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For I do not speak it but after the most searching examination of the matter, and under stern sense of need for it: so that whenever the reader is entirely shocked by what I say, he may be assured every word is true.

JOHN RUSKIN.

Piety and Piffle.

It is an open secret that, as leader of the Conservative party, Mr. Bonar Law is not an unqualified success. Strong language is not the only thing needed, even for a political leader, and this really seems Mr. Law's principal accomplishment. And if not a brilliant success as a politician, I hardly think Mr. Law will shine as a champion of religion or as an opponent of anti-religion. It may be freely admitted that, in the latter capacity, strong language, wild assertions, and prophecies of coming disaster are extremely useful. Indeed, they form the staple of both the defence and the attack. The believer must be reassured as to the value of his own belief, and he must be convinced of the danger to society of all views that are opposed to them. And the way to accomplish both ends is to make statements without condescending to offer proof. When Zeus listens to an Atheist and a believer who are holding a discussion, Lucian makes the god tell his champion not to reason, but to call names. Begin to reason, he says, and you'll be as dumb as a fish. That was eighteen hundred years ago, but religionists have never failed to act on the advice.

The other day Mr. Bonar Law addressed a meeting at the Albert Hall on the Welsh Disestablishment Bill. The Archbishop of York took the chair, and prepared the way for Mr. Law by a statement both false and ridiculous. The Church, he said, had never been a department of the State. We advise his Grace to pay a little more attention to historical accuracy. The Protestant Church, wherever established, has always been a department of the State. The State selected it and established it. The State arranged for its maintenance, and settled what form its teachings should take. The State passed laws making it penal to attack Christian teaching, and did this because the Established Church was a department of the State, and an attack on its teaching was treated as an attack on the State itself. Prior to the establishment of Protestantism, there was no law in any European State making it necessary for anyone to profess belief in the Christian religion. This only began with Protestantism, which has everywhere been established and upheld by the State. The Church that has not been a department of the State is the Roman Church. And this is due to the fact that the aim here was to make the State a department of the Church.

The Archbishop followed his first statement by saying that the Church had been at the side of the State from the moment the State was born. The stupid inaccuracy gets worse. Are we to understand that there existed no such a thing as a State before the Christian Church was born? Were there no States in pre-Christian times? And is not the State, in its present form, a direct outcome of the State as it existed in the past? The State is a social fact, and its form is determined by the organised social

sense of the community. It is quite true that some sort of a Church has existed in every State; but this, too, is another social fact. For a Church is only the organised consciousness of a class within the State. Destroy the Church and the State remains. Destroy the State and the Church disappears with it. Or, better still, educate the social consciousness upon which the Church lives, and it dies of inanition, reduced to the primitive fetishism from which all religion develops.

Mr. Bonar Law's defence of the Church took a different form from that of the Archbishop's. He concluded his speech by appealing to Christians of all denominations to unite in face of the common enemy. They were all, he said, soldiers in a common army, fighting a common foe, and it was unwise to quarrel and so weaken each other. The advance of science was bringing new problems to be solved by the Christian Church, and Christians had to adjust their faith to the new knowledge. And in the face of these problems:—

"I for one am filled with alarm when I find that all the advanced, the revolutionary proposals for dealing with the social problem are founded on a basis of utter and absolute Materialism. They do, indeed, all speak of reform—of reform of everything and everybody except ourselves. They teach that there ought to be no criminals because there will be no temptation. They teach that everything ought to be pleasant for us, that no man or woman ought to do anything which he does not like and desire to do. In my belief this is a false view of life and of human nature. Human life always has been and always will be a struggle.....Man does not live by bread alone."

Therefore, leave the Church with its loaves and fishes—lest non-Christians get too much bread.

This seems to me the real inference from Mr. Law's remarks, although it is not the one he wishes his readers and listeners to draw. His conclusion is that the great enemy is Materialism, and that Christians must concentrate all their powers to repel attack from this quarter. And Mr. Law's picture of Materialism is characteristic. Which implies that it is a Materialism such as no Materialist would recognise. Materialism has taught that men and women act from desire; but that is a very different thing to teaching that desire itself is not to be educated and refined. It has also taught that life ought to be pleasant; but that, again, has involved the teaching that pleasure should be found in struggling against evil. I do not know what Mr. Law has in his mind when he says that these frightful reformers teach that there ought to be no criminals because there will be no crime, and there will be no crime because there will be no temptation. It sounds like, and probably is, sheer stupidity. People have taught compassion towards the wrongdoer, and to deal with wrong as a social ailment rather than as a burst of irresponsible malignity. But that, again, is a very different thing to what Mr. Law is talking about.

Necessarily all the really advanced proposals for dealing with social ailments are founded on a basis of Materialism, because there is no other on which to build a helpful proposition. Until social problems are treated from a purely scientific point of view, and human nature as being what it is as the outcome of ascertainable and ultimately controllable forces, we cannot have schemes of reform, but only vague aspirations after better things. The triumph of the

Materialistic philosophy of life is seen quite as plainly in the actions of its opponents as it is in those of its advocates. Every plan for better housing, or for a more equitable distribution of the means of better living, is a tacit admission of the truth of Materialism. One can quite agree with Mr. Law that this is not without its dangers; but they are dangers that threaten class interest, and not the interest of the community as a whole. So long as these Materialistic truths were seen by only a few, certain sinister interests that exist were tolerably safe. A little benefit to the mass of the people could be doled out by those in power, and it was received in the spirit of an ignorant religionist receiving a good harvest as an undeserved act of benevolence from his God. But when, thanks to the spread of knowledge, these truths are seen by more than a few, and when their application is, instead of being accepted as a favor, demanded as a right, misgivings may well arise among those who put class or party interest before all else.

What the world really has to dread is not the Materialism of philosophic Materialists, but the narrow and selfish ideals of self-styled idealists. We are not in our social troubles confronted with a public nourished on Materialism, but one that has been debauched by religion and plundered in the name of piety. Paradoxical as it may sound, it is the idealism of Materialists that stands out as a redeeming feature of current life. People do not always revolt against low wages and poor food. History shows clearly enough that they can submit to both for an indefinite period. But the past hundred years of scientific development and extension of education has not been thrown away. People are beginning to realise that the old lessons of the blessings of poverty and of the ethical value of suffering are false. They have lost faith in a future heaven and have ceased to dread a future hell. They realise that human nature, and consequently human society, may be modified in accordance with a larger and better ideal than any that religion ever had to offer. They see that much of the crime and misery that is with us need not be. And beneath all the outcry for more wages and more food is the demand for the possibility of a human life for every human creature. Mr. Law might be right in saying that human life always has been and always will be a struggle. But there is a permanent and a transient aspect of this contest. The transient aspect is that of the fight of man with his fellow man, due to ignorance, egotism, and selfishness. That will become weaker as men grow wiser. The permanent struggle, one that is mentally and morally strengthening, is that of a civilised humanity against the organic and inorganic obstacles to its development.

It is like a politician to imagine that he can check or circumvent the great process of human development by appealing to Christians to unite in face of the common enemy—Materialism. The Christian world, in the hey-day of its unity, could not succeed in crushing the renaissance of Materialism. It is still less likely to succeed now, when Materialism has increased in strength and when so many of its own preachers are forced into preaching its principles. The Archbishop of Canterbury, with his brother of York, Mr. Bonar Law, and other champions of the Church may well be afraid of the advance of Materialism, because that is an enemy with whom no truce is possible. For the basic teaching of Materialism applied to human society is one that cuts the ground from under all forms of religion. It asserts the value of life in this world, and is considered as an end in itself. It affirms that the solution to all our problems can only be found in an understanding of those forces that surround, or which are resident in, human nature. And to this understanding it denies that religion has ever made, or can ever make, a contribution of the slightest value. No wonder, then, that pietists are alarmed at the spread of Materialism. It is the germicide of the religious world.

C. COHEN.

Completed Lives.

MAN is said to be the incompletest thing on earth. All else is described as exhibiting a certain perfection. Physical substances, such as stars and mountains, and the lower animals, such as birds, beasts, and insects, fit into their own places, and give no hint that they might have been other than they are. But man, it is claimed, is a significant exception to the rule. Even man, on the bodily side, it is admitted, is completely developed. In this respect, he is part and parcel of the animal creation. But on the mental and moral side of his nature, it is contended, he never arrives at anything like completeness. There is an amusing definition of man as composed of a scaffolding, which is the body, and a temple built within it, which is the soul or spirit; but we are informed that, alas, the scaffolding, which is perfect, falls to pieces, "while that for the sake of which it was called into existence, is left unfinished, is sometimes indeed scarcely begun." Before leaving this point, we may observe that it is an astounding procedure to put up a perfect scaffolding and then pull it down before the edifice designed to be erected within it is much more than begun. The reason assigned for pulling it down so soon is the silliest ever heard of. It is "made so perfect," we are told, "that it could gain nothing by being preserved for ever." Why, the only object of a scaffold is to serve as a supporting framework while building operations are going on, and naturally when the edifice is finished it is no longer of any use. A scaffold has absolutely nothing to gain by being preserved a single second after the building has been completed; but to destroy it a single second before would testify to the colossal incompetence of the builder.

It is further maintained that the present life is in every respect incomplete. Not one of us is ever perfectly happy, while the happiest people have visions of happiness infinitely transcending anything ever experienced by them. On the other hand, there are multitudes among us to whom the word is unmeaning. Not one of us is ever absolutely good, while others are prevented by their heredity and environment from being anything but desperately wicked. We are assured that the very best people are the most conscious of imperfection, with the result that no one can look back upon his career and regard it with complacency. Our best services to the community are so inadequate that we can never be entirely satisfied with them. As one divine mournfully says:—

"Our labors are unfruitful and disappointing. Of a thousand seeds sown, and watered with blood and tears, only a few arrive at maturity. Hundreds of soldiers die in the trenches for one that mounts the breach. Half our efforts are in the wrong direction; and the other half are too clumsy and feeble to produce any great effect. Should we be able to say, at the close of life, that we have enjoyed a little happiness and done a little good, we shall be more fortunate than the majority of our race."

This jaundiced recital is not yet at an end. The divines are never tired of blackening the Almighty's character in one direction in order to glorify it in another. They say that "our endowments are altogether out of proportion to a life of threescore years and ten." Conscience is on so vast a scale that it needs eternity for its operations. "Conscience bids us aim at perfection, and perfection is not to be reached on earth." Indeed, "if this life be the only life for us, we are overweighted in our moral nature." Allusion is made to Pietro, the tyrannical Duke of Florence, who in one of his capricious moods ordered Michael Angelo to mould a statue of snow—"a statue that the warmth of an Italian sun would dissolve in a single day"; and commenting on this the late Dr. Momerie says:—

"A sad waste of artistic skill! But that is as nothing compared to the prostitution of creative power in making beings like ourselves to rot for ever in the tomb. If it is intended that we should merely cross the petty stage of earth, then our noblest faculties are deceptive

and useless excrescences. As soon as we learn to live, we are called upon to die. We spend our allotted span in sharpening our tools, in finding out how to use them, and then we are removed from the workshop. Must there not be some other place in which we shall exercise our craft?" (*Immortality*, p. 25).

This species of reasoning sounds highly plausible, and when delivered from the pulpit was doubtless exceedingly moving; but it is based on a totally false conception of human life. As a matter of fact, there is positively nothing to indicate that "man is the incompletest thing on earth." It is true that the majority of people die prematurely; but it is also true that premature deaths are due to purely extraneous causes, all of which are removable. Disease and accident are preventable evils; and when we shall have succeeded in eradicating them, no life will be incomplete. When asked, "Is our goal to be our grave?" we have no hesitation in answering, "Yes, certainly, just as the cradle is our starting-point." When a man has spent the natural span of his life, death comes as his last gain. It is inaccurate to say that the body reaches maturity before the mind; and no one can be guilty of saying it unless he forgets, or is ignorant of, the fact that the brain, the organ of thought, is just as much a part of the body as are the bones and muscles. In some cases, the brain is the last organ to decay; in others, the first; but in all cases there comes a time when all that is left, in the figure of a great Italian poet, is "to lower sails and gather in the ropes." It is reported that Theodore Parker on his death-bed exclaimed: "I wish I could carry on, carry out, my work. I have only used half my powers." But to quote that cry as a proof of the incompleteness of life is an outrage upon common sense and an unforgivable insult to the reason, because it is a notorious fact that the courageous reformer died at fifty, having recklessly disregarded the laws of health in his early years. On his lips the cry was perfectly justifiable, for he died when his mental powers were at their highest and best. His was a premature death, a pathological, not a physiological, end. In an infant there is the promise of an adult, just as in a rosebud there is potentially implied a rose. If the infant dies, there is, from the social point of view, the loss, waste, or failure, of a human being, just as in the cankering of the rosebud there is, from the æsthetic point of view, the loss, waste, or failure, of beauty; but, surely, there is not in the untimely death of an infant, any more than in that of a rosebud, a just demand for a revival, or completion, in another state of existence.

To say that "we are over-weighted in our moral nature if this be the only life for us," is to make a display of inordinate pride and self-conceit. We have never yet seen or heard of anyone with too much conscience for the requirements of daily life. Indeed, so far is conscience from needing "an enduring arena for its operation" that it seldom distinguishes itself on the ephemeral arena of the present world. It would be the very acme of absurdity to "set a mighty engine to propel a rowing-boat," or to build "an Atlantic liner to steam across a rivulet"; but there is no sign whatever that man is constitutionally too big for the position in which he finds himself on earth. He is not too big, but too little; not over-weighted, but under-weighted, in his moral nature, and the lesson he needs to learn is, not how to shape wings to fly away, but how to grow greater, nobler, and more useful as a member of the race; not how to sharpen his tools so as to exercise his craft in another place, but how to sharpen them by using them here and now. Theology has led man to a false estimate of himself. It has taught him to be supremely concerned about himself in personal relations with another world; and it has, as an inevitable consequence, developed within him the ugliest and most injurious kind of individualism, an individualism which is largely responsible for the industrial unrest and upheaval of the present day. It has trained him to regard himself as being so

enormously "over-weighted in his moral nature," and so infinitely too big, for earth, that as a result he has made earth a hell for the majority of his fellow-beings. We may boldly say, without fear of exaggeration, that theology is almost the direct cause of the social evils from which society is now, independently of theology, trying so hard to release itself.

The truth about man is that, as an individual, he goes through a process of evolution which inevitably ends in dissolution. When this twofold process is permitted to run its course without let or hindrance from disease or accident, we may be described as enjoying complete lives. Whatever good there may be in such complete lives shall be perpetuated in the life of the race. The theologian avers that if, as individuals, we are not to live forever, it follows that "as we advance in culture we only obtain a wider survey of possibilities that will never be realised, of glory that does but tantalise and mock us"; but the theologian is fundamentally mistaken. Whatever advance in culture we may make will contribute to the culture-enrichment of the race, and whatever glory we may win will increase the lustre of our descendants. Whatever harmony we may manage to introduce into our own relations with the community shall go on "making undying music in the world" when we are dead and cremated; and, surely, the knowledge of this should give us complete contentment.

J. T. LLOYD.

Modern Materialism.—XIV.

(Concluded from p. 374.)

"Tracing the origin of things to their furthest ken on orthodox lines, we arrive, it is alleged, at an author who did the impossible and inconceivable thing of creating the present system of visible things from nothing. But, unfortunately for this deduction, it also warrants us, who see further than our fathers, to ask the equally legitimate and more pertinent question, 'Who, amid the eternal sequences, was the author of this author?' and the mere fact that we can ask such a startling genealogical question, and get no intelligible answer, disposes of the supposition in its entirety."—REDCOTE DEWAR, *From Matter to Man*, p. 3.

"I tell you there is no God; that the creation is a chimera; that the eternity of the universe is no more conceivable than the eternity of the spirit; that because I do not know how motion has been able to engender this universe, which it knows so well how to conserve, it is ridiculous to remove this difficulty by the suppositious existence of a being that I know less."—DIDEROT, *Philosophic Thoughts*, p. 4.

"Many a sleepless night of my childhood has been passed fretted by the question: 'Who made God?'"—PROFESSOR TYNDALL, *Fragments of Science*, 1855, vol. i., p. 383.

"Millions of prayers have been vainly breathed to what we now know were inexorable laws of nature."—LECKY, *History of European Morals*, 1886, vol. i., p. 55.

SOME conception of the fineness of the inner structure of matter may be given by the fact that a single cubic centimetre of water—that is, about as much as would go inside the shell of a small filbert, contains about 90,000,000,000,000,000,000 (ninety thousand million billion) chemical atoms.* Lord Kelvin, by the aid of mathematics, calculated that if a single drop of water were magnified to the diameter of the earth, that is, eight thousand miles, the grain of it would appear somewhere between the size of cricket balls and rifle bullets. And then we have not arrived at the ultimate particle, for we now know that the atom itself has a structure—that it is composed of electrons or corpuscles; the atom of hydrogen, which contains the fewest, is supposed to contain a thousand of these corpuscles or negative electrons; and, what is still more astounding, that these particles do not fill all the space inside the atom, but have been likened by Sir Oliver Lodge to flies in a vast cathedral. "The electron," says Mr. Soddy, is "a particle probably 100,000 times smaller and 2,000 times lighter than the smallest hitherto recognised." †

* W. A. Shenstone, *The New Physics and Chemistry*, 1906, p. 63.

† *Matter and Energy*, p. 176.

"But," it will be asked, "if the atom is only a group of positive electrons round which the negative electrons revolve like planets round a central sun, is not this dematerialising matter and reducing it to force?" To this it may be replied that electricity itself is a form of matter. Sir William Ramsay, who is a great discoverer and authority on these marvellous discoveries, declares that "it is almost certain that negative electricity is a particular form of matter; and positive electricity is matter deprived of negative electricity—that is, minus this electric matter."*

Again, Sir Oliver Lodge, an opponent of Materialism, says: "Supposing an atom thus broken up into electrons, its weight may possibly have disappeared." We do not know:—

"But whether weight has disappeared or not, it is quite certain, for definite though rather recondite theoretical reasons, that the inertia would *not* have disappeared; and, accordingly, it may be held, and must be held, in our present state of knowledge, that the constancy of fundamental material still holds good, even though the atoms are resolved into electric charges—an amount of destruction never contemplated by those chemists and physicists who promulgated the doctrine of the conservation of matter."†

Mr. Soddy, who is not, apparently, a Materialist, for he speaks of "the Great Organiser," ‡ whoever that may be—and Mr. Soddy does not condescend to explain whether he is to be regarded as identical with our old friend "the Heavenly Father"—for Mr. Soddy does not introduce this mystic personage in his contributions to the proceedings of scientific societies, but he does mind appearing in his company when writing a shilling book for the public.

Mr. Soddy observes: "The electron has been spoken of as immaterial in the sense that it is not matter"; but, as he points out, any moving particle possessing kinetic energy, and able to agitate the molecules of matter,—

"or capable of being converted into heat, must possess mass. A massless particle would belong to that other world of spirits and dreams, the inhabitants of which are not 'conserved,' and the study of which belongs not to physical science..... Whether or not future generations will find any room for massless particles in their philosophy, the present one can hardly conceive them to exist, or imagine how they could become known if they did. It is just because the electron has a definite mass, even though it is by far the smallest of any known, and still is not a material particle, that its chief interest lies" (pp. 169-170).

Well, if the electron possesses mass and kinetic energy, it comes under the denomination of matter and force, as the Materialist understands it.

We have seen that molecules are composed of atoms, and that atoms are built up of electrons or corpuscles; now the question arises: "Are the electrons the ultimate form of matter, or are they, too, evolved from some still finer material?" Scientists are now coming to the view that electrons are composed, or evolved, out of the universal ether. But here we must warn our readers that we are departing from the firm ground of experience and experiment to adventure upon the open sea of hypothesis. The ether itself is said to have been invented in England; but it is an hypothesis without which science could not explain the simplest phenomena. As the French scientist, Gustave le Bon, rightly observes:—

"The majority of phenomena would be inexplicable without it. Without the ether there would be neither gravity, nor light, nor electricity, nor heat, nor anything, in a word, of which we have knowledge. The universe would be silent and dead, or would reveal itself in a form which we cannot even foresee. If one could construct a glass chamber from which the ether were to be entirely eliminated, heat and light could not pass through it. It would be absolutely dark, and probably gravitation would no longer act on the bodies within it. They would then have lost their weight." §

But, as he further remarks, "As soon as one seeks to define the properties of the ether, enormous difficulties appear." And, although its existence has forced itself upon us, the inmost nature of the ether is hardly suspected. Lord Kelvin considers the ether to be "an elastic fluid filling all space."

It must, says Le Bon, "possess a rigidity exceeding that of steel, or it would not transform luminous vibrations at a velocity of 300,000 kilometres per second." And yet it has been demonstrated that, combined with this solidity, it must possess a density a million times less than the air, rarefied as it is in a Crookes' vacuum tube, or it would have a retarding effect on the motion of the moon, and would very quickly expel the atmosphere from the earth. As Le Bon observes, "One is thrown back on the idea that the ether is a solid, without density or weight, however unintelligible this may seem" (p. 90). If you can imagine a substance more rigid than steel, yet without weight, and through which things can pass more easily than through air, then you can imagine the ether. We confess that we cannot.

Le Bon considers the ether to be imponderable and immaterial, but he admits (p. 91) that it possesses mass, for he says: "If there were no mass, the propagation of light would probably be instantaneous."

Sir Oliver Lodge, after stating that the ether is now being discovered to constitute matter, observes:—

"The question is often asked, Is ether material? This is largely a question of words and convenience. Undoubtedly the ether belongs to the material or physical universe, but it is not ordinary matter. I should prefer to say it is not matter at all. It may be the substance, or substratum, or material of which matter is composed, but it would be confusing and inconvenient not to be able to discriminate between matter on the one hand and ether on the other. If you tie a knot on a bit of string, the knot is composed of string, but the string is not composed of knots..... The essential distinction between matter and ether is that matter *moves*, in the sense that it has the property of locomotion and effect, impact and bombardment, while ether is *strained*, and has the property of exerting stress and recoil."*

According to the latest speculations, it is from this universal ocean of ether that the elements of matter, as we know them, have evolved. A primary condensation into nebula has been followed by a further condensation into stars, accompanied by an enormous evolution of heat, and this is borne out by the facts of astronomy, which show us stars at white heat, incomparably hotter than our sun, down to cooling stars of a dull red; and, what is more important still, the spectroscope reveals the fact that the elements are found in gradually increasing numbers the lower the temperature of the star. Or, in other words, the hottest stars contain the fewest elements; the cooler stars the most. "Taking it all together," says Professor Duncan, "the evidence for an inorganic evolution of the elements seems every whit as conclusive as the evidence for an organic evolution. And farther:—

"We mean that the eighty odd elements of matter as we know them on earth to-day were not specially created, but that, like the plants and animals, they have been truly evolved from simpler and still simpler types, back to some really simple element from which they have all evolved through infinite ones gone by."

"The geologist, from an examination of the earth's strata from lowest to highest, finds an ever-increasing complexity in the organic remains which the rocks contain. The astronomer, from an examination of the stars from hottest to coldest, finds an ever-increasing complexity in the so-called elements which they contain..... They both deduce an *evolution* of simpler forms to more complex, and their deductions are equally valid; we *must* accept the inorganic evolution. Organic evolution is measured by millions of years; inorganic evolution is measured probably in billions." †

* *Essays, Biographical and Chemical*, 1908, p. 176.

† *Life and Matter*, 1909, p. 14.

‡ *Matter and Energy*, p. 194.

§ Gustave le Bon, *The Evolution of Matter*, 1907, p. 88.

* *Nature*, January 14, 1909, p. 324.

† Professor Duncan, *The New Knowledge*, 1905, pp. 206-212; cited by Dr. Charlton Bastian in *The Evolution of Life*, 1907, p. 19.

Thus the law of evolution applies not only to living matter, as in plants and animals, but to unorganised, or non-living matter—to the very elements themselves. As Carl Snyder observes:—

"In this view, the basis of the elements, the substance of the universe, is eternal; likewise the process which it pursues. A new Moleschott might now write a *Kreislauf der Materie, a Circulation of Matter*. Devolution follows evolution, regeneration follows degeneration, world without end."*

This is the view of the famous Swedish chemist, Arrhenius. In a letter to Carl Snyder, he says:—

"I therefore adhere to the idea of an oscillation of matter, because it is impossible for me to understand a beginning or an end of the system of matter that we observe. If there were an end with complete rest, the condition would have been reached in the infinity of time which lies behind us, and there would be nothing left in the world to observe. Therefore, also, the second law of thermo-dynamics cannot be perfectly true as it is formulated now." †

The Materialist declares matter and force to be the one eternal existence. The man unacquainted with science places wood or coal on the fire; he sees them consumed, and thinks they are destroyed. The chemist knows better; he burns a candle in a closed flask; he weighs the flask before, and after, the candle has burned away, and finds the weight to be exactly the same; all that has been done has been to change the fat and wick of the candle into vapor and gases. Matter is eternal, it changes only its form. If, at one time, it did not exist, it never could have come into existence.

We do not wish to prolong this series of articles unduly, so we will reserve the Nebula Hypothesis and the Evolution of Life for a future occasion. In conclusion, we cannot do better than finish with a quotation we contributed to these columns nearly ten years ago:—

"The first and last word of science is the uncreatability and indestructibility of matter. 'It is an experimentally ascertained fact [says Professor Tait] that no process at the command of man can destroy even a single particle of matter, still less create a new one. It is on this definite basis that the great science of chemistry has been accurately built' (*Chambers' Encyclopedia*, article on 'Matter'). It is obvious to the meanest intelligence that something that cannot be created or destroyed must have existed from all eternity. It is at this point the theologian steps forward and says: 'Although man cannot create matter, God can; all things are possible with God. Every effect must have a cause, and God is the First Great Cause.'

"Very well, then; if God created matter, there must have been a time when matter did not exist (not even the ether, we may add). There was nothing but empty space—an *infinite black vacuum*. What was God doing during the millenniums of ages before matter existed? He could not see; there is no light apart from matter. He could not hear; there was nothing to carry the waves of sound. He could not think; there was nothing to think about. And to finish up, if every effect must have a prior cause, how came God to exist at all? He must have required another First Cause to create him." ‡

The theologian says that God is eternal and uncreated. The Materialist says that matter and force are eternal and uncreated, and he can point to the existence of matter and demonstrate its indestructibility. But the theologian cannot produce God, or any proof, to the sceptic, of his existence. His God is a mere phantom of the mind, born of ignorance and nourished by priestcraft. Away with it.

W. MANN.

An actress, who was always making herself out to be very young, being engaged in a law suit, said she was nineteen. Much laughter ensued when her son, entering the witness-box, replied, in answer to the usual questions, "Six months older than mother."—*Under Five Reigns*, Lady Dorothy Nevill.

* Carl Snyder, *The World Machine*, 1907, p. 423.

† *Ibid.*, p. 461.

‡ "The Riddle of the Universe Answered," *Freethinker*, December 13, 1903.

How to Help Us.

IN our two previous articles on the "Boycott" we think we have made our position tolerably clear. We keep the *Freethinker* going week by week, in a manner which, we believe, is generally held to be worthy of its traditions and of the party that it represents, without being able to reckon on any financial return whatever for the work we put into it; and this after having for some years paid a considerable loss out of our own pocket,—a loss, however, which is now nearly extinguished by the improved circulation of the paper and certain improvements in the business arrangements of the publishing department.

Now at this point we want to say something of a very personal character, and in such circumstances the greatest modesty is to be thoroughly frank and straightforward.

Rather more than twenty-nine years ago (it was on April 24, 1883) we stood before Lord Chief Justice Coleridge and a special jury in the then Court of Queen's Bench, defending ourselves against an indictment for "blasphemy." We were brought up from Holloway Gaol where we were suffering the sentence of twelve months' imprisonment passed upon us by Mr. Justice North. Lord Coleridge was deeply interested in the case. He followed our three hours' address to the jury with the most flattering attention. When it closed he adjourned the court until the next morning. "That," he said to the jury, "will give you a full opportunity of reflecting calmly on the very striking and able speech you have just heard." It was generously and graciously said, but Lord Coleridge was more than a judge, he was a gentleman, and he had made a stand for principles himself. He understood us, he respected us, he recognised that we were not really defending ourselves against a criminal indictment, but fighting a battle for our convictions. It seemed to us that his lordship's unwavering look of respect deepened into one of admiration when we came to the opening sentences of our peroration. This is what we said:—

"Gentlemen, I have more than a personal interest in the result of this trial. I am anxious for the rights and liberties of thousands of my countrymen. Young as I am, I have for many years fought for my principles, taken soldier's wages when there were any, and gone cheerfully without when there were none, and fought on all the same, as I mean to do to the end; and I am doomed to the torture of twelve months' imprisonment by the verdict and judgment of thirteen men, whose sacrifices for conviction may not equal mine. The bitterness of my fate cannot be enhanced by your verdict. Yet this does not diminish my solicitude as to its character."

"As I mean to do to the end." Yes, we had enlisted in the great Army of Freethought, and were glad and proud to be at the front, whatever might happen there. And has not the course of events proved that when we said what we meant we meant what we said? "The end" is not yet, but it is some thirty years nearer than it was then, and we have kept our promise. Whatever else may be said of us, no one can deny that.

We had a right to say what we did to the jury about "sacrifices for conviction." When we joined the Army of Freethought we understood what it involved, we agreed to pay the price, and we faced the future with the greatest cheerfulness. We have never complained of the fact, and only once have we boasted of it. In the last conversation we ever had with the wealthy man who tried to ruin us some twelve years ago, we told him that we had been by far the largest subscriber to Freethought in our time. The purse-proud old gentleman smiled and sneeringly asked us to explain. We reminded him of what he had said about our "abilities." He could not deny it. He admitted that we might, for instance, have made a big income in the legal profession. And we asked him whether he didn't see that we gave to Freethought all the difference

between our "soldier's wages" in the service of Freethought and the big income we might have earned in another direction. The man before us had given some money, which he had never missed. We had given our life. It was a new view of the situation.

The late Major Harris, whose name was always amongst the subscribers for various objects in our columns, kept on at us for years about our financial position. "We ought to secure our Archbishop a minimum wage," he used to say with that jolly smile of his. At length the idea was realised. The President's Honorarium Fund was opened. And it has been an immense relief to us.

Those who subscribe to this Fund are indirectly, of course, subscribing to the support of the *Freethinker*. Considering the work we put into the paper week after week, with no salary or its equivalent, it follows that we must live on something else, if we are to live at all,—which seems an indispensable condition. There would be no time left for the paper, except perhaps occasionally, if we earned our living in the open market of journalism. If we stand by the paper, its friends must stand by us. There is nothing dishonorable in this arrangement. Yet at the same time we should be delighted if the necessity for it did not exist. We would rather live by the paper itself than by the most sincerely contributed freewill offerings.

Perhaps we shall be pardoned for interjecting an observation at this point. The Fund is dragging a little in comparison with last year. It has taken the first (and best) six months to realise one half the £800 appealed for. We do not complain—we have no right to—but we were hoping for better things. We were even hoping we might be enabled to transfer some of the drudgery of the paper to other hands, and devote our time and energies to the more important work for which our special knowledge and experience must have to some extent fitted us. It seems a pity, for instance, that mere drudgery should stand in the way of completing our book on Shakespeare, which, being written from our particular point of view, is likely to be of some value to the Freethought cause. And we have other works in contemplation. Moreover there are the affairs of the National Secular Society and the Secular Society, Ltd., to which we should like to pay more attention.

Our position would be more satisfactory if we could live by our work on the *Freethinker*. It would also be more satisfactory to the Freethought movement, for it would mean a wider circulation for the only weekly Freethought journal in England. Not forgetting the Honorarium Fund, therefore, but regarding it as a temporary expedient, our friends might devote themselves to promoting the circulation of this journal—which is also *their* journal. We shall introduce to their notice from time to time, in the near future, the various devices—such as labels, handbills, and large posters—by which the paper may be advertised. It is no use introducing these all at once; they must be introduced one at a time. There will be something said on this matter nearly every week for the next few months; and also about the fresh publications that are soon to be issued from our office. But, in the meantime, we invite all our friends to concentrate seriously—as seriously as we do—on the problem of the *Freethinker*. Let them do a little missionary work, and do it regularly. Let them introduce the *Freethinker* to some fresh person every week. Not say they will, or hope they will, but do it. This can be done easily enough. And if any friends can distribute copies on a larger scale they can obtain "specimen" back numbers for the purpose by applying to our shop manager (Mr. H. Saill). If only a thousand of this journal's friends would bestir themselves in this matter, not spasmodically but continuously, they might get us a thousand new readers in the course of six months. And the process could be continued indefinitely.

G. W. FOOTE.

Acid Drops.

Bishop Welldon is antediluvian enough, but we did not expect he would join the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes. We see that he is to be initiated into the Albert Edward Lodge, No. 59, which meets at the "Prince of Wales Feathers," Windsor-bridge, Salford. But a bigger place has been taken for this august occasion, namely, the Marble Hall of the Albion Hotel, Piccadilly. The ceremony is to take place at 8.45 p.m. on Wednesday, June 26. We should like to see the refreshment bill. Bishop Welldon believes in "following Jesus" and Jesus was—not a teetotaler. Still, one can hardly fancy Jesus as a "Buffalo." It looks and sounds so incongruous.

The Dean of Manchester says he supports an Established Church because he desires to see a democracy governed by the spirit of Jesus Christ. Doubtless. It is only natural that the Dean should desire the people to remain Christian, but a democracy that remains Christian is a democracy that will be always getting there and yet never arrive. The Dean also said that an established and endowed Church is the only guarantee for the permanence of Christian worship. This, we take it, is only another way of admitting that Christianity will only live so long as it can dispense patronage and bribery. And with this, too, we are inclined to agree.

Amongst the subjects discussed at the recent eighth Congress of the Chambers of Commerce of the British Empire was that of Easter. A resolution was passed that it was desirable to establish by international agreement a fixed date for Easter. Lord Desborough said that "an Easter which 'hopped about' was right neither historically, astronomically, nor geographically." Quite so. But it is right enough astrologically. Sun worship and moon worship are both reconciled in the present arrangement for fixing Easter. We should be sorry to lose what throws such a searchlight on Christian mythology.

Mr. Stephen Phillips's very blank verse on General Booth's blindness, which appeared in the *Westminster Gazette* of June 12, seem almost designed to show that he is no poet. If the writer had not already achieved a reputation it is doubtful whether his lines would have had the honor of publication. Mr. Phillips could not even keep off Milton. Certainly the great John Milton was blind, but he was blind in the prime of life, through using his eyes too much in defending the freedom and self-government of the people of England. His greatest and most famous work, *Paradise Lost*, was written afterwards; or rather, being unable to write, he dictated it to his daughters as his amanuenses—a fact which makes it one of the most extraordinary achievements in human literature. General Booth, on the other hand, goes blind at the fag end of a long life, when it can make very little difference, except to himself personally, whether he is able to see or not. What sense is there, moreover, in mentioning John Milton and William Booth in the same breath? Blindness was the only point they had in common. But nothing seems sacred to the minor poet, and Mr. Phillips commits his act of literary sacrilege in a perfectly serene, if thoroughly incompetent, manner. And when he takes to describing William Booth's "mighty war 'gainst infidelity and wretchedness," he simply sinks into ridiculous impertinence. Perhaps one ought to take him comically. In that case, his nice discrimination in the use of words reminds us of the American lady who wanted a divorce from her husband on the ground of his "infidelity" because he had become an "infidel."

What, by the way, is Mr. Stephen Phillips's own religious belief? Has he, indeed, any such belief at all? We are not dogmatising on the matter, but just seeking information. We are wondering whether Mr. Phillips has degenerated in every way since he wrote "Marpessa." That was fifteen or sixteen years ago, and all sorts of things may happen in that time—even to a man's brains.

The *Christian* says that one of the saddest facts is that so few people are converted after they are thirty years of age. It also notes that twelve, sixteen, and twenty are the most fruitful ages for conversion, and professes inability to explain the phenomenon. We think we can explain it in a sentence. It is simply the exploitation of adolescence. From twelve to twenty-five is the period of adolescence; the years during which boy and girl reach maturity, and the social and sexual sides of their nature undergoes rapid development. Under wise and proper conditions these years

would serve as the period during which youth and maiden were intelligently introduced to the more serious side of social life. It is a time of rapid physiological change and emotional development, and is marked out by nature as the proper period for such an introduction. But, instead of this being so, they are brought under the influence of ignorant evangelists, their feelings are interpreted in terms of religion, and their inclinations after a larger social life diagnosed as the voice of God in the soul, or by some other equally nonsensical religious expression. The result is that instead of developing a useful, healthy-minded citizen, we develop a narrow-minded religious fanatic. The energy that should be expended in social channels is diverted to the service of religion. We repeat, conversion is mainly an exploitation of adolescence.

Dr. James Denny, in a sermon on behalf of the Bible Society, said that the Bible is so little read because people are afraid of the responsibility it creates. People do not read the Bible through cowardice. This is unadulterated rubbish. We question if the Bible is less read now—to any serious extent—than it ever was. The number of people who seriously read the Bible must always have been comparatively few. We fancy Dr. Denny is confusing the number of people who owned a Bible with the number of people who read it. People do not so much read the Bible less, as they are less afraid to say they do not believe in it. Dr. Denny also says that "we do not take up the Bible on the assumption that it is inspired, but we lay it down with the assurance that this is the place where we hear God's voice." Again, rubbish! We venture to say that no one ever thought of putting down the Bible with the assurance that it was "God's voice," unless they commenced reading in the belief that it was so. We should like Dr. Denny to supply us with cases to the contrary. For our part, we could provide him with plenty of cases of people who began reading the Bible with the belief that it was inspired and ended with quite a different opinion.

"At times we need to examine ourselves and see that we are bearing fruit." This is not an extract from the scrap-book of a private asylum, but a portion of a sermon for which the preacher received payment from presumably sane people.

The Pope is building a new palace at Rome with 350 rooms, besides kitchens and halls. It will suffice for the humble disciple of a Deity who was born in a stable and in after life had not where to lay his head.

Misprints are sometimes found in the *Freethinker*, and those who advise us of them generally do so in reproachful accents, notwithstanding the conditions under which this journal is produced. But the fact is that misprints appear in publications on which plenty of money is spent to prevent them. There was a funny one in Monday's *Daily News* in a review of the late William James's *Essays on Radical Empiricism*. James, the reviewer said, "took metaphysics from that dark and stuffy chamber where it hunts without ceasing for black hats which are not there." Hats, of course, should be cats. Only one letter is wrong,—h for c—but what a difference it makes! There was another shocking misprint of a Wordsworth quotation in a book we happened to be looking at only a few minutes after we noticed the one in the *Daily News*—the sevenpenny edition of Helen Mathers' *Cherry Ripe*. It is a quotation with which Shelley ended the beautiful Preface to "Alastor," and this is how it should read:—

"The good die first,
And those whose hearts are dry as summer dust
Burn to the socket."

This is how it reads in Helen Mathers' novel:—

"The gods die first,
And they whose heart is dry as summer dust
Burn to the socket."

Here are two small but miserable misprints in the second line, and a terrible one in the first, completely spoiling the poet's meaning.

Funny things were on the banners of some of the demonstrators in Hyde Park and at the Albert Hall against the Welsh Disestablishment Bill. "Our Patron Saint," said one, "is David, not McKenna." We don't think much of McKenna ourselves, but David—! He belongs to the *Newgate Calendar* of "Holy Writ." "Will a man rob God?" Certainly. Some of the demonstrators would have done it if they had the chance. It's the safest form of robbery going. But the crowning anti-disestablishment motto was this: "We want Churches, not Museums." What they really meant, though, was that they wished for

Churches, not Museums. They want Museums more than Churches. What they want most of all is common sense.

"I was sorry to notice in Florence," Mr. George Bedborough writes us, "that the principal street which was called Via Francesco Ferrer, for two years or more, is now Via Roma." This is the work of a reactionary majority on the City Council.

The *Catholic Times* fully endorses our approval of the decision of the American Court that Bible reading in school, by whosoever the selection is made, is denominational. The *Catholic Times* says that to the Jew the New Testament is denominational, while to the "unfortunate Atheist" the doctrine of God comes under the same head. It sums up by saying that once teaching of religion is admitted in any school, it must be taught in all schools, and if teachers are allowed to teach Cowper-Templeism they should be allowed to teach all forms of religious belief. Of course, the *Catholic Times* is out for the teaching of Catholic religion in public schools, and thinks that before the controversy is ended the British public will see the justice of allowing this. We fancy that by the time the controversy is concluded—and it is the only way in which it will be closed—the public will see the wisdom and justice of excluding religion altogether from State schools.

For some weeks an instructive, if not very interesting, discussion has been going on in the *Christian World* over the Rev. A. C. Dixon's views on evolution and religion. Like most of our American preaching importations, "Dr." Dixon is an extremely ignorant and narrow-minded type of believer, and as such will have nothing to do with the doctrine of evolution. Quite unable to discriminate between a discussion as to the factors of evolution and a discussion as to the truth of evolution itself, he has raked together a number of theological back numbers of a similar kind to himself, and produces their testimony against evolution. His attack has been too much for the editor of the *Christian World* and other Christians, who have reminded him that the theory of evolution is now too firmly established to be attacked by any Christian preacher without injuring the preacher and reflecting discredit on Christianity.

So much for Dr. Dixon. The man is, as we have said, ignorant; we know him to be none too scrupulous in his controversial methods; but, in spite of these things, we prefer a straightforward championship of the Bible and a denunciation of evolution to more or less dishonest attempts to harmonise the two. Thus, the editor of the *Christian World*, in closing the discussion, remarks that he is glad Dr. Dixon goes to the Bible, because that is an admirable text-book of evolution. We see there the evolution of the idea of God, etc., etc. This may be true enough from one point of view. If evolution be a fact, it must be traceable everywhere—in the Bible no less than in a collection of fairy tales. But to say that evolution can be seen in the Bible, and to say that the Bible teaches evolution, are two very different statements. The first may be true, and this is what the editor of the *Christian World* says. But he means the second, and that is decidedly false. The writers of the Bible had no conception of evolution, and therefore could not teach it. Evolution is a late conception applied to religion, as it has been applied to other matters. And the reading of a teaching of evolution into Christianity is an example of religious harmonising which shows that our sense of rectitude is still in need of further development. Dr. Dixon represents the old-fashioned, unenlightened type of believer. The editor of the *Christian World*—perhaps we had better leave him unclassified for the present.

There is one thing in Mr. J. W. Gott's book, noticed in our last week's "Sugar Plums," to which we could not call attention then. It will be remembered that a petition for Mr. Gott's release from his imprisonment for "blasphemy" was engineered by the Rationalist Press Association. It was understood, we believe from Mr. J. M. Roberston, M.P., that the Home Secretary, in "considering" Mr. Gott's case, would most of all be helped by a petition. This petition was numerous and influentially signed. But it did not contain our signature. We understood the thing only too well. Mr. McKenna could make any use he liked of it—good, bad, or indifferent—and it was the easiest of all methods for those who were engineering it to pursue. It committed them to nothing beyond. They had made their perfectly respectable protest, and if it failed what more was there to be said, or what remained to do? Mr. McKenna was informed by the petition that there were a number of Freethinkers in England who belonged rather to the "classes" than to the "masses." He must have known

that before, and we daresay he smiled at the innocence of the ladies and gentlemen who thought that the fact might disturb him. It takes a far more violent, and even brutal, pressure than that to prevent a Home Secretary from obliging the religious bigots on both sides of the House of Commons. Mr. McKenna publicly treated the petition—and therefore the petitioners—with the cold contempt that the professional politician usually displays to people who fondly imagine that principles count for anything in politics when they are not supported by practical power. Privately, he threw the petition into the waste-basket. The only effect it produced was to make the Home Secretary justify and applaud the prosecution and the sentences on the Leeds "blasphemers." And the same thing would have happened if the document had been signed by the Trinity and all the Archangels, including the "fallen" one known as Satan. They count no votes in England, and no political party would have anything whatever to do with them.

There was one woman who objected to that petition. It was Mrs. Gott. With the inaccuracy that is so frequent in this little book, we are not given the exact terms of her letter to the Home Secretary on the subject. The copy has been lost, but "it was near about in these terms":—

"To the Right Hon. Reginald McKenna, M.P.,—

Sir,—My attention having been drawn to a certain answer of yours in reply to questions raised in the House of Commons affecting the possible reduction of the sentence recently passed upon Mr. J. W. Gott and the course he would have to take to secure it, I write to say that my husband would never think of begging for the remission of so much as a single day. He is in prison not for a crime, but for a principle. He is the best husband woman ever had and the kindest of fathers—and he is a man.

Yours, etc., ADA GOTT."

Mrs. Gott died while her husband was in prison. Her husband was liberated at last by the Home Secretary in order that he might go home, see the corpse, and attend the funeral. Some day or other, if there be a day of judgment, as Christians declare, Mr. Gott may just hand in his wife's letter as his testimonial, and intimate that it is all he proposes to offer. And if, as Renan said, the verdict for all of us on that great occasion will probably be the judgment of our women folk and children, countersigned by the Eternal, it seems extremely likely that John William Gott may have quite as good a seat in heaven as Reginald McKenna.

But we have not yet said what we started out to say. Ada Gott's letter is the best thing in this book. We are not surprised at it. Our opinion of women Freethinkers has often been stated in these columns. There is a lot of matter in this book which, in view of the title, had no business in it at all. But this one letter gives it an imperishable value. Ada Gott emerged from her domestic privacy but once, and then she said what for all the best qualities of human speech—sincerity, directness, and force—throws nearly everything else in this book into the shade.

What humbugs the Christians of this country are! After all their gas over John Bunyan's copy of Foxe's Book of Martyrs, preserved at the Bedford General Library, they wouldn't find £2,000 to keep it in Bunyan's and Foxe's own land, but allowed it to be bought for that sum by Mr. Pierpont Morgan, and carried off to the land of American millionaires.

Mr. Robert Blatchford finds out things as he goes along. He is now seeing through the superstition of royalty. Mr. Foote was secretary of the Republican League started at Birmingham in 1871, with Charles Bradlaugh as President, the inauguration of which was celebrated by a crowded evening meeting in the great Town Hall, with Mr. Foote himself as one of the speakers,—and the youngest, of course, for he was then only twenty-one. Not long after his twelve months' imprisonment for "blasphemy" in 1883-1884 Mr. Foote wrote and published the most daring Republican pamphlet of the nineteenth century. It was entitled *Royal Paupers*, with the sub-title of "What Royalty does for the People, and What the People do for Royalty." It was a challenge, of course, to those who were working up the loyal fever in connection with Queen Victoria's first jubilee. Several Radical papers gave it favorable notice. Not one, we believe, would do so now. "But why mention all this now?" somebody may ask. Because it is just and fair to point out that the really difficult and dangerous pioneer work has nearly always been done by the fighting wing of the organised Freethought party.

We warned the Labor party some time ago that their turn would come when the police had practised enough upon "blasphemers." And our warning (as usual) has been justified, for we never speak publicly without knowledge and deliberation. The case of Mr. Tom Mann is very much to the point. We see, too, that the police have started on Mr. Ted Leggatt. Now we have a soft spot in our make-up for Ted Leggatt. Many years ago, when we were fighting the *Freethinker* battle at West Ham, and some rowdy Christians (probably paid for the job) tried to spoil our first big meeting in the Town Hall, Ted Leggatt was wonderfully useful in passing them out of the place more expeditiously than they had entered it. He asked them nothing for his services in placing them in a position of greater safety. He was never mercenary. Neither, though he can talk savagely at times, is there a grain of ill-nature in his composition. He is now a Trade Union organiser, and is mixed up professionally with the dock strike. That is how the police came to prosecute him for "insulting behavior" to "black-legs," and with using "bad language" to a convoy of constables. Ted says that he simply shouted, in reply to the question of Union carmen as to what he thought of "strike-breaking" carmen: "Look at these joskins; you would think they were sawing wood. I am responsible for getting those men a rise of 6s. a week, and this is the return we get." This is not exactly the language of the Vere de Veres, but what harm is there in it? How could anybody except a fanatical pedagogue call it criminal? Yet the Thames Police Court magistrate fined Ted forty shillings or a month. Even without "the language" he said that "the evidence was sufficient to substantiate the charge." "Insulting behavior" is thus like "blasphemy." It means speaking of and looking at without proper respect anybody or anything that the authorities—for very good reasons of their own—want to surround with artificial credit. We are not surprised that Ted Leggatt refused to pay forty pence and said he would "do" the month. The really important point, however, is that it is the evident intention of the "classes" generally to use the cunning force of law, instead of the brutal force of "bullets and bayonets," against the "masses." They will find judges and magistrates docile enough to do all that the "classes" expect of them.

Government by the police, aided by the magistrates, goes on apace in England. The newest crime is to say anything in public which the police choose to consider as "likely to cause a breach of the peace"; which means anything that the Chief Constable happens to dislike. A young man named William Richards has been sent to prison at Barrow for "ridiculing the Salvation Army" in an open-air lecture. This is a fresh form of "blasphemy." General Booth enjoys the same protection as God Almighty. It would be more to his (W. B.'s) credit if he answered Mr. Manson.

Rev. G. A. Cobbold, vicar of St. Bartholomew's, Ipswich, having scruples about administering the Holy Communion to a woman who could not live the day out, was minded to send up to London "to obtain the Reserved Sacrament," but he was distressed at the idea of "bringing back the Consecrated Elements in a railway car" and decided it would be better to use "a motor car." Apparently a railway carriage is worse than a motor car in its deteriorating effect on the body and blood of Christ. One would like to know why.

The Bishop of Lincoln is ready for Disestablishment "whenever in God's providence" it arrives. "But why disendowment?" he asks. Ay, there's the rub. "Call us what you like, and put us where you like, but let us go on handling the swag."

The Abbé Pitou, of Angers, who mysteriously disappeared, turned up at Lyons and told the police he had been kidnapped. It turns out, however, that he had kidnapped the parish money.

"The Song of Solomon" has been set to music and has been used as a recital on the concert platform. By the way, was the song of Solomon—"Place Me Among the Girls"?

A correspondent of the *Boston Globe* named Leominster asked the editor if it were true that Ingersoll "made a dying statement to the effect that he was sorry for the life he had led." The editor replied (May 17):—

"As Robert Ingersoll's personal life was about as good as a man's can be, there was little for him to be sorry for. As to his beliefs there is no evidence that on his death bed or at any other time did he express any belief that his speeches or essays had been mistakes."

A calumnious question brings Ingersoll a fresh testimonial.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended until September.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1912.—Previously acknowledged, £154 6s. 2d. Received since:—C. Heaton, 5s.; "Ficksburg," 10s. 6d.; W. H. Hicks, £2 2s.; R. Taylor, 5s.; M. A. P., 2s. 6d.; J. P., 5s.; Wm. Hopper, £2 2s.

A. G.—The passage from Dean Inge is written paradoxically, but we find it easy enough to understand. It is not our business, however, to explain his meaning.

W. McKELVIE.—We hope the Liverpool Branch's picnic will be a great success.

C. TUBSON.—We have dealt with the matter in "Acid Drops"—which please see.

M. J. LEVIN.—We attack the superstition in power. Spiritualism and Theosophy are relatively harmless. We gave some attention to the latter, however, when Mrs. Besant went over to it from Atheism, lest her name should carry weight though her arguments carried none. We never heard that a single Atheist went over with her.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

S. CLOWES.—The article is enigmatic, and you may have the right key of interpretation—but we fancy not. Thanks for your cheering letter and your efforts to promote our circulation.

F. SMALLWOOD.—Thanks for your trouble, but wouldn't it be better to wait till the fun begins at Wolverhampton?

W. H. HICKS, subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund, says: "I hope you will receive a greater response to the appeal for this fund. I enjoy reading the *Freethinker* very much; it is well-written and instructive, and I wish I had known of it years ago."

G. PROCTOR.—See paragraph. Thanks.

E. B.—Thanks for useful cuttings.

J. HANS.—The first and second verses have merit, the third is much inferior, and the fifth line is not written in real English.

HELEN STEINBERGER.—Pleased to hear of your seafaring friend to whom you send the *Freethinker*, and who enjoys reading it and says it has "put quite new thoughts into him on the subject" of religion. There is an excellent little book by Mr. H. S. Salt on *Shelley's Principles*, and the late J. M. Symonds' volume on Shelley in the "English Men of Letters" series is also good. Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, in two big expensive volumes, is full and authoritative, though diffuse and redundant. Essays on Keats are fairly common. There is a fine one in the Second Series of Matthew Arnold's *Essays in Criticism*.

J. ALLMANN.—The question of the persecution of the Christians under the Roman Empire cannot be dealt with in the space we have here. But this is certain that the Pagans never persecuted them as badly as they afterwards persecuted the Pagans—and each other.

J. WORSLEY.—Solemn moonshine, not worth criticism. Thanks for good wishes.

FRANCES PRUETT.—Glad you find this journal so stimulating and informing.

WM. HOPPER, sending subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund, which he "regrets to see coming in so slowly this year," says, "I could not delay any longer after reading your last article, which seems almost heart-breaking from a monetary and other points of view. I trust the £300 will soon be contributed, and so relieve you of all further anxiety on that account."

W. DAVIDSON begs leave to acknowledge the receipt of a letter through our office from T. G., who gives no address.

G. J. SIMPSON.—Don't trouble about such ridiculous personalities. We thought the orator had gone out as a missionary to some cannibal region. Have the natives found him unsuitable?

M. ROBBERS.—No reader of this journal ought to be ignorant of the fact that Miss Vance has lost her sight.

D. BEALE.—Sent as requested.

LUX.—There is a lot of truth in what you say about the religion of Chief Constables. We do not always mention all that we see. We have to keep "a general's eye" in our position. Thanks for encouraging words at the end of your letter.

W. B. WARD.—Nothing pleases us better than acknowledgments of "mental emancipation" through the *Freethinker*.

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

A Canadian reader, belonging to the theatrical profession, and formerly a Roman Catholic, writes to us: "I have been reading the *Freethinker* for some time now, and find it indispensable. What I think is really needed now is a visit from your good self, or some strongly equipped Freethinker, for the purpose of 'converting Canada.'" This correspondent promises to write again, and we hope he will do so.

The Liverpool Branch's annual picnic takes place to-day (June 23), the destination being Thurston. The tickets, including lunch and tea, are 3s. 9d. each. Cyclists 2s. 6d. Wagonettes leave Woodside Station at 10.30 a.m. Apply for tickets to Mr. W. McKelvie, 57 Penrose-street, Everton.

The Bradlaugh Fellowship holds its next "social" at the Shoreditch Radical Club, 43 New North-road, N., on Wednesday, June 26, at 8.30 p.m. "There is nothing to pay and no tickets are required." The Fellowship is also arranging for another visit to Charles Bradlaugh's Grave at Brookwood Cemetery on Sunday, July 7. The railway fare is 2s. 6d., but tickets can be obtained at half price by applying, before Monday, July 1, to Mr. W. J. Ramsey, 146 Lansdowne-road, Hackney, N.E.

The West Ham Branch has secured the Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, for a winter's course of Sunday evening lectures, from October 6, 1912, to March 13, 1913. Local "saints" please note.

Mr. Joseph Bates has been "fighting with beasts at Ephesus"—only the place is really called Gainsborough. He attempted a week's lecturing there in the Market Place, and only desisted, after a good deal of disorder, when the police threatened to arrest him if he continued. Mr. Bates and the local "saints" who stood gallantly by him had to fight their way through a fanatical Christian crowd who tried to throw them into the river. We hear that the town is stirred up and many people are inquiring after the *Freethinker*.

The Annual Services of the Failsforth Secular Sunday School took place on Sunday last. Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner gave two excellent addresses; part songs were given by the choir, assisted by the Orchestral Society; and large audiences were present. Mrs. Bonner had the pleasure of naming two children (Vitor Collins and Warren Schofield).

We have received a copy of *The Labor World*, published at Spokane, Washington, dated May 31, and we see that it contains "Our London Letter" by George Bedborough, who refers to the Tom Mann prosecution under the Liberal Government, and then says:—

"The same government which prosecutes Tom Mann had previously revived the vile 'blasphemy' laws and has since permitted and encouraged prosecutions of freethinkers without even the pretence of 'blasphemy.' Until there is a perfect liberty of thought and speech nobody (least of all a reformer) is safe from persecution. The most just and in the long run the most discreet course is for all lovers of freedom to unite in resisting interference with liberty whatever guise the interference takes. It is only justice to admit that George W. Foote, the famous English freethought leader, has always been ready to work, speak, fight, and suffer for the cause of freedom, not asking who is the present victim, be he Christian, socialist, anarchist, or atheist. Socialists must learn to reciprocate."

We wish they would. But our policy is the same whether they do or not.

"Edward C. Reichwald, as a citizen and taxpayer of Cook county, Illinois, and Secretary of the American Secular Union, has begun a suit against the Catholic Bishop of Chicago, *et als.*, to enjoin the erection of a church on a tract of land acquired by Cook county for charitable uses, known as the Oak Park Institutions. The Board of County Commissioners, unlawfully, as Mr. Reichwald holds, gave to Archbishop Quigley permission to build a church or chapel on the grounds. The suit has aroused much interest in Chicago, and Mr. Reichwald expects it is going to be 'some fight.' He has received assurance of support from the press and business men."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

The Missouri Society, Sons of the Revolution, offered three 1912 prizes to high schools and scholars of equal grade for the best essays on "The Political Writings of Thomas Paine and their Influence on the Revolution." All three were won by girls, and their portraits in the *Truthseeker* leave no room for surprise at their success.

Culture and Freethought in Spain: A Literary Causerie.

SPAIN'S unenviable reputation for illiteracy and religiosity must not deceive us into the belief that all Spaniards are ardent believers in Christianity or devout worshipers at the shrine of ignorance. It is true that such schools as the Government provides are poor and inefficient, and that the percentage of illiterates is shamefully high. On the other hand, the fortunate few who can read have abundant, and, indeed, almost enviable opportunities of revelling in the classics of science and Freethought. In spite of the Inquisition of old, the Spanish sceptic of to-day is catered for by enlightened and enterprising publishing firms, who offer him for a few pesetas the masterpieces of the world's best thinkers in philosophy, history, criticism, and religion. Given two generations of sound secular education, and with these advantages the Spanish democracy will become more fully emancipated from Christianity than perhaps any other.

One of the most valuable amongst these Spanish publishing houses is the firm of F. Sempere y Ca., of Valencia (Calle de Palomar, 10. They have a London depôt at the Spanish Library, 134 Charing Cross-road, W.C.). In a previous issue of this journal* and elsewhere, I have had occasion to review some of the bold Freethought publications published by Sempere & Co. The perusal of these volumes, sold mostly at one peseta, filled me with astonishment at the admirable broad-minded spirit presiding over the enterprises of this enlightened firm. Their copious catalogues, and, still more, the teeming volumes themselves, some hundreds of which have now been published, soon convinced me that, whilst with some publishers godliness is great riches, with Sempere & Co. a generous hospitality to economic and religious heterodoxy has meant, and still means, good business.

Messrs. Sempere some short time ago sent me a further batch of some twenty volumes belonging to their series of "Popular Books," which, I am grateful to say, are popular in no catch-penny sense. The works are of standard excellence, and are selected in a wide and comprehensive spirit. On perusing this collection, I can only say that when, as a young man; with meagre means for buying the best type of literature, I began to plough my way through the bog-land of superstition, I am sorry I did not possess the equipment furnished by these splendid volumes, almost without money and without price. The student of to-day who wants to find intellectual salvation can soar to the skies and commune with choice spirits, if only he will take flight on the wings of the Spanish language—which, by the way, is one of the richest and most beautiful, as indeed it is one of the easiest and withal most majestic, of all languages. Take an instance of what I would call cheap salvation from Sempere's list. Where, in France or in England, can the impecunious lover of learning and research get Renan's *Averrhoes and Averrhoism* for two pesetas (1s. 8d.)? And yet the Spanish student can get from Sempere (sometimes in one-volume editions, at tenpence a volume) almost any of the chief works of Darwin or Haeckel; he can get Draper's *Conflict*; his *Intellectual Development* (in three volumes—dirt cheap); most of Kropotkin's compelling books; nearly all Nietzsche (in separate one-volume editions); the very interesting outspoken criticisms on Christianity and religion by Proudhon (I refer specially to his book on Education!); the wondrous volumes by Rêclus; Herbert Spencer's books, including his *Ceremonial Institutions*, and a crowd of other works of capital importance to the gentle reader who is a Freethinker but not a millionaire. Such easy opportunities of self-culture are a boon to the liberal-minded, all-round student of modern life and thought.

* *Freethinker*, January 24, 1908.
† *La Educación* (edition Sempere).

What, to my mind, is specially noteworthy in the publications of Sempere & Co. is the fact that the light of Freethought is not put under a pharisaic bushel. One of the most destructive attacks of Christianity on the critical side is Auguste Dide's work, *La fin des religions*. This work* is accorded a prominent place in the "New Library" series issued by this firm. The publication of this volume, in a handsome Spanish edition, side by side with the *New Life of Jesus* (Strauss, 6 pesetas); the *Historia Política de los Papas* of Lanfrey (with prologue by the ex-priest and staunch Freethinker, José Ferrandiz, who carries the work down to the Pontificate of the ineffable Sarto); and many other high-class presentments of modern science, philosophy, and historical criticism of special interest to the Freethinker, will suffice to show that Spain only needs a better system of education, and a regime less bent on wasting the nation's resources on war and religion than the present, in order to renew her ancient glory among the nations.

I know that more than a sprinkling of our readers in England and America are not indifferent to Spanish culture. To those amongst them who would like to know at first hand what are the real facts concerning the social conditions and the state of education and religion in Spain, I would strongly commend the very able work, the "Backwardness of Spain," noted below.† The author, a well-known Valencian publicist, hides his identity under the name of "John Chamberlain," and writes as an English observer in order, by the piquant standpoint of his criticisms, to fix the serious attention of his countrymen upon the vital problems at the basis of Spanish national degeneracy. Some well-known Hispanophiles have already read this remarkable work on my recommendation, and I am happy to seize the present occasion to give that recommendation yet wider reach. The chapter on Spanish religion should be specially noted. It will give Mr. Belloc and all the congregation of the faithful a rude shock of disillusionment. We shall all know more about Spain when this superb volume, written by a convinced Freethinker, who, like so many damned souls, has the saving grace of culture, is made accessible to a wider public in an English garb.

One of the latest additions to the "Popular Books" series is the interesting study on John Jacques Rousseau, by Auguste Dide.‡ This work was written in 1910, and forms a fitting sequel to the masterly work on Servetus by the same learned author. The present work, which has as its subtitle, *Protestantism and the French Revolution*, is a close criticism of Rousseau's life, doctrine, and religious tendencies, especially in their bearing on Robespierre and his political school, and through these, upon the course of events during the French Revolution. The Spanish are lucky to get in such a cheap and handy form this admirable historical study, which covers a wide field of criticism, centering around the doctrines and the personality of this singular—and one had almost said sinister—life. Here, again, one has to note with a touch of envy and a sigh of regret that M. Dide's frankly Rationalistic study of such an important thought-centre as Rousseau readily wins its way into the editorial sanctum of the Spanish publisher, but has to wait outside on the doorstep in pharisaic England, unable, it would seem, to get a hearing.

Another recent volume is by Prince Kropotkin.§ The present edition is prefaced with an informing prologue on the state of anarchism in Spain. Kropotkin's work has already appeared in English, and contains some trenchant criticisms on Christianity viewed as a mirage in the pathway of human

* *El fin de las religiones*, pp. 387 (3 pesetas, Spanish edition, Sempere).

† *El Atraso de España*. Sempere. pp. 298. 1 peseta.

‡ *Juan Jacobo Rousseau*, edition Sempere, p. 265 (1 peseta).

§ *La Ciencia Moderna y el Anarquismo*, etc., pp. 261, and introduction 16 pp. (1 peseta).

progress. Like every production of Prince Kropotkin's pen, *Modern Science and Anarquism* gives one furiously to think, as the French say, and just now, and for some time to come, the Spaniards have need of some serious stimulus to "furious" thought.

Taking up, almost at random, another volume*—this time by Proudhon—one comes across his book on "Woman" in Spanish guise—a work which deals with the fair sex in a way that will profoundly displease the Feminists. This is not the place to take up the cudgels on their behalf, and I do not suppose that the most fanatical opponent of what are called "woman's rights" would proceed to the lengths—I would almost like to add, to the depths—of antagonism exhibited in this volume, the publication of which in Spanish gives me my first introduction (I know of no English edition of it) to this singularly arresting study, as Proudhon terms it, in practical philosophy. I should like very much the pious Pauline advocate of the Christian subjection of woman to take this plain-speaking, somewhat cynical, volume to his soul for fresh inspiration in girding against Mrs. Pankhurst and the Suffrage; he would gain new arguments, some of them a little more original, and some of them certainly far sounder, than many of those that now do service; but his faith would infallibly be shipwrecked during the painful process of colliding with the crushing icebergs of anti-Christian criticism with which these pages are fairly littered.

All things considered, I have come to a conclusion which is contrary, it may be, to a good many current ideas, viz., that the Spanish Freethinker is remarkably well served with high quality literature, written by good Rationalists of credit and renown and published by first-rate publishing houses. Indeed, the Spanish Rationalist enjoys advantages which, in some respects, exceed those available to his English colleague. For instance, the Sempere firm gives the Spanish sceptic the Baron d'Holbach's *Moses, Jesus, and Mahomet* for a peseta, and nowhere can I find it in English. At the same price he can buy Büchner's *Force and Matter* (and other works by the same author); Buckle's *Sketch of the History of the Spanish Intellect* (we can get the book now in the English original at about the same price, but the Spaniard has, I believe, enjoyed his privilege longer than Buckle's fellow countrymen); Dide's *Servetus and Calvin*—a work I cannot too warmly recommend; my friend Professor Gilie's *History of Moral Ideas* (quite a notable book), adorned with an introduction by the Spanish Herbert Spencer, the learned Anselmo Lorenzo; Dr. Maudsley's *Crime and Insanity*; Edgar Quinet's *Genius of Religions* (in two volumes); a whole string of volumes (complete) by Renan, Spencer, Kropotkin, Nietzsche, etc.—all deeply interesting to the student of religion; Voltaire's *Philosophic Dictionary* (in six volumes) and an endless variety of valuable works by authors of world-wide reputation in science, philosophy, and Freethought. I will only say, in conclusion, that I bitterly regret I did not learn Spanish thirty-five years ago, in order to have had the chance of revelling in the intellectual delight which all too late, in the evening of my days, has been revealed to me. That revelation, with the gifts of knowledge it bestows, are specially for the young—we all love and envy them—who are rising up around us. To them, I can offer no better counsel than to deepen their culture by a study of the Spanish language, and enrich their knowledge of Freethought and of the world of ideas by studying the works (inaccessible elsewhere, in many cases, in English) opened out to them in these unique publications.

In the meantime, the Spaniard ought to thank his lucky stars that a few pesetas enable him to summons to his aid in the fight for intellectual freedom the choicest spirits that hold dominion in the realm of thought.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

Old Testament History.—XV.

(Continued from p. 380.)

OF king Josiah who made such great reforms in connection with the worship of the god Yahveh it is stated:—

2 Kings xxiii. 25.—"And like unto him was there no king before him, that turned to Yahveh with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might..... neither after him arose there any like him."

Of an earlier king, Hezekiah, it is also stated: "so that after him was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor among them that were before him" (2 Kings xviii. 5). Setting aside these conflicting post-exilic statements, there can be no doubt, from the Yahveh point of view, that Josiah and Hezekiah were the first and second in order of merit of all the kings that reigned in Judah. Yet, in the case of the second of these, the god Yahveh rendered no assistance, either to the king or his people, when Jerusalem was besieged by the great Sennacherib, nor did he move a finger to prevent the deportation of more than half of his worshippers to Assyria. In the first case, Josiah received no aid from Yahveh when he fought against Necho, king of Egypt, but met the same fate—death upon the field of battle—as the notoriously wicked king Ahab. Azariah, again, was a good king "in the sight of Yahveh," yet that deity smote him with leprosy; while the worst king of Judah, Manasseh, enjoyed the longest reign of all (58 years), and died in his bed in peace, as did also the licentious and idolatrous king Solomon. The moral, of course, is that the god Yahveh had no power to assist any king—good, bad, or indifferent—and had no control over any of the events of history. We are indebted wholly to the post-exilic editors for the many statements that "the fierce anger of Yahveh was kindled" against this or that king, and that Yahveh brought this or that conqueror against him, etc.

Josiah was succeeded by his son Jehoahaz, who "did that which was evil in the sight of Yahveh" (609 B.C.), and who after reigning but three months, was deposed and carried captive to Egypt by Necho. This Egyptian monarch "put the land to a tribute of an hundred talents of silver and a talent of gold," and placed upon the throne Eliakim, another son of Josiah, "and changed his name to Jehoiakim." The change of a name by a king of Egypt is pure nonsense. The name "El-iakim" signifies "god raises up"; that of Jeho-iakim, "Yahu raises up." The compiler preferred that only Yahu or Yahveh should be deemed able to elevate or raise up, and so changed the name himself. The Egyptian king would neither know nor care anything about such childish matters.

Jehoiakim, like his brother Jehoahaz, "did that which was evil," etc., and, after reigning eleven years, "slept with his fathers: and Jehoiachin his son reigned in his stead" (2 Kings xxiv. 6). The last-named king only reigned three months, and during that short reign "did that which was evil," etc. Against this king came "Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon," and laid siege to Jerusalem, which city appears to have been then unprepared for a siege; so Jehoiachin "went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers." These were all carried away to Babylon, and with them were also carried captive "all the mighty men of valor, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and the smiths: none remained save the poorest sort of the people of the land" (2 Kings xxiv. 14).

Before leaving Jerusalem, however, the king of Babylon made Zedekiah, a third son of Josiah, ruler over the remnant of the Jews left in Jerusalem and Judea. Here it may be noted that the name of this Babylonian king should be written Nebuchadnezzar, as in Jer. xxxix. 1, 11, etc.; not Nebuchadnezzar, as given in 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles.

The last king of Judah, Zedekiah, was another of those who "did that which was evil," etc.; which conduct would not have affected in the smallest

* *La Mujer* (Spanish translation, pp. 205, 1 peseta).

degree the course of his life had he continued to pay tribute to Nebuchadrezzar; but, unfortunately for him, he "rebelled against the king of Babylon," and had to take the consequences. In the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign came Nebuchadrezzar "and all his host against Jerusalem.....and the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah." Then came the end. The provisions stored within the city were exhausted: the king and his men of war "fled by night by the way of the gate between two walls," and got clear of the city, but were overtaken by the Chaldeans and brought back prisoners. Zedekiah was taken before Nebuchadrezzar, who was then at Riblah, and there "they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes, and put out the eyes of Zedekiah, and bound him in fetters, and carried him to Babylon" (2 Kings xxv. 7).

After this, "Nebuzaradan, the captain of the guard" returned with a strong force to Jerusalem. "And he burnt the house of Yahveh, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem.....and brake down the walls of Jerusalem round about." And "the residue of the people left in the city, and the fugitives.....and the residue of the multitude, did Nebuzaradan carry away captive." There were left only "the poorest of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen." From these captives "the captain of the guard" selected those who had held some official position, or were influential citizens, to the number of seventy-three, and led them before Nebuchadrezzar. "And the king of Babylon smote them, and put them to death at Riblah.....So Judah was carried away captive out of his land."

From the foregoing accounts it becomes evident that after the deportation of nearly a quarter of a million of the inhabitants of Judah to Assyria by Sennacherib in 701 B.C., and the cutting off from Judah, at the same time, of the cities from which these captives were taken, the diminutive kingdom left to the kings who succeeded Hezekiah was but a small almost depopulated province, a mere remnant of the once powerful kingdom of Judah. Hence, the carrying off of ten thousand captives in the reign of Jehoiachin left Zedekiah only a king in name. The wonder is that in the latter reign Jerusalem was able to stand a siege at all. The main cause of this deplorable condition of the Jewish kingdom was the foolish trust placed by Hezekiah in the power of the god Yahveh to save him from the king of Assyria. Small wonder it is that his son Manasseh would have nothing to do with that discredited deity, and believed the payment of tribute to be more conducive to safety.

The final captivity of Judah is stated to have taken place in the 19th year of Nebuchadrezzar. This would be in 586 or 587 B.C.; but no inscription has been discovered in the reign of this monarch giving an account of wars or campaigns. All the records found refer to a later period of his life, and have to do with the building and repairing of palaces, temples, and fortifications, etc. We have thus no Babylonian record relating to the captivity of Judah—nothing, in fact, but the statements in 2 Kings, and from these it is clearly implied that all the people deported from Judah were carried captive to Babylon. Not a word is said of the very large number carried by Sennacherib to Assyria.

The writer of the book of Ezekiel professes to have been one of the captives carried away with Jehoiachin (598 B.C.), and he dates his ridiculous visions in various years of that king's captivity; but he throws no light upon the number or condition of any of the Jewish captives.

The book of Esther claims to be a historical account of the Jew Mordecai and his young cousin Esther, who are also said to have been among the captives deported with Jehoiachin; but the scenes in the drama in which these two characters move are placed in the reign of Ahasuerus (Heb. Achashverosh) king of Media and Persia. No king of this name ever reigned in Persia: it has been found, however, that Achash-verosh represents the Hebrew pronunciation of the native name of the king known

as Xerxes (486—465 B.C.), in the twelfth year of whose reign most of the events narrated are stated to have occurred. The fact that this year (475 B.C.) is 123 years *later* than that of the deportation of Jehoiachin, that the events recorded in the book are obvious improbabilities and absurdities, and the fact that the names of the hero and heroine represent the Babylonian deities Merodach and Ishtar are, without further evidence, sufficient to show that the whole story is a late Jewish fabrication.

The writer of the book of Daniel also professes to have been one of the Jewish captives in Babylon, and to have lived there until the reign of Cyrus; but the book has been shown to be a work of fiction written about 164 B.C. We thus possess no reliable information respecting what became of the comparatively small number of Jews carried to Babylon by Nebuchadrezzar, and no information of *any kind* relating to the large number deported to Assyria by Sennacherib. This matter will, however, form the subject of the next and concluding paper.

ABRACADABRA.

(To be concluded.)

A Short Sermon on Faith.

"Hey, diddle diddle, the Cat and the Fiddle,
The Cow jumped over the Moon,
The little Dog laughed to see the sport,
And the Dish ran away with the Spoon."

THESE inspired words, my dear friends, will be remembered by you all. You will all retain the recollection of the time when, seated on your dear grandmother's or mother's knee, the beautiful text I have just chosen for the subject of my discourse this evening, was instilled into your young and pliant mind. We know that it was taught by our grandmother's grandmother to our grandmother, and it is difficult to fix the date of the first utterance of these beautiful and comforting words. They have been handed down from generation to generation, and have become a part of our nursery faith. As children we were taught to believe in them implicitly, and why, my dear friends, should we not, with increasing years and stronger intellects, still as implicitly believe that which we have no right to doubt? Is it possible that those who had the care and training of our young minds would wilfully lead us into error? No. Therefore I will proceed to discourse upon these time-honored words, and I hope that the faith you have in the truth of them may assist you to appreciate their moral worth.

"Hey, diddle diddle."

The very commencement of the line proves that the intention was to convey to the mind a proper way of getting on through life. "Hey, diddle diddle." And you must admit, my dear friends, that those loving words of advice have not been poured into most of our ears in vain, for diddling has certainly formed a vast and beautiful part of some natures. With them, to get on it is Diddle, Diddle; and without Diddle, Diddle, there is but a small chance of success in life. It has been asserted by ancient historians that the next part of the sentence was written in order to procure a rhyme for the first part. "The Cat and the Fiddle." And this opinion has gained strength from the fact that the feline animal and the musical instrument (beyond being in the poem) are of no particular interest: they are simply there for the purpose, as I said before, of rhyming with diddle diddle. But, my dear friends, who shall dare question the fact that there is a mysterious and beautiful allegory attached to them, a moral utility which it is beyond our poor minds to fathom. To assert that they were placed there for the purpose of a miserable rhyme is to insult the great source from whence they sprang. Therefore, believe this, I say, steadfastly believe this, and your faith will have its

reward in the self-consciousness that you believe what you are told.

"The Cow jumped over the Moon."

Ah, my dear friends, this is another evidence of the grand triumph of faith. The unbelievers will no doubt scoff and say,—Impossible. A jumping cow, in itself is a rarity, but a cow to jump over the moon, Impossible! Oh, ye of small faith—What is impossible to the true believer? Remember, we have not a modern cow or a modern moon to deal with. Who is there among you that dares to assert that the elasticity of the cow mentioned in that ancient history was not sufficient to enable it to perform the task of clearing at a bound the moon of that period? Have you not all, you true believers, been taught, and have you not read, that stars and moon danced quadrilles and tumbled about in a most reckless manner? Does not Revelation tell you this? Are you not also told that the sun stood still, and did you not, and do you not, believe it? Then I claim the same belief for the cow and the moon. I am sure your clear sense of truth must shine on this occasion, and although you may deem such things impossible in these degenerate days of literal facts, yet to disbelieve what was told you as a fact occurring ages ago, is a proof, my friends, of the wrong-going of your souls. It is not, for weak mortals like ourselves, to inquire into the purpose for which the cow performed that gymnastic feat. There are, no doubt, many lost sinners who would assert that it was to get to the other side. There is, no doubt, a beautiful hidden purpose into which we may not inquire; for to do so would be searching beyond the bounds of mortal reason. And that, my dear, dear friends, we are taught we must not do; like the darling child who has a beautiful tart given to it but is not allowed to bite.

The next portion of the text, although strange, does not strike us, my friends, as being altogether so wonderful.

"The little dog laughed to see the sport."

Now the risible power of the dog may or may not be disputed, but I can assure you my friends, in all truthfulness, that I have heard a dog laugh, positively laugh, or produce a sound exactly resembling the human laugh; and, as most of us know, hyenas indulge in the amusement, although it is on occasions when the sport to them is invariably the other way about for their victims. And now comes the question—Why should the undoubted gravity of the situation be termed sport, for we must all admit that it was the centre of gravity? Here is another instance of the great wisdom displayed, and on act and occasion of the greatest solemnity, and on which (were it possible for us to gaze) we should look with awe and amazement. This act, on the part of the cow, is positively hailed by the dog as a sportive arrangement, and one which should be received with approving laughter. But, my friends, there is no record of the end of that dog. Is it not possible that he was tempted of a devil to laugh at this wonderful and awe-inspiring phenomenon, and as an everlasting punishment for not resisting that influence which he had no power to resist, he was doomed to everlastingly bark at everlasting cats and never get a bite?

It has been asserted by eminent writers that the cow, for her noble heroism in obeying the command which was given to her to prove her faith, was immediately introduced to the great Bull of Nineveh, and that they are both alive and doing well.

I trust, my friends, that up to this time you have benefited by this beautiful lesson on faith. And you will not, I sincerely hope (should such a position as the unfortunate dog's ever be yours), give way to spontaneous merriment, but view the solemn action with becoming gravity, and depend upon it—oh, depend upon it—you will get your reward. You will be allowed to choose your own wings.

"The little dog laughed to see the sport"—unhappy animal—"And the dish ran away with the

spoon." Before proceeding to discuss this last portion of the marvellous history, I must make a few remarks as to the difference of opinions which exists as to the actual words. One great writer hath it, "The dish ran *away with* the spoon"; whilst others have translated it, "The dish ran *after* the spoon." That these discrepancies should exist is to my thinking to be deplored, for although it cannot shake or affect the faith of the true believer, yet it gives those unhappy wretches, those misguided men and women who do not believe, an opportunity for disputing the beautiful fact. They would say that it materially affects the facts of the case. That if the dish ran *away with* the spoon it would tend to prove a preconcerted act on both their parts, and it would also imply that some criminal act had been committed, or they would not have run away. On the other hand these wretched Atheists argue, that if the translation, "The dish ran *after* the spoon," be correct, it alters the entire meaning and sense of the sentence. On the one hand you have the two useful and closely connected articles of domestic use fleeing from wrath, or possibly eloping. On the other hand you have the picture of a piece of willow-pattern crockery being pursued by a spoon. If the one is correct the other must be wrong, they argue. That is the believer's difficulty, he cannot argue as to the A B C of the case, but he must argue by faith—beautiful faith of which they know nothing.

But, my faithful hearers, the Greek word "away with" might, in the hurried moment of translation be mistaken for after. There is, we will say, no similarity between them, but what of that? Is a slight oversight or technical error to upset and destroy the great fundamental principles of our belief? If so, then we are indeed lost. But to return to my subject. The beautiful, gymnastically constructed cow sinks into positive insignificance beside the proceeding of the dish and spoon. Away, away into the realms of space are these two hurried on to realms where crockery is not required, and where spoons are at a discount. For what purpose? There we pause. We believe, and that is a sufficient answer. We are happy in our beliefs—and that also is a sufficient answer. For if we question the great purpose of the great worker of miracles who changed everything into anything, and back again into nothing, we insult the lofty mind whose one idea was to practise inconsistency so that we might thoroughly appreciate the value of consistency in after ages. And so long as you believe that water flowed from barren rocks, that water was changed to blood, that water was changed to wine, that the sun stood still, you must join with me, my dear friends, in the pious belief that—

"Hey, diddle diddle, the Cat and the Fiddle,
The Cow jumped over the Moon,
The little Dog laughed to see the sport,
And the Dish ran away with the Spoon."

UNREVEREND JOSIAH.

It is not only a right, but it becomes an unavoidable duty on the part of a Freethinking critic, to present as plainly as possible to the notice of the people every weakness of the text, however trivial, that may serve to show that the Bible, or any portion of it, is fallible, that it is imperfect, that so far from being above all books it is often below them as a mere literary production.—C. Bradlaugh.

Obituary.

I have to record the death of an old member of the Birmingham Branch in Mr. C. Steptoe, who passed away, after a long illness, on the 8th inst. He was a Vice-President of the N. S. S. A consistent Branch worker, he scarcely ever missed a lecture or a meeting of any kind. He will be well remembered by those who knew him in the old Baskerville Hall days. His funeral took place at the Lodge Hill Cemetery on the 13th, and, in accordance with his wish, a Secular Burial Service was used.—J. P.

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.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15 and 6.15, C. Cohen, Lectures.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): J. Rowney, 3.15, "The Atonement"; 6, "The Search for God."

CLAPHAM COMMON: 3, Debate between Rev. A. J. Waldron and A. D. Howell Smith, B.A., "Does Christianity Promote Human Progress?"

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Green): 7.45, E. Burke, "The Bankruptcy of Christianity."

ISLINGTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 11.15, F. A. Davies, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road, High-street): 11.30, F. Schaller, "Science and the Bible."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, E. C. Saphin, "Christ, the Sun."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers Hill, opposite Public Library): 7.30, F. A. Davies, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BATLEY (Market Square): Joseph A. E. Bates—Friday, June 28, "Demos and Deity."

DEWSBURY, YORKS (Market Square): Joseph A. E. Bates—Sunday, June 23, at 7.30, "God is Dead"; Monday, 24, at 7.45, "In the Valley of the Shadow"; Tuesday, 25, at 7.45, "The Truth shall make thee free"; Wednesday, 26, at 7.45, "Royal Parasites"; Thursday, at 7.45, "The Philosophic Necessity of Materialism."

HUDDERSFIELD (Market Cross): Joseph A. E. Bates—Friday, June 21, at 7.30, "An Old Story and a New Interpretation."

LAINDON, ESSEX (opposite Luff's Hairdressing Saloon): Saturday, June 22, at 7, R. H. Rosetti, "The Origin of the Sabbath."

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