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A useless life is but an early death.—GOETHE.

"The Bloody Faith." —SHELLEY.

"O! blood, blood, blood!"
—*Othello*, Act III., Scene 3.

LONDON newspapers have reported a terrible case of the religious "blood" superstition in the United States of America,—which seems, by the way, to be the most extraordinary hotbed of crazy and criminal fanaticisms. On the whole, instead of summarising the facts from the various newspaper reports, we prefer to take one of them, and our choice falls on the *Daily Chronicle* :—

"The arrest of a young Mulatto woman at Lafayette, Louisiana, yesterday, has resulted in the revelation of a series of religious crimes unequalled in this country. The Mulatto, whose name is Clementine Bernabet, was arrested as being suspected of the murder of a negro child two months ago. Upon her arrest she confessed that she had killed 17 people, and declared that she was a Voodoo priestess.

"To-day four leaders of this horrible cult—two men and two women—all Mulattos, have been arrested, and they do not deny that they are concerned in the murders of some 25 people. The priestess and her assistants are preachers of the blood atonement, and their religion is called the Church of the Sacred Serpent, known in the island of Hayti as the lowest and most barbarous form of African Voodoo worship.

"This Voodooism, or the worship of a serpent, demands human sacrifice, and the frequent disappearance of children and weak-minded adults aroused the suspicion of the authorities, who set a watch upon Bernabet, and traced the crimes to her. All the victims were negroes, who were taken to a rude temple in the centre of an immense bayou. There their throats were cut on an altar erected to the Sacred Serpent, the ceremony being carried out with the usual Voodoo rites."

No doubt all the colored people implicated in this shocking affair are professed Christians and diligent readers of the Bible. The special correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph* says, indeed, that Bernabet "knows the Bible, and can quote readily in support of blood sacrifice as practised in olden times." A Bible text was found scrawled over a group of her victims: "When He maketh inquisition for blood He forgetteth not the cry of the humble."

Many faithful readers of the Bible will probably be astonished at this aspect of the case. They read the Bible and yet do not read it. The modern Christian takes no notice of those parts of "God's Word" which have no relationship to his mind and character, however much they were related to the mind and character of ancient and less civilised people. Things that would disgust or horrify him if he read them as yesterday's news make no impression upon him when he meets with them in the Bible. He merely looks and passes on. Only what interests him detains him; the rest is disregarded. Otherwise the book would be thrown away with contempt and abhorrence.

It is not too much to say that the Bible reeks with blood. Open any good Concordance and note the space devoted to the word "Blood" and its deriva-

tives, including "bloody." And this in the New Testament as well as in the Old Testament.

God himself is represented in Leviticus (xvii. 11) as telling the Jews through the mouth of Moses that "it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." Jesus Christ himself said at the Last Supper (Matthew xxvi. 26-28) with reference to the contents of the winecup that went round the table, "This is my blood of the new testament which is shed for many for the remission of sin." And even to this day the wine used in the Holy Communion has to be of a color suggesting blood. Finally, the writer of Hebrews (ix. 22), whether St. Paul or another, in a long argument on the sacrificial character of the "Savior's" death, says: "And almost all things are, by the law, purged with blood; and without shedding of blood there is no remission." Or as the author of the first Epistle of John puts it, "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

We mean no disrespect to the Jews of to-day by remarking that the ancient Jews were savages. Our own ancestors were savages at the same time. And the savagery of any people is reflected in the savagery of their religion. The ancient Jews had the blood doctrines and ritual that were, and still are, common to their stage of evolution. The blood was the life, and the life was the most precious of all things; therefore it was offered in sacrifice to God. Moreover, as relationship between members of different tribes is only possible through a blood covenant, in which the blood of the covenanters is shed and generally mingled, so relationship between man and God could only be renewed by fresh bloodshed. Christ's "blood of the new testament" really means his "blood of the new covenant." And the word atonement simply means "at-one-ment." God and man are made at-one with each other again.

Human blood came first in religious sacrifices. Of this there no longer exists the slightest doubt. The blood of lower animals is substituted for that of human beings as man progresses in civilisation. Even the blood of lower animals is dispensed with as the sight of blood becomes too offensive; and, in some parts of India to-day, the Deity is put off with a red-ochre mixture, his worshipers hoping he will benevolently wink at the subterfuge.

That the ancient Jews sacrificed human beings on the altars of Jehovah is beyond dispute. Professor Frazer, in the third volume of the new (third) edition of the *Golden Bough*, shows how incontrovertible it is. The first-born, at any rate, was God's; other children, and even wives, were sacrificed on special occasions, say of famine or pestilence. The sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter stands as a classic instance of this terrible superstition.

Christianity did away with the necessity for further bloodshed by uniting the human and divine in the person of Jesus Christ, and making his sacrifice serve once for all. His blood shed on Calvary is "the blood of the everlasting covenant." It was a wholesale transaction, leaving no room for further business in that line. As the poet Cowper sang, in a hymn which is ignominiously cast out of the present collections, the fountain of salvation "is filled with blood, drawn from Immanuel's veins," and all sinners have to do is to "plunge within its flood" to "lose all their guilty stains."

G. W. FOOTE.

Points of View.

THERE was considerable piquancy in the inquiry addressed to Sir Rufus Isaacs in the House of Commons, "Is it wrong to teach in a Christian country, 'Thou shalt not kill?'" In the first place, the person questioned was a Jew. He was asked to give an official opinion upon Christian practical ethics in a Christian country. One would have thought the proper person of whom to inquire should have been a bishop. But there are no bishops in the House of Commons. There are, indeed, no representatives of the Church, as such, in the House of Commons. There is a Chaplain, but no one seems to bother about him. Certainly, no one ever asks him for information. He may be ornamental; he is decidedly not useful. He says certain Christian prayers over an assembly of Christians and Jews and Atheists and Agnostics, and other religious odds and ends, and having said them, everybody proceeds with the business exactly as they would if the proceedings opened with a comic song. In the latter case, it is quite probable there would be a greater anxiety shown by members to be present at the opening of the day's business.

In the next place, the inquiry laid bare the ugly fact that killing, or the readiness to kill, irrespective of any personal conviction as to the justice of the killing, forms a part of our Christian civilisation. Our national salvation, we are told by those in authority, depends upon our readiness and ability to kill more people in a given time than can Germany or some other nation. The other nation, as Christian as ourselves, is apparently in agreement with us on this point. Among Christian nations the rule, kill or be killed, or at best, be ready to kill or be killed, seems to obtain. Of course, the rule is not stated in this open manner. We must be more or less hypocritical in our international piracy, but it means this or nothing. Our national security rests upon the Army and the Navy, and the obvious value of soldier or sailor lies in their effectiveness as killing machines. A soldier or sailor who will not kill to order is valueless. Neither may ever be called upon to kill, but both must be ready to do it. Both are supplied with chaplains to look after their spiritual welfare. They will be duly taught the Christian duty of non-resistance, of forgiveness of enemies, of the all-conquering power of Jesus; but this must not be allowed to interfere with a supreme faith in military discipline, or of the supreme value of effective marksmanship. And if considerations of economy compelled the Government to economise in the direction of either Army chaplains or the number of rifles, there would be no hesitation in dispensing with some of the chaplains.

Naturally, in a Christian country we talk much of loyalty to conscience. And the depths of one's devotion to a principle is not unusually in inverse proportion to one's talk concerning it. Where people feel deeply, they are more apt to be silent than discursive. But what amount of conscience does our civilisation permit a soldier? He must be loyal to his oath, true; but in what sense? What would be said to the soldier who, when told to fire on an enemy, replied, "Very well; but, first of all, let us know what he has done to deserve killing. Those who give the order may be convinced he deserves shooting, but I don't yet know anything about it. I may not agree with the arrangement at all. When I know more about it, I may even think he deserves praise instead of death." A soldier who talked in this manner would be declared an impossible creature; fit only for comic opera; altogether out of place in the world of real life. A much-admired poem of a much-admired poet describes the soldier's duty as:—

"Their's not to reason why,
Their's but to do and die,"

a conception of things that leaves precious little scope for conscientious questioning. So we exalt, on the one hand, the claims of conscience; and, on

the other hand, declare that the safety of the country depends upon the maintenance of a condition of affairs that rules conscience out altogether.

Most people will say this is absurd; but really the absurdity is that it should be considered so. More than absurd, it is tragic that we should openly claim, and apparently believe, that civilisation depends for its security and perpetuation upon proficiency in warfare. We must study cost, as one does in the purchase of luxuries, when dealing with the man of science (when he is not developing a new gun or a new explosive), or with the man of letters, or a rise in wages; but cost is nothing when it is a question of Army or Navy. That is essential. It is a first charge, and anything we may have over may be spent in other directions. Our political leaders tell us, in much applauded bursts of political ardor, that so long as we have a shilling to spend we will get rid of it in buying better guns and in building more battleships than any other nation. When will one of them have the courage to say that so long as we have ignorance, disease, misery, and oppression, we will spend our last shilling to get rid of *them*? Yet these are far greater dangers to present civilisation than lack of military development. Advice of the first kind is noble, practical, patriotic. Advice of the second kind is Utopian, impracticable, and unpatriotic. It all depends upon one's point of view.

While I write I have but to cross the room to see marching by a Church Boy's Brigade. They are dressed in a semi-military uniform, with officers and other military trimmings, and everything done that is possible to excite in them an admiration for military life. They are marched to church—I believe Church attendance is compulsory—and the mixture of religious teaching and military training, it is hoped, will result in their becoming disciples of the gospel of empire and piety. Christians, of course, see nothing wrong in training boys in this fashion. They believe in the power of love to overcome the world, but it is as well to have an Army and Navy in case the other gospel breaks down. So each generation grows up fed with the notion that our greatness depends upon the extent of our territory, or upon our ability to wipe every other Navy off the seas, in ignorance or indifference of the factors upon which real greatness depends. Mr. Fielding Hall tells us that when the Burmese consulted their Buddhist priests as to what would be the consequences to those who took life in offering resistance to the English, their reply was simple and explicit. The moral law, said they, was clear. "Thou shalt not kill" was part of the moral order, and no one could break that order without paying the penalty. Soldiers might be called on to take life in defence of their country, but with that the moral law had simply nothing to do. No one could take life without being worsened by it. "Thou shalt not kill" is a part of Christianity as it is part of Buddhism; but our priests are more accommodating. They are not only ready to provide spiritual consolation and spiritual inspiration for militarism, but will use their energies in training the young that they may become professional soldiers when they arrive at maturity. The Burmese were behind the times. They had not realised that in the eyes of the Christian world the ability to kill is one of the surest indications of a high state of civilisation. They foolishly thought a people's greatness might lie in other directions, and they paid the price accordingly.

It would not be fair to call the people who measure greatness in this way hypocrites. In fact, it would be decidedly unfair—to the hypocrites. For a hypocrite is one who does what is wrong while fully realising what is right. He can see straight even though his actions are crooked. And there is, to this extent, some hope for him. One can build upon his perception of truth, and so correct the moral bias. But the mass of people do not even see what is right. They are askew both mentally and morally. They are the slaves of phrases, victims of a distorted system of education. They do not take the trouble to seriously think out their position, and perhaps

lack the ability to do so, even were they inclined to the task. All their lives they have been led to ignore the essential, and to emphasise its opposite. The result is the complete absence of a guiding principle that is in touch with reality. There are plenty of cant phrases and cheap moral maxims—mostly wrong. They live from hand to mouth, mentally as well as physically. And the result is, that when any real crisis faces the nation, the nation is sadly unprepared to meet it in anything like a sane and scientific spirit.

Consider the discussion that has been going on over the question of a living wage. Never mind whether the demand of the workman or the refusal of the employer was justifiable. That a very large number of men, able and willing to work, are not able to get enough to bring themselves and their families up decently is undeniable. It is also said certain industries cannot pay more in wages than is at present being paid. This may, or may not, be true. True or false, there is little to boast of in a civilisation where such a condition of things not only exists, but where it is taken as part of the inevitable order. This last is the worst feature of all. For the fundamentally tragic feature of the discussion over the living wage question is the hardly disguised feeling that to demand for everyone able to work the wherewithal to secure a decent standard of comfort is to strike at the very foundations of our social order. A society that can adopt that tone shows itself lacking in the first elements of a genuine civilisation.

It will be said that a deal of the evil complained of results from our being Christian in theory without being Christian in practice. But this is not true. What we see is really Christianity in practice. Historical Christianity, and there really is no other before us, has never been averse to the use of brute force—when it could be exerted in its favor. As a matter of fact, the glorification of the soldier, as such, is practically a product of Christian times. The soldier received his measure of praise in antiquity, but there were few writers who asserted that Militarism was essential to the well-being of a nation or of civilisation. Moreover, Christianity has always been glaringly wanting in any adequate guiding principle of conduct. Its standard of excellence has been extra-terrestrial, and the essentials of terrestrial welfare have been obscured and ignored. And the outcome has been a people who have never been accustomed to taking a sane and comprehensive view of life as a whole. They have valued the things they should not have valued, and despised the things they should have prized. Something has been done of late years to correct these many centuries of mis-education. But a great deal more remains to be done before we have completely mastered the effects of a bad social heredity.

C. COHEN.

The Kingdom of God.

THE Rev. Dr. Newton Marshall is perfectly right in claiming the miraculous as "an essential part of our Christian faith" (*Baptist Times*, March 29). A supernatural religion would be a contradiction in terms did it not treat the natural as its rightful playground or theatre of action. In the theological sense, a miracle always means an act of supernatural interference with the natural order to serve some supernatural end. The miraculous is the supernatural at work. But there are miracles and miracles, Dr. Marshall tells us. Some of them we are to believe "just as recorded," about others we have permission to be "doubtful," and there are others, again, which "the evidence leads us to reject." The only difference between the reverend gentleman and ourselves on this point is, that the evidence leads him to reject some miracles and compels us to reject all of them. Speaking at the same Free Church Council meeting, Dr. Frank Ballard, heedless of the

glaring self-contradiction involved, made the astounding statement that a man may throw all the miracles overboard and still remain a Christian; and Dr. Marshall himself gave utterance to the following most amazing opinion: "But all this is very unimportant. A few incidental miracles, more or less, makes no real difference." He asserts that it makes no difference to the Evangelists that some of the miracles they record are discredited. He proceeds thus:—

"In point of fact, the really important miraculous element of the Gospel, in the view of the Evangelists and of Jesus, is not the incidental miracles, but something else. What is this something else? It is called in the Synoptics the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven. It is generally called in the Fourth Gospel 'eternal life.' And if we are to understand the New Testament, we must get out of the habit of paying an exaggerated regard to the little miracles of healings and raisings from the dead and feeding thousands of people. These are marvellous enough, of course, but they are petty and insignificant compared with the stupendous miracle (as the New Testament writers regarded it) of the kingdom."

Fancy a servant of Christ describing anything his Lord and Master is reported to have done as "petty and insignificant." Surely, whatever he did in the service of the kingdom was of necessity redeemed from being "petty and insignificant," no matter with what compared. But let us examine this "stupendous miracle of the kingdom," compared with which the little miracles of healings and raisings from the dead and feeding of thousands are said to be "petty and insignificant."

Dr. Marshall waxes exceedingly eloquent in his eagerness to describe it. He employs very high sounding phrases in his endeavor to portray its glory. The chief feature upon which he expatiates is its newness. There never had been anything like it in the world before:—

"Jesus said He had it, so to speak, here, something startling, new. It was so new that even John the Baptist was not in it. Nicodemus could not enter it without rebirth. This new kingdom was not a mere refurbishing of what had been in the world before. It was a new creation. And here it is worth while saying that when we treat the preaching of the kingdom as a mere poetic way of talking ethics, or a fantastic and enthusiastic way of advocating social reform, we simply have not begun to understand the language of Jesus or the times in which he lived. He did not come to reform, but to create."

That sounds extremely fine, only it has the disadvantage of being false. Further on in his discourse Dr. Marshall himself admits that the idea of the kingdom was old when Jesus appeared. It had been preached by various prophets for at least eight hundred years before our era began. It was to be an exclusively Hebrew kingdom, in which the Gentiles were to have no part. Indeed, the earlier prophets predicted the destruction of the enemies of Israel. Let anybody read Jeremiah xxv. 15-34, and immediately thereafter, if he dare, enlarge upon the transcendent beauty and unsurpassed righteousness of Jehovah's kingdom. Highly instructive, too, is the whole of Ezekiel xxxviii., wherein the sword of the Lord is seen hewing and slashing in a grand style. Even according to the evangelical Isaiah the Gentiles are to be nothing but menials in Jehovah's kingdom. They must do all the dirty work as Israel's servants and handmaids (Is. xiv. 1-8); they must build the walls of Jerusalem (Is. lx. 10); they must bow themselves down at the soles of Israel's feet (Is. lx. 14); they must act as Israel's herdsmen and ploughmen and vinedressers (Is. lxi. 5); but, if they decline this life of servitude they shall perish (Is. lx. 12). Such is "the stupendous miracle of the kingdom" as depicted in the Bible. Is Dr. Marshall really proud of it when a few details are placed before him? Such is the new Messianic kingdom which is to belong exclusively to the Israelites, or to as many of them as are deemed worthy to enter it. Speaking of the Apocalyptic literature generally, Dr. Marshall says, "Into this heritage the writers of the New Testament entered. They looked forward

to the making of new heavens and a new earth." In its Christian form, the kingdom was, and is, in essence just the same. It is the exclusive possession of Christians. The whole world must either come under the banner of Christ or ultimately perish. Christ, of course, is the King, and he is to reign until he shall have put down all opposition. This is how Paul puts it:—

"Then cometh the end, when he shall deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have abolished all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign till he hath put all his enemies under his feet" (1 Cor. xv. 24, 25).

Dr. Marshall is forced to confess that this "stupendous miracle of the kingdom" has never been witnessed on earth except in idea. The natural is still universally supreme everywhere. Except on myriads of printed pages and in the mouths of countless preachers, the supernatural is still conspicuous only by its absence. It has completely failed to demonstrate its existence by a single solid deed. It is but an empty dream that has never once become true. Then why cherish it as if it were a reality? Dr. Marshall knows quite well that many present-day theologians have dropped "the stupendous miracle of the kingdom" altogether; and the only fault we can find with them is that they still call themselves Christians. He sneers at such men as Professors Harnack and Bacon, hinting that they have put the miraculous on one side without serious consideration, and, in so doing, behaved like antedeluvian Huxleyites, and not like men alive to the new tendencies of thought. Having thus politely dismissed the fossilised Huxleys, our divine proceeds to play the favorite game of claiming both science and philosophy as allies of theology.

At this point it may be useful to bear in mind that "the stupendous miracle of the kingdom" is still an affair of the future—a mere possibility. The pre-Christian Jews confidently expected a miraculous change; but it never came. Jesus and his Apostles declared that the time was fulfilled and that the kingdom of God was at hand. Jesus died without seeing it established; but the Apostles continued to comfort their converts with the assurance that it would come in their own life-time. They all passed away sadly disappointed. Eighteen hundred years later we find Dr. Marshall making desperate attempts to confirm the wavering faith of his fellow Christians by saying "The miraculous kingdom is still a blessed possibility." Well, anything, however absurd, is theoretically possible; but what on earth is the use of theoretical possibilities? What is the good of talking about a miraculous kingdom that never approaches visualisation? Dr. Marshall wishes to convince us that "modern philosophy actually leads us to expect such a new kingdom as the Jews expected." Can he name one accredited philosopher, who is not a theologian, that actually encourages such an expectation? All he says is that "to the best thought of our time the past shows the advent of new kingdoms." Clearly, "the best thought of our time" is the thought that agrees with Dr. Marshall's. But will he kindly tell us when the last new kingdom sprang into being, and what it is called? He mentions four kingdoms at present in existence: the kingdom of matter, the kingdom of life, the kingdom of consciousness, and the kingdom of man. Without pausing to criticise his classification, we ask, how long ago did the kingdom of man appear, and is there any indication anywhere that another kingdom is about to emerge? We are not aware that any scientist or philosopher has recently committed himself to such a prediction. Dr. Marshall makes a curious mistake in the following statement:

"The past is not a mere monotony of identity, nor even a slow and unvarying evolution without a break. There is an evolution, but with the evolution there is something else that is more important than the evolution; there is epigenesis, or the opening up of new kingdoms."

Epigenesis is a theory which, when first established by a young German doctor named Wolff, was said to

be subversive of religion; and the dictatorial Haller violently opposed it on that score. It eventually supplanted the two silly theories of generation, preformation, and scatology, which held the field when Dr. Wolff first introduced it. What this theory made plain was, that embryonic development consists in a series of new constructions, and not in an unfolding of preformed organs. That is to say, the complete form of the animal is never found either in the ovum or the spermatozoon, but is gradually developed during the process of generation. But this is a radically different thing from the "opening up of new kingdoms" referred to by Dr. Marshall. No new kingdom has at any time appeared by means of epigenesis. Epigenesis is simply a scientific explanation of the embryonic development of existing organisms.

Dr. Marshall's kingdom of heaven is to supersede the order of Nature, and to be known as the order of Supernature; and yet he maintains that "if you will look into the matter you will see that that kingdom is actually in our midst," and that it is "a miraculous kingdom." There is a distinctly Horace Bushnell flavor about these new kingdoms and their new laws. We only know of two kingdoms, the organic and the inorganic, and they are both subject to the same laws. We belong to the former, and are indissolubly related to the latter. Of nothing else have we a solitary scrap of knowledge, all else being a fabrication, an invention of the poetic or religious mind. We are Nature's children, and our mission is to know and observe her laws, which are identically the same for all. To our mind, George Meredith's teaching is infinitely wholesomer than Dr. Marshall's, and to follow it is to enjoy man's highest life. Nature is strong and stern, and we cannot trifle with her with impunity. Man, according to Meredith, is to be:—

"Obedient to Nature, not her slave:
Her lord, if to her rigid laws he bows;
Her dust, if with his conscience he plays knave,
And bids the Passions on the Pleasures browse."

And this is how man comes to his kingdom, which is not of God, nor yet of Heaven, but solely of Earth, whence he came and whither he returns.

J. T. LLOYD.

Modern Materialism.—IV.

(Continued from p. 219.)

"All over the civilised world, laborers, aided by Physics and Chemistry, have united their efforts, until we can say that the limits of the unknown recede, and that new conquests are perpetually being registered in our scientific reports."—LUXS, *The Brain and Its Functions*, p. 3.

"Now the philosopher has stepped upon this planet, everything nursed and petted in the past as truth, is severely scrutinised. He has the mental crucible which digests solar systems, and extracts the pure metal from the dross. He calls unprejudiced observation to his aid, and by it unlocks the gates of mystery."—HUDSON TUTTLE, *The Arcana of Nature*, p. 3.

"We live in an experimental age, in an eminently Positivist age, in which a single well-observed fact has more value than all imaginary arguments, no matter how well knit together they may be. We must seek for the future of philosophy in the depths of chemical retorts, in the surgeon's scalpel, and in the mathematician's calculations, but not in dialectics."—F. MALIBRAN, *Las Dominicales*.

As we have remarked, Herbert Spencer, like Comte, arrived at Atheism and rejected it, and for much the same reason; and although Spencer always repudiated any indebtedness to Comte, declaring, "from everything which distinguishes Comteism as a system, I dissent entirely," and that his direct acquaintance with the whole of the works of Comte was limited to the half of his "Positive Philosophy" still it is difficult to believe that he was not indirectly influenced by Comte in this matter. For Lewes, in his book on *Comte's Philosophy*, published in 1847, dwells on Comte's rejection of Atheism, giving his

* Cited by Lester Ward, *Dynamic Sociology*, vol. i., pp. 143-4.

reasons, of which he approves. Now Lewes was an intimate friend and visitor of Spencer's, and it is impossible to believe that they never discussed the matter between them.

For Spencer bases his rejection of Atheism and Religion upon the same grounds as Comte, namely, that the problem is insoluble, only, in place of the multitude of insoluble problems posited by Comte, Spencer posits an infinite and eternal energy from which all things proceed; but what this infinite and eternal energy is, we do not know and never can know.

Spencer was brought up in the atmosphere of Nonconformity, and his emancipation from religious ideas appears to have been, like Darwin's, a slow and long-drawn-out affair. At the age of thirty-one, he was still a believer.

It was only when Spencer had ranged through the whole of the sciences, and was forced to the conclusion that there was no interference by the supernatural in any one of them, that he at last gave up belief in a God. There was nothing for God to do.

Moreover, an enormous advance in physical science had recently been made—comparable only with Newton's discovery of the laws of attraction—and without which it would have been impossible for Spencer to have formulated his philosophy. This was the discovery of the laws of the Conservation of Energy, the Persistence of Force, and the Indestructibility of Matter, as worked out by Mayer, Joule, Hemholtz, Grove, and others. And as Kant worked out the origin of worlds upon "Newtonian Principles," as the title of his book records—and it was not possible to do so before Newton had discovered the laws of Attraction—so, through the discovery of these new laws of matter, the time had arrived for the "Synthesis" of science, the linking together of the sciences into an orderly sequence, and the working out of the laws of evolution.

In his *Autobiography*, Spencer explains how the idea of the Synthetic Philosophy arose in his mind. He says:—

"The time was one at which certain all-embracing scientific truths of a simple order were being revealed. Years before had been published the work of Sir William Grove on *The Correlation of Forces*; and now the scientific world was becoming everywhere possessed by the general doctrine of the 'Conservation of Force,' as it was then called."

Now, the work of Sir William Grove, *The Correlation of the Physical Forces*, was a thoroughly Materialistic work, and is classed with the works of Buchner, Moleschott, and Vogt. The author lays it down, to cite his own words:—

"heat, light, electricity, magnetism, chemical affinity, and motion are all correlative, or have a reciprocal dependence; that neither, taken abstractedly, can be said to be the essential cause of the others, but that either may produce or be convertible into any of the others" (p. 10).

These are all manifestations of a force that cannot be created or annihilated.

Nor does he stop here; for in the chapter on "Other Modes of Force" he contends that nervous and muscular power are only further manifestations of the same force (p. 158). All the varied phenomena of nature are the result of matter in motion; nowhere does he admit the intrusion of the supernatural in any shape or form. It is a profound and stimulating work. The author, Sir William Grove, an English Judge, was also a scientist, and carried out an enormous number of physical experiments in proof of his thesis. Moreover, his work is not vitiated by any concessions to the religious spirit, such as Comte, and afterwards Spencer, made.

Spencer's *First Principles*, in which he attempts the reconciliation of science and religion, is the most unsatisfactory of all his works. In this work the universe is called "the manifestation of an Unknowable Power," and this Unknowable—with a capital U—is "an Infinite and Eternal Energy whence all things proceed"; but what it is in itself is an inscrutable mystery. Now, says Spencer to the reli-

gious, your God is also Unknowable, and this Unknowable which you call God is the same as the "Infinite and Eternal Energy" of the man of science. Here in this common mystery you can meet and be reconciled.

To the really religious this reconciliation was nothing but flat blasphemy. How could anyone pray to "Eternal Energy"? How could Eternal Energy look after our interests in this life and guarantee us a good time in some future life? This "Unknowable" is own brother to Matthew Arnold's "something not ourselves that makes for righteousness," which he set up for worship after, like Spencer, discarding the almost indescribable varieties of religions now existing. We do not often agree with the late Mr. Spurgeon, but it must be allowed that he put the case of the religious man against this crop of new gods—or rather substitutes for gods—with almost painful clearness and candor. He says:—

"If God does not see and hear, we are shipwrecked upon the rock of blank atheism. I do not care a bit what men believe in, whether it be pantheism, or agnosticism, or theism; if they have no personal God that hears and sees, they have, in fact, no God at all. 'There is a power that makes for righteousness,' said one; but if that power is insensible, and never communicates with man, and never notices him, there is nothing in the forced admission of any use to him who makes it or hears it. It is big talk, such as men call 'bosh,' and nothing more. Though it be veiled in the language of philosophy, the scientific jargon which makes God into insensible force is covert atheism."*

The fact is that Spencer, having reached Atheistic Materialism, declined to acknowledge the name because of its unpopularity. It has often been pointed out that there is more bitterness against Atheism displayed in Nonconformist circles than among Ritualists and High Churchmen. Spencer himself lost a friend through this intolerance when he first began to doubt the accepted creed, and he felt it so keenly that in his *Autobiography* he gives the entire letter in which his friend breaks with him upon this account—an incident that a fighting Freethinker would take as a matter of course.

Atheism is not a popular cause now, but at that time the Atheist was the most unpopular of all reformers. In the panic following the French Revolution, the middle and upper classes resolved to stamp out Freethought and unbelief among the democracy. The bloodshed of the Revolution was described as the work of Atheists, although, as is well known, the revolutionists never broke with religion, but followed Rousseau in his worship of the Supreme Being.

The younger generation who do not know, have only to turn to the *Life of Charles Bradlaugh*, by his daughter, to see the murderous hatred then felt towards the Atheist. Moreover, the upper classes support the Church because they know it is a great conservative force; if, as Mr. Bernard Shaw has remarked, beer is the chloroform by means of which the British laborer is enabled to perform his hard tasks, then religion is the opium which induces him to dream of a better after life in which he will be compensated for all the ills inflicted upon him by outrageous fortune in this life. Here he must be content to pick the crumbs from under the rich man's table; but there he will disport himself in Abraham's bosom, and the rich man will be in "another place." And the preacher tells him to be contented with the station in life to which Providence has appointed him, to order himself lowly and reverently towards his betters, to take no care for food and raiment, or the wealth that perisheth, but to lay up spiritual treasure in heaven, and all will be well.

It is for this kind of teaching that the upper classes patronise the Salvation Army, and for opposing it that Nonconformist governments connive at prosecuting open-air Freethought lecturers.

Spencer, having reached the Atheistic position,

* *The Planter of the Ear Must Hear*, p. 665. (Sermon No. 2,118.)

faltered when it came to declaring it publicly. He knew that his character would be assailed, that his family, relations, and social friends would be shocked and offended; in short, the result would be very unpleasant all round; so he sat down and wrote *First Principles*, in which he tried, after the English fashion, to compromise the matter by keeping aloof from both the spiritual and Atheistic camps. But he admits that his plan was a failure. He tells us that when he decided developing his System of Philosophy:—

"I saw that it would be needful to preface the exposition by some chapters setting forth my beliefs on ultimate questions, metaphysical and theological, since, otherwise, I should be charged with propounding a purely materialistic interpretation of things. Hence resulted the first division—'The Unknowable.' My expectation was that, having duly recognised this repudiation of Materialism, joined with the assertion that an explanation which may be reached of the order of phenomena as manifested to us throughout the Universe, must leave the Ultimate Mystery unsolved, readers, and by implication critics, would go on to consider the explanation proposed. To me it seemed manifest that the essential part of the book—the doctrine of Evolution—may be held without affirming any metaphysical or theological beliefs; and though, to avoid the ascription of certain beliefs of these classes which I do not hold, I thought it prudent to exclude them, I presumed that others, after noting the exclusion of them by the first division of the work, would turn their thoughts chiefly to the second division. Such attention as was given was, in nearly all cases, given to the Agnostic view, which I set forth as a preliminary. The general theory which the body of the book elaborates was passed over, or but vaguely indicated."*

(To be continued.) W. MANN.

The Law of Progress.

An Address by Dr. T. J. Bowles, delivered before the Secular Union, Chicago.

THE law of progress is a natural law, and, like all other natural laws, it never has, nor never can, be suspended—if anything can be true this must be true.

The great unconscious cosmos under the operation of this law, in the course of millions of years, has developed consciousness in man, and under the operation of this law the gods will all be driven from the sky, and their priests will all be banished from the earth.

When the citizens of the United States can be made to realise that the vicars of Jesus Christ and the priests of Jehovah are the chief enemies of the human race, our country will be a happy home for men, women, and children, and here will be seen the grandest civilisation that has ever appeared in the history of the world.

This glorious epoch in history will come when societies like this are organised in all the towns, cities, and villages of our country, and this will occur at no distant day, for the law of progress is eternal and universal.

From the most cruel savagery and barbarism the law of progress has already developed on the earth many partially civilised nations. From the sanguinary state of universal war it is gradually encircling the earth with a golden cincture of peace, and from the degrading and horrid relation of master and slave it is gradually elevating all races of men to the high and sacred plane of universal brotherhood.

From a state of profound ignorance, in which the mightiest monarchs of the world could not sign their names to the bloody decrees which they issued, the law of progress is filling the world with books and knowledge, and is fast illuminating the whole earth with the sacred light of science.

Slowly, and painfully, and sorrowfully, in spite of gods and priests, man has overspread the earth; by long converse with nature, in spite of gods and priests, he ascended from savagery to barbarism; through long ages of toil and struggle and blood, in spite of gods and priests, he ascended from barbarism to the semi-civilised state, and from universal war, monarchy, and servitude to gods and popes and priests, he has finally emerged in a few favored spots of earth as a partially civilised being, and under this universal natural law of progress he is still moving on from conquest to conquest, and to doubt his final triumph over gods and popes and priests after such a long series of battles and victories would be folly and madness.

He has already attended the funeral of more than a thousand gods; he has driven Uranus, Kronos, and Zeus from the skies.

Under the operation of the universal law of progress Odin and Thor and their priests no longer enslave the nations of the northland.

Brahma has been driven from his throne for ever, and his priests have turned to ashes long ago.

Osiris and Isis lie buried in the hot sands of Egyptian deserts and in the valley of the mysterious Nile—under the operation of the irresistible law of progress the priests no longer assemble at Delphi to interpret the will of the gods on Mount Olympus.

The thunderbolts of Jupiter are no longer hurled from heaven, and his priests no longer enslave the sons and daughters of men who dwell on the coasts of the Mediterranean and the Adriatic.

The universal and irresistible law of progress will soon hush for ever the thunders of Sinai, and the priest of Jehovah will soon mingle their dust with that vast army of gods and priests who lie buried on the banks of the Tiber, the Euphrates, the Ganges, and the Nile.

Man, under the operation of the law of progress, has already nearly subdued the earth and filled it with millions of happy homes. He has crossed every sea and tunneled nearly every range of mountains; he has harnessed steam and taught electricity to carry his messages of love; he has nearly exorcised war; he is ridding the world of physical and mental slavery, and who can doubt that in the near future he will drive from our beautiful earth every cruel god and pernicious priest, and make this earth a happy home for all the children of men.

The law of progress is as universal as gravity; it is inherent in the cosmos and is interwoven in the economy of Nature, and through its beneficent operation we are standing to-day on the highest plane that has ever been reached in the history of the world. Virtue is increasing; temperance will soon wave its banner over a sober world; justice is enlarging her dominion; charity and brotherhood are gradually melting down the icy barriers of separation; the grand Caucasian Anglo-Saxon man is slowly but surely spreading the light of science over the entire earth, and we are entering upon a career of greatness and happiness hitherto undreamed of in the history of the world.

All cultured men and cultured women know that all so-called revealed religions are myths and legends; ignorance of natural law was the soil in which they were generated, grew, and flourished; and as ignorance of natural law was universal among primitive men, a belief in supernatural religion naturally and inevitably became universal.

We now know to a positive certainty that this was the beginning of the universal belief in supernaturalism; this was the germ from which all the supernatural religions which have cursed the human race had their origin; with the dawn and growth and development of reason, and with constantly increasing knowledge of natural causation, supernaturalism has gradually faded from the human mind under the beneficent operation of the law of progress, and in the highest variety of men and women known as Rationalists it is positively known that the universe embodies all causes and all effects, and that the supernatural does not and cannot exist; and that all forms of supernatural religion are pure superstitious, and now flourish only in the brain of ignorance.

There was a time when there were no living things upon the earth, but in due time the cosmic law of progress filled the seas with tangled forests and lowly forms of animal life; after the lapse of inconceivable ages the warm primeval seas were filled with fishes and the dry land was covered with luxuriant ferns; after the lapse of many more million years the cosmic law of progress brought forth upon the surface of the earth hideous reptiles, and forests of pine now clothed the earth with beauty.

Tireless and persistent, the law of progress continued its beneficent work, and in a few more millions of years the monstrous reptiles that crawled upon the earth and swarmed in the air were replaced with beautiful birds, and the whole surface of the earth was clothed with leafy forests of transcendent beauty; the cosmic law of progress, tireless and eternal in its work, in a few more millions of years brought savage man upon the scene, and he began his wonderful career upon the earth, now made ready by the cosmic law of progress for his home and habitation.

Universal history, or the history of man and nations, now begins, which carries us through the corridors of time many hundreds of thousands of years in the long ago. The whole biological history of our beautiful earth is simply a record of the beneficent working of the universal law of progress, which first transformed chaos into cosmos, and finally, after the lapse of millions of years, covered the earth with all its infinite wealth of form and beauty.

(To be continued.)

* Herbert Spencer, *An Autobiography*, 1904, vol. ii., p. 75.

Acid Drops.

There was a religious procession through the streets of South London on Good Friday, organised by "the official leaders of the Anglican Communion." Next year perhaps the Catholic and Nonconformist Churches will also organise processions. The more the merrier. But if the processions meet! God help them then.

A novel feature of the observance of Good Friday at Brighton was a procession of Churchmen, starting from the parish church at 3.30 p.m., and proceeding for some distance along the sea front. They did not meet the fate of the famous Gadarene swine, but it must have been a near thing. Perhaps the sea was not inviting enough at Easter. We hope the experiment will not be tried again at Whitsun.

The *Daily Mail* had a pious article on these Good Friday processions. Of course it was very profound and edifying. It wound up with a delightful reference to "that reconciliation of religion and science for which the best minds of our time have yearned." The best minds of our time include the editors and proprietors of the *Daily Mail*. You can see the yearning on their faces—especially between midnight and four a.m.

The Bishop of London's Evangelistic Council held services on Good Friday evening in the Oxford Music Hall and the West London Theatre. What impression this sort of thing will have on the "heathenism" of London may be judged by the statement in the *Daily Chronicle* that the large attendance at both places was "composed, apparently, of the usual church-goers living in the respective neighborhoods."

The *Guardian* tearfully deploras the growing neglect of Good Friday as a religious festival. It is observed as a public holiday, "but the religious significance of the day is not felt by multitudes of men and women." More; this tendency is one "which is becoming stronger in England every year." The *Guardian* appears to be under the impression that the chief function of Good Friday is to make us duly miserable and sorrowful, and only so far as this is done does the day fulfil its proper work. We are sorry for the *Guardian*, and we can assure its editor that such articles as the one in its Good Friday issue is not likely to mend matters. On the contrary, it is calculated to make people laugh more than ever.

And there is a deal to be said in favor of laughter. There is such a thing as taking life and taking one's self too seriously. Half the troubles in the world would disappear if we could only laugh heartily on many occasions where we now wear a perfectly grave face. And certainly a large part of current discussions on Christian beliefs would disappear if people could only be taught to laugh a little more. Nothing gives so much vitality to a ridiculous belief as approaching it with an air of preternatural solemnity, and as though a smile would be a desecration. Laughter is the great solvent of the absurd, which is the principal reason for long impressing on the world the sinfulness of smiling, and its dominance was secured through the cultivation of an unintelligent gravity. Man is the only animal that laughs, and the greater the quantity of hearty laughter in the world the better the outlook for his welfare.

We deeply regret to say it, but it appears to us that the Socialists as a whole are only sensitive about liberty when they themselves are affected by its infraction. They do not display the brave spirit of Thomas Paine, who said that the best defence of his own liberty was the defence of another man's when it was attacked. Nothing short of that is a real love of liberty. It is only a love of one's own selfhood, and a desire to share in a certain privilege. Here is Mr. Upton Sinclair, for instance, shaking his head over an attack on liberty because the victims are Socialists. When they were Secularists, or even unpopular Christians, he never shook his head and all that therein is. Now he bucks up and delivers himself quite oracularly. "It is, indeed, a serious thing," he says, "that a man should be sent to prison for advocating the ideas of Christ in a Christian country." It is singular in the logical sense of the word, but it is not singular in the sense of being much out of the common. There are the Peculiar People—honest, worthy souls—who are sent to prison as ignominiously as possible, with hard labor, for obeying the clearest "ideas of Christ." For, if Christ did not utter the texts on prayer ascribed to

him in the Gospels, what is the use of talking about *anything* that he is reported to have said? And who says a good word for these persecuted Peculiar People? Christian policemen arrest them, Christian juries find them guilty of manslaughter, and Christian judges sentence them to long and humiliating imprisonment. All these good Christians are sworn on a copy of the very book which those unfortunate honorable Christians are punished like felons for obeying. It is only the Freethinkers who protest against this treatment of the Peculiar People by their professed fellow Christians. No editor in England has to our knowledge lifted his pen against it except the editor of the *Freethinker*.

A lot of sheer *blague* was talked at London Opera House meeting convened by the new Free Speech Defence Committee, and Mr. Bernard Shaw was well to the front in the competition. It may be admitted that the prosecution of Mr. Tom Mann, Mr. Bowman, Mr. Crossley, and others is a bad mistake, and, in view of the seditious language indulged in at Belfast, a piece of gross partiality. To let Tolstoy's writings circulate freely, and to pounce upon the obscure *Syndicalist*, is really fatuous; though all Governments are prone to strike at the weak offenders first. We quite agree that there should be a perfectly free circulation of opinion in the press—and also on the platform, though one might draw the line at preaching arson near a haystack. What we complain of is the pretence, which Mr. Shaw and Mr. Ramsay Macdonald kept up just like their colleagues, that troops are brought out in this country to shoot down strikers as strikers. This is not true. Messrs. Shaw and Macdonald know it is not true. And its introduction mischievously complicates an otherwise plain issue. Many people would agree that the expression of opinion should be free, who are not prepared to let strikers (or mere hooligans, taking advantage of an unusual opportunity of gratifying their predatory and destructive instincts) loot, burn, and murder without interruption. We add the hooligans advisedly, for it was they who created most of the disorder during the last great railway strike. Some thirty ruffians were arrested at Lincoln, for instance; they were more or less leaders of a brutal mob that had for several hours been indulging in sheer devilry; and there was not a single striker amongst them. Messrs. Shaw and Macdonald argue, on the face of it, that any Trade Union which organises a strike has the right to govern all the rest of the community while the strike lasts. We submit that the general community has natural as well as legal rights of its own, which ought to be protected; and that if the Government cannot protect them the general community would be entitled to protect itself, and this would be civil war in fact, whatever you like to call it in order to hide the truth. The long and the short of it is that opinion should be free, and that this is in the long run to everybody's advantage; but a limit to men's right of action is inevitable. One man's opinion is not an injury to another man; one man's action may easily be so. And if Mr. Shaw and Mr. Macdonald don't know this as well as we do they are not as clever as we took them to be.

When the Grimsby Professional Orchestra offered to give a Sunday concert in aid of the local relief fund, rendered necessary by the coal strike, Canon Markham hoped no such assistance would be accepted. Sunday labor was bad—not including his own, of course,—that is quite another matter. But a Councillor remarked that the clergy didn't object to Sunday concerts when they ran them themselves.

This same Canon Markham, we understand, is the vicar of Grimsby, and in that capacity he has been preaching on the coal strike. His view of the matter is very simple. He said that men forgot their moral duties and handed themselves over to professional schemers. It seems as though the reverend gentleman had never heard of such a thing as a minimum wage—nor considered how he would like to live upon it himself. After the sermon there was special prayer; and how much attention "the Lord" payed to it was shown in the miners' second ballot.

The London County-Council has turned out a number of books from the school libraries on the ground that there is little demand for them. What a reason! It is just like the present reactionary majority of that body. One of the books turned out is *The Essays of Elia*. Now that book is a classic. Its author is as sure of immortality as any prose writer of his time. You say that young people don't want it. What, none of them? Oh yes, some, but very few. Well, leave it in the library for the sake of that few. They will be the elect readers, with something more in their minds than the mob care about or understand. And even from an economical point of view the book will not be

wasted. The few who read Charles Lamb with pleasure and satisfaction will leaven to some extent the whole mass of commoner persons who surround them.

The reform movement in Turkey was started by Free-thinkers. It was the freethinking officers who led the well-organised army from Salonica to Constantinople, deposed the unspeakable Sultan, and set up a Constitution, which they have jealously guarded ever since. But their task is becoming more and more difficult now that the infamous attack by Italy on the Turkish Empire has roused the Mohammedan world from Morocco to India. A wave of reaction is passing over Turkey. Even the women, who who were enjoying a little of the Western freedom of their sex, are being driven back to the harems. The Sheik-ul-Islam, the religious head of the Ottoman Moslems, has taken the opportunity to denounce their dress and their moving about out of doors, and declares that under Western influence they are "going the way to hell." Religion is the same everywhere,—the sleepless enemy of liberty and progress.

The Shakespeare Festival at Stratford-on-Avon is duly arranged, and according to one report there is to be "a remarkable program." This includes "the Shakespeare sermon" which is to be preached on Sunday, April 28, by the Rev. Hon. E. Lyttleton, Headmaster of Eton. There is something very comic about that Shakespeare sermon preached every year by a professional Christian over the grave, so to speak, of a man who is admitted by nearly all non-clerical critics to have been a sceptic. Swinburne plainly calls him a Freethinker. And what is Lyttleton to Swinburne? These orthodox sermons are enough to make Shakespeare turn in his grave. Perhaps he only keeps quiet because he is seventeen feet below the church pavement. It almost looks as if that great depth was decided upon in anticipation of these annual outrages on the poet's memory.

The following report is taken from the *London Daily Telegraph* :—

"In the course of their annual review of the progress of research at the Imperial College of Science and Technology, the governing body of that institution refer to the very interesting results achieved by Professor Strutt, F.R.S., in connection with the measurement of geological time by radioactive methods. Search has been made for minerals containing a great amount of helium relative to the radioactive matter present, and in some cases ages as great as 700,000,000 years are indicated for the minerals."

What an insignificant thing is the Bible of 6,000 years after this tremendous chronology!

Children, says the Rev. W. F. Adeney, must be brought face to face with the approved results of Biblical study. Certainly they must—if it is necessary for them to go in for Biblical study. For our part, we fail to see any such necessity. Children cannot enter into a critical study of the Bible, which study may well wait until they have reached more mature years. The "approved results" of Biblical study can only mean, so far as the children are concerned, a view of the Bible accepted by the parents or teachers. And this is as likely as not to be proved wrong in the light of a more complete knowledge. Dr. Adeney also says that "Children must be fortified against foolish and sceptical ideas." Against foolish ideas, certainly. But why against sceptical ideas? Suppose the sceptical ideas happen to be the true ones? Why cannot Dr. Adeney have a little more confidence in the power of reason, and in his own religious views, so that he may be content with training a child *how* to think, and leave it to form its own opinions on the Bible as well as on other subjects? Ready-made opinions are of no more use to children than they are to adults—indeed, they are positively dangerous.

"Recent Wills" in Monday's *Daily News* contained the following: The Rev. John Hulbert Grover, M.A., of St. Katharine's, Regent Park, N.W., £167,655. There are no coal strikes where this reverend gentleman now resides—if the New Testament be true.

We referred last week to an article in *Reynolds'* belauding Mr. Ramsay Macdonald for singing the praises of Puritanism. We venture to refer to it again. The writer is Mr. Hector Macpherson—a gentleman who dreads scepticism and dreads orthodoxy too, one of those who were satirised by George Eliot as steering a safe course between too little and too much, avoiding all really definite statements, and objecting even to an uncompromising declaration that twice two make

four. Mr. Macpherson's leanings, however, are towards the good old Scotch religion in which he was painfully brought up. Just listen to this :—

"Puritanism, which it is still the fashion to hold up to ridicule, had the merit of holding before working men a higher ideal than that of materialism, which is apt to take the form of pursuing gross pleasures. Puritanism carries with it a seriousness of purpose, devotion to high ends, and the elevation of character to the highest rank in the sphere of secular activity. When the workers as a whole begin to discover that materialism fails to bring mental satisfaction, we may expect to see a step taken in the direction of a higher form of civilisation."

This nicely blown bubble of bigotry would burst in a moment if Mr. Macpherson only defined his principal term. What does he mean by "materialism"? If he means the theory of the universe taught by Lucretius in ancient times, and by Bradlaugh, Büchner, Haeckel, and others in modern times, he is talking sheer silliness; for there is not the slightest evidence that Lucretius, Bradlaugh, Büchner, and Haeckel were anything but highly honorable men, to whom the mere life of the senses was as nothing to the higher life of intelligence. There is absolutely no reason—unless vulgar personal prejudice may be called a reason—why a philosophical Materialist should be a worse man than a philosophical Spiritualist. The truth of the matter is that Mr. Macpherson uses the word "materialism" in its secondary sense of animality, by which it is suggested, though not honestly asserted, that non-religious persons are moral lepers, in an early or a later stage of that ghastly malady. This is one of the dirtiest tricks of religionists in controversy. We beg to tell Mr. Macpherson, with the requisite amount of down-rightness to make an impression on such mental integuments as his, that the people he calls "materialists" value character quite as highly as he and those he speaks for do, and have quite as much of it in stock as they have. To put the whole case in a nutshell, Mr. Macpherson is simply playing the Pharisees. We advise him to read Robert Burns by way of remedy for his loathsome complaint.

"Plain Speaking on Foreign Missions: Startling Report by Bible Students' Committee." These headlines in the *Daily Chronicle* of April 2 were over the following statements :—

"The summary report on foreign mission fields of the special committee appointed by the International Bible Students' Association has just been issued.

"The success attained by the missionaries in the past (it says) is very small. We found Oriental Christians about as sincere, intelligent, and earnest as the average Church attendants in America and Europe! very few gave evidence of being wholly consecrated to God and His service.

"Present missionary efforts are almost exclusively along the lines of secular education. Although this is not Christianising work, it is of course a good work, for the poor Orientals surely need education.

"The tendency of the times, in the Orient as in the Occident, is towards unbelief in any religion. The Orientals are remarkably tolerant of all religions, and are often perplexed at the missionary competition and opposition of Christian denominations. The higher castes consider the medley of Christian doctrines presented to them less philosophical than their own.

"The common conception that all the people of China, Japan, and India are heathen savages is very erroneous. Their upper classes include some splendid characters of truly noble manhood, the moral and intellectual peers of Americans and Europeans. Indeed, the masses of these people are less vicious and rude; more kind and considerate than those of Europe and America. Drunkenness and immodesty are almost unknown amongst the Orientals."

"The summary report read at the Convention was signed by all the committee, as is also the complete report, which is to be published in full (by the International Bible Students' Association, Brooklyn, N.Y.) for its members and the public."

How the truth comes uppermost—in time.

More "Providence." President Taft has asked for the immediate appropriation of £100,000 to relieve the suffering caused by the "unprecedented" Mississippi flood from Cairo to Memphis. For three hundred miles the swollen river has been spreading death and destruction. Twenty or thirty towns have suffered greatly. It is reported that the town of New Madrid has been swept right away. "He doeth all things well."

Mr. Pierpont Morgan and a gang of other millionaires are running "The Religious Forward Movement." We suppose they are trying to Christianise the masses for good business reasons. It is only religion that can make men satisfied with a state of society having millionaires at one end and paupers at the other. "The Religious Forward Movement" has our best wishes for its failure.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

April 21 and 28, Queen's Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

C. COHEN'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—April 14, Queen's Hall; 23, Wood Green; 30, and May 1, Belfast; 5, Victoria Park; 12, m., Finsbury Park, a., Parliament Hill.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—April 21, West Ham.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1912.—Previously acknowledged, £118 5s. 11d. Received since:—F. Whatcott, 2s.; J. D. Maysmor, 6s. 8d.; Captain Potter, 6s. 8d.; J. D. Maron, 6s. 8d.

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

T. M. MOSLEY.—Mr. Cohen's book on Determinism deserves all you say in its praise. It is in a different street altogether, as you say, from the books of Ballard and Blatchford, neither of whom really understands the subject. Ballard confuses will with choice, and Blatchford leaves no room for morality. Determinism has indeed been almost as much misunderstood by its friends as by its enemies. Mr. Cohen drops the absolute individual man, who has no real existence, and studies and presents him as a product of social evolution. That is the reason why he gets at the bedrock truth of the matter. Yet the very merit of his book, curiously enough, militates against its success. Bacon observed that people don't like pure truth, but prefer to have it with a mixture of error. So the public look to the Ballards and Blatchfords, and only the real students like yourself will talk about Mr. Cohen's book. We may add that you are rather a remarkable working miner.

L. KOEHLER (S. Africa).—We will get Mr. Heaford to look up the case of Holland, which we judge from your letter is very interesting, and write something on the long-established system of secular education there, and the spread of Freethought among the people. Pleased to hear you so "enjoy the *Freethinker* and never miss a word in it."

S. G. MASON.—Glad you have derived advantage from reading this journal. As to your questions, Christians oppose progress first and claim all the credit for it afterwards. We give a few instances of the pioneer work of Freethinkers. Robert Owen was the founder of nearly all social reform in Great Britain. Thomas Paine originated the scheme of Old Age Pensions. Jeremy Bentham (an Atheist) was the greatest reformer in jurisprudence; Macaulay says he found it a gibberish and left it a science. G. J. Holyoake has been called the Father of Co-operation. Bradlaugh was the boldest reformer of his time. And as your friends seem to be Socialists, we may remind them that Karl Marx was an Atheist. (2) Your Agnostic friend argues very badly. He knew a man who was laughed out of Christianity and went to the dogs. What does that prove? Thousands of men whose orthodoxy is unimpeachable go to the dogs.

E. B.—You will see it has been useful. Thanks.

HARRY JACKSON.—Glad you hold the *Freethinker* to be "the best weekly paper" and that you "would not miss it once for pounds." Thanks for cuttings.

E. OLIVER.—We had seen the report elsewhere and made use of it—as you will see. Thanks, all the same.

A. B. MOSS.—Thanks for the paper, but we think we have given the Rev. C. W. Screech quite enough attention already. You will be able to settle his hash quite easily. As far as we are concerned, let him screech.

E. B.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

JOSEPH ALMOND.—Will be useful. Thanks. Glad to hear there were special meetings for Freethinkers at the Esperanto Congress in Antwerp. We should like to see the journal you refer to.

S. ELLISON.—Pleased you think the *Freethinker* "gets better week by week." It is a pretty way of putting it that "the editor is getting younger in years and older in thought." The latter may be true; the former is flattering.

J. TOMKINS.—Too late for this week. Will deal with it in our next. Thanks.

OTTO WETTSTEIN.—Thanks for packet of tracts.

WILLIAM JAMES.—You say "there is much comedy in this world for those who can appreciate it." True. But as Meredith said in a letter we saw quoted the other day, the thinker who deals in wit, at least in this country, has to trust to his philosophy to keep him warm.

J. G. BARTRAM.—Next week.

E. DALE.—You are mistaken on one point. Morrison Davidson is sincere enough; he is as honest as the daylight.

J. D. MAYS MOR.—Glad you and your friends like this journal so well.

SOME CORRESPONDENCE (owing to the holidays) stands over unavoidably till next week.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums

Mr. Foote's engagement at Glasgow for April 14 has been cancelled. This note is for the sake of some who may not have seen last week's *Freethinker*.

Queen's (Minor) Hall, closed last (Easter) Sunday, will be reopened this evening (April 14) when Mr. Cohen will occupy the platform, and there should be a good meeting to hear what is sure to be an interesting lecture. Mr. Foote will deliver the final lectures at Queen's Hall this season on April 21 and 28. Particulars will found on the last of our advertisement pages.

The next "social" under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive will be held at Anderton's Hotel, Fleet-street, on Tuesday evening, April 30. There will be the usual program of music, readings, and some dancing. Members of the N. S. S. are entitled to introduce a friend. No charge is made for admission.

A Conference on the Blasphemy Laws, and how to secure their abolition, is arranged to take place at South Place Chapel, Finsbury, on Tuesday evening, April 16, at 7.30. Various advanced bodies will be represented. The National Secular Society will be represented by Mr. G. W. Foote and Mr. J. T. Lloyd. It is hoped that one result of the meeting will be the formation of an influential standing committee.

The Bethnal Green N. S. S. Branch starts to-day (April 14) its open-air propaganda in Victoria Park. Its station is near the bandstand. Mr. Darby lectures at 3.15 on "The Message of Secularism."

Mr. J. W. de Caux's manly letter in the *Eastern Daily Press* of April 2 should increase the respect in which he is held by a great number of his fellow-citizens at Great Yarmouth. The magistrates have set aside a vaccination exemption order on the ridiculous ground that the "parents'" application was made by the mother instead of the father—just as though there were any room for doubt as to the mother's being the child's *parent*. The magistrates have ordered the child to be vaccinated. Mr. de Caux, who is himself a magistrate, advises the father to "refuse to comply with such order," and adds "I shall support him in his resistance." Brave and straight!

The stricken reader to whom we forwarded the present from another reader in New Zealand (see last week's "Sugar Plums") tells us, in his letter of acknowledgment how he first became acquainted with the *Freethinker* :—

"I will never forget the day I came across the *Freethinker*. I found it in a wood not far from my house. It was on a Sunday morning coming home from chapel. I was a great Christian, by the way. I read the front page 'G. W. Foote—Rubbish!' and threw it down. But while going home I kept thinking. Yes, I would go back to see if it was still there. I said to myself I hope somebody has taken it away; but deep down in my heart I was wishing it was still there. I was very glad to find it again. I laid me down under a tree, as it was a nice summer's morning, and read it all through. From that day, seven years ago, I never missed the *Freethinker*, and I do hope I never will while I am in the land of the living."

Thus is the seed of Freethought sown—and thus it fructifies. Our correspondent need not fear about the *Freethinker*. We shall send it to him while we and he and the paper co-exist.

The Mediævalism of Modern Spain.

THE twentieth century familiars of the Holy Inquisition who govern the destinies of the Spanish nation are preparing their plans for a fresh outrage on humanity and a further act of infamous injustice upon Freethought and its standard-bearers. The cynicism of this renewed attack is all the more odious, inasmuch as the new plot is an evident act of pure vindictiveness, which receives the official sanction of Canalejas who, by countenancing these proceedings and lending them the endorsement of his illustrious name, is evidently sinning wilfully against the light.

That the plot being hatched is a mere matter of revenge, no doubt is possible in any reasonable mind. The intended victim is the ex-priest, Don Segismundo Pey y Ordeix, against whom the hosts of heaven, led by the bigots of Spain, are now being stimulated to fanatical zeal by all that is religious in that paradise of inquisitors. Pey y Ordeix was not content to desert the altar of God and the profession of religion just in order to sink into the sloth of indifference and enjoy the sweets of an idle celibate existence. When he left the Church a few years ago, he left it under a deep sense of indignation at the wrongs which the baleful institution of Rome—the *ne plus ultra* of cruelty systematised, and of superstition organised for the purpose of enslaving the human intellect—had inflicted during the whole course of her history upon the civilisation of Spain, and incidentally upon the welfare of humanity at large.

Pey y Ordeix fled from the city of Sodom and Gomorrah, and, unlike Lot's wife, did not turn back. He had renounced the Devil of Catholicism and all its ways. He was a dangerously honest man who had something to say as to the inmost secrets of the institution whose weapon is the Inquisition and whose text-book is the Syllabus, and he was not prepared to be gagged in utterance or meekly mealy mouthed in the mode of saying the thing that needed to be said. He had learning, brilliant talents as writer and speaker, indefatigable gifts as a student in the by-ways of religious history, and a profound knowledge of the sealed and sacred arcana of Mother Church. No doubt, already, some ecclesiastical Mephistopheles had taken the brilliant theologian to the pinnacle of the Christian temple and had shown him the alluring prospect of episcopal promotion that would be in store for him if he would only fall down and worship. But Pey y Ordeix had no stomach for bribes or the allurements of preferment; and the *dulce et decorum* of the fat stalled clerical ox failed to win him from the leaner but more honorable pastures of Freethought journalism. And so our distinguished colleague, whose name I am proud to have made known to English readers, dedicated his talents as speaker and writer to the noblest of all causes, the cause of Rationalism, which brings the free spirit of inquiry and the undaunted temper of liberty of thought and utterance to all the problems around which religion erects a ring fence of sanctity.

Some two years ago Pey y Ordeix joined the staff of *El Motin*, and his fascinating articles became thenceforth one of the leading features of that brilliant paper which for thirty-two years has fought for Freethought in Spain. It was due to his splendid initiative, aided by the generous and efficient co-operation of one whom Mr. Cunninghame Graham has just described to me as "dear old Nakens," that the splendid campaign against the Inquisition was undertaken. The measure of success attained by this new crusade against the Cross may be gauged by one tell-tale fact: in the Senate where the revelations of *El Motin* stung the clericalists into exculpatory declarations so little in keeping with the uncompromising temper of early times, the Bishop of Jaca signalled himself by disavowing all sympathy with the Inquisition and disclaimed any responsibility on the part of the Church for its doings. For this

volte faccia the spiritual ancestors of the right reverend father in God would have sent him to the Devil *via* the torture chamber and the flaming stake right speedily if they had had him in their holy clutches.

Pey y Ordeix has made himself obnoxious to the bigots not only by his writings but by his clean life and integrity of character. By virtue of the infamous Concordat between Rome and Spain, a man who is once a priest remains always a priest, except by special dispensation of the Holy Father. The marriage of priests becomes, therefore, illegal, and their children have no existence in law, although the priests may have publicly disclaimed all connection with the Church, its doctrines, and its privileges. In spite of this prohibition, which practically condemns the Freethinking priest to life-long celibacy, with its dangers and reticences, or drives him to an open life of sexual irregularity, Pey y Ordeix endeavored to obtain the sanction of the law for his projected marriage; but "the law," in Spain, slammed the door of refusal contemptuously in his face. Anxious to give his *fiancée* the satisfaction of a legal union—an honorable step taken in order to stop the mouth of scandal and to protect any future offspring from the legal disabilities attending bastardy—he went over the frontier into France, more than a year ago, and duly contracted marriage under the French law at Perpignan. The bigots, who certainly would have winked at any amount of open depravity on his part, whose hands, in fact, would have been tied—so far as concerns the possibility of striking him or his wife a legal blow—had he or she, or both, lived in flagrant or shameful promiscuity, being more scrupulous to wound than to heal, availed themselves of the perfectly monstrous possibilities of iniquity provided by the Concordat to persecute the happy married couple and brand their union and their offspring with infamy. Pey y Ordeix now informs me that by a *Royal Order* the Fiscal of the Supreme Tribunal has signed a decree authorising steps to be taken in the Courts for pronouncing the nullity of his marriage. At the same time, the judge has actually had the audacity to issue an order for *the separation* of Pey y Ordeix and his wife, and as neither of them are willing to obey, and, indeed, refuse to obey, their imprisonment (I presume for contempt of Court, as though such a Court, and such a decree, were not beneath contempt) is imminent. In the meantime, the Spanish newspapers have just announced the birth of their first child, I think on March 10. Pey y Ordeix, with the laudable pride of a father, tells me his child is very strong and very beautiful (*muy robusta y muy hermosa*). By way of piling the Pelion of meanness on the Ossa of trickery, the Government, acting as jackal for the bigots, has instituted against him a fresh prosecution. What is the new crime? It is this; when he registered the birth of his daughter, Diana ("I have called her Diana," he writes to me, "for she shall hunt down the clerical vampires") he inscribed her as his *legitimate daughter*. Because of this, the odious pedants are prosecuting him for making a *false declaration of legitimacy*. What would they have? Did they expect him to proclaim the bastardy of his beloved child after he had sought every means and taken every precaution to secure that the children of his marriage should enjoy the advantages of legitimacy? But, alas, it is no use arguing with a venomous bigot. Pey y Ordeix might have vied with the Popes in the number and multiplicity of his bastards, or in the variety of his amors, without let or hindrance from the existing law, if only he had remained within the bosom of Mother Church.

It is to be hoped that the French Government will not permit the Spanish bigots to penalise a marriage contracted under the sanction of French law. International Freethought will doubtless watch the case, and will take the cause of Pey y Ordeix under its protection. We cannot afford to lose the brilliant pen and the valiant leader personified in Pey y

Ordeix. Nor can we allow the efforts of Spanish Freethinkers to redeem themselves and their country from the cramping trammels of the past to fail for want of sympathy with their difficult task.

The leading article in *El Motin* of March 21, written by Pey y Ordeix, is entitled "A Lullaby by My Daughter's Cradle." It is beautiful in its pathos, terrible in irony, and rich in poetic feeling. It is incidentally a terrible denunciation of Christianity. In one passage he exclaims:—

"Daughter mine; if some day you should meet in the street with the children of Canalejas, my dear child, remind them of the story of the Boy at Huesca [a child born recently in a Spanish convent, the offspring of a nun and a monk—born only to be flung, mutilated and killed, into the roadway]. If I had acted towards thy mother like that father did towards the mother of that murdered boy, we should have seen the bishops shielding me in the exercise of my sacred rights. If your mother and I had acted towards you in the same fashion as the parents of the Huesca boy acted towards him, the newspapers that flung their insults at thy mother and salute thine entrance into life with outrage and insult, would have made themselves into breastworks to shield the crime, and would convert the accusation of my wrong into a calumny."

The constantly recurring scandals connected with monastic life in Spain lend piquancy and force to the bitter sarcasm which thus leaps indignant from an injured parent's pen. He bursts forth anew:—

"Sleep tranquil, daughter mine! for this law which defames thy origin stands infamous before thee. Know this, my child; the very officials who administer this law tremble like children. With their hand, they may write the sentence; but in their heart, they bless thee. The tightening grip of the law feels to them like the hand of the executioner. Do not fear, child of my heart; by the breast of thy mother they offer thee the homage of their respect."

Whether the smiles of a lovely babe will indeed soften the heart of a Spanish judge remains to be seen. The innocence of the cradle was no protection in the palmy days of Christian intolerance, nor can any reliance be placed to-day, for softening the hearts of judges, upon appeals to their humanity and good sense. As a rule, judges in all ages are men of the world, who swim with its tide and sport with the social bubbles that sparkle on the crest of the social tide. They administer the prevalent code of laws, however anachronistic these may have become in the light of new ideas. Judges have always been ingenious in finding excuses for the bad laws they administer, and their naturally conservative temper of mind, which largely springs from their dependence on the existing order of things, has ever inclined them towards an undue reverence for the past, despite its absurdities and brutalities.

Let us hope that the young and beautiful Diana will grow into a mighty huntress, chasing the demons of superstition that haunt the woods and thickets of theology. While she grows into strength and beauty her arrows will be sharpened for her beneficent task by the labors of her father, who is no sluggard in the intellectual world. I have just received his second volume on the Inquisition—*El Santo Oficio*—and shall have something to say about its terrible pages later on. In the meantime, I would like to announce that two additional volumes, one, *Los Autos da Fé*, and the other, *Quema de Herejes en Logrono*, have since been issued by *El Motin* (Madrid) and that two or three additional volumes, all dealing with separate historic themes concerning the Inquisition, and all based on entirely fresh material excavated from the archives of the Holy Office in Spain, are promised for the month of April. The contemplation of these handsome volumes, containing each some 200 pages, sold at the uniform price of one peseta, fills me at once with wonder at the extraordinary literary fecundity of Nakens and Pey y Ordeix, and an unbounded admiration of their enlightened zeal for Freethought.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

Old Testament History.—V.

(Continued from p. 214.)

THE Egyptian domination of Syria and Palestine continued during the short reign of Rameses IV. (about 1171—1165 B.C.); but after the latter date we hear no more of campaigns to reduce the revolted provinces of those countries into submission. We may therefore take the year 1165 B.C. as probably the last of the Egyptian sovereignty in Canaan. Up to this date there could be no oppression of the peoples of that country by any of the surrounding nations, such as those described in the book of Judges. This is obvious; for such invaders would have to reckon with the kings of Egypt as well as the tribes of Canaan. Hence, the series of servitudes recorded in Judges, assuming them to be historical, could not commence until after the year 1165 B.C. Taking this date as a starting point, we must now find another in the historical period of the kings of Israel and Judah, from which we can reckon back.

This required date we obtain from the cuneiform inscriptions made by the kings of Assyria, more especially during the period included in the Eponym Canon; viz., from 893 to 666 B.C. Looking through the earliest of these inscriptions, we find that Ahab king of Israel and Benhadad king of Damascus were defeated at Karkar by Shalmaneser II. in the sixth year of that Assyrian king's reign, which was 853 B.C. This battle is not recorded in the Hebrew writings; but we find from the first Book of Kings that Ahab and Benhadad were at war in all except the last two and a half years of Ahab's reign (1 Kings xx. 34; xxi. 1, 2, 34). It was only during the first or second year of their reconciliation that the two kings could have been allies; whence we find the date of Ahab's death and the accession of his son Ahaziah to be 851 B.C. This in the Bible chronology is given as 897 B.C.; which is forty-four years too early, the difference being due to the giving too many years to some of the reigns that succeeded that of Ahab. Going backwards, now, from 851, we come to 929 B.C. (in Bible chronology 975), the date at which the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel commenced, under Rehoboam and Jeroboam respectively.

We have now two dates, 1165 B.C. and 929 B.C., embracing a period of 236 years, between which have to be placed the events recorded in the book of Judges, the judgeships of Eli and Samuel, and the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon. Now, according to the Bible chronology, the total number of years for this period (made by adding the judgeships and reigns together) is 468—a total which is very nearly double the 236 years between 1165 and 929 B.C. Another and a more simple version of the Bible chronology for this period is found in 1 Kings vi. 1. This reads:—

"And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel.....he began to build the house of the Lord."

From this statement we learn that the fourth year of king Solomon's reign was the 480th year after the supposed "exodus" from Egypt. Now, assuming that Solomon was king for forty years (as stated in 1 Kings xi. 42), the fourth year of his reign was thirty-six years prior to 929 B.C. If to 480 years we add 36, we get 516 years as that of the first year after the Exodus; then, deducting forty years for the legendary wandering in the wilderness, we obtain 476 years as the period between 1165 and 929 B.C., an excess of 240 years—the difference between the two Bible chronologies being eight years.

With regard to the question of history during this period, we have no alternative than to shorten the various periods of time that are named between Judg. iii. and 1 Kings xii. 24. It is not at all improbable that the Israelites, as well as other tribes of Canaan, suffered oppression by the Moabites, the Midianites, the Ammonites, and the Philistines, as

related in the books of Judges and Samuel; but not for the periods recorded in those books. Moreover, the duration of the majority of the judgeships has evidently been much exaggerated. We are told, for instance, that Othniel judged Israel forty years; that after Ehud had delivered Israel, the land had rest for eighty years; that Jabin king of Hazor oppressed Israel for twenty years; that after the victory of Barak the land had rest for forty years; that Gideon was judge for forty years; that the Philistines oppressed Israel forty years; that Samson judged Israel for twenty years, and Eli for forty years; and that Saul, David, and Solomon each reigned for forty years. These periods of forty, eighty, and twenty years are on the face of them fabrications; and since it is now impossible to get at the correct figures, they must be reduced by about one-half. Some of the events recorded in Judges are obviously fictitious, such as the victory ascribed to Gideon with a handful of only 300 men, and the alleged feats of the strong man Samson. Others are simply legendary, and refer to a much earlier period, such as Barak's victory over Jabin king of Hazor, and the war between Benjamin and the other tribes. These might be struck out altogether. The story of the Levite and his concubine appears to be also fabulous; for besides being the alleged cause of the war between the tribes, it contains other matter which is unhistorical. It is stated in Judg. xix. 10 that in this Levite's time Jerusalem was named "Jebus," the man and his servant when passing near it speaking of it as "Jebus." But the city of Jerusalem was not called Jebus in those days; we find it named Jerusalem—that is, "Urusalem"—on several tablets in the reign of Amenhotep IV., some centuries before the period of the Judges. If this portion of the story of the Levite is untrue, it is probable that the whole is of the same character.

A most important point, however, in connection with the Old Testament history has not yet been noticed. This is, that all the books composing that history, as we have them now, are not original writings, but compilations made many years after the return from the exile in Babylonia. In order, then, to test the accuracy of the present historical books we ought, as a preliminary, to be able to compare them with the original documents from which they were compiled. This is now impossible; for long before the commencement of the Christian era the original writings had ceased to be copied, and so passed away. Some of these more ancient writings are named, as in the following passages:—

Num. xxi. 14.—"Wherefore it is said in the *Book of the Wars of Yahveh* —"

Josh. x. 13.—"The sun stood still, and the moon stayed.....Is not this written in the *Book of Jashar*?" (See also 2 Sam. i. 18.)

1 Chron. xxix. 29.—"Now the acts of David the king, first and last, behold they are written in the *History of Samuel the seer*, and in the *History of Nathan the prophet*, and in the *History of Gad the seer*."

2 Chron. ix. 29.—"Now the rest of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written in the *History of Nathan the prophet*, and in the *Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite*, and in the *Visions of Iddo the seer*?"

The other original documents named are the following:—

"The History of Shemiah the prophet" (2 Chron. xii. 15).

"The Commentary of the prophet Iddo" (2 Chron. xiii. 22).

"The History of Jehu the son of Hanani" (2 Chron. xx. 34).

"The Commentary of the book of the kings" (2 Chron. xxiv. 27).

"The History of Hozai" (2 Chron. xxxiii. 19).

"The Book of the kings of Israel" (2 Chron. xx. 34).

"The Book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel" (1 Kings xiv. 19; xv. 31; xvi. 27).

"The Book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah" (1 Kings xiv. 29; xv. 7, 23).

"The Book of the kings of Israel and Judah" (2 Chron. xvi. 11; xxv. 20; xxviii. 26).

Not one of these ancient writings has been preserved.

The present books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles are not identical with any of them. The "Book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel" and the "Book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah" are referred to, in every case, as containing additional particulars, or a more detailed account, of the reign of the particular king in question. For instance, we read:—

1 Kings xvi. 27.—"Now the rest of the acts of Omri which he did, and his might that he shewed, are they not written in the Book of the chronicles of the kings of Israel?"

Where is this book? It is certainly not our present Book of Kings in which it is referred to as containing further information; neither is it either of our present books of Chronicles. In the latter books Omri's name is not even mentioned. On the Moabite Stone, however, we meet with the name of Omri as king of Israel. On that record of victory Mesha, the king of Moab, says:—

"Omri, the king of Israel, oppressed Moab many days, for Khemosh was wrath with his land. And his son that succeeded him [i.e., Ahab], he also said, I will afflict Moab. In my days he said thus: but I saw my desire on him and his house.....Now Omri had taken the land of Medeba, and dwelt therein all his days and the days of his son, forty years; but Khemosh restored it in my days.....And the king of Israel built Ataroth: and I fought against the city and took it, and slew all the men of the city for the well-pleasing of Khemosh and Moab," etc.

This is not much about Omri; but we see something of "his might." That king did not himself live in the cities he had taken from Moab; he had merely placed men of Israel in them to hold them, so that they might not be retaken. This is the first mention of any king of Israel or Judah by another nation of which we have any record.

Besides the original writings already noticed, the compilers after the Exile had some other pre-exilic documents. Foremost among these was a primitive code of laws called the "Book of the Covenant" (Exod. xx. 22—xxiii. 33), which was the only one in use during the period of the judges and kings. This was supplemented by the book of Deuteronomy, which was mysteriously "found" in the temple in the reign of Josiah (2 Kings xxii.). There were also the Yahvistic and Elohist narratives which are now combined in the Pentateuch, besides some Psalms, Proverbs, and prophetic writings.

The earliest of the compilations made were the so-called "five books of Moses," which were completed in the time of Ezra (458—444 B.C.). The next set of books compiled were those called the "Prophets," under which title were included the books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve (i.e., Hosea to Malachi). These were not completed until about 200 B.C. The last of the compilations to appear were all the other books now in the Old Testament, commencing with Psalms and Proverbs, and ending with Ezra—Nehemiah (one book) and Chronicles; this division being completed about 100 B.C. It will thus be seen how very late was the compilation of some of the historical books, especially the two Chronicles; nor can there be much room for surprise if we find that they all contain some interpolated fictions, though none of them to such an extent as the books of Chronicles.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be continued.)

We do not deal with party politics in the *Freethinker*, except now and then for a special reason connected with Freethought. We venture to express a hope that Roosevelt will not gain the Republican nomination for the U.S.A. Presidency. The Christian bouncer who described Thomas Paine as a "dirty little Atheist," cramming three lies into three words, and lets the description stand although its falsity has been pointed out by all sorts and conditions of objectors, is too immoral a person to represent a great nation in its highest seat of authority.

Interview with Henry Burstow.

Is there something in the profession of bell-ringing that brings eternal youth? Not quite that, perhaps, though it would appear in Henry Burstow's case, as well as in some others of which I have read, that it is as good a help to long life as honoring one's father and mother. But I suppose that any hobby, except aviation, enthusiastically pursued, lengthens life and prolongs youthfulness, and so it seems with Henry Burstow. True, he is not quite so vigorous as once, but when he talks of his earlier years, the twinkle in his eyes shows that he is not yet grown old.

"Call him not old whose visionary brain
Holds o'er the past its undisputed reign;
If yet the minstrel's song, the poet's lay,
Spring with her birds or children at their play
Or maiden's smile.....
Stir the few life-drops creeping round his heart,
Turn to the record where his years are told,
Count his grey hairs, they cannot make him old."

He is the youngest son of his father, and was born in 1826, when times were very different to what they are now. His father and grandfather were both long-lived men, and it has greatly helped him in recording Horsham's antiquities to be able to give some of his grandfather's experiences, which his father told him. For his grandfather, being born in 1721, was in the full vigor of his manhood in the middle of the century before the last. Henry Burstow's father had a good memory, for out of the 420 songs which he still remembers, and still can sing, fifty of them he learned from his father, and that, he says, was only about half that his father knew, and he has often regretted he didn't learn the other fifty, for his father would have been only too pleased to teach him if he had asked him.

What a memory! Time was that once he learnt he couldn't forget if he wanted to. Now, he doesn't like so well to sing some of his songs, for his voice is apt to break when he comes to the sad parts. I, who asked him to sing two or three over for my benefit, can tell how clear and true his voice still rings. This is one-half of the secret of the welcome his songs always received. Every word was plain for all folk to hear. And his memory reaches back to his cradle and his mother's knee. He recollects the words spoken in his presence before he could stand alone, and can recall, as if it were yesterday, the very tone in which they were spoken. Some sad memories he has, as who has not? but no bitter ones. He nurses no recollections of past wrongs, but has a good word for all, and the best for those that have been nearest to him. That, perhaps, accounts for his being loved and tended now when almost all his contemporaries have gone. His wife—the best of wives, his sister—no better woman ever lived. There hang their pictures on his wall, with many others, most of them drawn, and many painted in colors, by his own hand. The old grammar school, long since diverted from its donor's last kindly consideration for the poor children of the town in which he was born, and since Henry Burstow's schooldays twice rebuilt; the old chapel-of-ease at Oakwood Hill, in which the last wild boar in England was killed; Newstead Abbey, Lord Byron's home for a few short years, where his favorite dog was buried (the old man recited to me word for word the epitaph engraved upon his tomb):—

"The poor dog, in life the firmest friend,
The first to welcome, foremost to defend,
Whose honest heart is still his master's own,
Who labors, fights, lives, breathes for him alone,
Unhonored falls, unnoticed all his worth,
Denied in heaven the soul he held on earth:
While man, vain insect! hopes to be forgiven,
And claims himself a sole exclusive heaven."

There was the old Town Mill; Coote's Farm, where he always said if he had money he should like to build himself a house—but he must have a peal of bells, or it would be no use to him, and some good ringers too. If he ever went to heaven he should

want a peal of bells, else he should very soon go somewhere else to try and find one.

How was it a man so fond of church bells became a Freethinker? I couldn't find out; I suppose it was gradual. In his father's boyhood, he said, boot nails were stamped "T. P." (Thomas Paine), so that they might tread the hated infidel under their feet. Then Henry Burstow is a shoemaker by trade, and the smell of leather is well known to promote scepticism. As a young man he used to attend St. Mark's Church—"To see the girls," as he puts it. But for a very long time now he has never been to church except to pull the bells. When that was done he came out; and so marked was his non-attendance that the parsons themselves tackled him about it. "Is it true that you are an Atheist?" "I don't know exactly what I am," said Mr. Burstow. In those days he was not quite so outspoken as he has since become. Many a time since then he has had long arguments with them, sometimes in the belfry, which have ended in as friendly a manner as they began. He does not seem to have any of that intense hatred of Christianity that some of us feel—except, perhaps, of the doctrine of eternal torment. "What sort of a God Almighty would it be, anyhow, who could punish his children so?" he asks. "There are as big lies in the Bible as ever were told by Baron Munchausen," is another of his remarks. But the only time that I heard him say he ever got seriously angry with Christians was when Mr. Foote was imprisoned for blasphemy. "I was wild then," he said.

There is no horror of death in his mind. When I went to see him he was warming his hands at the kitchen fire, and, as he laughingly said, "I am ready to go now. I tell my friends sometimes I should like to wake up some morning and find myself dead. I never thought I should feel so; I have enjoyed my life so much; but now I am tired and want to rest." I thought at once of Walter Savage Landor's verses—

"I have warmed both hands at the fire of life;
It sinks, and I am ready to depart."

However, in a moment he was talking about his beloved bells; how he had walked eight miles to Newdigate when he was a lad, and rung his 720 changes correctly at the first attempt. How, in after years, he had taught the ringers in all the churches round, and whenever there was a new peal of bells bought it was always he who was sent for to teach the villagers to ring. At Slinfold (two of the old bells were cracked and one other was a little out), when they rang their first 720 changes on the new bells, they gave him 10s. He didn't expect anything, he said; which shows his love of his art. It must have been little money that he earned for all his long walks and his many hours of labor. When he taught the ringers at Crawley they always went to the public-house for a few songs after the ringing was over till he started on his seven-mile walk back to Horsham. May bell-ringing flourish when our village churches have long forgotten the droning of the parson and have been transmuted into sweet halls of song.

W. W. KENSETT.

LABORATORY WORK.

"Gentlemen," said the professor, "this is one of the most dangerous experiments known to science. The slightest mishap and the experimenter will be blown to atoms. I will now step into the next room while my assistant performs the experiment."

A WOMAN'S HUMOR.

"Madam," began the man, respectfully, "I am very hungry. Could you give me a bit of something?"

"I will call the dog," the woman replied.

"I am hungry enough to eat the dog," the man said, "but I'd rather have something else."

And, woman like, she went inside and banged the door.

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, "Religion and Decadence."

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Cowell's, 44 Jenner-road, Stoke Newington): 7.30, Business—Election of Conference Delegates, etc.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, J. Rowney, "A Search for God."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15, Mr. Darby, "The Message of Secularism."

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

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEICESTER SECULAR SOCIETY (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Musical and Literary Evening.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, Bert Killip, "Christian Socialism."

OUTDOOR.

DERBY (Market Square): Joseph A. E. Bates—Sunday, April 14, at 7.30, "Before the Dawn—and After."

BULWELL, NOTTINGHAM (Market Square): Joseph A. E. Bates—Monday, April 15, at 8, "God is Dead"; Tuesday, 16, at 8, "In the Valley of the Shadow"; Wednesday, 17, at 8, "The Uselessness of Monarchy"; Thursday, 18, at 8, "Broken Fetters"; Friday, 19, at 8, The Philosophy of Materialism."

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Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

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