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In the republic of mind, ONE is a majority.
—INGERSOLL.

Dolet: The Freethought Martyr.

(WRITTEN IN 1881.)

RELIGION has had its martyrs, and so has Freethought. The path of progress has been drenched with blood and tears, and a world darkened by theology has been lightened by the fires of the stake. From Socrates drinking the poison cup to the latest object of orthodox hate, history bears a long record of noble men and women who have died or suffered for humanity and truth.

Nothing, says Lecky, should impair the reverence with which we bow before the martyr's tomb. But there are martyrs and martyrs. The early Christians courted death at the hands of power; their eagerness to be immolated outstripped the cruelty of their persecutors. They were ready to perish miserably here in order to wear an imperishable crown of glory hereafter. They wished to make an infinitely profitable exchange, giving a few moments' pain for eternal bliss. They died not to save others but to save themselves, not for unfriended Truth but for a Deity with power to bestow matchless rewards. There is no martyrdom in that. But when a man who has no assurance of another life, and perhaps no belief in it, risks reputation, fortune, friendship, and life itself, in the pursuit and propagation of Truth; and rather than belie his conscience or stultify his manhood, dies a bitter death, and lays his *all* on the altar of man's highest hopes; then indeed there is a martyrdom at once pathetic and sublime.

Etienne Dolet, one of the martyrs of Freethought during the Renaissance, was hanged and burnt at Lyons in the year 1546, on his thirty-seventh birthday (August 8). The Church gave him the martyr's crown as a birthday present, and that was the only noble gift it could confer.

Several works have been written on Dolet in French, but nothing had appeared in English until Mr. Christie published his monumental Biography, which shows, like Mr. Pollok's *Spinoza*, that we, as well as the Germans, can produce the finest fruits of profound and careful scholarship. Mr. Christie has devoted the leisure of eight years to his work, and as he can never expect any other payment for it, he should at least receive our heartiest gratitude. He has conferred an inestimable boon on all earnest students of literature, as well as on those who treasure the memories of the heroes and martyrs of progress. While highly impartial, he has performed his task as a labor of love, and done justice to one whom M. Bonimier has called "the Christ of Freethought."

Mr. Christie's research has been wide and patient, and he has collected a vast quantity of interesting matter from obscure sources. Yet we are surprised to find that he makes no reference to the bibliophile Jacob's lengthy introduction to the works of Bonaventure Des Periers, in which there are several passages referring to Dolet, and many curious notes on the literary struggles of his time. Has it escaped Mr. Christie's notice, or does he think it useless? We can hardly conceive the latter, for Jacob (Paul Lacroix) is certainly an authority on the history of French literature, if on nothing else.

Although he is Chancellor of the Diocese of Manchester, Mr. Christie praises Rabelais and Voltaire and the French Revolution with charming frankness. He writes of Voltaire as "the father of the Revolution in at least one, and that not the least beneficial of its aspects." And of the arch-heretic and the jolly Curé of Meudon, he writes: "Intense love of the human race, intense desire for its social and intellectual progress, intense hatred of hypocrisy, bigotry, superstition, and ignorance, is to be found in both." Further on, in a footnote, he says:—

"Great as was the genius, many as were the virtues of Bossuet, I prefer the Christianity (or non-Christianity) of Voltaire to that of the Eagle of Meaux, nor can I forget that his beak and claws displayed themselves not only in the flights of his pulpit oratory or in his admirable denunciations of the variations of the Protestant Churches, but in the active persecution of Fénelon, and in the warm approval which he gave to the revocation of the Edict of Nantes and the dragonnades of Languedoc."

And he describes Rabelais as "that great man, from whom a word of praise is itself sufficient to confer an immortality." It is very pleasant to find a serious and sober scholar, like Mr. Christie, confessing himself a "disciple of the divine Pantagruel." He is worthy to be a member of the Rabelais Club, and to consort with the choice spirits who compose it. He sees the splendid wisdom and humanity beneath the Master's buffoonery, and understands the meaning of Victor Hugo's great word about "irony incarnate for the salvation of mankind."

With regard to the Renaissance, Mr. Christie notices the sneer that it gave birth to nothing, and refutes it:—

"Surely this is not so. The Renaissance gave birth to mental freedom. It taught the true mode of looking at things and opinions. It revived the classical as opposed to the mediæval method of thought. It examined things as they are, and opinions according to their absolute truth or falsehood, and not according as they are in accord or discord with authority and orthodoxy. It appealed *ab auctoritate ad rem*; and a system which was the parent of Erasmus and Rabelais, and a more remote ancestor of Molière and Voltaire, cannot be called unfruitful or unworthy of attention, whatever be the value at which we appraise its fruits."

Mr. Christie then notices the hostility of the chief spirits of the Renaissance to Christianity, and says the fault was not theirs:—

"To each of them Religion, Christianity, the Catholic Church represented, as it could not but represent, all that was odious, all that was opposed to freedom of thought, to freedom of action, all that in one aspect (the religious) was cruel and brutal, in another (the mundane) all that was degrading and immoral."

Even Bossuet, says Mr. Christie, "had no word of sympathy, apparently no thought, for the wretched and oppressed millions; in fact, as Vinet has remarked, 'during all that triumphal era the people escape our search.' For them, at least, the Church had no message."

Such is the spirit in which Mr. Christie writes. Having recognised it, and given him thanks and praise for the result of his labors, we shall proceed to draw from it, for our readers, a brief narrative of Dolet's career, his struggles, his successes, his misfortunes, and his death.

Dolet was born at Orleans in the year 1509, probably on August 3, the day on which Saint Etienne's relics were "invented." Little is known of his parentage. One absurd story represents him as the natural son of Francis the First; but, as Mr. Christie observes, "at the date of Dolet's birth Francis, then Duke of Valois, was not quite fifteen years of age." Voulte, one of his enemies, says that his father died at the hands of the public executioner. This, however, is probably a slander. Dolet himself says that his parents were "in no mean or low position," and that his father attained to civic honors. Both appear to have died while he was still young. Yet they, or other relations and friends, secured for him a liberal education.

His studies at Paris began at the age of twelve. There he learned Latin, and contracted that deep admiration of Cicero which he always retained. He studied rhetoric under Nicholas Berauld, "one of the greatest masters of eloquence and Latin scholarship of the time," a man who was much greater than his books, and who had the signal honor of being tutor to the three great Colignys. Berauld was suspected of sympathy with the reformers, and it is probable that his toleration and breadth exercised a beneficial influence on the mind of Dolet.

At the age of seventeen Dolet went to Padua, to pursue his studies still further at that renowned seat of learning. The intellectual atmosphere of this place profoundly affected him. "At Padua," says Mr. Christie, "an independence and freedom of thought existed which would have been sought in vain elsewhere." At Padua, wrote Paleario, in 1580, "dwell poets, orators, and celebrated philosophers. Learning has taken refuge there from choice, and has there found an asylum where Pallas teaches all the arts: in short, there is no place where we can better gratify a taste for reading and learning." One of its chief figures at that time, Cardinal Bembo, was a thorough Pagan, who refused to read the Epistles of St. Paul lest they should vitiate his Greek style!

(To be continued.) G. W. FOOTE.

Christian Purity.

THE Rev. R. F. Horton has been making what he calls a "Patriotic Plea for Purity." I am not quite sure of the idea that links together "Patriotic" and "Purity." Purity seems to me something that is much wider than the area covered by Patriotism, and can only be said to be an adjunct to Patriotism in the sense that it makes the latter more efficient. But it only does this by making the human animal more efficient, and, consequently, its aid to Patriotism is quite adventitious. It helps the patriot only as it helps the anti-patriot. It aids the warrior or the statesman only as it aids the bootmaker or the dustman. Purity helps all because it makes for efficiency. And as nature cares only for efficiency, anything that makes in that direction possesses an obvious advantage in securing a "mastery of life."

On reading Dr. Horton's lecture one is not very much surprised to find that by Purity he means no more than sexual purity—that is, the maintenance of a fixed standard of conduct between the sexes. I am far from objecting to the maintenance of such a standard, nor have I any wish to deny that nature does set a certain value—to use figurative language—on sexual purity. But I do object very strongly to limiting the meaning of purity to sexual relations, and to the assumption that it is this alone which constitutes efficiency. In Dr. Horton's sense of the word the Boer Republics were models of Purity; but that did not prevent their being overrun by the British power; and many similar examples might be recorded were it necessary to adduce them. Yet in trying to prove that nature sets supreme value on what he conceives as Purity, Dr. Horton writes as follows:

"There are 50,000 children born every year out of wedlock. What does that mean? 50,000 children born into the world with a stamp and a stigma which it is almost impossible for them to evade; born into

the world without even a name of their own; born into the world under conditions in which there is not likely to be good training or careful moral instruction. Fifty thousand little children born every year in this country almost inevitably to become the criminals, the drunkards, the tramps, the prostitutes of the next generationNo wonder there is a vast degeneration of the population among us, multitudes deficient in brain and in body, multitudes of untrained and ill-regulated young children who fall a victim to the very vices in which they were born into the world."

Now, concern for the family is a good thing, and a very necessary thing, but to put the case in this way is to prove that the would-be teacher has really no rational grasp of the problem. In the first place, there is no proof, nor is it at all likely that the "multitudes deficient in mind and body" are solely recruited from the ranks of illegitimacy, or even that illegitimacy furnish a larger proportion than legitimates. On this point nature is absolutely careless. It looks to the stock, not to the conditions under which people commit the act of parentage. The case brought before the London County Council of a woman who had been admitted to Colney Hatch sixteen times, and who had been the mother of thirteen children, was fulfilling Dr. Horton's condition of purity, but it is certain that she had, nevertheless, done more than *her* share to make the nation, in the best sense of the word, impure. Illegitimacy has quite enough to answer for without making it responsible for our "multitudes" of degenerates. The question of degeneracy and the question of illegitimacy have really little or no connection with each other.

Nor is it just to confine the lack of "good training or careful moral instruction" to children born out of wedlock. Fifty thousand children is a large number, true; but, one regrets to say, they form but a part of the children in this condition. The cases taken up by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children are not all, or even mostly, those of illegitimate children. An hour's walk through certain parts of any of our great towns, a slight knowledge of the number of ill-cared for children, will inform anyone that in Christian marriage there is no guarantee whatever that children will be well-trained or morally instructed. Once again, Dr. Horton is exhibiting how little qualified he is to lecture other people. It is true that illegitimate children—when known—bear a "stamp and stigma" almost impossible to evade; but this is not a *natural* consequence of illegitimacy. It is a social, an artificial creation; it is an outcome of that spirit of Christian brutality which visits upon the innocent child the consequences of its parents' actions, and which will overlook the fact of a man being the parent of a child born out of wedlock, but which will taunt and persecute the offspring, even though he may be a more worthy individual than those who count themselves his superior.

Dr. Horton's fitness to deal with the topic he has selected is fitly characterised by his method of dealing with the French people. France, we are told, "with a population that is practically stagnant, a population which, in many departments, is positively decaying, has found that the goddess of Lubricity has betrayed her"; the French people are "on the era of decay." Greater nonsense was never uttered. What Dr. Horton cites is the small increase, or no increase at all—it matters not which—of the French population. What he has in mind is decay of moral fibre in the French people. But there is no decay in the French people; there is, at most, a cessation in the increase of population in relation to other countries—who show the same phenomena in varying degrees. But growth in numbers is no indication of improvement in quality. If the nation grows by the addition of "multitudes deficient in brain and body," how does that nation become strong thereby? The more we have the worse we are. Increase in number is one thing, improvement in quality is another and a quite different thing. And no one but a fool or a fanatic will say that the French people are decaying because

they do not increase in numbers. That is a political problem, not an eugenic one. And if Dr. Horton will only take the trouble to inquire, he will be surprised to find that one thing making for the stationary character of the French population is the greater concern for the family shown by them. It may come as a shock to the English people to learn that concern for the family is really stronger in France than in England, but it is nevertheless a fact.

The truth is that Dr. Horton is obsessed with the Christian contraction of the meaning of purity to merely sexual relations. I have no intention at present of estimating the relative value of sexual and other forms of purity; but I am very certain that a nation might carry sexual relations to the utmost possible limits of puritanical exactitude, and yet, in the absence of other things, go to the dogs, or the Devil. It is not, for example, sexual purity, or impurity, that causes the present strained relations between Capital and Labor. In the East End over 50,000 dock laborers are out on strike. What has sexual purity to do with that? In public life we have insincerity, timidity, hypocrisy, and more or less regulated peccation. What relation does sexual purity bear to these things? In the slums we have people herded together worse than cattle—badly fed, badly paid, badly clothed, badly housed. What has sexual purity to do with this? Nothing, except so far as it renders a healthy purity a practical impossibility. Would Dr. Horton dream of talking of the sweater, the "tricky" financier, the time-serving statesman, the men who—through the medium of the purse—poison and distort the public conscience, as impure men? He might blame them, but he would never dream of calling them impure. You may lie, you may cheat, you may oppress, you may use every artifice of law and cunning to gain your selfish ends, you may make the lives of wife and children a veritable purgatory by bad temper and selfishness; but so long as you keep off one offence you are "pure" in the eyes of our stern Christian moralists. Commit that one offence, and not all the virtues known to man can save you the stigma of impurity.

This narrowness of meaning and obsession with what is, after all, but one aspect of life has been characteristic of Christianity throughout the whole of its history. Dr. Horton says that the Christian teaching of celibacy was one of the most serious mistakes made by the Church, since it depreciates the consecration of marriage. Again, there is a lack of recognition of the real and overshadowing evil of this aspect of Christianity. The great evil was not that it looked upon marriage as a lower state than celibacy—for this the Church had the example of Jesus and the teaching of Paul. The evil was, that in dwelling upon sexual purity, it aggravated the vice it set out to cure. Christian preachers dwelt upon it with a zest that was in part the expression of their own sensualism. For it is a mistake to suppose that the fanatical ascetic is not a sensualist. He is actually more of a sensualist than the man who indulges all his desires without the slightest restraint. His is not the concrete sensualism of the avowed sensualist; it is a moral and psychological sensualism that bites deeper and is more deadly in its consequences. Living with this idea before them, dilating upon it in their sermons and writings, Christian teachers have succeeded in making things unclean and suggestive that otherwise might have been innocuous to the normal mind. The Christian preacher no longer treats the world to accounts of how the Devil tempts him to sin with visions of nude women, but he does betray the same nature in a quite undesirable dwelling upon vice in the name of Purity.

Let us have Purity, by all means. I agree with Dr. Horton that the nation needs a generation of clean, wholesome men. But a clean and wholesome man is not made by mere sexual continence. The liar, the sneak, the coward, the hypocrite, the man who tramples on the rights of others in the name of conscience, the man who seeks by boycott and ter-

rorism to prevent straightforward speech and fearless thinking; all these are quite as fatal to a nation's wellbeing. Our great need is, indeed, clean, wholesome men; but to get these we need to rescue the idea of morality from the clutches of the Churches. We need to bring back the ideal of the moral man to the Pagan conception of the *straight* man—one whose duty in all its aspects is discharged well and faithfully. Life as a whole has far more to do with the determination of even sexual cleanliness than most people imagine, and it may easily happen that a sane and intelligent view of human duty will do more to secure desirable sexual relations than the disguised pornographic preaching of Christian teachers.

C. COHEN.

The Never-Ending Controversy.

IN the Dog-days one does not feel specially inclined to discuss philosophical problems, however important they may be in themselves, or however urgent the need for such discussion may seem to be. Still, it is difficult at any time to choose a subject which has not its philosophical implications. The themes dealt with in lectures, articles, and books are innumerable; but one is never at a loss as to whether the authors are governed by a materialistic or an idealistic interpretation of the Universe. Mr. A. J. Balfour enjoys the reputation of being the most successful of living thinkers in concealing his own views on whatever topic he may take up; yet, although he tells us himself, in his critical review of Bergson's *Creative Evolution*, that he is "neither idealist nor naturalist," it is quite impossible to peruse his *Defence of Philosophic Doubt*, or his *Foundations of Belief*, without perceiving that he has a strong bias towards Idealism. He is usually classed with Realists, though he denies the validity of the testimony of the senses; but being a believer in God as distinguished from Nature, he is bound to be, to that extent at least, an Idealist. In truth, all thinkers must be either Materialists or Idealists, though, in some cases, a dash of Realism may qualify the Idealism. Materialism may be described as the oldest philosophical interpretation of the Universe. There are those who despise this system as unphilosophical; but the students of Greek philosophy know that for ages Materialism was practically its only expression. From the very first it was in sharp conflict with religion, which was itself, however, an amusingly nondescript affair. But Materialism was the only philosophy until Platonism arose, after which the two philosophies began to contend the one against the other; and the controversy has continued to our own day. According to the former matter is the matrix in which all things are formed, but according to the latter thought is the sole reality, of which matter is but an imperfect expression.

The history of the conflict between these two theories is intensely interesting; but this is not the time to relate it. At the present time it is not easy to determine which is in the ascendant. In philosophy, probably, Idealism is the more popular; but in science Materialism is the only sound hypothesis; and for working purposes it is universally adopted. Even Huxley and Tyndall, who repudiated Materialism as a label, admitted that they explained all they knew about life in terms of matter. That is to say, as scientists they treated the Universe as a pure mechanism, though as philosophers they leaned towards Idealism.

The Rev. Dr. Orchard makes a forcible attack upon Materialism in his "Correspondence Column" in the *Christian Commonwealth* for March 24. His thesis is that "Naturalism must always be defeated when in debate with Idealism, because the so-called natural ultimates, atoms, corpuscles, force-points, etc., and the laws by which they act, are, after all, our mental impressions of things, and not the things themselves." This is the reverend gentleman's starting-point—the baseless assumption that thought

is prior to matter. He begins with a metaphysical proposition the truth of which he does not even attempt to demonstrate. Does he expect sensible people to be satisfied with such an unsupported *dictum* as that? We affirm, on the contrary, that "atoms and corpuscles" are objective realities, and we have no hesitation in challenging him to prove that they are not. "Things themselves," as distinguished from things as dealt with by scientific observation and experiment, are simply metaphysical chimeras. Dr. Orchard calls his theory "an impregnable critical position," whereas, as a matter of fact, it is not a *critical* position at all, but a decidedly fantastic one. He knows as well as we do that science perceives no trace of the priority of thought. Even in biology it can discern nothing but mechanical operations; and even a Christian, like the late Lord Kelvin, admitted that "'fortuitous concourse of atoms' is not an inappropriate description of the formation of a crystal." Of course, the adjective "fortuitous" is utterly out of place; but the idea conveyed is that the presence of thought is not essential to the formation of a crystal, and the natural inference is that in the inorganic world all operations do or may take place in the entire absence of thought. If this was conceded by so eminent a physicist as Lord Kelvin, what conceivable evidence is there of the priority of thought? No Idealist has ever adduced any. Dr. Orchard himself asserts that "no one in his senses has ever believed" Berkeley's version of Idealism. Indeed, there are several other versions of Idealism which the reverend gentleman rejects, such as the objective and sceptical versions; and then at last he seizes on an entirely new version, prepared by Signor Croce, who tells us that spirit is the one reality. Now, to Croce spirit is, not pure *thought*, but pure *activity*. Spirit does not exist at all except as activity. It is the doing of things that is the grand reality. But if spirit is identical with activity, two things follow, namely, the first, that spirit is not an entity, but a process; not a being, but a becoming; and the second, that the activity of the Universe is purely mechanical, because there is no actor. No wonder that the correspondent who called Dr. Orchard's attention to this theory warned him that it is not likely to be of any service to religion. This is what the correspondent says:—

"The sense of the infinite is thus merely the sense of the inexhaustiveness of spiritual power, the sense of spirit as infinite virtuality: it is the sense that all has not been done, and there is power to do infinitely more for ever. It is, therefore, purely immanent virtuality, and not a transcendent presence to whom we may turn for help. History made, and history being made, or in the making, is all that is, and the necessity for spirit to *act* in order to *be*, is the result of it, and this necessity, which is also universal freedom, is all in all, is the whole in all."

Now, activist Idealism, as represented by this correspondent, is at once Atheism and a contradiction in terms. In so far as it is Atheism it is true, because all it recognises is activity, which is an incontrovertible fact; but in so far as it is a contradiction in terms it is self-condemned as a hopeless misnomer. There is no such thing as spirit in existence, there is only activity, and all activity known to us is physical. Thinking and feeling are the activity of a material brain; speaking is the activity of physical vocal chords; heat, electricity, and light are forms of physical motion; and so far as we know, there is no other kind of activity in the whole universe. Consequently, activist Idealism is only an euphemistic name for Materialism or Naturalism, which, as Dr. Orchard accurately says, "holds that everything is governed by a fixed quantity of forces acting according to unchanging law, when scientific experiment becomes the only pathway to reality."

At this point we must call attention to a palpable error into which Dr. Orchard falls in an allusion to Naturalism. This is clearly a Universe of ceaseless activity, activity being essential to its existence. It

is under an inherent necessity to act, which is only another way of saying that it is free to act, or that there is nothing that can prevent it from acting. Dr. Orchard, being a New Theologian, immediately appropriates this idea of freedom, and understands it to mean freedom to act apart from or in contradiction to law. There is no such freedom as "the freedom of lawless irresponsibility," or "the freedom of man to rebel against God to all eternity." If activist Idealism teaches that, it goes with open eyes against the facts. The only freedom conceivable is freedom to act under law. Can Dr. Orchard point to a single human being whose daily life is an absolute libel on his character? We know nothing about rebellion against God; but can he deliberately affirm that there are organically bad people who yet live ideally good lives, or typically excellent people who wallow in the filthiest wickedness? If he cannot, this metaphysical and theological talk about freedom is the merest twaddle. Materialists are ardent believers in freedom, but it is freedom to act according to unchangeable law, or in obedience to the actor's nature or character; and this freedom should be absolutely unrestricted except when it interferes with the freedom of others, or brings injury and disaster in its train.

We have no wish to follow Dr. Orchard in his subtle theological disquisitions, beyond saying that in these he has not the companionship of either Bergson or Croce. Neither philosopher is in the slightest degree Theistic, though they are both glaringly unscientific. But there is one statement made to which we wish to call special attention. Having referred to freedom to act as the one law of life, our divine says:—

"It is the sign of a rising energy which refuses to be cramped by the irritating delays of political tactics on the one hand and the pale obstructions of Rationalism on the other."

Both parts of that statement are incorrect. The rising energy of the democracy, for example, is being seriously cramped by the delays of political intrigue. Is it not also cramped by the unwillingness of Capital to grant justice to Labor? On the other hand, to what form of "rising energy" does Rationalism offer "pale obstructions"? This insinuation is surely unworthy of usually so sane and fair a critic as Dr. Orchard. Materialism rather sympathises with, and encourages, every righteous movement. When have Naturalists opposed any genuine reform? When have they ever frowned upon and tried to crush any naturally rising energy? The honor or dishonor of doing that belongs to the Christian Church. We are the friends of progress, of all efforts to emancipate the intellect and to help men to rise and become strong; and we oppose the Church simply because it has always hindered, and still hinders, the onward march of humanity, because it has held the intellect in bondage for thousands of years, and because it has enriched itself at the expense of ignorant and superstitious members.

J. T. LLOYD.

Very Common Prayers.

The Book of Common Prayer, Appointed to be read in Churches, 1912.

THIS volume is an interesting addition to the literature of the holiday season. By this time the average reader will be tired of the puerile metaphysics of the Bishop of London, and even the Holy Bible may pall after a second reading. The fun of the Book of Common Prayer is of a more gentle character than that of the Bible. To be fully valued, its pages should be scanned lazily at some seaside or country resort, far from the madding crowd. The wisdom of that mediæval institution, the Church of England, cannot be appreciated amid the hurry and bustle of a large town. It should be perused whilst the reader is stretched at length upon the grass or sand,

soothed by the drowsy hum of insects or the happy laughter of children at play.

This book possesses one distinct advantage. It does not matter where you commence reading. Whether one starts with the Baptism of Infants, the Thirty-nine Articles, the Athanasian Creed, or the lugubrious Litany, or any other pious diversion, does not signify in the least. It has, therefore, one point of superiority over most other volumes. The reader should be carefully warned that the author is true to the old-fashioned ideals of politics. As the writer is anonymous, we have no means of knowing his or her precise age. But we think we are justified by internal evidence in treating this book as a first appearance in print. This will partially excuse the lick-spittle references to royalty, which, we regret, disfigure the volume, and which are only paralleled by the disgustingly servile dedication of the Holy Bible to that padded and half-forgotten buffoon, King Jimmy the First. So extravagant was this eulogy that, as a child, we thought the Almighty's front name was James. The adult reader, however, must not read this book with the wide-eyed innocence of childhood, or it will lead to his mental undoing.

The book may be regarded best as a Theological Inquire Within upon Everything. Take, for example, the average Englishman's staple subject of conversation—the state of the weather. The author of this volume has included, with great acuteness, prayers for rain and for fair weather. We notice also other recipes against plague, famine, battle, murder, sudden death, and, for what we know, housemaid's knee. Advice is also given upon the subject of matrimony, and much wisdom is offered to the blushing youth of both sexes. A young man is informed, for instance, that he must not marry his grandmother. No one except a "right reverend father-in-god" ever supposed that he would wish to. But we will hurl the gruesome suggestion from us. This is one of the few blemishes in an otherwise promising volume.

The reader must not think that the book is largely given over to confetti and orange blossom, for the undertakers have a few pages devoted to them. The Burial Service is somewhat disquieting. A few passages actually lead us to suppose that not all the persons who turn up their toes in consecrated ground "better" themselves; but some go to a place frequently mentioned by Salvation Army orators. There is also a quite unexpected touch of temper in the "Commination Service." The denouncing of God's anger against people who do not often trouble the pew-openers might get on a delicate person's nerves. But, looked at from the proper standpoint, it should be as interesting as the never-to-be-forgotten anathema in the "Jackdaw of Rheims" or the rantings of a villain in a melodrama, who curses everybody on the stage, hurls maledictions at the dress circle, spits at the orchestra, and shakes his fist at the gallery.

The splenetic humor of the Commination Service makes the refrain of "miserable sinners," which recurs throughout the Litany, positively welcome. It is such a comfort to reflect that we are all "miserable sinners," including the peerless paterers from the pious platforms of the Christian Evidence Society. The Thirty-nine Articles are as cheerful reading as a railway guide, in which the trains depart, but never arrive anywhere; and the Juvenile Catechism unfolds truly tremendous possibilities. Here are the ways and means for making any child a member of the Church of England, and, if under the age of eleven, a "bud" of the Primrose League. Now that the great Conservative party has "eaten dirt" during three elections, the astute Tory politicians might try to force this book into the schools. Dismissing this instrument of torture, we turn to the Baptism of Infants, which will be found to be a healthy and invigorating exercise, especially with the addition of a little soap. Those that are of riper years might add a scrubbing-brush.

The most valuable information in the book is given in the Communion Service, where full instruc-

tions are given to the reader how to obtain a spiritual nature by the simple and pleasing process of feeding. So long as a person has a bottle of "shilling port" and is near a baker's shop, he has always at hand the material for turning out a plaster saint.

Lord Beaconsfield once said, with regard to flattering royal personages, that the courtier should lay it on with a trowel. The author has taken this sage advice in the prayers devoted to "Our Sovereign Lord" and the numerous members of his august family. These oratorical jewels should be recommended to the notice of members of the Primrose League, licensed victuallers, and all Conservative clubs. A few judicious quotations skilfully introduced into after-dinner speeches and addresses from the hustings would be sure to tickle the ears of the groundlings.

To a superficial observer a Prayer-book would appear to be something heavy and indigestible. Our examination shows how deceptive are appearances, and how foolish it is to look at any question with only one eye, as is said to be the habit of dicky-birds. The unfeathered biped, man, should know better. So far from religion being a serious affair, it is simply a solemn jest. You cannot tell what a religious circus is like by simply looking at the highly-colored posters on the walls. MIMNERMUS.

The "Lake of Fire."

AMERICAN REPUDIATION.

THE unanimous decision, on the hottest day of the year, by the members of the International Bible Students' Association, in conference near Washington, that the hell described in the Scriptures as "a lake of fire and brimstone" is all myth, is welcomed throughout the United States as the most appropriate and cooling news since the commencement of the present hot spell. The members of the Association went even further, and called upon every minister in the country to publish his views on the subject in the local newspapers, and asked the editors to invite ministers to publish a statement of their belief.

The assault on the ancient teaching of eternal punishment for sinners by hell fire and torture was led by Brigadier-General W. P. Hall, retired, and his hardest task was to overcome the disinclination of those members who no longer believed in "a lake of fire" but who hesitated formally to repudiate the religious teaching.

Brigadier-General Hall insisted that laymen were entitled to know where their clergymen stood on this question. The following resolutions in part were adopted:—

"We do not find the Bible to teach the doctrine of a literal 'hell fire,' or place of fire and brimstone, for the punishment of the wicked, but the secular history of the formation of the creeds of the Middle Ages reveals the fact that, for various reasons, either wisely or unwisely, the doctrine of torment in 'hell fire' was added to the gospel as taught by Jesus and the Twelve Apostles, necessitating many ridiculous interpretations of our Lord's parables. We now unreservedly repudiate this thoroughly unscriptural teaching of a place, state, or condition of a literal 'lake of fire and brimstone' for the torment of the wicked; and, further, we believe, from many testimonials, that the vast majority of the ministers of all Protestant denominations have privately repudiated the 'hell fire' theory."

Invitations to ministers to discuss the subject in the public Press will undoubtedly be taken up with zeal by the majority of them, but it is believed now that the Bible Students' repudiated belief in the hell fire of ancient doctrine will find few defenders.—*Daily Telegraph*, July 10.

PROVERBIAL.

Tramp: "You know the sayin', mum: 'He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord.'"

Mrs. Subbubs: "Very true. And since you speak in proverbs, I'll refer you to another old saw."

Tramp: "Which one is dat, mum?"

Mrs. S.: "The one back in the woodshed."

CONSOLATION.

Struggling Author: "This world will not recognise all I have done until after my death."

Friend (consolingly): "Well, I wouldn't worry. You'll be beyond injury then."

The Warrior's Prayer.

In Saxon town and hamlet
This tale is oft retold:
At Bärenburg the castle
Lay wrapped in evening gold;
There comes an old campaigner,
His hair and beard untrimmed;
Pale is his face, and haggard,
With tears his eyes bedimmed.
Dismounting from his charger,
Before the castle door,
'Tis said that there he trembled;
'Tis said—I know no more.

He passes 'neath the portal,
And through the lofty hall;
Within a chamber lying
His daughter hears him call.
Scarce can she murmur "Father,"
Painfully draws she breath—
The soldier's only daughter
Stands at the gate of death.

Now, kneeling by the bedside,
He grasps her wan, white hand
And weeps; 'twas said he loved her
As nought else in the land.
Then silently he rises,
Still not a word he speaks,
Out in the quiet garden
A lonely spot he seeks.
Here again, as in childhood,
He'll offer up a prayer—
On bended knees, uncovered,
Approach his Maker there.

"Thou old field-marshal yonder,
Who guidest with thy hand
A greater host than ever
I had at my command;
Impostors come before thee,
Learned in the art of speech,
With humble words of anguish
I hope thine ear to reach.
In Turin's bloody combat,
At Kesselsdorf hard pressed,
I never showed white feather,
Nor broke upon thy rest.
To-day, O great Commander,
I quail before the fight;
Thou know'st a father's sorrow,
Come to my aid this night;
Turn not away, O Captain,
From this my pleading wild;
Won't come again so quickly;
Spare me my darling child."

He strides into the castle;
He kneels beside the bed;
The warrior's prayer was answered;
His only child was—dead!

* * * *

In slow and quiv'ring accents
These solemn words spoke he:
"I'd not have been so heartless
If God had prayed to me."

ALLAN ALDWINCKLE.

—From the German "Der selb'ne Beter."

It is lucky for Roman Catholicism that Jesus was crucified, and not shot or burned at the stake. Without the cross Romanism would have no ammunition. It was not the death of Jesus, but the manner of his death, that Christianity has emphasised. The crucifix is the great object of veneration among Roman Catholics. It would be difficult for superstition to make of a burning stake or a shot-gun as great a power to move the masses. Something must be had to show the suffering Savior, and the cross makes the right appeal to the ignorant.—L. K. Washburn, "Truthseeker" (New York).

A WINNER.

"Was the charity ball a success?"
"Oh, yes, indeed. They say the gowns must have cost a half-million at least."
"And how much was raised for charity?"
"Why, nearly \$700. Wasn't that fine?"

Acid Drops.

Mr. Ben Tillett is a poor hand at the praying business. If he were better practised or more sagacious he would recognise the danger of special prayers. They may not be answered,—and where are you then? General or indefinite prayers are far safer. It is difficult to tell whether they are answered or not. Anyhow, it takes a long time one way or the other, and your prayer may be mercifully forgotten if the event is untoward; whereas, if you pray for something that must happen soon, if at all, you are sure to prove yourself a failure if it doesn't happen in due course, which everybody knows is extremely likely. Mr. Ben Tillett asked God to strike Lord Devonport dead. God didn't care to oblige the Labor leader. Lord Devonport felt none the worse for his opponents' good wishes. And a few days afterwards the strike was declared "off." Next time he prays for a particular blessing Mr. Tillett should make certain that the Deity is in a more obliging mood.

Suppose the Deity didn't mean to take any special action in the strike affair, but on appeal decided he would take a hand in it, and struck Mr. Ben Tillett dead instead of Lord Devonport? Mr. Tillett would wish he hadn't spoken. And he ought to wish it now. Every battle should be fought under civilised rules—and assassination isn't one of them. Mr. Tillett wouldn't run the risk of killing Lord Devonport himself; he asked God to do it; but that doesn't affect the ethical responsibility. Morally, as legally, what your agent does you do yourself.

Mr. Ben Tillett was an assassin, if he thought his prayer would be answered; if he didn't believe it would be answered, he was a mountebank. He can only save his intelligence at the expense of his character, or his character at the expense of his intelligence. It is a painful and humiliating position, but he put himself into it. In no other country but England, we believe, would a Labor leader make himself such a spectacle. We often hear the boast from Christian lips that the Labor leaders in England have frequently, if not generally, been Nonconformist local preachers. Judging from Mr. Ben Tillett's performance at Tower Hill, there seems to be a great deal of truth in the statement.

The strikers that Mr. Tillett addressed on Tower Hill, and whom he induced to repeat his prayer to God to kill Lord Devonport, were more sensible than he was. There is a certain rough sense in an English crowd, which often runs into humor; and Mr. Tillett's audience—perhaps we ought to call it *congregation* that morning—were no exception to the rule. When they had repeated the sanguinary prayer, they followed it up with the refrain of a new comic song—"He shall die! He shall die!" It was a perfect criticism on the spur of the moment. As much as to say "Good old Ben! And damn Lord Devonport! But keep God out of it. And we're not assassins."

In the good old days the Church usually got what it prayed for when it asked God to kill its enemies. It saved him as much trouble as possible in answering the petition.

Mr. Cunninghame Graham spoke after Mr. Tillett at that Tower Hill meeting. He said that he did not expect the Labor leader's prayer to be answered. He thought the Great Power up above "was on strike too." "The capitalists," he added, "had bought the press, the parliament, and the pulpit, and sometimes he thought they had bought God too." Swinburne said that the tyrants of Europe had actually done that. "They have bought over God with a fee," he made the revolutionist exclaim in one of his early poems, the noble and thrilling *Song in Time of Order*. There are other "blasphemies" in Swinburne, but he was a great poet and he belonged to a good family, so it wouldn't do to prosecute him. Nor would it do to prosecute Mr. Cunninghame Graham, though his statement that God was on strike or had been bought like a blacklog, was worse than anything in the indictments of the Atheists who have been made "prisoners for blasphemy" during the past few years.

Answering a question in the House of Commons concerning Mr. Ben Tillett's prayer to God to strike Lord Devonport dead, Mr. McKenna referred to the "so-called" prayer of Mr. Tillett. "We see no reason for the 'so-called.' The prayer was genuine enough, and certainly a large number of those who joined in it would have had no objection to see it answered—as it will be if they wait long enough. After all, a prayer is a prayer. The aspect of it that strikes us is its silliness. Christians seem to have been

most struck by what they are pleased to call its "profanity." As though Christians did not pray for the deaths of their enemies every time they pray for success in warfare—and afterwards thank God for answering their petition.

The late Rev. Charles Voysey was at one time a rather notable heretic, though he never was a notable thinker or even a very notable man. He was turned out of his living as a Church clergyman in 1871. He had attacked the doctrine of everlasting punishment some years before, and he had followed this up by attacking the Incarnation. It has even been rumored that he wrote Thomas Scott's *Life of Jesus*, but we do not believe it. The style of that book is too terse and logical for his composition. Mr. Voysey carried on a Theistic Church in London from 1871 until his death. He kept a fairly large and well-to-do congregation together, but he never made the mark that he was expected to. His comparative failure is another proof that "natural religion" has no chance with people at large when "revealed religion" has departed. One thing should be mentioned to Mr. Voysey's credit. He was one of the founders of the Cremation Society, and his death removes the last of them.

Is there any body on earth but a Church on which such a state of things could obtain as is disclosed in the following extract from a late number (July 10) of the *Daily Chronicle* :—

"An extraordinary state of affairs exists at the little Somerset village of Holton, about two miles from Wincanton.

"The aged rector's position as clergyman in charge passes unrecognised amongst the parishioners, and often he has to conduct service in the parish church with empty pews as congregation.

"The village has a population of 200, and the old-fashioned church has accommodation for 120. The churchyard, instead of having the well-kept appearance so familiar with our village churches, is a scene of utter desolation.

"The church is practically boycotted by the villagers, and in consequence of this there are no funds for the upkeep. A *Daily Chronicle* correspondent who visited the village was told by the churchwarden, Mr. William Rowden (who does not now attend service at the church), that the Rev. Joseph Sorrell, the rector, began his incumbency in Holton 11 years ago. The village churchgoers developed a dislike for the incumbent, and after a time none of the villagers attended his services, and at the present time, after all these years, there are occasions when months perhaps intervene and not a soul attends the church.

"Sometimes, not very frequently, strangers find their way into the village and attend the church. On these occasions the rector conducts the full service with solemn impressiveness, even though the congregation may consist of one person. He delivers his sermon as though the church was full of worshippers, and for the hymns he has to start a tune, there being no organist.

"No less than 21 services are held in the church each week, and at least twice each day, as there is no one else to do it, the rector himself rings the bell, announcing to the unheeding parishioners that service is about to be held. Whether or not anyone put in an appearance the service is held.

"Entrance to the churchyard is gained through a wooden gate, which is fast rotting, and is held closed by means of a piece of rope. The graveyard is very neglected, because there is no money to have it attended to. Vegetation has now reached such a height that the tombstones are almost hidden.

"The rector, who is over 80 years of age, resides in the rectory absolutely alone."

Yet we are told that nothing binds people together like religion.

This is the holiday season, and Dr. R. F. Horton has discovered a tonic for holiday-makers. People may think, he says, that the novels of Arnold Bennett, or the plays of Bernard Shaw, or the wisdom of H. G. Wells, will give them relief and a new outlook. This is all a mistake. What you ought to take away, if you want a real good holiday, is Professor Hogg's *Christ's Message of the Kingdom*. The book is arranged for fifteen weeks, which is a deal more holiday than most people get. Still, you can make a start. We don't know what Professor Hogg's book is like, not having read it, and not intending to, but we would like to know what our old friend, *Meditations Among the Tombs*, has done to be slighted? And there are plenty of cheerful Christian holiday classics of this kind without rushing to a newcomer like Professor Hogg.

The Rev. John Thomas, M.A., minister of the Myrtle-street Baptist Church, Liverpool, has for some time been in charge of the spiritual welfare of the young people who are supposed to be readers of the *Baptist Times and Freeman*. He sends them a weekly letter in which he puts them on their guard against some pernicious error of the day. In

the issue for July 19, he warns them against being led astray by the illusions of modern science, especially by those of the Darwinian theory. He takes his stand by the side of Dr. Dixon, and boldly assures his readers that Darwin's banner is "riddled," that "great scientists like Wallace and Bergson" have smashed the Darwinian theory of continuous evolution into black smithereens, and that the only thing the Naturalists can now do is to "bow before God incarnate." Fancy a vagarious metaphysician like Bergson demolishing the greatest biologist of the nineteenth century, whose famous theory of descent is the foundation on which the biologists of the twentieth century continue to build.

Having warned his readers against having any dealings with Darwinism, which is a false, godless system, he coolly informs them that it is "dead." Then the reverend gentleman is guilty of wasting two columns of our pious contemporary in flogging a dead horse. The truth is, that Mr. Thomas is aware that if intelligent young people adopt Darwinism they will eventually cease to be Christian believers, as Darwin himself did; and to prevent that dreadful calamity he is prepared to tell the wildest Munchausen tales; and he tells them with the effrontery so characteristic of his profession.

Mr. Thomas's attempt to bamboozle innocent young readers is a really despicable performance. His own ignorance qualifies him for the sorry job. Nothing in the world is easier than to denounce what you do not understand. If Mr. Thomas knows what Darwinism is, then he is guilty of maliciously misrepresenting it. He defines it as "the changing of a monkey into a man, or a fish into a monkey." He sneers at "the amateur evolutionists of to-day," who, in "their zeal for science, most unscientifically confuse the evolution of solar systems and the evolution of species, as if they exemplified one and the same principle of evolution." Now, we challenge this gentleman to give the name of one accredited biologist who teaches that Darwinism signifies the evolution of a man out of a monkey, or of a monkey out of a fish. No scientist has ever indulged in such sheer nonsense. The truth is, either that Mr. Thomas does not understand what Darwinism is, or that he deliberately misrepresents it in order to prejudice his readers against it, and so retain them as Christians. In either case the spectacle presented is pitiable in the extreme.

The execution of Arthur Birkett, a weaver, aged twenty-two, who murdered his sweetheart, Alice Beetham, aged eighteen, in a Blackburn mill, was celebrated as an important event. At the house in Riley-street, Blackburn, where the murderer had lived, a religious service was conducted by the Rev. F. G. Chevassut, vicar of the parish. Amongst those present was the murdered girl's mother. A table in the middle of the room was covered with flowers, and the service is said to have been very impressive. Hundreds of mill hands collected outside, and as the clock rang out the hour of execution they started singing hymns, including "Nearer, my God, to thee." We suppose the murderer was then well on the way to his reserved seat in "glory." Murderers seem about the only people who are perfectly sure of a front seat in the Upper Circle.

Arthur Birkett was a member of the St. Thomas Conser-vative Club, and was suitably remembered by his fellow members. They presented his mother with a miniature monument in the form of a broken column "with a suitable inscription." No doubt it will be duly valued by future ages.

This highly honored murderer, of course, had made his peace with God. What had become of the girl he murdered does not appear to have troubled him or anyone else. On the Sunday afternoon he attended divine service, and writing in the evening he said: "It was lovely to hear men singing one verse and women the other. What must heaven be like when service in prison is so lovely!" Such is the elevating influence of Christianity! No other religion could enable a murderer to die in such a state of comfort and self-satisfaction. All murderers ought to be Christians. And it must be admitted that they usually are.

"What is wrong with the Christian Church?" This question has just been discussed by the Wesleyans. No one gave the correct answer. What is wrong with the Christian Church is that it is the Christian Church.

The *British Congregationalist* raises, in its issue for July 25, the customary lament over the supply and quality of candidates for the ministry. The number is poor and the

quality bad. It attributes this to poor pay. "When men think of a career," it remarks, "it shapes itself to their minds as one that will bring money, reputation, and social advancement." And it adds that these are things which do not come easily to the Nonconformist minister. This is only another way of expressing the truth that men take to the ministry as others take to a trade; and if adequate pay and honor are forthcoming, enough suitable people will receive a "call" to become preachers of the Word. The curious thing is, that although this is acknowledged to be the case, the old cant continues. The man who goes in for the ministry feels himself "moved" to do so. When he gets a post, it is a "call" from the Lord, and when he resigns he has much to say about the way in which "Providence" has favored him during his ministrations.

We are inclined to take a more flattering view of human nature than the *British Congregationalist*. Money is a power, but it is not the only thing that determines human action, and not always the most powerful. Under certain conditions men will embrace hardships and penury, but in that case it must appeal to all that is best in them, and it must be something which a high spirited man may adopt without any suffering in his own estimation. The *British Congregationalist* comes nearer to the actualities of the situation when it says, "Time was when the ambition of most Christian parents was to see one of their sons in the pulpit." Quite so; but this was not because they were better paid than now. There has been no decrease in ministerial salaries, but a decided increase. Parents wished to see their sons in the pulpit, and the sons had no objection to going there because the intellectual conditions were different from what they are now. But within the last few generations the whole foundation of the Christian religion has been undermined. Professional preachers may pretend to ignore this, and men of education and ability may keep silent, but the knowledge is theirs, and this knowledge acts as a very effective obstacle to men of ability and honesty entering the pulpit. They seek a field for their energies in other directions. The Churches are left with what they can get. In short, it is not the cash, but the creed that stands in the way.

While the *British Congregationalist* is complaining that men of ability will not enter the pulpit, the *Christian Commonwealth* laments that "it is getting more and more difficult instead of easier for men of liberal views to remain in the Church." We agree; but we do not see that the *Christian Commonwealth* has any valid ground for assuming that it is any easier for men of real culture and breadth of mind to embrace its particular form of Christianity. The chief recommendation of "liberal Christianity" is its nebulosity. The historic forms of Christianity are so far handicapped because they were hammered out at a time when men really believed, and when the state of knowledge did not prevent their expressing their beliefs in definite terms. The *Christian Commonwealth* comes later, professes fundamentally the same beliefs, and imagines it is liberal and advanced because it is hesitating and indefinite. But if the historic basis of Christianity is surrendered, everything is surrendered. If there was no miraculous-born, miracle-working, miraculously resurrected Jesus, all that is really Christian disappears. Mere vaporings about social righteousness and moral ideals will not do. They only deceive those who are either incapable of, or never, attempt really serious thinking.

What is needed, we are told, is to reinterpret the Christian message in the light of modern knowledge. But that is just what the "liberal" Christian fails to do. He acts precisely as other Christians act. He drops some doctrines to hold which are obviously impossible; he drops one or two more, and prides himself on his advancement. But it is not, after all, a very modern knowledge that does not believe in eternal damnation or the crude forms of vicarious atonement. These "advanced" Christians do not seem to be aware of the fact that modern knowledge not only challenges doctrines, but the fundamental belief out of which these doctrines grew. Observe, we say *knowledge*, not speculation. We know, for example, that the whole idea of God is pure myth. We know how the idea of God originated, and we know the causes that contributed to its advancement. We know also that the whole of the Christ legend is no more than a survival of savage beliefs and practices. The very savages to whom Christians send missionaries may be found making gods, killing them, aye, and eating them; thus repeating the same mental stages that produced Christianity. And the *Christian Commonwealth* imagines that it is advanced and liberal because it presents its readers with the philosophy of Mr. Campbell and reinterprets ideas that are altogether discredited by modern knowledge. It is not

a new interpretation that is needed, but a rejection of a set of beliefs that it is almost degrading to discuss seriously.

Judging from an article in one of the religious weeklies, some missionaries on the spot do not seem over-pleased with the influence of the Chinese revolution on Christian prospects. The writer laments that a great many Chinamen have visited Japan for educational purposes, and returned filled with "materialistic teachings" that divert their minds from religion. This means that the Chinese, like the Japanese, while ready enough to see the advantage of certain Western teaching, are not stupid enough to attribute our advance in scientific knowledge to the possession of Christianity. Left alone—that is, without being subjected to the pressure arising from the cupidity of other nations—the long moral training of the Chinese would have the tendency to direct their awakened energies into wholly beneficial channels. If they are not left alone, it means that China will be forced, in self-defence, on a career of military development, and we shall have in the Far East two powerful military nations in place of one. In either event the Chinese are not likely to be Christianised to any serious extent.

The Liverpool Methodist Conference devoted a portion of its sittings to a "Conversation" on the works of God. This was a grandiloquent way of discussing the prospects of Wesleyan Methodism. And, truth to tell, the "Work of God" does not appear to be flourishing just at present. This was acknowledged by more than one speaker, although they all felt sure that it would be all right in the end. The Rev. W. Wakinshaw said that what was wanted was how to "arrest the paralysis creeping over the Church." The expression crystallises the situation very fairly. With a decreasing membership and hundreds of ministers more or less ashamed to preach the old gospel, the outlook is gloomy enough. Gipsy Smith told the Conference that he had preached for thirty-five years and saw no reason for changing his gospel. Probably not. There are some people who, if they lived for a century, would still be found repeating the same old platitudes and the same old absurdities. So long as the supply of shallow pates holds out they are secure of an audience. But as the quality of the public mind improves these preachers are apt to be left high and dry. And this is really what is occurring with the Methodist Church and with every other church.

Mr. Clarence Rook, reviewing in the *Daily Chronicle* a new book by an American writer, Mr. Kellogg Durland, entitled *Royal Romances of To-Day*, makes the following observations which will be of interest to our readers:—

"But the American explorer has noted rather casually that all these model queens and wives and mothers have changed their religion in order to acquire a throne, a husband, a baby, an heir. The Empress of Russia was most carefully converted from her native soil, and taught the tenets of the Russian Church in order to marry the Tsar. She did it, and believed. Princess Ena of Battenberg also had her time of training, and it is rather a big jump for a girl who leaps from evangelical doctrine to Roman Catholicism. She managed it. And Elena of Montenegro shed her Greek orthodoxy in a twinkling, with the approval of the Tsar, when the little King of Italy asked her to be a wife and a mother.

"Our American explorer, you will see, has found three good queens. All of whom cared not twopence about their official religion; could change it as easily as they changed their stockings, for Greek Orthodoxy, Roman Catholicism, and Protestantism don't matter to a girl who is to be a wife and mother. The American investigator has got hold of the right end of the stick when he starts it in the Royal nurseries."

This is pretty plain speaking, but we are left to guess, after all, what is the right end of the stick. Does he mean that John Bright was correct in his famous statement as to what the "classes" really think of Christianity, and for what reasons they value it? It serves their turn. That seems the alpha and omega of their attachment to it.

Mr. Justice Darling, the gentleman who gave Boulter his month's sentence at the Old Bailey, is quite prepared to do a little "blasphemy" himself rather than forego a joke. Recently, in the Law Courts, he asked that heavy K.C., Mr. Danckwerts, who made the translation from the German of a document that had been referred to. "God knows, I don't"—the learned counsel replied. "Aro you quite sure, his lordship retorted, "that what is not known by you is known at all?" A daring suggestion.

The Mikado of Japan is dead. No doubt he did good work for Japan. But modern Japan was made by the great group of freethinking statesmen, with the "Agnostic" Marquis Ito at their head.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended until September.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1912.—Previously acknowledged, £170 Os. 11d. Received since:—J. H., 5s.; Harry Shaw, 5s.; John Green, 10s.; L. E. S., 1s.; R. Stirton and Friends—Dundee (quarterly), £1 10s.

A. T. PORTER.—We cannot deal with the subject at greater length at present. There is something in what your lady friend says, but she overlooks a very obvious *per contra*. Oliver Wendell Holmes sang it thus:—

"Lords of creation, whom you ladies rule—
The world's great masters, when you're out of school—
Learn the brief moral of our evening's play:
Man has his will, but woman has her way."

J. B.—All the literature that Mr. Gott sells at these Propaganda Scheme meetings is supplied from 2 Newcastle-street, and largely consists of the *Freethinker*. It is a condition of the agreement that he does not sell any other publications whatever, not even his own. There is thus no danger of the N. S. S. or the Secular Society, Ltd., being made responsible for what it might not approve.

J. ROBERTS.—Glad you think this journal "one of the best, brightest, and most sensible" published, and are doing your best to promote its circulation.

H. SHAW.—Subscription passed over to N. S. S. secretary. Glad to hear you still buy six copies of the *Freethinker* weekly and put them into circulation. It is sure to do good. Many people friendly to Freethought won't come out into the open because they fear to encounter "Christian charity."

W. H. MORGAN.—Pleased to hear that Mr. Jackson's visit to the Openshaw district has set some of the natives (and others) thinking.

JOHN GREEN (Vancouver Island).—Glad to hear from you, and to learn that you "don't know what you would do without the *Freethinker*." We fancy we are likely to be in the thick of the fight a good while yet.

E. B.—Cuttings always welcome.

W. WILSON.—Sorry there was disorder at Mr. Jackson's first evening lecture at Southport, but glad the second meeting was a great improvement in that respect. We note that Mr. Jackson answered all the questions put to him "very ably." No doubt other lecturers will come along in time. But you must not expect us. We gave up open-air speaking, except for an occasional demonstration, some ten years ago. We did our share of it between 1871 and 1902. We leave it to the younger men now.

MARTIN WEATHERBURN.—Coming on Tuesday, your obituary of the late Mr. Wharrior must stand over till next week or be remorselessly cut down. We prefer the former course. We may add that we are shorthanded in our printing office, as the "hands" are holidaying a little turn by turn.

C. BOOKER.—We have conflicting reports of the young man's language. But the real point is that he was prosecuted for "blasphemy" and was sent to prison for "blasphemy." We are not defending his language on grounds of taste or utility; we are protesting against, and as far as possible resisting, the application of the Blasphemy Laws, which are directed solely against Freethinkers, leaving Christians to be as malicious and ill-mannered as they please.

G. W. MOORE.—Glad to hear the Northern Tour lectures at Burnley were so successful. No doubt Burnley will be visited again.

R. STIRTON.—Thanks for your generous effort. We wish you could find imitators.

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

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

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

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

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

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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.

Many years ago—it was in the early seventies (how the time passes!)—Mr. Foote wrote some two hundred and twenty pages of a book called *Heroes and Martyrs of Freethought*, which never brought him anything but the pleasure of the writing. Not having kept a copy of it, he hardly knows at this time of day what sort of production it was, though he inclines to think it must have been very faulty and jejune. But the title was a good one, and he has often hoped he might use it again for worthier contents. In 1881 he wrote a long and careful paper on Etienne Dolet, the martyr of the French Renaissance. This was published in the first volume of the *Freethinker*, and was highly praised by Charles Bradlaugh in his own journal, the *National Reformer*, the praise being accompanied with a hope that it would be reprinted in a permanent form. That hope has not been realised. But we venture to reprint it for the present-day readers of this journal. Our readers are asked to bear the chronology in mind. Mr. Christie, whose Life of Dolet was the basis of Mr. Foote's essay, gained titles in after years. Yet it would be tiresome to amend the essay accordingly, and a chronological confusion, though in another direction, would still remain. Perhaps this paper on Dolet will be followed by other studies of a similar character.

The "Northern Tour" under the new Propagandist Scheme, financed by the Secular Society, Ltd., is being carried on with vigor by Mr. T. A. Jackson as lecturer and Mr. J. W. Gott as literature seller and organiser; and on the whole the experiment is satisfactorily successful. Here and there a meeting is spoiled by wet weather—for the meetings are all out of doors; and here and there the public are somewhat apathetic. But most of the meetings are well attended and orderly, the lectures being listened to with interest and appreciation, and sometimes greeted with enthusiasm. The sale of literature too, including the *Freethinker*, has been very gratifying. The literature sold at these meetings is all supplied through Miss Vance, secretary of the Secular Society, Ltd., as well as secretary of the N. S. S., from 2 Newcastle-street, London, E.C. This should satisfy all inquirers as to what Mr. Gott is selling.

Mr. Gott writes us that the Northern Tour meeting, wherever it is held, as it generally is, alongside other meetings, is sure to be the *big* one. And instead of being satisfied with an hour the people hang round the platform for two or three hours, and then haven't had enough. The *Freethinker* is sold in large numbers at these meetings at a penny, both in order to introduce it and to break down the boycott. Mr. Gott says there are seven new Branches of the N. S. S. on the way already, and some forty towns have yet to be visited.

The Latest "Blasphemy" Case.

LEEDS is the storm-centre of "blasphemy" prosecutions—varied with prosecutions for "profanity." The latest victim of Christian bigotry, dressed in the garments of law, is the young man called Bullock, whose case we referred to last week. He has been found guilty at the Leeds Assizes and sentenced by Mr. Justice Bankes to three months' imprisonment in the second division. We intended to write about the case at considerable length this week, but at the last moment we did not feel quite sure of all the details, and, as we have a most positive preference for accuracy—and, further, as this matter is one of the gravest importance—we decided to postpone what we have to say until next week. In the meanwhile we hope this fact will sink into our readers' minds: "*Blasphemy*" prosecutions never fail. No matter who prosecutes or who is prosecuted, no matter how the indictment runs, who the jury are, or who is the judge: "*Blasphemy*" prosecutions never fail.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Races of Britain.

THE various ethnological and anthropological attempts to scientifically classify the different races of mankind have led to great diversity of opinion. The earliest classifications were of little or no importance, as most of them were dominated by racial or religious bias. A marked reform was effected by the elder Retzius (1796-1860) when he founded the craniological school, which made the skull the basis of classification, and introduced exact methods into anthropological inquiries. The cranium was measured and the relative length and breadth of the head was determined. The human race then appeared to be divided into long-skulled (dolichocephalic) and short, broad-skulled (brachycephalic) stocks. Further, craniological inquiries led to the discovery of a third class, known as the mesocephalic, which represents a mean between the two other forms. More recently, the color, shape, and texture of the hair has risen into favor with biologists as a racial test. The hair is now very generally considered to be the most constant of human characters, and has been made the basis of their systems by many of the most eminent modern anthropologists. Huxley, Haeckel, Müller, and Broca all attached great importance to the color and texture of the hair.

After many abortive endeavors by able scientists to raise a system of classification upon single characters, or groups of characters, there is now a tendency to recur to the three larger racial stocks—white, yellow, and black, or Caucasian, Negro, and Mongolian. The constancy of hair pigmentation and texture is very noticeable in the Negro stock, all branches of which have black and frizzly hair, flat, or highly elliptical in section. In the Mongolian division, which is thought by many to embrace all the native races of America, straight black hair of the horse-tail type is a universal characteristic. Within the Caucasian (Aryan) division, this feature fluctuates considerably, but always within certain recognisable limits. For example, the hair may be wavy, straight, or curly, but it is never frizzly like the Negro's. Its color has likewise a considerable range, from jet black through all shades of brown, up to red and the palest flaxen. But dark skins are usually associated with dark hair and eyes, while fair complexions and light hair and eyes are very usually found in company throughout the whole so-called Aryan race.

A painstaking and praiseworthy effort to render practical and exact the still too inexact science of anthropology has been made by Dr. T. E. Smurthwaite. This investigator has devoted over twenty years' study to the subject, and he now strives to effect what he deems a radical reform in this department of natural history. A prudent inquirer, he concentrates his studies upon the ethnology of the English people, and has thus reached the conclusion that irregularities of language, place names, and facial contour are far more reliable data upon which to base deductions than the color of skin, hair, or eyes. Dr. Smurthwaite propounded his views at the British Association gatherings at York in 1905, and at Leicester in 1907. He has published charts and diagrams illustrating his theories, and has also lectured upon ethnology before interested and appreciative audiences. He has now published a booklet, entitled *Practical Anthropology*,* in which he states his case in greater detail. He claims to make good the following conclusions:—

"(1) The presence in England in prehistoric times of six distinct races; (2) The continuity of these same six types in the so-called Anglo-Saxon period; (3) Similar types of the same six racial stocks in the present-day population; (4) The support given to this theory by philology in reference to the irregularities in speech and language, the survivals of racial linguistic words, tribal and place names, and patronymics."

* *Practical Anthropology* (Watts & Co.), 1912.

The writer has, unfortunately, been unable to find conclusive evidence for the existence of six distinct races in Britain in prehistoric times. The evidence presented by Professor Boyd Dawkins in his important work, *Early Man in Britain*, indicates that the early inhabitants were more long-headed than any of the extant European stocks. The skulls of the savages whose remains have been unearthed in caves, and whose tools and weapons have been discovered in the late glacial river drifts, cannot be said to substantiate the Doctor's contention. The mode of life, as well as the head-form of these early men, so closely resembled those of the Eskimo of North America that Nilsson thought them of common descent. "This early type was as long-headed as either the African negro or the Eskimo."*

The race which next made its appearance in Britain was one of a much higher culture, but seems to have been similar to the earlier one, though not so pronounced in physical type. The period of these people, from their method of interring the dead, is called the Long Barrow era. Its relics, of which many have been unearthed, almost invariably reposed in rudely fashioned chambers covered with earth. Our island then appears to have been the scene of a further invasion. The remains of this race were buried in round barrows; it was evidently in a much more advanced stage of culture, and was distinguished by the roundness of its skulls. Dr. Thurnam laid it down as an axiom that long burial barrows yield long skulls, while round burial barrows yield round skulls. These appear to have been the races conquered by the Romans in Southern Britain. But with the withdrawal of the Romans in the fifth century there was a further influx from continental Europe, with a further intermingling of peoples. Various "Saxon" invasions occurred in all probability throughout the following four centuries, but these incursions were checked by the descent of the Danes in the middle of the ninth century. The "Saxons" were now attacked in the rear, and their Danish antagonists made many permanent settlements in the country. The Norsemen next descended upon the northern and western coasts of Scotland, and in East Caithness the Teutonic type has predominated for nearly 1,000 years. Pure Norse seems to have been the spoken language for a considerable period in the northern areas of Ireland and Scotland. The Norwegians also settled in Lancashire, the Lake Country, and in Pembrokeshire. In the eleventh century the Normans entered England as military adventurers, and Dr. Beddoe states that by the accession of Edward I. in the fourteenth century, one-fifth of the population was more or less of Norman origin. Later Jewish and Huguenot immigration led to a further racial admixture, and thus history and archæology unite to explain the composite character of the so-called Anglo-Saxon race.

Further support to the foregoing contentions is furnished by place names. Professor Ripley has adapted a place-name map from Canon Taylor's instructive work on Words and Places, and a study of this map makes clear the fact that those areas of the British Isles most vulnerable to Teutonic encroachments are precisely those which have most completely succumbed to their attacks. Northern Scotland, Ireland, Cornwall, Wales, and sundry inaccessible parts of England best preserve the more ancient Celtic and "Iberian" names.

A color-map displaying the prevalent blondness and brunetness of our islands seems "almost an exact counterpart of the preceding one on place names." The West of Ireland, Argyleshire, and Cornwall "are about as dark, roughly speaking, as a strip across Europe, say from Normandy to Vienna." The conservative nature of the dark brunette type is indicated by its more marked presence among the female population. In Bucks and Herts the people are nearly as dark as the Welsh, and this dusky North London area is shown on a stature-map as a region of abnormally short population, not very

* Ripley, *Races of Europe*.

unlike that of Wales. This last consideration, however, loses much of its apparent force when we remember that the dark natives of Inverness and Argyleshire are well above the average height, while the fairly dark inhabitants of South-Western Scotland are probably taller than any other Europeans. But racial admixture in all probability accounts for this anomaly.

What he regards as the myths and legends of the post-Roman Teutonic conquests of Britain are viewed by Dr. Smurthwaite with grave suspicion. He favors the view that the various German, Norse, and Danish invasions were pre-Roman. There is more than an element of truth in this theory; innumerable place-names throughout Southern Britain lend it powerful support. But to establish pre-Roman Teutonic invasion is not to explode a post-Roman Teutonic conquest. We possess no contemporary evidence for the Teutonic descents of the fifth century worth mentioning. On this point Dr. Smurthwaite quotes Grant Allen with considerable effect as follows:—

"Though the myths which surround the arrival of the English in Britain have little historical value, they are yet interesting for the light which they throw incidentally upon the habits and modes of thought of the colonists. They have one character in common with all other legends, that they grow fuller and more circumstantial the further they proceed from the original time. Baeda, who wrote about A.D. 700, gives them in a very meagre form; the English Chronicle, compiled at the court of Alfred about A.D. 900, adds several important traditional particulars; while with the romantic Geoffrey of Monmouth, A.D. 1152, they assume the character of full and circumstantial tales. The less men knew about the conquest, the more they had to tell about it."

Dr. Smurthwaite would willingly extend Grant Allen's sardonic scepticism to the historical achievements of "the blustering Freeman and the blundering Green." Nevertheless, our traditional histories have been supplemented by modern scientific inquiries; and, as the Teutonic and other races made Britain their home before the Roman conquest, it is only natural that their fellow-countrymen should follow their example when the Roman legions were withdrawn.

That three distinct stocks have inhabited Britain from very remote times is a proposition that scarcely needs demonstration. There can be very little doubt that Iberian, Celtic, and Teutonic words are all blended in the English language, and these, with the additions made within the historic period through the influence of other linguistic stocks, seem amply sufficient to cover the facts. That quite unlike terms have been, and are, employed to denote the same concrete and abstract ideas and appearances by those peoples whom most ethnologists and anthropologists consider the same root race, may find its explanation in the independent evolution of local dialects among the wandering tribes of the same racial stocks.

Be this as it may, Dr. Smurthwaite's contention that facial contours constitute a sound racial test contains much which commends it. Whether his theory that the six races of mankind are all native to the British Isles be sound or unsound, his claim to have established the existence of six racial types in contemporary Britain must be conceded. One must, however, demur to the statement that these six races have continued to occupy our country from prehistoric days down to our own. The more reasonable conclusion is that Britain has been slowly but most surely peopled by various incoming races. And one fact shines out clearly above all others, and that is that immense periods of time are necessary to bring about any material modification in the form of the human skull.

There can be little doubt that were the Doctor to extend his inquiries to other parts of Europe he would be able to demonstrate that the continental peoples are as hopelessly mixed as those of our own island. The color divisions of the human race have been of material benefit to anthropological science

in its endeavors to classify the human race. The color and texture of the hair has also lent important aid in solving ethnological problems. And while agreeing with Dr. Smurthwaite that the forms of the skull and face constitute the pre-eminent tests of race, exception may justly be taken to his argument that skin and hair color are mere matters of environment, and consequently have little bearing on the problems of anthropology.

This article has been less appreciative than critical. But it might easily have been devoted to an exposition of those pages of the Doctor's *brochure* which present nothing save sound scientific argument. His booklet is extremely interesting and instructive, and few students of the science of man can afford to ignore it. It is to be hoped that the author will elaborate his views—particularly those which bear upon language, place, and tribal-names—in a larger work. In a growing and expanding science such as anthropology, men of fearless and independent judgment, rather than those who tamely follow the official leaders, are those most likely to crown the discoveries already made by the pioneers in this most important branch of organic nature.

T. F. PALMER.

Tales of Our Times.

By A CYNIC.

I.

SIR MARTINGALE SNAFFLE, Master of the Midlandshire Hunt and chief supporter of the Midlandshire Coursing Club, is thoroughly enjoying himself. Seated in a grand stand among a crowd of kindred spirits consisting of "the best people in the county," he is indulging in his favorite "sport" of watching the most timid and harmless of animals being systematically done to death. Before the grand stand extends a long, sloping space of meadow, down which over and anon speeds the flying hare, followed with lightning swiftness by the still fleetest greyhounds. Turning, wheeling, doubling, dashing wildly hither and thither, flees the terrified little animal, while ever on its track come the two long, lithe dogs in relentless pursuit with something almost serpentine in their swift, sinuous movements, and so perfectly trained in their deadly work that they seem to be acting in deliberate and reasoned co-operation. Till at last the agony ends. A last wild dash of despair brings the panting creature almost into the merciless jaws of its pursuers, and the "kill" takes place. This is the usual ending, though occasionally the escape coverts at the far end of the course afford a refuge for the hare—which thus lives to run another day and to undergo the agony of the death-terror all over again.

So for some hours the sport goes on. One hare after another is let loose in the arena of death; brace after brace of greyhounds is slipped in pursuit; while Sir Martingale and his friends bet eagerly on the results and enjoy the cruellest sport that the blood-lust of man has ever invented.

Next morning Sir Martingale, mounted on the magisterial bench, dispenses what he understands as justice.

A young man steps humbly into the dock, while a smug looking constable addresses the bench.

"Tom Smith, the carrier, your worship. Found driving lame pony in his cart. Several times warned but no notice was taken, so the Police have had to prosecute. No previous convictions."

Tom Smith pleads guilty, but urges that the lameness was very slight and that the pony is now quite recovered.

"I cannot accept any such excuse," says Sir Martingale severely. "Cruelty towards animals, in whatever form it may exist, is a sign of a callous and brutal disposition which it is my duty as a magistrate to do all in my power to suppress. Ten shillings or fourteen days, and the next case that comes before me will be more severely dealt with."

II.

A boatload of castaways, after incurring many perils and hardships, only overcome by the resolute courage and determination of men accustomed to danger, were at last approaching a haven of refuge in the shape of a small island in mid ocean. The party consisted of two of the saloon passengers of the lost ship—a millionaire capitalist and a clergyman—and some six or eight of the crew, including the boatswain and the ship's cook.

As soon as they landed the clergyman said: "Our first act, my friends, should be to offer up thanks to our Heavenly

Father for his mercy in saving us from a watery grave. Let us kneel down here, on the beach, and give him praise."

"A most excellent and pious suggestion," said the capitalist. "Both in prosperity and adversity we should never forget our duty to God."

"We don't agree, gentlemen," said the boatswain. "Most of us here are earthly fathers, and I for one shouldn't expect my kiddies to be very thankful to me if I first chucked them all into a deep pond, and after watching most of them drown allowed a few of them to struggle to the shore as best they could. What say you, mates?"

"Hear, hear!" shouted the sailors, while the ship's cook grinned approval and said, "That's so, Bill. You 'aven't been attending them Freethought lectures for nothing."

So while the clergyman and the capitalist assumed that rather ridiculous bodily attitude generally regarded as an appropriate one when addressing the Deity, the sailors proceeded to unload the boat and drag it up the beach out of harm's way.

When the clergyman and the capitalist rose from their knees they turned angrily towards the sailors, and the former said, "Poor fools! This is the result of the shallow arguments with which the blatant Atheism of the day is poisoning the minds of the ignorant. Do you really believe that we have been saved from death by *your* puny efforts?"

"Looks rather like it, sir," said the boatswain.

"Blasphemer!" spluttered the capitalist. "The wonder is that the Almighty did not destroy us all in his anger when an infidel of your sort was among us."

An angry murmur rose from the sailors, but the boatswain said calmly, "Well, gentlemen, as you seem to think that our efforts have had nothing to do with our rescue, and that our company may be rather dangerous than otherwise, there seems to be no reason why you should remain with us in one camp. Of course, with the Almighty helping you along, you ought not to require any material assistance; still, we are quite willing to give you your proper share of whatever we have with us. So here are a fishing line and one or two hooks, here's an axe to build yourselves a house with, here are some sailcloth and cordage for the same purpose, and here's your share of the remaining provisions and water. Now, as you need no longer run the risk of association with us, and as the Almighty can devote himself entirely to your welfare, you ought to get along very comfortably."

The sailors soon discovered that the natural resources of the island precluded all danger of starvation and promised a fairly comfortable sojourn. There was plenty of good water, fish and turtles could be had for the catching, and there abounded those useful wild goats which shipwrecked mariners in fiction always find on oceanic islands in defiance of all the laws of zoological distribution. These convenient animals the nimble sailors caught by hemming them in and running them down among the narrow, rocky ravines which they mostly frequented. For shelter the boatswain soon set to work at a little hut of logs. The cook managed his own department with a skill which the difficulty of the conditions seemed only to stimulate, and they were all as happy as they could reasonably expect to be.

Far differently, however, did it fare with the clergyman and the capitalist. To meet the primary difficulty of food the clergyman elected to try his hand with the hook and line, but this "fisher of men" was no angler in the ordinary, mundane sense of the word, and it was almost pathetic to see him seated hour after hour on a rock waiting for a bite, and perhaps regretting that the good old days of miraculous fishery were gone for ever. Nor was his companion any more successful, and the sight of a rather stout capitalist trying to circumvent a particularly nimble goat, touched emotions in those rough sailors' breasts which lay too deep for coherent expression.

But, of course, this state of things could not last long. On the evening of the third day, after the clergyman and the capitalist had been placed under the direct care of the Deity, they approached the sailors' cheerful camp fire in a somewhat chastened frame of mind.

"Well, my good men," began the capitalist, "it is wise to acknowledge when one is beaten, and my reverend friend and I have come to lay down our arms and admit our defeat. I must also apologise to you, boatswain, for having lost my temper, and I do so unreservedly. So I hope there will be no further ill-feeling, but that you will accept the olive branch which we hold out to you, bury the hatchet, and—"

"Smoke the pipe of peace," said the clergyman solemnly. "I, too, must express my regret. I was wrong in trying to point out God's providential care to men rendered desperate by peril and suffering."

"Certainly, gentlemen," said the boatswain, "we accept your olive branch willingly. In any case, we were thinking of sending you an embassy of peace, as, of course, we

couldn't stand aside and watch God's providential care allowing you to starve to death. But you join us on two conditions. The first is that you do your full share of any work you are capable of—we shall not put you on to catching either fish or goats—and the second is that there must be no preaching, praying, or thanksgiving thrust upon us in this camp, for I tell you plainly we don't like it."

"That is fair enough," said the capitalist, "and I accept your conditions on behalf of my reverend friend and myself. So now let us all be friends and comrades."

But when, a few months later, they were rescued by a passing ship, and returned home, this little adventure did not in the slightest degree affect the belief of the clergyman and the capitalist in the theory of Divine Providence. For, incredible though it may seem, the old rusty armor of Superstition is still proof, not only against the keen sword-thrusts of Reason, but also against the heavy battle-axe blows of Experience.

Correspondence

A SOUTH AFRICAN MARRIAGE.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I enclose a report of a wedding which will be of interest to Freethinkers in three continents. Mr. James Hall, father of the bridegroom, is an old follower of Charles Bradlaugh, whom he cannot mention without emotion. Mr. Hall is the son of a minister, but broke away from orthodoxy in his youth, and, emigrating to Australia, did some strenuous fighting for the cause even before the days of Joseph Symes. If I recollect rightly, he lived in both New Zealand and Australia, but eventually settled down in Hobart, where he was for a decade or two universally known and respected, or hated, as an irrepressible opponent of the clergy, with most of whom, then as now, he was privately excellent friends. He is an electrical expert and a natural handy man and inventor, and a sample of his wood and metal turning, valued at about £125, was exhibited at the Melbourne Exhibition. He came to South Africa since the war and became curator of the Braamfontein Cemetery (Johannesburg) until recently, when, owing to his advanced age, he stepped down in favor of the son who has recently been married. The father has taken his son's place as secretary, and probably does just about as much work as before. He is an able platform speaker, seeing vividly the humorous side of things and quite able to point it out. The cutting is from the *Rand Daily Mail*, from the hand of "Dadge" of the *Pink 'Un*, who naturally severely disapproves of Rationalism, hence among the friends of the happy couple there is no mention of the committee of the S. A. Rationalist Association, who were nearly all there, or of the fact that they presented the bride with a handsome present. The guests mentioned, as you see, include two clergymen, while some fifty or sixty friends, including the Mayor, and, I believe, the Bishop of Pretoria, sent regrets at being unable to attend. Mr. Smit is a town councillor, a one-armed Dutch giant of the most genial type.

Mr. E. P. Beer has been elected President of the S. A. Rationalist Association for the current year.

East Rand, Transvaal.

JOHN LATHAM.

[The cutting referred to in Mr. Latham's letter is a newspaper report of the marriage of Mr. Edward Cleveland Hall to Miss Susannah Helena Smit. It would hardly interest our readers in the way that Mr. Latham's letter will.—EDITOR.]

THE TRUE RESURRECTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In the article under the above title which appeared in your issue of May 19, the Rev. H. Mayne Young is quoted as saying of Christ, "His spiritual embodiment passed through closed doors." Sir Oliver Lodge, moreover, says his body "penetrated walls." It is clear that at least one of these gentlemen has invented his "scripture" instead of reading it; for a door is not a wall. The truth is, not only did the "apparition" insist that he was not a ghost, but the Bible says nothing about Christ passing through anything—door or wall. The story narrates that there was a meeting of persons in a place where eleven men lived together with at least four or five women. This place is called a room; but it had more than one door of entry, and must have been a complete tenement with a roof, which, in the east, is a sleeping place for men. Jesus suddenly "stood" among them hungry, late in the evening, on some day after the morning following his execution—when his body was missing; but how long after is not given. The rational supposition is that he had returned during Peter's absence at Emmaus, and was resting on the roof, but hearing them

speaking below had come down and had not been perceived until he came and stood in the faint light of the oil lamp.

Jesus, like all religious impostors, was an adept at histrionic appearances and disappearances. He had it on the brain; when he knew he would be arrested and killed he told his followers in the words, "A little while and ye shall not see me"; and again, "a little while and ye shall see me."

Previously, he had formed a corps of seventy agents to "boom" him, and sent them in pairs in advance to every place to which he intended to go. He lied to his brothers and refused to go on the pilgrimage to Jerusalem to the feast of the tabernacles, telling them bluntly he was not going to that feast; but later went himself up secretly, and after there had been "much murmuring among the people concerning him. Howbeit, no man spake openly of him." He waited until the midst of the feast and then suddenly appeared in the temple, demanding Why do you go about to kill me? Which brought the retort, You are mad, who goes about to kill you? A bombast of this sort could easily make a mysterious appearance to enthusiastic peasants in a large chamber lighted only by an oil lamp or lamps.

The same pitiable reliance on common delusions marks the general belief among Christians that Thomas placed his fingers in the wounds of Jesus, and that Saul saw Samuel when he was raised by the Witch of Endor. Neither of these things is stated in the Bible, but the reverse. It says Thomas believed on being told to reach his hand and thrust it into the side of Jesus, and answered immediately, "My Lord and my God." The story does not even say that he saw the wounds, merely that he took the man's word for it. The Bible also says that Saul was told by the woman that she saw an old man come up, whereon Saul assumed it was Samuel; and from fear of seeing him, he stooped with his face to the ground.

Lord Macaulay anticipated that the twentieth century would be so advanced as to be practically an age of reason. How amazed he and the scholars of the middle of the last century—Bentham, Mill, Tindall, Huxley, Darwin, and their associates—would be could they now be in this much anticipated century and see men with the highest scientific reputations treating seriously such ghost stories as this reappearance of a carpenter who denied that he was a ghost and ate grilled fish to demonstrate his physical reality; and that other story of the ballet girl, Katie King, who perspired as she was kissed and embraced by the great scientific investigator, Crookes. This mental decomposition in the age is alarming to every sane person.

Boston, Mass., U.S.A.

GEORGE TREBELLS.

HALLS WANTED.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

Sir,—It occurs to me that your readers will be interested, and probably helpful, in the following matter.

The directors of the Secular Society, Ltd., have decided upon a more vigorous propaganda in the outlying districts of London, to take the form of Sunday and possible weekday meetings, commencing in September.

My experience is that suitable halls become yearly more difficult to obtain, particularly since the advent of the cinematograph.

Queen's Hall has been engaged from September to Christmas, and the directors are now anxious to attack the S.E. and N.E. of London, although we are not restricted to these neighborhoods.

All I desire are the names and positions of likely halls, which should be as near as possible to a main thoroughfare. The name of the person to whom applications should be made would also be an advantage. My directors, being in no sense bigoted, would consider even a disused church or chapel.

E. M. VANCE, *Secretary Secular Society, Ltd.*

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON JULY 25.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, occupied the chair. There were also present: Messrs. Baker, Barry, Bowman, Bradford, Brandes, Cohen, Cowell, Davidson, Hoaford, Lazarnick, Leat, Lloyd, Moss, Neate, Nichols, Quinton, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Schindle, Silverstein, Thurlow, Wood, and Miss Kough.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed. The monthly balance-sheet was presented and adopted.

New members were received from the Leeds and Bradford Branch and the Parent Society.

The Secretary reported a grant of £30 received from the Secular Society, Ltd.

The Sub-Committee's report of the Scholarship Scheme was received. Each member being supplied with a copy, it was resolved to place it on the Agenda for discussion at the next meeting.

The President read correspondence from the L.C.C. re their refusal to renew permits for collections at outdoor meetings, and stated that he desired to see the Council's action strongly resisted, and Branches had been advised to continue their collections. It was unanimously resolved that this action be approved and the Branches be encouraged to continue their collections.

The prosecution of S. E. Bullock for "blasphemy" at Rotherham was reported. The President had authorised Mr. John Grange, of Leeds, vice-president of the Society, to engage solicitor and counsel for the defence. The Executive thoroughly approved of this action, and, following further discussion on this subject, voted a donation of £5 to the National Committee for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws.

The forthcoming International Freethought Congress at Munich was discussed, and it was finally resolved that, instead of sending a delegate, a donation of £5 should be made towards the expenses of the Congress.

The Secretary was instructed to forward the following resolution of sympathy to Mr. and Mrs. A. J. Fincken:—

"That the N. S. S. Executive tenders its sincere sympathy to Mr. A. J. Fincken, his wife, and the other members of the family in the bereavement they have suffered by the death of Mr. Charles Fincken, who had been brought up like all his brothers in the principles of Secularism and worthily practised them in the course of his too brief life. This Executive also begs to condole with Mrs. Charles Fincken in the loss of her husband at so early an age."

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

WHERE DO SUCH CHRISTIANS LIVE?

In every sect, through every clan,
Is there a single living man
Who follows Christ whate'er he wrought,
And bears out strictly what he taught?

He surely says, through James and Paul,
Above all things, "Swear not at all."
Go to that Christian court and there
You'll hear the judge, the jury swear;
The aged witness and the youth
All take an oath to tell the truth.

"Resist not evil," but be meek;
And if one "smites you on the cheek,
Turn him the other" one also,
And take from him another blow.

No Christian banker e'er should fuss
About a signboard reading thus:
"We loan to men of every rank;
We take no usury at this bank;
We give to them that ask each day—
The borrower never turn away."

One more command, well understood,
Is "Love your enemies" and "Do good";
And if a man shall take your cloak,
Forbid him not to take your coat.

Hate your father and your mother,
Despise your sister and your brother;
Detest your children and your wife,
And, above all, abhor your life.
Sell all you have—you can't do more—
And give the proceeds to the poor.
Then take your cross and follow me,
Through rough and smooth to Calvary;
Then all I've promised shall be given,
And treasures you shall find in heaven.

Who will the information give,
And tell me where such Christians live?

—Aaron De Witt.

Obituary.

It is with great regret that I mention the death of Mr. John Wilson, at the age of 78. He was for many years, and until his death, a member of the Camberwell Branch. His Christian relatives, failing to shake his adherence to Freethought, countermanded the funeral arrangements, thus preventing the attendance of any of his old Secular confreres. He recalled with proud pleasure—a few days before his death—that he had missed but one issue of the *Freethinker* during the whole of Mr. Foote's Presidency of the National Secular Society.—W. H. B.

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, James Rowney, a Lecture.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15 and 6, F. A. Davies, Lectures.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (The Green): No meeting.

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

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road, High-street): 11.30, E. Burke, "Buddhism and Christianity."

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

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, W. Davidson, a Lecture.

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers Hill, opposite Public Library): 7.30, Mr. Allison, "Hymns and their Singers."

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE: THOS. A. JACKSON—Leeds (Town Hall Square): Sunday, August 4, at 11, "Who said Damn?" at 7, "Bernard Shaw: or, The Latest Thing in Gods." Barnoldswick (Church-street): 5, at 7.30, "The Devil and All His Works." Clitheroe (Market Place): 6, at 7.30, "When I Was in Prison." Great Harwood (Town Square): 7, at 7.30, "What Would Jesus Do?" Burnley (Market Place): 8, at 7.30, "The Cause and Cure of Christianity." Skipton (Socialist Stand): 9, at 7.30, "Philosophy of Secularism." Rochdale (Town Hall Square): 10, at 7.30, "Piety and Piffle."

OLDHAM (Park Gates): Joseph A. E. Bates—Thursday, August 1, at 7.30, "Freethought as a Factor in Civilisation"; 2, at 7.30, "Daydreams"; 7, at 7.30, "Royal Parasites"; 8, at 7.30, "Paganism and its Survival in Modern Christianity."

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Hunting Skunks*, G. W. Foote; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll. 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 6d. per hundred, post free 7d. Special rates for larger quantities. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—N. S. S. SECRETARY, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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