coal owners and coal miners? Note, too, that God is asked to do a little good for once in a way for the sake of his "Son" called Jesus. All the rest of God's children are not worth talking about. It is idle to expect him to help them for their own sakes. What a creed!

Wednesday's (Feb. 21) newspapers contained another "miraculous" recovery—of a girl living at 204 Milkwood-road, Herne Hill, London, S.E. The *Daily Mirror* was well to the front, as usual, and reported a special incident which it seemed to have patented. When the young lady got up after five years' illness and began walking about the room, she said that an angel told her to; whereupon "a professed Atheist" who was present "fell on his knees and sobbed aloud." We know that Atheist. He is on hire or loan for such occasions. You can learn everything about him except his "local habitation" and his "name." All we need add is that the "miracle" occurred apparently in the interest of a local Church mission; and that the lucky "Dorothy" had been treated by Dr. Norman, of Brixton, and "thirty-seven other doctors before him." Our readers will probably think that this paragraph is quite long enough for such a "miracle."

Dr. L. Forbes Winslow's remarks on this Herne Hill "Miracle" are suggestive enough. He was reported as follows in the *Daily News* (Feb. 22):—

"Dr. L. Forbes Winslow, the eminent specialist on mental and nervous disorders, referring last night to the case of Miss Dorothy Kerin, said in cases of paralysis, stammering, and deafness, the mind exercised a most powerful influence over the body, and he had known of most wonderful results from suggestion, either by a second person, or by the patient himself. He regretted that pioneers in mind-healing seemed to be looked on with suspicion and incredulity by members of the medical profession, who seemed content to 'get along with jalap.' Fortunately, American and French physicians paid considerable interest to the subject, and he hoped the day was near when its adequate study would be an integral part of the curricula in all British medical schools, to the immense benefit of thousands of sufferers."

It is to be wished that other doctors would speak out in the same sensible manner, instead of leaving such things to serve the turn of clerical and newspaper charlatans.

At a missionary meeting held lately at the Bath Church Institute the Rev. J. A. Yonge, Principal of St. Paul's College, Ambatoharana, Madagascar, complained of the "intolerance" of a French Governor, M. Augagnole, who refused to give special help to the Protestant missionaries any more than to the Catholic ones. He said that "religion was out of date, and was no longer necessary. He proposed to grant absolute tolerance to all religions, and would make no difference between a Christian Missionary and a witch doctor." Such was the Governor's intolerance! To give equal freedom to all was to persecute those who had been used to having their own way. "The result of this utterance," Mr. Yonge rather naively confessed, "was to give a quickening pulse to heathenism." But the new Governor is a French Protestant, and Mr. Yonge has "hopes of better things now."

Mr. Yonge made an important admission in his speech as reported in the *Bath Chronicle* (Feb. 17). "Heathenism in Madagascar," he said, "was not necessarily associated with a great amount of vice, but it did imply a relapse into the darkest ignorance." Reading between the lines one can see that good conduct in Madagascar, as elsewhere, rests on a purely natural basis, and really owes nothing to religion. The return to heathenism only means, after all, such things as worshipping a certain stream. But haven't we read of something like that in the Bible? Wasn't the Jordan a sacred river?

The brother of Sir Henry Jones, of Glasgow, is in the same trade as was Adam. He is gardener to Sir Harry Reichel. The *Christian World* says that when the Glasgow professor visits his brother "it is a pleasant sight to see the professor and his brother chatting together in absolute oblivion of their curious social relation." Marvellous! What a sign of the ennobling influence of Christian teaching that a real life professor can talk to his gardener brother in an ordinary human way! And what an amount of almost ineradicable snobbery is shown by a religious paper thinking the occurrence worthy of note.

A number of Nonconformist ministers have been writing on the use of the word "obey" in the marriage service. Dr. Scott Lidgett, Rev. Charles Brown, and Rev. F. G. Leggatt favor the exclusion of the word for commendable, but un-Christian, reasons. Dr. Agar Beet, Dr. Rowland, and Dr. Horton are more orthodox, and favor its retention. In a conflict of opinion, they say, there must be a supreme head, and this is the husband. We believe that in a conflict of opinion the husband as often gives way as does the wife. In any case, which one gives way depends upon what the difference is about, and even then it is not a question of obedience. One may decide to allow another's opinion to prevail without yielding any obedience whatever. Dr. Clifford also believes in the exclusion of the word; but it seems impossible for him to be on even the right side without cant. He believes that "a fuller and clearer apprehension of the meaning of the revelation of man and woman in Christ Jesus" has rendered the word obsolete. And this after Paul's explicit declaration that man is the head of the woman as Christ is the head of the Church, and that woman must yield obedience to her husband as unto Christ!

We have had occasion to several times check the utterances of Protestants—and even Freethinkers—who write so confidently about the decline of the Roman Church. We see from some published figures concerning the growth of religious organisations in the United States that the Roman Church comes out an easy first. The total increase for 1911 is 594,000, which does not equal the increase of population. But of this number 130,000 stands to the credit of the Roman Church. The truth is that the Protestant Churches carry within themselves the seeds of their own disintegration. The destruction of Roman Catholicism can only come from the increasing pressure of civilisation.

"Whence does the editorial writer on Hearst's *American* derive the idea that the Catholic Church is a 'republic'? We had no knowledge that anyone held that notion except Bourke Cockran. A republic is a form of government in which the people have something to say in choosing their rulers, their laws, and their principles. The Catholic Church does not answer this description in any way whatever. How would Lincoln's notion of a government of the people, by the people, and for the people fit the system which professes to derive its authority from God and which exercises that authority through a single head, the Pope, who is supreme and infallible? The Pope is Pontifex Maximus, a title borne by the imperial Cæsars. He occupies a throne (a picture of which appears in a current advertisement), surrounded by all the machinery of empire. He bestows titles of nobility, none the less aristocratic because they are purchased instead of being hereditary. Those nearest to him, the cardinals, are 'princes,' and each of these has his separate 'throne.' One of them has just been enthroned in New York, and another in Boston. The Church shows nothing of ideal republican simplicity; it is all pomp and parade, crowns and sceptres, millinery and imperial display. No Catholic as such has a vote; he is not even a member of his Church; only the higher clergy with titles are members; he is an adherent, a retainer, and describes himself simply as a Catholic. For commercial considerations Mr. Hearst's papers must speak well of the Church, but to call it a republic is a lie altogether too exaggerated to pass muster along with those to which we are accustomed. The Church is no republic; it is a hierarchy, a government by the priesthood, and so describes itself."—George Macdonald, "Truth-seeker" (New York).

Mr. James Douglas, in last Saturday's *Star*, calls upon authors and journalists to keep an eye on Mr. McKenna's projected Bill against "immoral publications." He says that the censorship of literature is now to accompany the censorship of plays. He cries out that the liberty of writers is in grave peril. He notes also that this is part of a general movement of reaction. We congratulate Mr. Douglas on seeing this at last. We foresaw the wave of reaction some fifteen years ago, and we have been calling attention to it ever since. We have also been calling attention for months to the danger of Mr. McKenna's projected Bill. But we

belong to the "sceptics," and etymologically a "sceptic" is a person who keeps his eyes open.

Mr. McKenna has been appointed by the King to be an Ecclesiastical Commissioner for England. The post is worthy of the man.

The police at Hull have been following the example of the Streatham Common police. They arrested a man called Mashford who had been lecturing against a certain Insurance Company and its methods in public open spaces, charged him with inciting to a breach of the peace, and got the magistrate to send him to prison on the ground that people were going to assault him. This topsy-turveyism of law and justice has aroused a good deal of feeling in Hull, and we are glad to see that a large and influential protest meeting has been held in St. George's Hall.

Freethinkers have never been slow to recognise the value of Bishop Colenso's work in Biblical criticism. Indeed, they recognised it long before others, and may fairly claim that it was partly due to their efforts that Christians came to see its value also. But when Dr. Hastings Rashdall, Canon of Hereford, refers to Colenso as "the pioneer Old Testament scholar," he is giving Colenso more than his due. And we fancy that Dr. Rashdall knows this as well as we do. Leaving on one side Hobbes' Analysis of the Bible in the *Leviathan*, the foundations of Biblical criticism may be said to have been laid by Spinoza, nearly two hundred years before Colenso published his book on the Pentateuch. During the eighteenth century all the main lines of Biblical criticism were developed by the Deistic writers, which well paved the way for Paine and his *Age of Reason*. Colenso's great merit was that he was a Bishop of the Church, although this did not save him from practical excommunication. As we have said, we believe Canon Rashdall is quite aware of the facts of the case, but it is part of the stupid Christian policy to ignore the work of Freethinkers in forcing Christians to recognise some of the truths concerning the Bible. First of all, these Freethinkers are denounced as false teachers, and when this can no longer be done, the next move is to hunt up some Christians who recognised these truths, and refer to them as pioneers. In this way the work of avowed Freethinkers is kept hidden, and that of their Christian pupils brought forward as being original. It seems quite impossible to combine Christianity with honesty and justice where Freethought is concerned.

When one glances round, it is astonishing to note how consistently and, on the whole, how successfully this game is played. No man played a greater part, financially and otherwise, in the growth of elementary education, in the early part of the nineteenth century, than did Robert Owen. But Robert Owen was an Atheist, and, therefore, in all histories of the question the praise for Nonconformists and Churchmen is lavish, and his name is ignored. Freethinkers led the way in comparative mythology and in Biblical criticism, but their work is either passed over or dismissed as of no value. Freethinkers were pioneers in temperance reform, but Christians have stepped in, and it is represented as a movement bred in the depressing air of a Nonconformist conventicle. So with a score of other movements. And the worst of it is, that the power of the purse, and the practical command of the press, enables Christians to perpetuate this injustice with impunity. If only funds were forthcoming, some justice might be done to the thousands of dead Freethinkers by the publication of records showing the part they bore in the developing life of modern times. Much of it is beyond recall. But much remains if only the means and the machinery existed for preserving it. While Christians maintain a practical monopoly of the means of publicity, anything like justice is impossible. That much, at least, is certain.

In the light of what has been said it is rather amusing to find a leading article in the *Methodist Times* in praise of "Intellectual Courage." We agree with the writer that it is one of the rarest of virtues, and we add that it is Christianity that has helped to make or keep it so. Courage, like every other quality, requires an occasion for its expression; but it will flourish in a community in proportion as encouragement is given to its cultivation. And how much encouragement does the Christian world give to its expression? What chance would the ordinary journalist stand of making a living if he freely expressed his opinions on religion? How many publishers are there in England that dare issue an uncompromising attack on fundamental religious beliefs? You may, of course, attack the Virgin Birth, or blood sacrifice, or some other stupid, savage doctrine that a decently civilised person ought to be ashamed to hold; but to attack fundamentals means to jeopardise your reputation and your

prosperity. It may be safely said that current Christianity represents a huge conspiracy against intellectual manhood. It bribes to silence where it can. It punishes where it cannot bribe. It boycotts where it can neither bribe nor punish. It manufactures mental cowards by the thousand, and then pours out yards of sloppy insincerity on the rareness of intellectual courage.

The following is clipped from the *Christian Commonwealth* :—

"A correspondent once heard the late Principal Fairbairn perpetrate the following 'howler.' He was preaching in Mansfield College Chapel, and in the course of his sermon he had occasion to refer to the incredulity of Thomas with regard to his Master's resurrection. The preacher sought to show how natural was such incredulity on the disciple's part. In all his experience he had never known of such an event as a dead man coming to life again. So and so died and was gathered to his fathers, and nothing more had ever been seen of him. This man and the other man died and 'was gathered to his fathers,' and so forth. Warming to his subject as his period extended itself, the preacher proceeded: 'The first man, Adam, died and was gathered to his fathers'—then, as the absurdity of this last remark suddenly struck him, he paused, stuttered, and adroitly added, 'if "fathers" he could be said to have!'"

This may be put beside the story of the bland old Irish priest who had to read one of the Bible genealogies. "And Adam began Seth, and Seth begat Enos, and Enos begat Cainan—and—and so they went on begetting each other to the end of the chapter."

A deputation of the Protestant Christians of Pekin waited on Yuan Shih-Kai the other day and got more, in all probability, than they bargained for. In replying the President declared his determination, so far as it lay in his power, to remove all religious disabilities and to enforce religious toleration throughout China.

The sons of the late "Mother" Eddy are appealing against her will in which she left millions to the Christian Science Church. Her bequest to the Church she founded is said to exceed the limit allowed by the law of Massachusetts.

Cardinal Bourne challenges the Archbishop of Canterbury's statement that Catholics are not increasing in England. "We have now in England," he says, "something like treble the number of churches and of clergy that we had sixty years ago." That may be true without a proportionate increase of worshippers. New churches are often built while old ones are nearly empty. To a large extent this is owing to the shifting of population which goes on in our great cities.

"G. B. S." calls the Pope "the Bogey Man with the triple tiara"—at least as far as the people who indulge in Ulsterics are concerned. We don't complain of Shaw's language, though a Catholic policeman would probably find ample material in it for a "blasphemy" prosecution. But we think Shaw underestimates the power of the Pope. And when Shaw talks of the "mighty stream of modern Protestantism" he may be reminded that the Catholic Church is the only Church with a future. It is the Church with which Freethought will have to fight its last battles.

Divorce is pretty easy in some of the United States of America. Mr. George Mann at Macon, Georgia, has just been granted a divorce from his wife on the ground that her first husband's spirit haunted them nightly with groans and reproachful glances. This plea was supported by Mrs. Mann's testimony. But it is easy for two persons who want to separate, for reasons of their own, to agree upon such a story. Anyhow, it is to be hoped that "old truepenny" will keep quiet now.

Rev. Stanley Parker, who used to add to the gaiety of Woolwich, is now adding to the gaiety of Newcastle-on-Tyne. People don't indeed laugh *with* him, but they laugh in another way. He has just been amusing them with a picture of the big Tyneside town without Christianity. Justice, liberty, and morality would disappear, might would be right, the strong would trample on the weak (of course, they don't now!), honesty and truth would vanish, there would be no public opinion opposed to vice, women would lose their greatest friend, and (to make a long story short) "hell and Newcastle would be well-nigh synonymous terms." One thing, however, the well-known modesty of this reverend gentleman induced him to omit. If Newcastle did without Christianity there would be no Stanley Parker—and that would be the greatest calamity of all.



## Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, March 3, Alexandra Hall, Islington-square, Liverpool: at 3, "Milton, Burns, and Byron on the Devil"; at 7, "Was Shakespeare a Christian?"

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

April 14, Glasgow; 21 and 28, Queen's Hall, London.

## To Correspondents.

- C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—March 3, Queen's Hall.
- J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—March 3, West Ham; 10, Manchester; 31, Queen's Hall. April 21, West Ham.
- PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1912.—Previously acknowledged, £78 11s. 10d. Received since:—Dr. E. B. Foote (New York), £10 4s. 1d.; K. C. C., £1 1s.; J. G. Finlay (S. Africa), £1; J. T. G., £1; Mde. Augusta Forrer, £1 1s.; W. Morris, 5s.; Manchester, 5s.
- N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance gratefully acknowledges a donation of useful clothing from Mr. A. J. Fincken, and would be glad if other members would note that similar donations are always most acceptable.
- ARTHUR CLYDE.—According to Christian chronology, Josephus was not born till four years after the crucifixion of Christ, so his personal testimony couldn't be worth much, in any case. The passage about Christ in Josephus's works is admitted to be a forgery by most Christian scholars, to say nothing of sceptical authorities like Gibbon, who says it was foisted into the text between the time of Origen and the time of Eusebius. The matter is dealt with in the chapter on "Pious Forgeries" in our *Crimes of Christianity*.
- VINCENT WHITTY.—Dr. L. R. Farnell's "Hibbert Lectures" on *The Higher Aspects of Greek Religion* should be the very thing you want. It is published by Williams and Norgate at 6s. You ask us, "Do you recommend Frazer's *Golden Bough*?" Recommend is a mild word. We regard it as ranking with Taylor's *Primitive Culture*. Very few such works appear in a century.
- W. BAILEY.—We have dealt with Bishop Welldon. Thanks. We note that when you were in New York last year you heard the guides on both the uptown and downtown sight-seeing cars say, as they pointed to a certain house, "Here for many years lived Bob Ingersoll the Atheist." We agree with you that this doesn't look like "being forgotten."
- K. C. C.—Pleased to have your good wishes too.
- J. B.—We really haven't time just now to hunt down that "professed Atheist" who "fell on his knees and sobbed aloud" when Miss Dorothy Kerin got up and walked. Most of the newspapers gave him (or was it a her?) the go-by as too stale a character nowadays. The *Mirror*, of course, is like Voltaire's Habbakuk, *capable de tout*. Perhaps the professed Atheist, if there was such a person present, only sobbed at the folly of the people around him.
- R. CHAPMAN, secretary of the South Shields N. S. S. Branch, has removed to 6 Wenlock-road, Simonside, S. S.
- W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.
- J. G. FINLAY (S. Africa), subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, says: "May health and strength be yours for many a long day." How lucky we should be if the sincere good wishes of all our friends could be realised.
- J. T. G., subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, wishes us "the best of health and sufficient financial support to enable you to keep the flag flying."
- AUGUSTA FORRER.—Your postal order (that is, a postal order) for £1 1s. was duly received, but no letter of directions arrived, and we have been waiting to hear from the sender. It is acknowledged in this week's list. Pray accept our thanks. The International Freethought Congress this year is to be held at Munich. We shall publish particulars shortly.
- J. DAVIDSON.—The man who calls Shakespeare's plays "the most learned of all the literary works in the world" is not worth replying to. We replied to Mark Twain's foolish book in an early number of *John Bull*. Mark displayed a plentiful lack of knowledge. We never saw a better illustration of Pope's line that "A little learning is a dangerous thing."
- When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.
- LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.
- ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.
- 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. 8d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

## Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote pays Liverpool a visit to-day (March 3) and delivers two lectures (afternoon and evening) at the Alexandra Hall, Islington-square. The subjects are quite fresh and the hall will doubtless be crowded. Tickets of admission are 1s. and 6d. for each lecture, and can be obtained beforehand of Mr. W. McKelvie, secretary, 57 Penrose-street, Everton—or of the caretaker at the hall.

Tea will be provided for visitors from a distance at the small charge of eightpence per head. It will be served in the Alexandra Hall during the interval between the afternoon and evening lectures.

Mr. Foote had very fine and most enthusiastic audiences at the Birmingham Town Hall on Sunday. The splendid and sympathetic gathering at night showed that Secularism is a power in the great capital of the Midlands, but the press still keeps silent about it, and will probably go on doing so to the point of downright imbecility. On the Saturday evening Mr. Foote had a chat with a deputation from the N. S. S. Branch. It was arranged that the Sunday evening lectures should go on at the King's Hall till the end of March, and a proposal was discussed for carrying Free-thought propaganda into the populous district in the neighbourhood of Birmingham. Plans will be matured for starting this work through the Birmingham Branch in the early autumn—with the financial aid and general supervision of the Secular Society, Ltd.

Mr. Cohen had good meetings at Glasgow on Sunday. This evening (March 3) he lectures at Queen's (Minor) Hall, London. We are minded to say, with regard to these Queen's Hall meetings, that we do not think the London "saints" are taking sufficient interest in them—even allowing for the inimical weather. We beg them once more to assist in advertising the meetings. That is the great thing we ask of them. It is impossible to advertise commercially all over the vast London area, but the "saints" can do a great deal by circulating the small printed announcements which can be obtained from Miss Vance, and sometimes by displaying a larger bill in a window or on a wall.

The *Ethical World*, reviewing Mr. Cohen's *Determinism or Free-Will?* compliments him on his "incisive and forcible" style and on his stating the "case for Determinism with clearness and fullness." "There is probably," it adds, "no better popular summary than this of Mr. Cohen's." The statement would be equally true if "probably" were omitted. The *Literary Guide* calls Mr. Cohen's book "an exceedingly useful little work" and adds that "the general opinion appears to be that Mr. Cohen has written just the book that Rationalists have long been inquiring for."

There was a very brief notice of Mr. Cohen's book in the *Times*, which called it "A defence of Determinism written with ability."

There is more correspondence in the *Camberwell Borough Advertiser* between Councillor A. B. Moss and the Rev. J. A. Douglas on matters arising out of the late proposal to open the Borough Council's meetings with prayer.

The same paper reports a lecture on the Blasphemy Laws by Mr. Harry Snell. It appears to have been a very good lecture, with good hits at bigots and hypocrites all round. But why does Mr. Snell follow Mr. Stead in stating that "the Founder of Christianity was himself executed as a blasphemer"? We have pointed out again and again that he wasn't. He was charged with blasphemy at first, but afterwards with sedition, and it was for that he was executed. We begin to wonder whether anybody reads the New Testament nowadays except ourselves.

The Secular Education League's Annual Business Meeting, for members only, takes place at the Caxton Hall (Room 18) next Wednesday evening, March 6, at 7.15 prompt. All members who can should make a point of attending, to receive the report and balance-sheet and elect the officers and executive for the new year. A public meeting for both members and friends of the League, or of its objects, will take place in the same room at 8. Admission is free and tickets are not necessary. The League's President, Mr. Halley Stewart, J.P., will occupy the chair, and the list of speakers includes Mr. George Greenwood, M.P., Mr. George Roberts, M.P., Rev. Donald Hole, Sir Henry Cotton, and Mr. G. W. Foote. There ought to be a good meeting.

We are always glad to see the fair sex—the potential mothers of the race—interested in Freethought, and we are very far from agreeing with St. Paul that they should not

speak and teach. We welcome lady speakers on the Free-thought platform. There are all too few of them as yet. We have pleasure, therefore, in announcing that the Manchester Branch's platform will be occupied this evening (March 3) by Miss Bessie Boltansky, who will lecture on the very appropriate subject of "Women and Religion." We hope the local "saints" will encourage her with a good audience and a hearty welcome.

Sir Hiram Maxim, referring to our paragraph on his telling Mr. W. T. Stead that Moses and Paul were imaginary characters, writes us: "It has occurred to me that some of your very wise readers might be interested in this subject, and might want to write their views as to whether I am right or wrong; in fact, I should like to see the position which I have taken criticised." The subject is a good one for correspondence. Our own views upon it are pretty well known already. We lectured on "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?" some thirty years ago, and many times since. We have had an article in type from the pen of Mr. J. W. de Caux for some time on this very question, and we expect to find room for it in our next issue. We are also unable to begin this week the new series of articles which "Abra-cadabra" is writing.

Mr. G. K. Chesterton had a long article on "The Blasphemer and the Buffoon" in the *Yorkshire Observer*—apparently written by special request. First of all he disowns all sympathy with Atheist propaganda. "I think of an Atheist," he says, "what the overwhelming millions of mankind think of him. I think he is a figure as essentially horrible as a headless man walking about." That is very nice for a beginning. But while Mr. Chesterton loathes Atheists he says that he is for giving them the same fair-play as other people. He asserts that nobody dares to persecute Atheists:—

"There are far too many of them in the upper classes for that. They abound among the dons at the universities, among the proprietors and editors of the great quarterlies and monthlies, among parliamentary statesmen and fashionable authors. It is no more feasible now to gaoil all infidels as blasphemers than to gaoil all Socialists as thieves."

Prosecutions for blasphemy are bound, therefore, to be discriminating. They are directed against poor men because it doesn't do to attack the rich. There still is in England one law for the rich and another for the poor. Of the prisoner for blasphemy Mr. Chesterton writes:—

"He is being punished under a state of utter lawlessness; a state of affairs that differs in no way from the maddest mob rule, except that it is governed by the caprices and whimsies of wealth instead of by the passions and appetites of starvation. He is being punished because a certain sort of well-fed man who is made a magistrate happens (in his purely private capacity) to dislike one kind of talking and to tolerate another. The prosperous magistrate does not mind being told that there is no God in a learned article. On the contrary, the news comforts him, for many excellent reasons. But though he does not mind Deity denied, he objects to Deity derided, largely because he feels that if once men make game of their gods they may hurl their blasphemies yet higher in the cosmic scale, and begin to make game of their magistrates.

"But my first and last ground of protest is that these recent raids on the blasphemers of the street corner are simply new weapons in the mean war of wealth against the under-world. We must not allow the old law of blasphemy or the old law of slander to be used spasmodically in this individualist and favoritist style. Either we ought to enforce the law or we ought to alter it. We ought to fight with the blunt sword of charity or the sharp sword of consistency. But to give the individual magistrate an ancient sword of justice, of which you deliberately keep one edge sharp and the other edge rusty—that is a trick, and is intolerable."

That is what Lord Chief Justice Coleridge said in 1883.

The *Yorkshire Observer*, referring to Mr. Chesterton's article and the release of Messrs. Stewart and Gott, observes:—

"The only questions that matter to the public are whether the Christian community proposes to revive the Roman Inquisition and make men believers in certain doctrines by the compulsion of English common law or English statute, and whether, if belief is not enforceable, the expression of unbelief is to be punishable except when it is framed in polished periods. Does anyone imagine that the two men who were sent to prison in Leeds have come out orthodox Christians? Has their literary style been improved? If not, then at least Christians cannot justify their having been imprisoned for saying what Lord Morley says in language less disciplined than his—and language which, in spite of all, still remains less disciplined."

This is the essence of the matter in a nutshell.

The *Bradford Daily Telegraph* gave a half-column report of the funeral of Mrs. Gott. It was fairly written and included a large part of Mr. Grange's eloquent speech at the graveside.

## The Inquisition.—II.

(Continued from p. 124.)

NUMEROUS offences were cognisable by the Old Inquisition. Religion being a sovereign principle, unlike mathematical theorems that lead to nothing, a man's heresy takes all sorts of forms, and distinguishes him from the orthodox in various ways. When any of these symptoms appeared, the Inquisition considered him as "suspected of heresy," and imprisoned him until by witnesses or the torture they could prove him guilty. Few passed through the ordeal safely. "The number of those actually acquitted by the Holy Office," says Davie, "previous to the reign of Philip III. was about one in two thousand" (p. 91). The toils for ensnaring the victim were so ingeniously multiplied that few were permitted to escape, and it became a proverb that those who were not roasted were at least singed.

"Devant l'Inquisition, quand on vient à jubé,  
Si l'on ne sort rôti, l'on sort au moins flambé."

—Prescott, vol. i. p. 318.

Suspicion of heresy fell on all who committed any crime, or were guilty of any vice, that might result from erroneous opinions; on blasphemers against God or the saints; on sorcerers and diviners; on the invocers of demons; on those who remained a year excommunicated without performing their penances; on all who held any article condemned by the Catholic faith, and all who did not hold any doctrine it prescribed; on those who denied the authority of the Pope; on the concealers and favorers of heretics; on all who opposed the Inquisition; on all nobles who refused to take the oath to drive heretics from their states; on all secular rulers who would not fight for the Church when required; on all lawyers and notaries who assisted heretics by their advice, or concealed papers or records which might make their errors, dwellings, or stations known; and on all who buried heretics. Even death was no shield, for any deceased person might be tried for heresy, his body disinterred and burnt, his property confiscated, and his memory pronounced infamous (Llorente, pp. 20-23).

The expenses of the Inquisition, including the cost of prisons and the salary of officers, were defrayed by the fines and confiscations of condemned heretics. Neither the Pope nor the State ever succeeded in obtaining more than a third of the spoil. No wonder, therefore, that "the sword of justice was observed, in particular, to strike at the wealthy" (Prescott, vol. i., p. 312). The wives and families of condemned heretics were disinherited. An article of the code required the Inquisitors to set apart a portion of the confiscated estates for the education and Christian nurture of children who were minors; but Llorente says that in the immense number of processes he had occasion to consult, he met with no instance of attention to the fate of these unfortunate orphans. When the Inquisition could thus rob, as well as murder, it was not likely to be slow in finding victims. We may add, as a specimen of its justice, that not only reconciled heretics, but their children and grandchildren, were prohibited, under pain of confiscation of property, from holding any public office, or practising as notaries, surgeons, and apothecaries. This was visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children, as Prescott remarks, "to an extent unparalleled in modern legislation" (vol. i., p. 321). But it was strictly in accordance with the decrees of several Councils.

"All hope abandon ye who enter here," might have been inscribed over the entrance of the Inquisition prisons. The victim was not allowed to know who were his accusers nor to confront the witnesses; and if, under interrogation, he admitted one heresy, it was vain for him to assert his innocence of others. If he denied the charges, he was tortured to make him confess his guilt, and we shall presently describe the brutalities that were inflicted on this pretence. If he was slightly suspected, he was required to

renounce all heresies. On consenting, he was *reconciled*, and subjected to a fine and penances. Refusing, he was excommunicated, and proceeded against as an obstinate heretic. If *violently* suspected, he was required to make a public abjuration, bareheaded on a scaffold, and warned that if he relapsed he would suffer death. Relapsed and impenitent heretics were burnt at the next *auto-da-fé*, or Act of Faith. Those who died in the Catholic faith were strangled before being committed to the flames, while those who died in any other persuasion were burnt alive (Rule's *History of the Inquisition*, vol. ii., p. 77. Llorente, pp. 27-29).

Under Ferdinand and Isabella, the New Inquisition was organised in Spain by the ferocious Torquemada. The scruples of the Queen were overcome by the Dominicans. Thomas de Torquemada was her confessor, and he is said to have extorted from her a promise that if she came to the throne she would devote herself to the extirpation of heretics. This man, who has achieved an infamous immortality, was appointed Inquisitor-General in 1485 by Innocent VIII. So fierce was his zeal that in eighteen years 105,294 victims were burnt or severely punished. Weary of his cruelties, the very Pope diminished his powers, ostensibly on account of his age and infirmities. He was so hated that he was obliged to travel with a bodyguard of fifty Familiars on horseback and two hundred on foot; and so superstitious that he kept on his table the horn of a unicorn, which he thought able to discover and neutralise poisons (Llorente, p. 58). With the license of genius, Victor Hugo has partially whitewashed this monster, but the historian is nearer the truth in saying that:—

"This man, who concealed more pride under his monastic weeds than might have furnished forth a convent of his order, was none of that class with whom zeal passes for religion, and who testify their zeal by a fiery persecution of those whose creed differs from their own; who compensate for their abstinence from sensual indulgence by giving scope to those deadlier vices of the heart, pride, bigotry, and intolerance, which are no less opposed to virtue, and are far more extensively mischievous to society" (Prescott, vol. i., p. 307).

Torquemada founded the New Inquisition, and drew up its rules. *Denunciation* came first. Then followed the *Inquiry*. Witnesses were summoned, without being informed against whom, and asked "if they had seen or heard anything which was, or appeared, contrary to the Catholic faith, or the rights of the Inquisition" (Llorente, p. 60). When they had signed their declarations, the Qualifiers decided whether the accused merited theological censure. These were generally ignorant and fanatical monks, who saw heresy in everything, and they often condemned doctrines taught by the Fathers of the Church. No improvement seems to have ever taken place in this respect, for Blanco White wrote of the students in the Spanish colleges, early in the last century, that "the absolutely dull and ignorant were made inquisitors, who, passing judgment in their secret halls, could not disgrace the college by their blunders" (Davie, p. 360).

If the accused was held to be tainted with heresy, he was removed to the *secret prison* of the Inquisition. The arrest often took place suddenly, and his family and friends were not apprised of his whereabouts. At the first *Audience* he was told that being there was a proof of his guilt, and admonished to confess. The admission of any *formal* heresy meant the loss of honor and property. If his replies varied from time to time he was accused of falsehood and evasion, and subjected to the torture. Llorente, who was secretary to the Inquisition at Madrid from 1789 to 1791, and made a careful examination of the records, says that the historians who have described these tortures "cannot be accused of exaggeration" (p. 65).

According to the rules, torture could not be repeated; but this was evaded with devilish ingenuity. When the victim was utterly prostrate, the inquisitors declared the torture *suspended*, so that it could be renewed at pleasure.

The prisoner was allowed a defence, but he could only employ one of the lawyers on the list of the Holy Office; and even if one of these was selected, he was not allowed to see the original process or to communicate with his client.

When condemned the prisoners were attired in the *san-benito*, made of yellow woollen, and marked with the red cross. Those who repented after sentence had "on the lower part of the scapulary a painted bust, in the midst of a fire, the flames of which were reversed, to show that the culprit was not to be burnt until he had been strangled" (Llorente, p. 71). The impenitents, who were to be burnt alive, had the flames mounting, with grotesque figures of devils, to point their destination.

When we describe the tortures we shall give some lively narratives of those *autos-da-fé*. They were great festivals, at which the *grandees* of Spain assisted; and no spectacle was thought more glorious at a coronation than the roasting of as many heretics as could be reserved for the occasion (Llorente, p. 269; Davie, pp. 154, 225). With disgusting hypocrisy, the inquisitors ordered the secular authorities to execute the poor wretches, as a priest could not kill; and they were bidden to avoid the shedding of blood—the atrocious formula for burning alive.

We have already, in "The Jew Hunt," described the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. The expulsion of the Moors in 1609 was also instigated by the Inquisition. So far were these "infidels" in advance of their fellow subjects, that six families out of every hundred were ordered to remain and instruct the Christians in their arts and manufactures. This they indignantly refused to do. The result was that Spain lost a million skilful citizens, and the industries they had practised were totally lost. The miseries of those exiles were often appalling.

"Large numbers were shipwrecked and drowned; and many of those who had preferred hiring private vessels to those provided by government, were murdered at sea by the owners and crew, for the sake of obtaining their property; and the instances mentioned, by Spanish historians, of the horrible butchery perpetrated in these cases—men murdered in presence of their wives and children—the children thrown overboard alive—the females violated only to meet the same fate as their protectors a few days afterwards—can be equalled only by the most terrible instances in the annals of piracy.....But even of those who landed on the shores of Africa, comparatively few lived to reach an asylum.....Many were attacked and robbed by the wandering Arabs, and those who resisted were put to death; others perished of hunger and fatigue; and of 6,000 persons who left the neighborhood of Oran with the intention of proceeding to Algiers, *one* only is said to have reached his destination; while of 140,000, who about this time embarked for Africa, 100,000 are believed, by competent authorities, to have suffered death in various ways a month or two after their expulsion" (Davie, pp. 204, 205).

Let it never be forgotten that the expulsion of those people was advised by the Inquisitor-General. The barons were well-disposed to their Moorish vassals, and the humane scruples of Philip III. were overcome by Ribera, the archbishop of Valencia.

The Inquisition took upon itself the duty of licensing books in Spain as well as in Italy and France. The works of Erasmus, Luther, and the other reformers were prohibited. An Index Expurgatorius was prepared, which especially excluded all tales and romances as well as heretical works.

"It is related," says Davie, "that one of the Spanish lists of prohibited books particularised the various passages in works only partly condemned, and that the extracts which it gave were so racy, that the volume, though compiled for a different purpose, was frequently used as a means of amusement" (p. 106). The result was that the Index itself had to be put on the Index.

In 1558, the terrible law of Philip II. was issued, decreeing "death and confiscation for all those who should sell, buy, keep, or read, the books prohibited by the Holy Office; and, to ensure the execution of this sanguinary law the Index was printed that the people might not allege ignorance in their defence"

(Llorente, p. 106). A catalogue of the prohibited books, drawn up by Valdes, the Inquisitor-General, included a vast number of foreign books, and all Hebrew and Arabian writings, as well as works in other languages treating of the Jewish and Mohammedan religions. As half the learning of the time was contained in such volumes, the Inquisition was endeavoring to strangle all literature but orthodox theology. The Bible itself was put under embargo, Perez del Prado remarking "That some individuals had carried their audacity to the execrable extremity of demanding permission to read the Holy Scriptures in the vulgar tongue, without fearing to encounter mortal poison therein" (Llorente, p. 111). Prescott remarks how fortunate it was for the dawning literature of Spain that Isabella did not, like her successors, commit the censorship of the press to the Inquisition (vol. i., p. 324).

After the famous battle of Lepanto, Philip II., whose zeal against heresy was not excelled by any ecclesiastic of the time, conceived the idea of carrying the Inquisition to sea. As the authority of the Inquisitor-General did not extend beyond the dominions of the King of Spain, it was necessary to apply to the Pope, who, in 1571, granted a brief authorising a new tribunal for judging heretics who might be found in ships. It was first called the Inquisition of the Galleys, and afterwards more pompously the Inquisition of the Fleets and Armies. But it existed only a short time, as it was found to impede the progress of navigation.

America was made acquainted with the Inquisition in 1519. The baptised Indians, who retained some idolatrous practices, were prosecuted, and fleeing into the interior, they returned to heathenism and liberty. In 1571, Philip II. established three tribunals for all America—one at Lima, one at Mexico, and the other at Carthagena. The first *auto-da-fé* in Mexico took place in 1574. According to Llorente, "it was celebrated with so much pomp and splendor that eye-witnesses have declared that it could only be compared to that of Valladolid in 1559, at which Philip II. and the royal family attended" (p. 190). Among the victims were a Frenchman and an Englishman, who were burnt as impenitent Lutherans.

Voltaire (*Essai sur les Mœurs*, chap. 140) remarks that the Christians reproach Montezuma with sacrificing human captives to the gods, and asks what the Mexican emperor would have said had he witnessed an *auto-da-fé*. Montezuma would probably have said that the Aztec and Christian creeds were remarkably similar.

A papal decree in 1816 opened the proceedings of the Holy Office to the light of publicity. Prior to that time all its trials were conducted in secret. Every prisoner, witness, and attendant was compelled to take an oath not to reveal anything he saw or heard. This privilege was tenaciously clung to by the inquisitors; and when, in 1512, the New Christians offered King Ferdinand 600,000 gold ducats towards the expenses of a war with the King of Navarre, on condition that he would make the trials of the Inquisition public, they were defeated by the Grand Inquisitor, Cisneros, who gave the monarch a large sum of money to do nothing of the kind. A similar offer to Charles V. was frustrated in the same way (Llorente, p. 80).

With unintentional irony the prisons of the Inquisition were called *Santa Casa*, the Holy House (Chandler, p. 181). Some of the cells were clean and well lighted, but others were literally dungeons, being underground and without windows. Those who could purchase food were allowed to do so, but the poorer sort were half starved. Sometimes they gave the prisoners coals, and occasionally a candle, but according to Chandler:—

"Those who are confined in the lower cells generally sit in darkness, and are sometimes kept there for several years, without any one's being suffered to go or speak to them, except their keepers; and they only at certain hours, when they give them their provisions. They are not allowed any books of devotion, but are

shut up in darkness and solitude, that they may be broke with the horrors of so dreadful a confinement" (p. 184).

Silence was strictly enforced. If a prisoner sang a hymn, prayed audibly, or bemoaned himself aloud, he was beaten with a stick; and a case is recorded of one unfortunate who was so often chastised for coughing that at last he died from the stripes (Chandler, p. 190).

When brought before the judges, the prisoners appeared with shaved head, and naked arms and feet. Men and women were both treated in the same way. Frequently the victims confessed at once, whether innocent or guilty, in order to secure the most lenient treatment. They were then reconciled to the Church, and subjected to a penance and a fine, the latter punishment being too profitable to be ever omitted.

Some penances of the old Inquisition were very irksome. An extreme case was that of Ponce Roger, who was commanded to be—

"Stripped of his clothes and beaten with rods by a priest three Sundays in succession, from the gate of the city to the door of the church; not to eat any kind of animal food during his whole life; to keep three Lenten a year, without even eating fish; to abstain from fish, oil, and wine three days in the week, during life, except in case of sickness or excessive labor; to wear a religious dress with a small cross embroidered on each side of the breast; to attend mass every day if he had the means of doing so, and vespers on Sundays and festivals; to recite the service for the day and the night, and to repeat the *pater noster* seven times in the day, ten times in the evening, and twenty times at midnight" (Prescott, vol. i., p. 295).

If the said Roger failed in any of these requisitions he was to be burnt as a relapsed heretic! A sensible man would have demanded the faggots at once.

Heretics who died before their crime was discovered were not free from punishment. They fared worse than sodomites, whose offence ended with their death, and who might even escape arrest by taking sanctuary in a church (Chandler, p. 218). They could be condemned to the stake, their property confiscated, and their families ruined. Describing an *auto-da-fé* at Seville, Prescott remarks that besides those who were burnt alive, "the mouldering remains of many, who had been tried and convicted after their death, were torn up from their graves with a hyena-like ferocity which has disgraced no other court, Christian or Pagan, and condemned to the common funeral pile" (vol. i., p. 311).

Blasphemy, such as denying Mary's virginity, defaming the Trinity or the saints, or reflecting on the Pope or the clergy, was punished as follows:—

"If the blasphemy be very heinous, and the blasphemer a mean person, he is made to wear an infamous mitre, hath his tongue tied, and pinched with an iron or wooden gag, is carried forth as a public spectacle without his cloak, whipped with scourges and banished. But if he be a person of better condition, or noble, he is brought forth without the mitre, thrust for a time into a monastery, and punished with a fine. In smaller blasphemies they are dealt with more gently, at the pleasure of the inquisitors—namely, the blasphemer is condemned to stand, during divine service, upon some holiday or other, with his head naked, without his cloak and shoes, his feet naked, a cord tied round him, and holding a burning wax taper in his hands. Sometimes also they squeeze his tongue with a piece of wood" (Chandler, p. 218).

Besides penances, fines, confiscation, and banishment, the Inquisition had other punishments that fell short of death. Marieno, the Spanish historian, says that the Church "generously accords life to many who do not deserve it," and that, while some "miserably perish," others, who sincerely repent, "she, notwithstanding the heinousness of their transgressions, merely sentences to perpetual imprisonment" (Prescott, vol. i., p. 813). Such were the tender mercies of the Inquisition.

(To be continued.)

## Chant Royal.

ON THE PROPOSED CENSORSHIP OF LITERATURE.

CAST back the veil upon the Olympian dream!  
 Let Aphrodite don a Streatham skirt!  
 And we will filter Hippocrene's stream  
 Lest Pegasus defile it with his dirt!  
 As for the conscienceless Euripides,  
 Lo! he shall fall upon his trousered knees,  
 And to his colleague Brookfield cry in vain  
 That he will teach him to be good again.  
 Oh, foolish cry! Oh, fruitless orison!  
 How shall we purge our England of this stain?  
 Bibles are sold at fifteen pounds a ton!

Is there no laughter left? no single gleam  
 To light on England in her moral shirt?  
 Venus has naked doves—a shameless team,  
 With unimaginable evil girt!  
 The gods (hush!) all be praised! Those doves will freeze  
 In England: but some Aristophanes  
 Will hymn them in his lewd and boisterous strain!  
 Alas! alas! who then shall purge the stain  
 From England's mind? All naked is the sun!  
 England, oh, England! cure that moral sprain:  
 Bibles are sold at fifteen pounds a ton!

The milk of Christian purity yields cream  
 That few digest! What fool the truth would blurt,  
 Were he in terror of a Power Supreme  
 Whose words are simple as his acts are curt?  
 Alas, that faith is dead! What men are these  
 Who would revive the Sacred Mysteries?  
 Brave Cromwell Clifford! Brookfield, who hath lain  
 In wait for pelf, and now at length doth gain  
 His fit reward, the Impudential Bun!  
 Nay! let him read once more the tale of Cain.  
 Bibles are sold at fifteen pounds a ton!

The weekly bags of reeking dung, a ream  
 Of pornographic filth can do no hurt!  
 What are these dirty sprats unto the bream, [flirt!  
 Rabelais, who (fie!) with shameless Truth would  
 (The naked Truth!). As for the honey-bees  
 That hovered round the infant Socrates,  
 Each one should have a little silver chain  
 Held fast in Meyer's hands; his godly brain  
 Would see no harm to Nonconformists done.  
 What though they torture infidels in Spain?  
 Bibles are sold at fifteen pounds a ton!

Nay, Meyer, from thine own eye pluck the beam,  
 And cease to dally with that moral squirt!  
 To you, at least, things are not what they seem,  
 Though you think Shakespeare shameless, Ibsen  
 Not every mind is bitten by God's fleas! [pert.  
 And if this moral powder makes you sneeze,  
 There is some hope you are not quite insane;  
 But, really, you are Art's, and England's, bane.  
 O pure Charles Brookfield, come down with a run  
 From that high pole; not yet is humor slain:  
 Bibles are sold at fifteen pounds a ton!

## L'Envoi I.

O Chesterton! Shaw! Foote! Christ! Walter Crane!  
 For God's sake titillate the lion's mane:  
 He's in a net by Nonconformists spun!  
 Oh, shades of Bradlaugh and of Thomas Paine!  
 Bibles are sold at fifteen pounds a ton!

## L'Envoi II.

Prince Meyer, go and lie down in your drain,  
 And get the water turned on at the main!  
 "Old Charlie" Brookfield, others want their fun,  
 Although it hurts your finer moral grain:  
 Bibles are sold at fifteen pounds a ton!

## L'Envoi III.

Apollo, pardon if my speech be plain;  
 We wait the advent of thy royal reign!  
 Soon may it be thy victory is won!  
 With sacred fires we will illumine thy fane:  
 Bibles are sold at fifteen pounds a ton!

VICTOR B. NEUBURG.

## Portugal.—Official Statement.

The Portuguese Legation in London, wishing to bring to an end the new campaign of discredit by the enemies of the actual Portuguese Institutions, who intended once more to lessen the humanitarian sentiments of the Republican Government by starting the rumor that the political prisoners were badly lodged and suffered barbarous treatment, asks you to

be so good as to publish in your trustworthy journal the following:—At the sitting of the Portuguese Parliament on the 16th inst., the Prime Minister, replying to an interpellation by the Deputy Snr. Joao de Menezes, clearly explained this subject, observing that the prisons now utilised are the same used before by the Monarchical Government, in which, it is obvious, time has not allowed great improvements yet, but where, nevertheless, what is necessary has been done to make them become more hygienic to the prisoners' life; and informing that the British Minister, having visited and observed minutely the prisons in the Fort of Alto Duque and Trafaria, the most attacked of the salubrious point of view, he received from Sir Arthur Hardinge, the illustrious representative of Great Britain in Portugal, a letter recognising as absolutely false all the accusations of the enemies of the Republic, and that, on the contrary to what they assert, the *regimen* to which the prisoners are subject is by no means severe.

Once more the Portuguese Legation begs to call your attention to the disgraceful proceedings of defamation used by the enemies of the Portuguese Institutions, which, owing to the liberal and humanitarian spirit of the men who direct them and of the people who chose them, and to which the representatives of the Powers in Lisbon give a unanimous and public testimonial, were able to impose themselves to the world's respect.

The following is the textual declaration written by the hand of Sir A. Hardinge, British Minister to Lisbon:—

"The British Minister, Sir A. Hardinge, having visited the grandson of a British subject at the Fort of Alto Duque, and also having visited the Trafaria Prison, was pleased to recognise in a private letter he addressed to the Portuguese Minister for Foreign Affairs, that the accusation of barbarous and cruel treatment inflicted in the said prisons upon persons accused of political offences is absolutely inexact, having verified, on the contrary, that the preventive *regimen* to which they are subjected is not at all severe."

## Correspondence

## THE INQUISITION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—My attention has been called to a comment in your issue of last week upon a remark of mine in the *Birmingham Post*. You say: "Perhaps he will now show what mark of divinity there is about a Church which is never a whit better, and sometimes worse, than the world which surrounds her." I answer: In the first place, to put the cruelties of the Inquisition at the doors of the Church is to beg the question. Historians of note, as Hefele Moehler, the Protestant Ranke, and others, hold that it was a royal, not an ecclesiastical, tribunal, though clerics sat on it as parsons now do on English magisterial benches, which was only befitting, seeing it was to try, among other things, charges of heresy. Ranke calls it "a royal tribunal furnished with spiritual weapons."

Surely we may look to the *Freethinker* to strictly confine itself to charges which can be fully proved and are universally admitted as true. In the next place, it was the secular authorities, not the officials of the Inquisition, who made the laws fixing penalties. In any case, the Church never possessed, nor claimed to possess, any arms but spiritual ones; the material sword being wielded by the State on behalf of the Church. Then, too, the divinity of the Church is not dependent upon the action of her children, cleric or lay, but upon her Founder and the character of her dogmatic and moral principles. She has never claimed that her children are in all things better than their neighbors, nor that in all matters they must in the sixteenth century be abreast of the twentieth. Finally, *quod gratis asseritur gratis negatur*. So when you say the Church is never a whit better than the world, etc., I simply deny your assertion as contrary to the verdict of history. May I add, what would you think of my fairness did I argue that the immoralities, the orgies, and the savageries of the French Revolution were the distinguishing mark of Freethought, seeing they were done by professing Freethinkers, and in its name and that of liberty?

96 Bradford-street, Birmingham.

A. H. VILLIERS.

[Our best answer to this correspondent will be found in our brief History of the Inquisition which is now running through our pages. His final reference to the French Revolution is really ridiculous. That the "savageries" of the Revolutionaries had anything to do with Freethought is simply a Christian fable. During the Reign of Terror, even, Robespierre got the Convention to decree that belief in God and Immortality was necessary to human society, and at the festival of the Supreme Being an image of Atheism, contrived by the painter David, was publicly burnt to ashes.—EDITOR.]

**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, C. Cohen, "The World of Cant."

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Wright's, 327 Essex-road): 7.30, Business—*Re* Outdoor Chairmen, etc.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, J. T. Lloyd, "The Silence of God."

**OUTDOOR.**

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

**COUNTRY.**

**INDOOR.**

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, F. E. Willis, "Immortality."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12 noon, Class; 6.30, Dugald Semple, "The Return to Nature." With lantern illustrations.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): G. W. Foote, 3, "Milton, Burns, and Byron on the Devil"; 7, "Was Shakespeare a Christian?"

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Miss Bessie Boltansky, "Women and Religion."

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