

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXII.—No. 38

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1912

PRICE TWOPENCE

Certainly if ignorance and perverseness will needs be national and universal, then they who adhere to wisdom and truth are not therefore to be blamed for being so few as to seem a sect or faction.—MILTON.

More About the Origin of Life.

IT reflects but small credit upon the conditions of "educated" thought in this country, that Professor Schafer's address before the British Association should have been treated as new and epoch marking, and widely described as a "bombshell." All this would give the impression that Professor Schafer was a daring and original investigator, standing alone in his speculative venturesomeness, and that even scientists themselves were not quite prepared for so daring a genius. Pretty well the whole of the press, from the *Times* downward, in their desire to pose as instructors of the public, have been busy exhibiting their abysmal ignorance of things scientific the moment they step aside from the beaten track of the commonplace and political platitudes. Journalists, ready to turn out, with the aid of a handy encyclopædia and two or three books of reference, a superficially smart article upon any subject under the sun, let themselves loose on the question of the origin of life, and as no kind friend was at hand to remind them of their profound ignorance, their articles have duly appeared, and were read by a public no better informed than themselves. It is not the daring of Professor Schafer, but the lack of knowledge and of genuine education of the English press that has been the most striking event of the past fortnight.

To anyone who is acquainted with the trend of experimentation and of theorising based upon experiments, it is plain that the whole movement of positive science for the past forty years is in the direction of establishing a physico-chemical explanation of life. One may safely set on one side the "directive intelligence" of Lodge and Wallace as being no more than a mere theory invented to bolster up a pre-existing spiritualistic belief. In its wider aspect it is a simple survival of a now generally discredited animism. And although it may be dressed up in a modern scientific terminology, and graced by the decoration of a few prominent names, one has only to divest it of all clothing to discover primitive animism naked and quite ashamed. Fifteen years ago Verworn laid it down as absolutely certain that "an explanatory principle can never hold good in physiology with reference to the physical phenomena of life that is not also applicable in chemistry and physics to lifeless nature. The assumption of a specific vital force in every form is not only superfluous, but inadmissible." Since this was written very much has occurred to strengthen this opinion, and nothing to weaken it. Indeed, the only ground which the vitalists have to rest on is the inability of present giving a complete and satisfactory explanation of vital phenomena. No one, in fact, pretends that such an explanation can be given, at any rate, at present. But it is depressing to have to point out that absence of knowledge in one direction does not prove the presence of knowledge in another

direction. In no sense of the word can the ascription of vital phenomena to a specific life force, distinct from, and independent of, every other known force, be called knowledge. It is an asylum of ignorance, pure and simple. All scientific knowledge—and there is really no other kind of knowledge—is an explanation of a given group of phenomena in terms of a force, or of forces, of a more comprehensive character. To drag in the unknown is a confession of human impotence.

Broadly, there are only two theories of the origin of life. One is that of supernatural creation. Life is imposed on the earth by some outside power, and merely uses matter as its instrument. It is really a gratuitous honor to call this a theory, since it is a mere phrase used as an excuse for ignorance and an apology for mental laziness. Opposed to this is the belief that in some way—and known or unknown matters little to the reasonableness of the position—living matter, as Professor Schafer said, owes its origin to causes similar to those that have produced all other forms of matter. Assume, if you will, the most complete ignorance of how this evolution has taken place; it still remains the only reasonable position. It holds the field, if for no other reason, because there is none other. And it is, at least, in line with our knowledge in every other direction. There is no question whatever, by anyone, of the gradual evolution of our planet, with the consequent formation of definite and comparatively permanent chemical compounds, up to the point immediately preceding the appearance of life. There is no question anywhere, or by anyone, that there has been a continuous evolution from a mere jelly-like speck of living substance up to the most complex organisms. On what ground are we to assume, then, that while in every other direction we see only the transformation of pre-existing forces, and their appearance under new forms, at this one point—at the point where life appears—the principle prevailing everywhere else breaks down, and that a new and unique force makes its appearance? Moreover, the passing of the inorganic into the organic, and the resolution of the organic into the inorganic, is not a wild theory, nor is it in any sense a "bombshell." It is a fact of everyday observation. We are in doubt only—in some cases—as to the precise method of the process. We do not know what were the precise conditions under which life began; we may not know what is the simplest form of living matter; but we do know that life *must* be a purely natural evolution, unless our whole knowledge of nature is false, and all our science a sham.

It is not, then, merely a little knowledge that might have saved our English journalists making such a pitiful exhibition of themselves; capacity for sane thinking would have been equally protective. Of course, it may be that they wrote as they did because they were writing for the public; but it is most likely that it was because they are of the public. One journalist, for instance, came to the conclusion that Professor Schafer's theories have disturbed Church people because they go directly against the freedom of the will and cut at the root of our ideas of punishment. I don't know what "our ideas of punishment" may happen to be, but Professor Schafer leaves the rational idea of punishment exactly where it was. The only reason for

punishment is that some end will be gained by it—in this instance, the coercion or education of an individual. And I really cannot see how this fact of life being a natural product will make a man less averse than formerly to being punished, or less anxious to so act that he will avoid punishment in future. To the better educated generation of, say, the twenty-first century, one of the most curious aspects of present-day life will surely be that on the delivery of an address by a prominent scientist, journalists rushed off to ask Church folk, the Rev. F. B. Meyer, Mr. R. J. Campbell, and the like, what they thought about it. As though it really matters what they think about a subject so obviously beyond their reach.

Of course, the most depressingly amusing comments appeared in the religious press. And with the religious press must, for the time being, be grouped the *New Age*, which dismissed Professor Schafer's address in a couple of columns so saturated with oppressive omniscience that it really calls for separate and more elaborate treatment. The *Christian Commonwealth*, to whom any mediocrity becomes a philosopher provided he labels himself a "mystic," at once consulted a Hindu gentleman, Mr. S. M. Mitra. Mr. Mitra settled the matter by remarking that to the Hindu all matter is life, and that thirty centuries ago all that scientists now know was discovered "through intuition" by Hindu yogis. We have heard about these discoveries before. The curious thing is that they only become public property after the Western scientist has done his work. Perhaps they are kept in the background in order to give the poor Westerner a chance. In a leading article the same journal remarks:—

"In that serener region, where the mystics are more at home than we laborious intellectualists, the question of the chemical origin of organic life does not arise. It is along this line, we think, that relief from the remorseless pressure of materialistic science will come."

Happy mystics! Here, at last, is a royal road to knowledge. Instead of being laboriously intellectual, the wiser course is to soar into that serener region, and settle all your problems by intuition, by consulting the inner light, much as the Hindu fakir may attain spiritual ecstasy by the solemn contemplation of his navel. Most common people who have not gone into this serene region are content to ask whether materialistic science is true or false. The *Christian Commonwealth* is concerned only with its remorseless pressure, and invites an ascent into a serener region as a mode of escape. Really, the editor does himself an injustice in placing himself amongst the laborious intellectualists. If he is not yet amongst the mystics, he is surely not very distant from that select company.

While the *Christian Commonwealth* advises escape into a serener region, the Rev. Charles Widdowson, of the Roman Catholic Pro-Cathedral of Dundee, quite welcomes science. "The Church," he said, "had no hostility to science; on the contrary, its attitude was one of gladness, joyous encouragement." This is good news, particularly in view of the past history of the Catholic Church. But, of course, it had to be science of the right kind, otherwise the gladness, joyous encouragement would not be forthcoming. Professor Schafer's universe, "untouched by supernatural intervention," was not of the right kind for Christians, and "a comfort for the timid believer was this—the chief things that really mattered in human knowledge refused to enter the tests of his physical and chemical laboratory at all." As usual, so long as things are not understood, room is left for the supernatural, and the believer is happy; and science of that kind Mr. Widdowson will meet with gladness, joyous encouragement. It will encourage men to remain ignorant, in the confidence that they will remain religious. Fortunately, Mr. Widdowson is in Dundee, in 1912, and his "severe condemnation" of Professor Schafer—to quote a newspaper report—excites nothing but a smile. Science is no more inclined to be depressed by his condemnation than encouraged by his

approval. Neither the approval nor condemnation of such men really matter. Science to-day has not only made good its claim to pursue its work without their permission or their patronage; it is fast establishing its right to investigate and its power to explain the whole region of theory and practice.

(To be concluded.) C. COHEN.

Religious Belief and Scientific Knowledge.

NOTHING is more suggestive to an outsider than the callous manner in which the divines misrepresent the facts of history and of science, on the one hand, and contradict one another about their own dogmas, on the other. The Rev. John Thomas, M.A., minister of the Myrtle-street Baptist Church, Liverpool, for example, still persists in asserting, in his "Letters to Young People," which appear in the *Baptist Times*, that "the Darwinian hypothesis of continuous evolution, which excludes the intervention of successive acts of specific creation, is no longer scientifically tenable." Mr. Thomas knows, or if he does not, his ignorance is monstrously culpable, that the Darwinian theory of evolution holds the scientific field to-day more firmly and completely than it ever did before. We respect a theologian who honestly rejects science because it discredits his faith, as Mr. Thomas seems to do; but our respect vanishes when we find him guilty of a deliberate perversion of the truth. Mr. Thomas declares that Darwinism is dead, that all the best scientists have renounced it as unworthy of credence, and that there is a general return to the saner teaching of Revelation; but the declaration is not supported by a single fact, nor does the reverend gentleman quote one well-known biologist of the day as his authority. He speaks of the "newest light of to-day," but omits to produce it. He tells us that he "set out to prove the fallibility of the science of Charles Darwin"; but so far he has not even attempted to do anything of the sort. Sir Ray Lankester and Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, two of our leading biologists, give Mr. Thomas's statement the direct lie. They are both thorough-going Darwinians; and the same is true of Professor Schafer, President of the British Association, and of practically every other biologist of note. Does Mr. Thomas imagine that the young people who read the *Baptist Times* are so simple as to take his word rather than the united testimony of the greatest living scientists? Why, even the *Daily News and Leader* for September 11 was compelled to observe that, at the recent meeting of the British Association at Dundee, "it must be admitted that, on the whole, the materialistic Mechanists had the best of the exchanges." We believe that Mr. Thomas is quite justified in regarding Darwinism as essentially anti-Biblical and anti-Christian; but he entirely misleads his readers when he assures them that it is dead. True or false, it is most vigorously alive.

Mr. Thomas is an orthodox divine of the conservative school. To him Jesus is the Christ, the only begotten Son of God, who came into the world to save sinners. He is a Trinitarian who glories in the incarnation of the second person in the Godhead. He regards the Deity of Jesus Christ as an essential article of the faith. But Dr. Orchard, who is fully as competent to judge, looks upon such theological dogmas with something like disdain. He says:—

"Orthodoxy leaves me quite cold. When men discuss whether Jesus was God, or man, or both, or neither, I sit patiently waiting until someone will tell me first of all what they mean by God or man, for I cannot define either.....I do not believe that Jesus had almighty power or worked miracles, simply because I do not know what either of these things are."

Dr. Orchard seems to be proud of his ignorance. He does not know what God or man is, and he refuses to tell his correspondents whether Jesus was the one or the other, or neither; and yet, in spite of this ignorance, he alludes to Christ as "my Lord and Friend," and calls "the very knowing him eternal

life." Then out of the bottomless pit of his ignorance issues this curious deliverance:—

"On the naturalistic theory of the Universe I have to conclude that everything is one vast miracle; on the spiritualistic theory of the Universe I have to conclude that it is all perfectly natural."

That is not so bad for an avowed ignoramus. One would have thought that such a statement implied the possession of a considerable amount of positive knowledge by its author. Fancy a man who confesses that he does not know what miracles are, confidently affirming that "on the naturalistic theory of the Universe everything is one vast miracle," or a denouncer of theology, indulging in the rankest theological dogmatism. Clearly by "spiritualistic" is meant "supernaturalistic"; but will Dr. Orchard kindly tell us how he distinguishes between Nature and Super-nature, or where the former ends and the latter begins? He will have to shed his ignorance and clothe himself with something akin to omniscience before he can give us that information.

Or let us take another orthodox divine, like the Rev. Professor James Denney, of Glasgow, who preached in the Parish Church of Dundee, in connection with the meetings of the British Association. His subject was "Christian Faith in God," which he described as the highest possible kind of faith. We are not going to quarrel with him on that score; but we join issues with him as to the identity of faith and knowledge. Dr. Denney uses the words interchangeably; and although he says nothing new about either, there are points in his discourse that invite criticism. In the Fourth Gospel Jesus is made to say that he was in the world to make the Father known to his disciples, and Dr. Denney treats that representation as literally true. To see Jesus is to see the Father; and the vision ripens into knowledge. As a matter of fact the Gospel Jesus did not show or make known the Father; he merely talked about him *as if* he knew him, as tens of thousands in many lands had done before and have done ever since. Assuming that he was an honest believer in God's Fatherhood, there is absolutely no proof that he was anything more; and of those who listened to him only a few believed his testimony, and the few who did believe it had nothing but their belief. Dr. Denney simply repeats in his own words what he finds written down in the Gospels. He insists on the certainty, intensity, depth, and purity of the knowledge of God as Father through Jesus, and says:—

"There is a not uncommon idea that truth about God and scientific truth *differ* in this respect. Scientific truth is supposed to be certain, but truth about God insecure; you cannot doubt the laws of Nature, but you can doubt God's character; there can be no question about gravitation, but anyone may question the Divine Fatherhood. Surely, there is something misleading here. Different truths, no doubt, have to be learned in their appropriate ways; but if we fulfil the conditions of knowing, all truth is one. We can doubt the laws of Nature, if we are ignorant of the processes by which they have been discovered; and we can *not* doubt the Fatherhood of God, as long as we see Jesus."

This whole extract is vitiated by the reckless confusion of faith and knowledge. Jesus is not *seeable* on any terms. The Gospel Jesus is at best but a legendary being in whom people learned to believe. He was never seen and known. Whether he ever actually lived or not, what the Gospels present to us is an imaginary portrait of a being never seen and known in the flesh. Now this impossible being claimed that he knew and was uniquely related to another impossible being whom he called the Father; and it is the testimony of the one impossible being about the other that Dr. Denney accepts as truth about God. But surely to speak of any *belief* as *truth* is unscientific. The Gospel Jesus is himself an object of belief, not of knowledge; and the same is true of the God proclaimed by him. Thus the Christian faith in God is first of all faith in the Gospel Jesus; and in neither case does the faith blossom into knowledge. The Christian religion is wholly dependent for its very existence upon the credulity of its professors. The moment faith dies

God and eternity instantly vanish, their reality being conditional on the reality and intensity of belief. Scientific truth is not an object of belief, but of demonstrated knowledge.

The curious thing is that Mr. Thomas, Dr. Orchard, and Professor Denney make their supreme, and as they contend their conclusive, appeal to experience; but nothing can be more certain than the fact that *religious experience is evidentially valueless*. Experience of gravitation proves its reality; and it should be borne in mind that we have experience of gravitation whether we believe in it or not. In the natural world experience precedes knowledge and belief. The infant neither knows nor believes that fire burns until it finds it out by experience. In religion, however, belief is prior to experience; and experience never survives belief. This is virtually admitted by Dr. Denney himself. What makes the Fatherhood of God doubtful, he says, "is not anything in itself; it is the ease with which our eyes are drawn away from Jesus." Exactly so; Christianity is true only to believers; God is love or a burning fire only to the credulous. He leaves unbelievers delightfully alone. We readily admit the reality—and to many how blissful!—of religious experience, our only contention being that its reality, even its existence, is contingent on the possession, in a corresponding degree of intensity, of specific beliefs; and this very contingency is in itself strong evidence against the objective truth of theology. To science the supernatural is non-existent because it has nothing to submit to observation and experiment; and the message that comes to us from the latest meetings of the British Association is that life, in all its marvellous manifestations, is a purely natural phenomenon, and is as much a subject of scientific investigation as electricity or magnetism, or the planet on which we dwell. In proportion as people become aware of this, theology decays and science flourishes, Heaven recedes and Earth takes its place as the one reality with which we have to do.

J. T. LLOYD.

Shelley and Mr. Robert Blatchford.—II.

I CONCLUDED last week by saying that Swinburne, who was one of Mr. Blatchford's "real poets," had praised Shelley more rapturously than any other eulogist. Take the following sonnet from *Songs Before Sunrise*:—

"COR CORDIUM.

O heart of hearts, the chalice of love's fire,
Hid round with flowers and all the bounty of bloom;
O wonderful and perfect heart, for whom
The lyrist liberty made life a lyre;
O heavenly heart, at whose most dear desire
Dead love, living and singing, cleft his tomb,
And with him risen and regent in death's room
All day thy choral pulses rang full choir;
O heart whose beating blood was running song,
O sole thing sweeter than thine own songs were,
Help us for thy free love's sake to be free,
True for thy truth's sake, for thy strength's sake strong,
Till very liberty made clean and fair
The nursing earth as the sepulchral sea."

Take again the following stanzas from the splendid rushing finale of "Mater Triumphalis" in the same volume:—

"Darkness to daylight shall lift up thy psalm
Hill to hill thunder, vale cry back to vale,
With wind-notes as of eagles Æschylean,
And Sappho singing in the nightingale.
Sung to by mighty sons of dawn and daughters,
Of this night's songs thine ear shall keep but one;
That supreme song which shook the channeled waters,
And called thee skyward as God calls the sun."

What does Swinburne mean by "that supreme song"? He means Shelley's great "Ode to Liberty"—which I say, humbly enough after Swinburne, is worthy of all his praise.

Swinburne reaches the climax of panegyric at the end of one of his Essays, in which he refers to Shelley as "in one word, and the only proper word, divine."

A great writer, both in prose and in verse, whom Swinburne so greatly admired and revered, was Walter Savage Landor. Shelley, who was fascinated by *Gebir*, failed in the attempt to make Landor's acquaintance. The elder poet was prejudiced against the younger by the calumnies which are not dead yet. Landor deeply regretted this after Shelley's death. He made what atonement he could by expressing the highest opinion of Shelley's genius and character. Of the younger poet's character he wrote:—

"Innocent and careless as a boy, he possessed all the delicate feelings of a gentleman, all the discrimination of a scholar, and united, in just degrees, the ardor of the poet with the patience and forbearance of the philosopher. His generosity and charity went far beyond those of any man (I believe) at present in existence. He was never known to speak evil of an enemy, unless that enemy had done some grievous injustice to another: and he divided his income of only one thousand pounds with the fallen and afflicted."

Landor's opinion of Shelley's genius is, however, of the more importance in this controversy. This is what he wrote—and late in life he could take an entirely dispassionate view of the matter:—

"He occupies, if not the highest, almost the highest, place among our poets of the present age, no humble station; and is among the most elegant, graceful, and harmonious of the prose writers."

Within a few years of the close of his long life Landor wrote as follows of Shelley:—

"With perhaps the single exception of Burns, he and Keats were inspired with a stronger spirit of poetry than any other poets since Milton."

"When poets extol a poet," Landor said elsewhere, "be sure it is not too highly." A sagacious observation that Mr. Blatchford may ponder.

A poet not in Mr. Blatchford's scratch list of writers he has "imagination" enough to admire is George Meredith. The following lines in the first volume Meredith published, when he was only a little way in the twenties, show what Shelley was to the young genius of one who was destined to be a great novelist and perhaps even a greater poet:—

THE POETRY OF SHELLEY.

"See 'st thou a Skylark whose glistening winglets ascending,
Quiver like pulses beneath the melodious dawn?
Deep in the heart-yearning distance of heaven it flutters—
Wisdom and beauty and love are the treasures it brings
down at eve."

There is a capital reference to Shelley in one of the Meredith letters included in the selection published in *Scribner's Magazine*. Meredith was travelling in Italy and he wrote to a friend in England:—

"In Venice read *Julian and Maddalo*. It is one of Shelley's best: admirable for simplicity of style, ease, beauty of description, and local truth."

This is real criticism. According to Mr. Blatchford, however, the critic did not know what he was talking about.

I do not know whether Mr. Blatchford has ever read the writings of James Thomson—author of that powerful poem *The City of Dreadful Night*. I knew Thomson well at one time. I often heard him speak of Shelley, and never without the glow of enthusiastic admiration in his fine expressive eyes and a touch of reverence in the slight droop of his noble head. I read aloud to him, when we both had time for it, Shelley's shorter masterpieces or scenes from the *Cenci*. Fortunately it is not my testimony that has to be depended upon in this case. His own written words are extant. One of his earliest poems is on the subject of Shelley, as a spirit who volunteers in heaven to be incarnated and teach anew the "love" which alone can save the world. He preaches it—and fails—and returns to heaven in despair. (Thomson had not grown into an Atheist then.) This radiant spirit delivered his message in song. Thomson describes that song, and most people will consider him a better judge than "Nunquam." Mr. Blatchford says there is no great poetry in Shelley and very little, if any, music. But what does Thomson say—he who dedicated his own poems

to Shelley as "poet of poets and purest of men"? Listen to this:—

"All powers and virtues that ennoble men—
The hero's courage and the martyr's truth,
The saint's white purity, the prophet's ken,
The high unworldliness of ardent youth,
The poet's rapture, the apostle's ruth,
Informed the Song; whose theme all themes above
Was still the sole supremacy of Love.

The peals of thunder echoing through the sky,
The moaning and the surging roar of seas,
The rushing of the storm's stern harmony,
The subtlest whispers of the summer breeze,
The notes of singing birds, the hum of bees,
All sounds of nature, sweet and wild and strong,
Commingled in the flowing of the song;

Which flowing mirrored all the Universe,—
With sunsets flushing down the golden lines,
And mountains towering in the lofty verse,
And landscapes with their olives and their vines.
Spread out beneath a sun which ever shines,
With moonlit seas and pure star-spangled skies,
The World a Poem, and Earth Paradise."

This is a poet's judgment on a poet. It is better than a journalist's.

In a later prose essay on Shelley I find Thomson writing in this way:—

"In musicalness, in free and, as it were, living melody, the poems of Shelley are unsurpassed, and on the whole, I think, unequalled by any others in our literature. Compared with that of most others his language is as a river to a canal—a river ever flowing 'at its own sweet will,' and whose music is the unpurposed result of its flowing. So subtly sweet and rich are the tones, so wonderfully are developed the perfect cadences, that the meaning of the words of the singing is lost and dissolved in the overwhelming rapture of the impression. I have often fancied, while reading them, that his words were really transparent, or that they throbbed with living lustres. Matter is therein, firm and distinct, but 'scarce visible through extreme loveliness,' so that the mind is often dazzled from perception of the surpassing grandeur and power of his creations."

Many years afterwards, in a letter to Mr. W. M. Rossetti, to whom he had sent some textual notes on Shelley's extraordinary *Triumph of Life*, Thomson wrote:—

"It is a poem which has always been a particular favorite of mine, and suggests questions which nothing less than an essay could indicate. Here I touch only on the text. It has been pure pleasure to follow again the unique *terza rima*; liquid, sinuous, continuous, a full-flowing river of music and light."

Mr. Blatchford finds no music worth speaking of in Shelley; Thomson finds in him a full-flowing river of music and light. The difference must be one of ears.

Just for the pleasure of giving my readers the pleasure of perusing it, I quote Thomson's final judgment on Shelley, delivered not long before his death, in some notes on Shelley's text which he contributed to the *Athenæum*:—

"I yield to no one living in the fulness of my tribute of gratitude and love and reverence, as no one in the measure of his or her capacity can be indebted for fuller delight and inspiration, to this glorious poet of the glorious possible future of Humanity."

James Thomson was an Atheist. Francis Thompson was a Catholic. In many respects the latter's essay on Shelley, posthumously published in the *Dublin Review*, is the finest ever written. This is what Francis Thompson says of the *Prometheus Unbound*:—

"It is unquestionably the greatest and most prodigal exhibition of Shelley's powers, this amazing lyric world, where immortal clarities sigh past in the perfumes of the blossoms, populate the breathings of the breeze, throng and twinkle in the leaves that swirl upon the bough; where the very grass is all a-rustle with lovely spirit-things, and a weeping mist of music fills the air. The final scenes especially are such a Bacchic reel and rout and revelry of beauty as leaves one staggered and giddy; poetry is spilt like wine, music runs to drunken waste. The choruses sweep down the wind, tirelessly, flight after flight, till the breathless soul almost cries for respite from the unrolling splendors."

A noble and true passage on Shelley's imagination is the following:—

"For astounding figurative opulence he yields only to Shakespeare, and even to Shakespeare not in absolute fecundity but in range of images. The sources of his figurative wealth are specialised, while the sources of Shakespeare's are universal. It would have been as conscious an effort for him to speak without figure as it is for most men to speak with figure. Suspended in the dripping well of his imagination the commonest object becomes encrusted with imagery."

Mr. Blatchford specially singled out Shelley's *Adonais* for depreciation. What does Francis Thompson say of it? Listen again:—

"Seldom is the death of a poet mourned in true poetry. Not often is the singer confined in laurel-wood. Among the very few exceptions to such a rule, the greatest is *Adonais*. In the English language only *Lycidas* competes with it; and when we prefer *Adonais* to *Lycidas*, we are following the precedent set in the case of Cicero: *Adonais* is the longer. As regards command over abstraction, it is no less characteristically Shelleian than *Prometheus*. It is throughout a series of abstractions vitalised with daring exquisiteness."

John Keats, in Mr. Blatchford's opinion, was a great poet. So he was. And it is curious how fate threw him and Shelley together. Their graves are in the same cemetery at Rome. Their geniuses are mingled in *Adonais*. Nothing can now separate them. And did John Keats share Mr. Blatchford's opinion of Shelley? Far from it. Shelley sent him a copy of the *Cenci*, and Keats, like the manly fellow he was, suggested a criticism,—but in words that could only apply to one who was a great poet by nature:—

"You, I am sure, will forgive me for sincerely remarking that you might curb your magnanimity, and be more of an artist, and load every rift of your subject with ore."

John Keats's opinion of Shelley is likely to outlast Robert Blatchford's.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

A Miracle Gone Wrong.

(Translated from the French ("La Pensée") by J. L.)

[Bernadette is the peasant girl who saw the vision of the Virgin at the spring. The apparition said, "I am the immaculate conception." This conveniently happened just at the time when the Pope had proclaimed the dogma of the immaculate conception of Mary. The reference to the politico-religious pilgrimages reminds us that the Government of the Third Republic tried to suppress this miracle trade when it was yet in its infancy, and this fact was taken advantage of by the Royalists to stir up dissatisfaction among the bigoted masses of the population. Had the Government persisted, there would have been fierce riots all over France, if not civil war. The whole story is delightfully told in Zola's *Lourdes*.—J. L.]

It was in 1878. I was then a cavalry captain at Baguères. The distance from Baguères to Lourdes is reckoned to be about eleven miles, that is, twenty-two miles to the return journey. As I was a very pious officer, I often made the trip.

Now, it was at the time of the great politico-religious pilgrimages. Chance had in other directions favored me with regard to Lourdes and to Bernadette. I knew a lot of curious facts. That is why Edouard Fournier, when he came into this neighborhood to investigate, addressed himself to me; he had been told that I had the best collection of documents.

To put it plainly, I was always on the look-out for a first-class miracle, without ever finding one.

One morning, however, when I had gone over to Lourdes, I was strolling on the far side of the Gave. I questioned the quarter-master of police, who was a very strong believer. The brave warrant officer said to me, "Ah! mon capitaine, if you had come over yesterday, you would have found what you wanted; a lame man who, at the time of his arrival, couldn't walk without crutches, and who, after having been plunged in the spring, returned home, walking like you or me, and left his crutches at the grotto!"

"In short, my luck is out," said I.

Walking further, I passed a Zouave who was lying in the grass. This soldier rose and gave me the military salute,

and, since I knew there were no Zouaves at Lourdes, I was surprised, and asked how he came there.

The quarter-master replied that it was a Zouave who had been wounded in Algeria in the last rising; they had sent him as a convalescent to the hospital at Lourdes.

I asked the Zouave where he was hit. He showed me his arm, and I saw the joint was completely rigid.

I turned to the policeman, and said, "When an arm like this is healed, after having been soaked in the fountain of the Virgin, you will see me following all the processions."

Then, to the Zouave, I pointed out that it was not to the banks of the Gave that he should go, but straight ahead to the Grotto, for the quarter-master had just told me that yesterday a pilgrim had been miraculously healed.

And the Zouave, with a laugh, replied: "It's a very good yarn, captain. I know all about the affair; he is my bed-mate in the hospital. This is what happened: Every time there was a manifestation at the Grotto, I joined in to pass the time. Yesterday I was in the front row of the spectators when they ducked the cripple in the water. As the quarter-master has told you, he was able to walk without crutches when he came out. Everyone cried out that it was a miracle, and they all began praying and so forth. Then two priests took him under the shoulders and led him away. I had nothing to do. I thought I should like to know where the two clerics were going to take this man and what they would do with him. I followed. They made a beeline for the railway station. But from the Grotto to the station is a good step. Even the miraculously cured man was beaten. He couldn't budge an inch for all the attempts of the priests to urge him on, saying to him, 'Come on, my friend, the Holy Virgin has healed you, but you must give her a bit of help!' So they had to give it up. They planted the poor devil by the side of the road while one of the clerical gentlemen returned to the Grotto to recover the crutches which had already been hung up as trophies. They put back the miracled one on his crutches, but alas! the miracle had been so successful, in an inverse sense, that he was now quite unable to walk, not only without, but with, his crutches. A magnificent cure! The priests had to get a chair, shove the 'miracle' on it, and dump him at the station like an unfortunate parcel. But, when there, the man refused with all his remaining vigor to board the train. He said that when he came to Lourdes he walked—it is true, only with the help of crutches, but he did walk—whereas, after being ducked in the water, he couldn't walk at all. 'Such being the state of affairs,' he told the parsons, 'I don't wish to go.' They had to prevent a scandal. The curés talked it over, and, finally, one of them informed the Mayor of Lourdes. He sent a card of admission to the hospital. In this manner," concluded the Zouave, "the man of the miracle came to the bed next to mine. He no longer believes in all this bunkum."

I guarantee the absolute accuracy of this brave soldier's story. And this inverted miracle is the only one at which I, enthusiastic about Lourdes, could warm up my cooling faith.

CT. RIFAUT.

Cowper's Religion.

COWPER seems to have had a nature made for happiness. He desired it, knew where to find it, and knew how to enjoy it when found. Thus both in his letters and in his poems he is constantly and easily amusing, unlike Wordsworth who is a bore when not inspired. Indeed very few of the greatest poets are so continually amusing as Cowper, who never forces his vein and is as much interested as a clever woman in the world around him. Dr. Frazer speaks of the contrast between the endless pains which Cowper took in polishing his verses and the careless ease with which he wrote his letters. Yet, he says, the same road as easily as the letters; and indeed there is the same kind of virtue in both, a virtue moral as much as intellectual, the symptom, one would say, of a perfectly healthy mind, if one did not know of his disease. Even his few sad poems are not morbid. There is good cause for the sorrow expressed in the lines to Mary Unwin, and it is more for her than for himself. He often writes even to Newton like a good talker who enjoys talking, and in all his letters one is startled by the passages that suddenly betray his unrest and seem to slip from him by accident. Sometimes he will speak half lightly of his fears, as in a letter to Newton where, after thanking him for an anecdote which he says is one of the best stories he ever heard, he goes on to speak of his poetry as a diversion from sad subjects. "While I am held in pursuit of pretty images," he says, "or a pretty way of expressing them, I forget everything that is irksome, and, like a boy that plays truant, determine to avail myself of the present opportunity to be amused and to put by the dis-

agreeable recollection that I must, after all, go home and be whipt again." We cannot believe him when in another letter he says, "My mind has always a melancholy cast, and is like some pools I have seen, which, though filled with a black and putrid water, will nevertheless, in a bright day, reflect the sunbeams from their surface." Yet the image has the truth of most of his images. He did rely on the world outside him for all the happiness he got, and that, no doubt, is the reason why he turned to it so eagerly. But he showed both wisdom and bravery in his pursuit of happiness. For all his causeless fears he was not a coward, and did not love his own weakness. A mind is completely morbid only when its own griefs and fears become delicious to it. Cowper's mind was never subdued in this manner. His will was not a traitor to him, and he gave way only when it was broken by time and calamity.

We may wonder why his religion so seldom took the cast of the happier part of his mind, why so good a man did not attain to the cheerful serenity of the saints. It is easy, of course, to explain all his fears as symptoms of disease; but the disease would not, we think, have been so severe—indeed, it might not have taken that form at all—if he had been a religious man by nature. He was, of course, much occupied with religion; but that sentence of his in which he compares himself in his intervals of ease to a truant schoolboy who must go home to be whipt betrays his attitude towards it. And it is only one of many such disclosures which, taken together, persuade us that Cowper, excepting at rare moments, was only drawn to religion by fear. To be so drawn is not to be of a religious nature, for the man of religious nature consents to the facts of his religion with all his heart as well as with his reason. Not only does he believe them true, but he is glad of their truth. He may be unhappy with himself, but he is not unhappy with the universe. Now Cowper would have been happy enough with the world if only he could have forgotten what he believed about the universe. But that haunted him, and seemed to him violently incongruous with all the innocent pleasures which he relished so much, just as the thought of nature red in tooth and claw might haunt a Materialist of our time while in the bosom of his happy family. Cowper was hardly more religious than the Materialist; the only difference was that he believed in a Power that could be influenced by religious offices. And he seems sometimes to speak of that Power as Dr. Johnson might have spoken in his determined Toryism of the ways of a tyrannical king. We may be pretty sure that he would have wished the universe otherwise, if he had dared, and that he would have forgotten eternity and infinity in the pleasures and affections of his own fireside, if his fears had let him do so.

—*The Times*, August 22.

TRIUMPH OF GRACE IN KENTUCKY.

(From the "Jackson Times," Editorial Page.)

Snake Valley has been transformed by two missionaries. Two lone women who have given their time to this degraded spot have caused the public to sit up and take notice. Children are attending school with clean faces beaming with love and radiant with delight that some one loves them. Wicked parents are seen to smile their approval, and their homes have been open to these women, who enter in God's name and tell of His love. There's a change in Snake Valley.

(From the "Jackson Times," News Columns.)

Hell broke loose in Snake Valley again Saturday, and men, women, and children mixed in one of the most sensational efforts at fighting in the history of the celebrated valley. One by one the inhabitants of Bridge Hollow were brought into the fracas until every mother's son of them was on one side or the other, and no one knew who was on the other side nor what it was about, the only information getting out being that it started from a drink of red liquor.

WHAT HE GOT OUT OF IT.

He never took a day of rest,
He couldn't afford it;
He never had his trousers pressed,
He couldn't afford it;
He never went away, care free,
To visit distant lands, to see
How fair a place this world might be,
He couldn't afford it.
He never went to see a play,
He couldn't afford it.
His love for art he put away,
He couldn't afford it.
He died and left his heirs a lot,
But no tall shaft proclaims the spot
In which he lies—his children thought
They couldn't afford it.

Acid Drops.

The Norwich floods are explained. A gentleman called Pucelli writes to a Norwich paper from London stating that the floods are "God's reply to the blatant boasting of the representative of the man of sin"—meaning the Pope. Catholics boasted too much of their strength in Norwich, so God sent the floods upon them—and also upon the Protestants. Guilty and innocent both get in for it when the noble Pucelli's "God" is on the warpath.

What an intellectual corrupter—yes, and too often a moral corrupter—is the "glorious free press" of old England. Newspapers, in the silly season, have been writing up the case of a young woman named Ethel Isaac, of Winterbourn, Gloucestershire, who has lately recovered from a spinal complaint. One would think that the case was absolutely exceptional, for it is put down as a clear answer to continuous prayer. Which implies, of course, that the Deity did a good turn for Ethel Isaac, and refused to do it for any other sufferer from the same malady. This is highly flattering to the young woman's vanity but the opposite of flattering to the benevolence of the Deity.

"It is mentioned," one newspaper says, "as a tragic coincidence that Dr. Eadon, who had been Ethel's medical attendant from her childhood, died just about the time that the faith cure came." If this means anything at all, except a mere appeal to the bump of wonder, it means that the Deity killed the doctor and cured the patient. Such a God indeed "moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform."

Rev. R. J. Campbell warns his fellow Christians against playing the part of religious zealots to the detriment of their faith. He reminds them that Professor Schafer may be right, after all, in his view of the origin of life. The reverend gentleman continues (we quote from the report in the *Daily News* of his City Temple sermon on Sunday morning):—

"Professor Schafer might be right. He did not say he was right; he only suggested that his representations might be triumphant in the long run. Suppose that life was not brought into the world from outside, but appeared spontaneously at a certain stage of evolution? The situation, from the standpoint of religion, was in no wise altered. They could no more dispense with God than they could before. They were no nearer to a satisfactory explanation of the fundamental problems that existed. That was what people had failed to see, though it was a simple truth."

We agree with Dr. Campbell—up to a point. While the hocus-pocus of theology imposes on the popular mind any juggle will keep "God" upon his throne. But in the long run a natural view of the origin of life is bound to react upon the whole budget of Christian beliefs.

"The Church," says the Rev. Charles Widowsen (Catholic), preaching at Dundee during the British Association week, naturally denounced the Materialism of Professor Schafer's presidential address. But the really striking thing he said in his sermon in St. Andrew's Pro-Cathedral was this, that "the Church had no hostility to science; on the contrary, its attitude was one of gladsome, joyous welcome and encouragement." When you can't close the door on an unwelcome guest you must make the best of the circumstances. Science has come to stay and the Church has to acknowledge the fact with all the geniality it can muster. But in former days it was different. Many people have heard of Bruno and Galileo, and remember how the Church treated them; torturing the latter into a recantation of the damnable doctrine that the earth went round the sun, and burning the former to ashes at the stake. Such was the Church's joyous welcome and encouragement to Science when she was free to express it quite naturally.

Preaching in the Parish Church of Dundee, Professor Denney said that—

"It is easy to understand that men whose business is the study of nature should have a kind of impatience with the idea of immortality. There is no immortality in the region in which they work. There is not in the whole realm of nature any real analogy to immortality."

Thus at one swoop the Rev. Professor wipes away all those proofs of immortality that other clergymen have been busily engaged in discovering. And it is perfectly and profoundly true. There is no hint of immortality in nature. Everything grows, decays, and passes away. It is only man's egotism that makes him picture himself as an exception to the universal rule. There was not even immortality

involved in the beginning of the belief in a future life. It was belief in the continuance of existence only. And this belief was based upon sheer ignorance, and upon the relative difficulty of conceiving death in the scientific sense of the word. Immortality is a late philosophical conception, grafted upon the primitive animistic idea, and it really has no other and no better foundation.

Professor Denney says that "If men are to be immortal at all, it must be in some mode of existence of which our experience here does not enable us to form any conception, and therefore we need not waste time thinking about it." Now, in all seriousness, we ask, What is meant by a mode of existence of which we can form no conception? To believe in a thing, we must have some conception of it, however vague and imperfect. But how, in the name of all that is reasonable, can one believe in something of which one has no conception whatever? To talk in this way is quite meaningless, and anyone who thinks about it for five minutes must know it to be such. It is really imposing upon one's hearers to talk in this strain, and in no other sphere but that of religion would such language be tolerated. Professor Denney says that as we are immortal in some mode of existence of which we have no conception, "we need not waste time thinking about it." This is a little more sensible; only we again say that we cannot think about it. We don't know what it is we have to think about. All we can do is to think about, and marvel at, the inexhaustible foolishness of leading religious teachers.

Jack Johnson's wife was in all probability driven to commit suicide by the ostracism and nagging of her white friends. To marry a black is an awful crime in the United States. To murder one, by lynching, is a conspicuous virtue. It is noticeable that before the poor distracted woman shot herself she called in her two negro maids to pray with her. Odd, isn't it? We thought all the suicides in the United States were due to Colonel Ingersoll.

In Sir F. Wedmore's just published *Memories* there occurs the following story of Queen Victoria:—

"Another little story of Royalty I remember Knowles told me; but I doubt if he got it from Sandringham. It was a story of the great Queen, and of old Lady Southampton, who, by reason of age, long-proved devotedness, and reciprocated friendship, was privileged to talk of many things. In some such terms as the following, Lady Southampton felt herself obliged to address the Queen one day: 'Do not you think, ma'am, one of the satisfactions of the future state will be not only our reunion with those whom we have loved on earth, but our opportunities of seeing face to face so many of the noble figures of the past—of other lands and times? Bible times, for instance. Abraham will be there, ma'am. Isaac, too, and Jacob. Think of what they will be like! And the sweet singer of Israel. He, too. Yes, ma'am, King David we shall see.' And, after a moment's silence, with perfect dignity and decision, the great Queen made answer: 'I will not meet David.'"

We have always understood that Queen Victoria was most particular as to the character of her associates.

The excitement of Mr. Morrell's recent birthday was too much for him. The old first Secretary of the National Sunday League has somewhat suddenly passed away. We see the announcement that the veteran's body is to lie in state, which we much regret; also that the burial service is to be performed by the Rev. S. D. Hoadlam. Everything has been done to conceal the fact that Mr. Morrell (with most of his old colleagues on the Sunday League) was a Secularist.

The Methodists are in trouble about the children. Their trouble is that children are not "worshipful" enough, and the *British Weekly* says that some steps must be taken at once to bring children into the Churches, or they will sink and decay. It is the Churches that will decay, the children are all right. At any rate, a most elaborate assault is to be made on the peace of the youngsters, and the National Sunday School Union has prepared a list of subjects, such as—Christ as the Guide of Youth, Christ as the Friend of Little Children, Christ as the Savior of the Young, etc., etc. These papers will be read by grown-ups to one another at the National Convention, and the grown-ups will decide that the children must have Christ. Meanwhile, the youngsters prefer other things.

The *Methodist Times* thinks that the decision of the Trades Union Congress to exclude Secular Education from its consideration, is "from every standpoint" to be welcomed. We are not surprised at the *Methodist Times* coming to this conclusion; neither is its sense of justice nor of logic keen

enough to bring it to any other decision. But when it says that "the strong sense of the great majority of the industrial population throughout the country" is against the policy of Secular Education, we would like to ask how it knows this to be the case? The industrial population, as a whole, has never had the question put before it, and so could not give an answer. The organised portion of the industrial population represented by the Trades Union Congress has been asked to decide, and both in local branches and at the Annual Congress has given an overwhelming majority in its favor. All that the *Methodist Times* can know is that the people in its own chapels are against it. And we venture to suggest that Methodist chapels are not quite co-extensive with the population—industrial or otherwise. Moreover, let anyone try to get the Trades Union Congress to pass a vote in favor of religious instruction in State schools, and it will soon be seen where the organised labor of the country stands. Secular Education remains part of the declared policy of organised Trades Unionism. It has neither been withdrawn nor even qualified.

It is admitted that "labor in this country is, above all, concerned to secure the efficiency of education"; but against this it is urged that "Biblical instruction in the schools need not hinder the efficiency of Secular Education in the slightest degree." Now, we might argue, and we think successfully argue, that any sort of instruction that does not lead to a sharpening of the child's natural qualities, and to greater efficiency in their exercise, is waste of time and opportunity, and even obstructive. And this Biblical instruction does not and cannot do. Whatever good is done during the time allotted for Biblical instruction is incidental. Teachers, that is, may make Biblical instruction the vehicle of nature study or moral instruction; but as this may be done by a teacher who is a Freethinker, it can hardly be placed to the credit of the Bible. Any other book or any other collection of legends would serve equally as well. The question we would like the *Methodist Times* to answer is, What has been the chief cause of trouble in the educational world since the passing of the Act in 1870? Everyone knows it has been this question of religious instruction. Church and chapel schools have been established to provide it, and for years improvement in Board Schools was resisted because it would mean increased expenditure in connection with voluntary schools. People were elected to School Boards more because of their religious views than because of their ability as educationalists. Teachers were appointed because they were safe on Church or Chapel teaching. And although, since 1902, this trouble may have been minimised—all except under the last head—it is still with us. A candid inquiry would soon show that nothing has served so much to retard the development of education as the squabble about religion.

One of the unfavorable signs of the times, says the Rev. J. Morgan Gibbon, is "the manifest indifference to organised religion, especially among young men and women of the best moral and intellectual calibre." The last clause is interesting—to Christians. We hear so much of the decay of religious belief being due to weakened moral and mental fibre that we are rather glad to see a preacher letting out a little of the truth, even though it be by accident. Of course, there is the usual ingenuous remark, that this indifference is to "organised religion." This really belongs to the same order as the observation that well-known and declared Atheists are really Christians without knowing it. Indifference to *organised* religion is chiefly found among people who are not of the "best moral and intellectual calibre." This other class is religious enough, although they may not be regular attendants at church. Disbelief in religion is one of the growing characteristics of thoughtful people, not only in this country, but all over the civilised world.

The Young Men's Christian Association's palatial headquarters in Tottenham-court-road is a curious outcome of the religion of Christ, who had not where to lay his head. The subjects taught in the institution—to say nothing of the billiards and other games—have a peculiar character when it is recollected that Christianity is supposed to be founded on the New Testament. A series of lectures is being run for business men on "advertising, salesmanship, paper and textiles, and for Territorials on aviation, camp hygiene, map-reading, marksmanship, outposts, scouting, and tactics." Fancy Jesus Christ attending evening classes of that description!

Rev. F. B. Meyer doesn't mind courting being done in chapel—up in the gallery for preference, so as to cause the least disturbance (and perhaps envy) to the older and more

sedate worshipers on the ground floor. It is difficult to say what the men of God will *not* put up with nowadays. Their business is getting so slack that they must accept customers without scrupulous references.

A colored clergyman was sentenced to one month's imprisonment with hard labor at Johannesburg on August 20. He was indicted for sticking to £7 10s. that had been entrusted to him by a Cape boy to be sent to the officials of the native College at Lovedale. Men of God have the same weaknesses in South Africa that they have (and display) in England.

"Is there some sinister element in the atmosphere of Kokomo, Indiana, inimical to clerical morals? After relating, under the heading 'Parson and Widow out on a Little Lark,' how 'the Rev. G. W. Alley, pastor of the First Methodist Episcopal Church at Royal Centre and an active member in the North Indiana Conference, was arrested at a boarding house at Kokomo shortly before midnight Tuesday night in company with Mrs. Wendling, a widow of Walton, and both were hustled off to gaol, where they still remain,' the Hartford City (Ind.) *Times-Gazette* of August 6 remarks: 'This is the fourth scandal in Kokomo within the past six months in which a preacher has been involved.' Surely there must be something unfavorable to ministerial morals in the Kokomo atmosphere—some such element as that affirmed by one of the infallible Popes, who, finding himself and many of his priests disabled by a mysterious malady, laid it to 'a certain malignity in the constitution of the air.' The constitution of the air in Kokomo, Indiana, is obviously malign and contraindicated for ministers. In suggesting this explanation of Kokomo's four preachers in six months we do not forget the theory of Ella Wheeler Wilcox that clerical conduct may be a germ disease. At the time the Rev. Jere Knobe Cooke eloped with his spiritual ward, Mrs. Wilcox advanced the thought that there are what she termed 'love microbes' of two kinds, the benign and the pernicious. In some way the Long Island parson (Cooke) had taken the latter kind into his system, with the result that he was found out. Whether an atmospheric malignity or a pernicious microbe accounts for what has taken place in Kokomo, the plain duty of those in authority is to inaugurate a research bureau with a view to discovering the cause and reducing the ravages of the moral epidemic among ministers."—*Truthseeker* (New York).

We see that "Brother Ramanda," a "transmitter of healing from the Divine Centre," can be interviewed daily, by appointment, at Denbigh-street, S.W. Evidently Brother Ramanda has a supply of the necessary power on hand, or perhaps the appointment is required so that communications may be made to the "Divine Centre" as to the time and place where the influence will be required.

Students know that there was a struggle between Mithraism and Christianity in the early centuries of the Christian era. Christ won, but Mithra was an extremely dangerous rival. The popularity of the latter in Rome itself is illustrated by the latest excavations at the great baths of Caracalla. The largest and most complete temple of Mithra has been unearthed there. It must have been much frequented by the Sun God's worshipers.

The Rev. Dr. Carnegie Simpson says that if science were to realise Laplace's dream and discover the egg from which the whole universe was hatched, it would not bring man nearer to God. We have been saying the same thing for many years. The curious thing is that Dr. Simpson offers this for consolation to the religious world.

Talmage's widow has published a Life of him through John Murray at the price of 12s. We should want several biographies of better men at that price. We are content to know, from the reviews, that the bombastic evangelist found godliness to be great gain. His salary at the Tabernacle was 12,000 dollars; from his lectures he made another 20,000 dollars; the publication of his sermons brought him some 12,000 dollars; his editorship of a popular monthly brought him 5,000 dollars; he often got 150 dollars for an article and as much as 250 dollars for a wedding fee. Christian preachers differ over many texts, but "Blessed be ye poor" always works out one way.

Dr. Schulze, who died at Braamfontein on November 2, and was buried in the local Cemetery, the service being conducted by an Archdeacon of the Church of England, left a will which the *Sunday Times* feels called upon to publish. None of his last wishes were carried out. He directed that

his body should be cremated, and that it should be done "without any religious ceremony." The legates took the dead man's money and flouted his instructions. How like Christians, to be sure!

How these Christians love one another! You see it most of all, as usual, at Belfast. Christian charity over there is at fever heat again.

They call Swift an Irishman—though he was a very doubtful one. And what did he say? "Most men have religion enough to make them hate each other."

The *Daily Chronicle* leader on Mr. William Watson's throw-back on the Home Rule question made a sad hash of a Browning quotation. It was only one word that was wrong—but it was like the nose all wrong on a handsome face. Four lines from the second verse of Browning's "Lost Leader" were printed thus:—

"We shall march prospering—not thro' his presence;
Songs may excite us—not from his lyre;
Deeds will be done—while he boasts his quiescence,
Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire."

The word "excite" in the second line should be "inspirit." How the blunder happened is difficult to imagine. Browning is not always musical, but his lines always scan. Perhaps the Belfast fever got into the leader-writer's veins.

The following news telegram is from the *Daily Chronicle* of September 10:—

"The *Shanghai Daily News* publishes a letter from Wenchow stating that a typhoon on August 29, combined with high tides and torrential rain, caused unprecedented floods in the Upper Wenchow River, which assumed the proportions of a tidal wave.

"The Prefecture of Chuchow suffered severely. Tsingtien was overwhelmed, and it is stated that 10,000 of the inhabitants were drowned. Koneo was entirely destroyed, and almost everyone was drowned. Numerous other small towns in the prefecture were washed away.

"On the morning of August 30 Wenchow presented a sight not to be forgotten. The ruins of numberless homesteads, on which crouched men, women, and children, were floating swiftly seawards. The task of rescue was exceedingly difficult, and hundreds perished.

"The Chinese estimates of the death-roll are from 30,000 to 40,000, and the loss of property was enormous."

"For his tender mercies are over all his works."

The National Free Church Council has issued another screed on the Sunday question. Here is an early paragraph of it:—

"The widespread and ever-increasing disregard of the Lord's Day is disquieting, not only because it is inconsistent with the national recognition of the claims of God, but because it is likely to induce moral flabbiness and physical degeneracy, which must have a disastrous effect on the national well-being."

For the clergy to talk to the laity about "moral flabbiness" is really impudent. As for "physical degeneracy," how often does one see a well-set-up man of God? The truth pops out when the Council admits that "for us the religious grounds of Sunday observance preponderate." Of course they do. All other grounds are mere pretences.

SETTLING A BIBLICAL DISPUTE.

Baylis Steele, capitalist and promoter, one day became involved in a dispute over a question of Biblical history.

"Elijah was a lucky man," he remarked. "Instead of being compelled to linger and die of some unpleasant disease he was carried to heaven in a whirlwind."

"You're wrong," protested the party of the second part, who happened to be afflicted with an impediment in his speech. "Bay-Bay-lis, you're wr-r-wrong! Elijah went to heaven in a chariot of fire."

"You can't convince me that that good old man was struck by lightning," retorted Steele, and the dispute waxed warm. After it had raged for some three minutes it reached the betting stage.

"Bet you I'm right," said Steele.

"T-t-t-taken," said the party of the second part.

"What'll we bet?" asked Steele.

"W-w-w-well," stammered the other, "seeing you d-d-d-don't know any m-m-m-more about Scripture than you do, I g-g-g-guess it had b-b-b-better be a-a-a Bible." And Steele admits that right there he backed out.

A SUGGESTION.

One of the hundred or more poems about the *Titanic* disaster, received by the *Kansas City Star*, voices the refrain that there are "no icebergs in Heaven." It may be suggested that there are no icebergs in the Other Place, either.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

September 29, Manchester.

October 6 to December 15, every Sunday evening, Queen's (Minor) Hall, London, W.

To Correspondents.

- PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1912.**—Previously acknowledged, £194 17s. 7d. Received since:—A. E. Maddock (Ceylon), £3; W. R. Munton, £2.
- N. S. S. GENERAL FUND.**—Miss Vance acknowledges:—J. Greaves Fysher, 2s. 6d.
- JOHN McMASTER.**—Our shop manager reports that your remittance was duly received and acknowledged. His letter has probably reached you since the date of your communication. He has forwarded another copy of the missing number.
- JAMES NEATE.**—Your announcement contained no address, so we had to give your own.
- W. GREGORY.**—It is not worth our trouble—or yours. If *Club Life* likes to print such laudatory verse (we can't call it poetry) about the late General Booth, let it do so. Perhaps it feels it must be in the swim on these exciting occasions.
- N. BIRTLES.**—Your letter was too late for last week.
- A. M.**—Glad you were so pleased with it.
- W. P. BALL.**—Many thanks for cuttings.
- B. G. MASON.**—See paragraph. Thanks.
- J. PENDLEBURY.**—Thanks for correcting our blunder in that generous way.
- E. STARLING.**—Glad you got permission to place the *Freethinker* on the table of your Liberal Club, and that "it is read."
- E. V. G.**—Pleased to have your encouraging letter.
- C. McDONELL (Canada).**—Your letter shall be dealt with in our next "Literary Gossip."
- M. J. CHARTER.**—We have not found the alleged summer of 1912 very propitious to our own health, but it is no use singing a song while one can get on with the work.
- T. W. HAUGHTON.**—Pleased to hear you "enjoy reading the *Freethinker* more and more." Jokes are often useful though they have to wait for the space that fits them in the make-up.
- T. A. JACKSON.**—You do quite right to take current topics when you can. Glad to hear good reports of your lectures from outsiders.
- O. T. DAVIES.**—We attach no special importance to the *New Age's* views as to "the soul existing apart from the body." As to the press being run by wealthy Atheists, it is utter nonsense.
- A. E. MADDOCK (Ceylon)** writes: "I am sorry to see the President's Honorarium Fund getting on so slowly this year. Unless our party bestir themselves I fear the total will fall far short of the required amount, and we shall have failed in a duty incumbent on all of us who admire and honor your fearless and able championship of the cause of Freethought. I send you herewith a draft for £3 as my second contribution to the Fund this year. I only wish it could be a larger one."
- MAY COLEMAN.**—Thanks for your charming and encouraging letter, which morally multiplies your subscription a hundred fold.
- JOSEPH BRYCE** informs W. P. Murray that the publisher of the *Shadow of the Cathedral* is Constable & Co.
- E. B.**, subscribing, humorously points out that the London County Council overlooks the only point that all Christians are agreed upon, "Now concerning the collection for the saints" (1 Corinthians xvi. 1). Why should Freethought "saints" be excluded?
- W. R. MUNTON.**—A veteran like yourself may well ask "Who would have thought, thirty years ago, that this would now be necessary?"
- W. DAVIDSON.**—Late Tuesday morning is too late. Next week.
- AGNES GOODWIN.**—Glad to hear from "another Atheist woman."
- WM. HURST.**—Cheques or Orders for the Fighting Fund should be made payable to G. W. Foote. We note your view that "the rank and file" should "support their leaders at such a time."
- C. CHATELAIN.**—We have no wish to misrepresent anybody, not even the Salvation Army. That a charge was made to persons entering the Clapton Hall where Mrs. Booth's body was lying in state was current at the time. We cheerfully publish the Salvation Army Headquarters' statement that the report was untrue. The real truth appears to have been that the collection boxes were going all the time, which is nearly as bad as a fixed charge—on such an occasion.
- LETTERS** for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- LECTURE NOTICES** must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.
- ORDERS** for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.
- THE FREETHINKER** will be forwarded direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

Our Fighting Fund.

[The object of this Fund is to provide the sinews of war in the National Secular Society's fight against the London County Council, which is seeking to stop all collections at the Society's open-air meetings in London, and thus to abolish a practically immemorial right; this step being but one in a calculated policy which is clearly intended to suppress the right of free speech in all parks and other open spaces under the Council's control.]

Previously acknowledged, £8 5s. Received since:—T. C. Rigin, 1s.; P. V. and H. F., 10s.; R. T. Nichols, £1 1s.; H. Wyllie, £1 1s.; E. V. G., 5s.; J. G. F., 5s.; T. N. Watts, 2s.; Frederick W. Walsh, 2s.; Richard Johnson, £2; Battersea and Clapham Freethought Society, 10s.; M. J. Charter, 5s.; Agnes Goodwin, 2s. 6d.; Wm. Hurst, 2s. 6d.; Librepensator, 5s.; Elizabeth Lechmere, 5s.; May Coleman, 10s.; C. Dobson, 2s. 6d.; Joseph Bryce, 3s.; E. B., £1 1s.; W. R. Munton, £2.

Sugar Plums.

London Freethinkers will remember that Mr. Foote begins his Sunday evening lectures at Queen's (Minor) Hall on October 6. His subjects for the first month will appear in our next issue.

The district "saints" will note that Mr. Foote delivers his first lectures this season on Sunday afternoon and evening (Sept. 29) at the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints, Manchester.

The annual Bradlaugh Dinner takes place next Wednesday evening (Sept. 25) at the Holborn Restaurant. Mr. G. W. Foote has accepted the invitation to preside, and there will be other speakers to toast, with vocal and instrumental music. The price of the tickets is 8s. each. They are obtainable from Mr. W. J. Ramsey, 146 Lansdowne-road, Hackney, N.E. Evening dress is optional. We hope there will be a good gathering of old-time and present-day "saints."

The National Secular Society's Annual Dinner is booked for Tuesday evening, January 14, at the Holborn Restaurant. The next N. S. S. "social" is booked for Thursday evening, October 17, at Anderton's Hotel.

Letters from both Messrs. Jackson and Gott reach us rather late and we can only devote a very limited space to the Northern Tour. A specially encouraging feature is the success of the three days' mission at Bradford, which had been given up as hopeless in connection with Freethought propaganda. The meetings were large and enthusiastic, and there were loud calls for more in the early future. Two fine meetings were held at Bolton on Sunday, and an extra treat was provided the audience in the form of a debate between Mr. Robert Mearns, president of the local N. S. S. Branch, and a local parson called Briggs. Mr. Gott says they get on well in arranging the use of lecture pitches with advanced bodies, but the Salvation Army, like the pigs they are in such matters, march round the Secularist meeting with their band playing its loudest.

The Bethnal Green Branch holds a tea and "social" on Sunday evening, October 6, and the tickets are 1s. each. A 6d. ticket is issued for the sake of those who cannot attend the tea but would like to enjoy the rest of the program, including music, songs, recitations, and dancing. Apply to James Neate, 358 Bethnal Green-road.

The first meeting of the new Bolton Branch of the National Secular Society was held on Sunday, September 8. Mr. R. Moarns was elected chairman, Mr. J. Smith treasurer, and Mr. N. Birtles secretary. Meetings are to be held on Sunday afternoons at 3 o'clock at Scott's Café, Bridge-street.

The land of the Stars and Stripes is a peculiar country. It contains millions of people as common-place as its rolling prairies, and some in the New York police, for instance, as noxious as a southern swamp. But it also contains a certain public as individual and striking as the Rockies, the great lakes, and Niagara. Splendid work is being done now in some of the Universities. Shakespeare studies are pursued with ardor and fruitfulness. It takes the conceit out of an Englishman to reflect that the American scholar

who died the other day, Dr. Horace Howard Furness, produced all those magnificent volumes of the great Variorum Shakespeare, and that the work is being brought to completion by his son. Englishmen have done good work on Shakespeare, but they have not done that; they left it for an American, who took the task, and earned the glory. There is also a larger body of good readers in America than there is over here. True, they are mixed up with a terrible crowd of semi-illiterates, but they are *there*, and the fact is inescapable. Great English authors, like Carlyle and Meredith, found a public over there before they found one in their own country—and a larger public afterwards. America is an awful mob, with a splendid remnant; and it is the remnant, everywhere, that saves.

We are happy to say that we have always had good friends in America. We have been told, any time during the past thirty years, that if we took the *Freethinker* across the Atlantic, we might make a fortune on the other side. This may have been a friendly exaggeration, but we fancy there was *something* in it. Anyhow, the Americans who read this journal appeared, as they still appear, to like it intensely. We have printed letters from some of them before, and we venture to print the following now,—omitting all marks that might lead to identification:—

"MY DEAR MR. FOOTE,—

"I introduce myself to you as a subscriber to your paper, one whose subscription has been paid for several years in advance. I also subscribed to your fund. This, as an introduction, to prove to you that I enjoy your writings very much. But I am inclined to be a little selfish. By all means, continue your weekly article on the front page. But, in addition, can't you include an article weekly, or at least every other week, in which you will discuss literature, such as, for instance, the one that appeared a month or so ago relating to Shakespeare and Bacon? And, as another instance, the one headed 'Literary Gossip' that appeared in the issue of August 18, 1912?

"I enjoy reading the *Freethinker*. I have said this before, but I trust the repetition will not be too severely criticised as it leads me to remark that I am desirous that others in this country shall also indulge with me in my enjoyment. Therefore, I enclose you \$2, for which please send three copies a week for the next six or seven weeks (as the enclosed money may pay for) to the following: R. S., 210 Market-street, Socialist News Co., 342 Third-avenue.

"Mr. S. has sold Freethought works in this city for many years. The Socialist News Co. sells many Freethought works, and they both dispose of a number of copies of the *Truthseeker* each week. I thought they might both dispose of a number of copies of your paper each week if they should be placed on their stands. It is worth a trial; I am willing to spend two dollars in an attempt to introduce them to a few discriminating readers. They should receive ten cents for them, and they are, indeed, welcome to the thirty cents each week if they succeed in disposing of them. I hope they succeed in selling many times this number each week, and that it will result in your securing several good customers.

"May Freethought rapidly spread. You have done your share. Oblivion for superstition."

There may be other American friends who could "go and do likewise" if they see the way indicated. Meanwhile we reciprocate this correspondent's cordial greetings.

Mr. Frederic W. Walsh, whose case was introduced to our readers some two years ago, still lies hopelessly paralysed at Leamington, and still bears his sad affliction with the fortitude of a convinced Freethinker and Humanist, who realises that his own trouble is far from being the only one in the world, and that there is consolation in watching even from his bed the progressive movement of humanity. We have visited Mr. Walsh when we have found it convenient in our lecturing journeys, and we have exchanged letters with him. We wish they were oftener when we reflect on how precious they must be to him in that sad situation, but we have only a little time to be divided amongst so many claimants. "True," the reader may say, "but do you call this a Sugar Plum?" No. That is to come. Mr. Walsh sends us a subscription to our Fighting Fund. Think of that now, you apathetic ones and you laggards! And just read the following extract from Mr. Walsh's letter:—

"I feel that I *must* keep in the fight to vindicate the cause of free speech, and enclose a small subscription. It is little enough, but it is something, and at such a time every little helps. Every man and woman who cares for liberty and the cause of Freethought, in its widest sense, should hasten to send in their contributions. It is all they are asked to do. It is the least that they can do. I, for one, cheerfully submit to a little self-denial in order to have the greater privilege of helping to uphold a fundamental principle of progress."

These brave words—and only a few persons know *how* brave they are—should make many fetch out their cheque books or start off to buy a postal order.

A Call to the Wild.

A WAVE of revulsion had swept over him, carrying on its crest all his strength, enthusiasm, and purpose, to dash them into spray on the shores of futility. He was tired of all, thoroughly sick of the seemingly endless fighting against the prejudices of the years. It was as if ignorance, apathy, and indifference—the sodden trinity religion has helped more firmly to establish in men's minds than its ideas of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost—had determined to show him their power in all its nakedness, and so had gathered their forces around to defeat him. Never before had he recognised the terrible inane opposition of these intangible enemies. They seemed as solidly substantial and irremovable as the great ugly buildings that crowded the air with oppressiveness.

Fresh and vigorous and brave, at the beginning, his voice had risen above the city noises, challenging them to combat; and he had won. Against the social injustice, against economic slavery, and against the religion that so devotedly upholds them, he had turned the full force of his reason. He had compelled attention; and from the constant stream of passers-by many had come aside to listen to his indignation.

But when his words were at their highest and when the flood of feeling had reached magnificence and his eloquence had the sparkle of the waters of truth, there suddenly awakened in the deeps of his mind a painful feeling of failure. As he spoke the idea expanded. He felt the conviction of his words trembling before it. The warmth of enthusiasm cooled; the flames of righteous passion flickered out. Utter dejection poured in, and he could not stay its flow. He had suddenly and unaccountably become weary and weak, and all his efforts to conquer this new enemy were hopelessly unavailing.

Hastily, he concluded, with the cruel, stinging consciousness of the bathos of his words whipping the hot blood to his pale cheeks. Wonderingly, he watched his dispersing audience. In pitiable vapid wonderment he gazed at the huge letters that spelled Failure, imprinted, so that only he could see and read, and yet not understand, on the atmosphere. The stir and tireless fret of the echoing streets beat into his ears the sound of it. The constantly moving streams of people carried its significance on the breast of their deathless energy. Within him there was no life; only the sickening sense of a great disappointment. Over his eyes spread the film that is the strong man's pathetic substitute for tears; and with the incomprehensible weariness gnawing at his heart, he turned and slowly walked away.

On and on he walked, habit guiding his way, along the thronged streets, past the immense shops and warehouses and factories, where many men and women toiled for little that a few might enjoy much; past those other other manufactories where were woven the vain dreams that send men's minds to sleep, or lure them from the path of progress to mispend their vitality in a garden of flowers whose every heart is cankered. On still, into the slumbered suburbs, where the man dwelt, the lords of labor, and the priests of God. And so out, at last, into the quiet country that he loved.

At an ordinary time, the sight of these mansions of the priests of poverty, and the lords of labor, would have made him angry. Not that he objected to the houses or the individuals who inhabited them. All his own tastes responded to the beauty of the mansions and the opportunities of relief they offered. But he could not forget the basis upon which they were built. The degradation and the slavery, the lies and the hypocrisy, poisoned the wells of his admiration. Of what permanent value is the beautiful coloring, if the canvas is rotten? Does not the knowledge of the filthy life of the musician often make the most divine music hard, cold, and lifeless? And so it was that the weakness

of his nature, if weakness it be, could not stem the rebellion of his feelings when he thought of the great gulf that lay between the worker and the master, and the precept and practice of the priest. His whole mind denied the justice and righteousness of these things; and had sent him deep into the roots of them to discover their falsehood.

But now, as he tramped away from the results of human submission and human gullibility, there was no anger in his heart, only the dull, dim weariness weighing ponderously upon him. Why had this weird sense of hopeless failure come over him? Where had it come from? What gave it birth?

He brooded over these questions long and painfully. His eyes, although open, were closed to the grey shadows that robed the hedgerows. The wonderful cloud-scapes, ever changing as the breeze moved its brush across the skies, had temporarily become insignificant. The constant ringing of failure in his ears had stilled the night noises. He did not hear the hooting of the owl as he passed by a dark wood; nor was he conscious of the coughing of a sheep on the hillside.

But his feet were moving more rapidly. His shoulders were straightening up. His nostrils were opening to inbreathe the perfumes that came from the sleeping flowers, from the fields, and the hills. Easily moved, his nature, despite the tiredness of his mind, was responding to the greater nature. The wind was blowing freshness upon his brow and through his hair. His lips were becoming moist, and his features began to settle to their characteristic strength.

A sudden desire to climb to the top of a hill took possession of him; and in a few moments he had vaulted a gate and was tramping upwards through tufted grass and rushes. For two hours he kept steadily moving up into purer air and fresher wind. At last he reached the top, and sat down to endeavor to get at the source of this mystery that oppressed him.

Before him stretched a valley, treeless, and without the gurgling of a burn to dispel somewhat its solitude. A clear reach of velvet-colored sky silhouetted the hill opposite, filling the lonely valley with a black shadow. No sound broke the silence. Everything lay in a perfect quietness. Even the wind was hushed. Gradually, as his eyes wandered over the beauty, and his mind opened to receive the appeal of the silence, the weariness vanished, and a new impression dawned.

It seemed as if this silence had within it a desire for utterance. As he looked and listened the imagined desire concentrated into a terrible intensity. It seemed to crave for speech. Naturally, he likened the silence to a paralysed deaf mute whose strong and healthy brain had given birth to a great idea. The thought clamored for freedom. It throbbed and heaved as if it would burst its bonds by its own strength. Against the impregnable walls of its prison it threw itself with frenzied might, seeking to demolish them and escape. Against the inevitable it labored for life, fighting with a resolute power its own greatness had given it. The dark curtains of silence seemed ever about to be rent. The mute's face was a picture of conflict to him. He could see the intensity of the hopeless endeavor deepening and deepening on it, as the desire became greater and greater; and he could feel the awful pathos that enswathed the struggle with the grey wall of sadness; for underlying the craving was the full consciousness of the impossibility of its relief; and the sadness of the uncongenial inevitability is the most poignant of all.

So it was with the silence of the valley. A great craving seemed to possess it. It seemed longing to burst forth into music. The idea grew in his mind; and he felt his ears become anticipantly sensitive, while every nerve in his body seemed presentient of some strange happening.

Suddenly a curlew whirred into the air above his head. The silence broke into rippling melody, exquisitely soft and sweet. It was a call of the wild.

The tremulous, weirdly beautiful notes floated down into the valley, echoing and re-echoing, until they fell asleep in the silence to which they had given voice. Again and again the full, sweet call rang out, the opening notes steadily clear at first, then quickening into a wonderful ripple of divine purity.

In the music his weariness dissolved. The old strength and courage returned. He felt a man once more, a fighter, one upon whom humanity had laid the harness of progress, wherewith to pull man up the rough road to freedom. For the call of the curlew had sounded the deep of his heart; had given him inspiration, and hope, and faith; had shattered the lethargy and tiredness; and had, with its rare purity and sweetness, cleansed his mind of the stains of the busy world.

For a while he thought of the questions of which he had been speaking; and he rose more than ever convinced that the God-idea had to be fought and vanquished; that religion demanded the sternest opposition; that the social injustices around which religion had wrapped itself would never become unpleasant recollections until this garment had been torn off and destroyed. And he tramped back to the city with the old rebellion urging his mind to the roots of things, to their causes and their cures. Thought had given him power; for to think is to be free.

ROBERT MORELAND.

The Supernatural.—II.

(Continued from p. 588.)

"Whoever seriously thinks that superhuman beings have ever given our race information as to the aims of its existence and that of the world, is still in his childhood. There is no other revelation than the thoughts of the wise."—SCHOPENHAUER, *Religion and Other Essays*; 1890; p. 117.

"Every year, indeed, messengers are sent unto all the world who, under the protection of the Church, in the most shameless manner, and speculating on the basest side of human nature, preach a crusade against whatever may be called freedom of mind or thought, enlightenment, culture, etc. Yet all these are only the last convulsive movements of an antiquated colossus, whose blows even in its death struggles may, indeed, be dangerous, but can never gain the victory. And if we ask who was the bold Knight George that bruised the dragon's head, there can, I think, be but one answer, viz., Science. It, the poor persecuted and tortured martyr, despised and thrust into a corner, has finally, in league with free thought, overcome its mighty foe, and exalted itself to a height where the arrows of its enemies will not be able to reach it"—LUDWIG BUCHNER, *Force and Matter*, Preface to ninth edition.

"Let not the friends of humanity and of civilisation disunite; let them form, on the contrary, an indissoluble union, for superstition is always on the watch, and waits for the moment again to seize its prey."—FRANCIS ARAGO, *History of My Youth*, p. 39.

THE author of *The Evidence for the Supernatural*, who is also a medical man, points out how religious feelings are governed by the state of the brain. He observes:—

"Experts on mental conditions are clear that moral or so-called spiritual states are inseparably bound up with physical states. Thus heavenly visions can be produced by fasting in a suitable subject. Again, while on the one hand, in general paralysis of the insane there is commonly a condition of exaltation or happiness, on the other hand, in so-called neurasthenia—a condition often affecting most earnest Christ-like natures, worried by religious problems and intellectual difficulties—there is usually depression or acute mental suffering that sometimes ends in suicide. In short, there is no evidence of a divine spirit enabling the will to control the body." (P. 185.)

Therefore, as he further remarks, "it is difficult to find one psychologist—that is, a man who has made a study of the facts of mind—whose writings support orthodox ideas about the supernatural."

There are many insane in our asylums laboring under the delusion that they have committed the unpardonable sin. This is a form of religious mania unknown among Roman Catholics, because they believe the Pope is infallible and can forgive all sin.

Moreover, as our author points out, it is impossible to draw a theoretical line between sanity and insanity; and this is a guiding light in the explanation of so-called phantasms, ghosts, and supernatural visions.

There is no need to accuse a person of fraud who tells us he saw the ghost of some departed person, still less to believe that the phantasm really appeared. We may believe that the thing was seen, but we need not believe that it had any objective existence apart from the brain of the person who saw it. Every one of us has had this experience, for when we dream we see people and hear them talk quite as plainly as when we are awake; and there is no doubt that very young children sometimes acquire a quite undeserved reputation for untruthfulness through relating things they dreamed, but have not been able to distinguish from the transactions of real life. A little sympathy and patience will sometimes reveal this source of error in the child's mind.

It is well known that a diseased condition of the brain will give rise to delusions and hallucinations, as in cases of brain fever and delirium tremens. It is also a fact that people in apparently good health are sometimes the subject of these hallucinations. Dr. Abercrombie mentions this case:—

"A gentleman of sound mind, in good health, and engaged in active business, has all his life been the sport of spectral illusions, to such an extent that, in meeting a friend on the street, he has first to appeal to the sense of touch before he can determine whether or not the appearance is real. He can call up figures at will by a steady process of mental conception, and the figures may either be something real or the composition of his own fancy."*

Then there is the classic case of Nicolai, a celebrated bookseller of Berlin, who became the subject of illusions through making too much blood. Some years previously he was troubled with a violent vertigo, which he relieved by bleeding with leeches, eventually making it a custom to be bled twice a year. Upon neglecting this means of relieving his system, he became the subject of hallucinations. The first appeared in the form of a deceased person, at a distance of about ten steps. Nicolai, pointing to the figure, asked his wife if she did not see it. Naturally, she could not; and, being alarmed, she sent for a physician. After the first day many other phantasms appeared, composed of living and deceased persons.

"These phantasms," says Nicolai, "seemed equally clear and distinct at all times and under all circumstances, both when I was by myself and when I was in company, as well in the day as at night, and in my own house as well as abroad.....I conversed sometimes with my physician and my wife of the phantasms which at the moment surrounded me; they appeared more frequently walking than at rest; nor were they constantly present. They frequently did not come for some time, but always reappeared for a longer or shorter period, either singly or in company."†

"All these phantasms," says Nicolai, "appeared to me in their natural size, and as distinct as if alive." After about four weeks they increased in number.

"I also began to hear them talk: these phantasms sometimes conversed among themselves, but more frequently addressed their discourse to me; their speeches were commonly short, and never of an unpleasant turn. At different times there appeared to me both dear and sensible friends of both sexes, whose addresses tended to appease my grief, which had not yet wholly subsided: their consolatory speeches were in general addressed to me when I was alone. Sometimes, however, I was accosted by these consoling friends while I was engaged in company, and not unfrequently while real persons were speaking to me."

Having thus suffered for some time, it at last occurred to him that his mental derangement might arise from a superabundance of blood; so he again had recourse to the leeches. During the operation the chamber was crowded with phantasms, but in the course of a few hours they began to move slowly; their color began to fade; until at last they

dissolved into air, and he ceased to be troubled with them afterwards.

Nicolai, being an educated man, knew the real character of these mysterious appearances. Had he been an ignorant or superstitious man he would probably have been driven insane; had he lived in the Middle Ages these apparitions would have been attributed to the influence of evil spirits, to be exorcised by the priest instead of the leeches of the surgeon.

There is no doubt that the visions recorded in the lives of the saints and the founders of religious sects are due to similar hallucinations. Dr. Ireland has written a book dealing with this subject, entitled *The Blot upon the Brain* (1885), in which he analyses the hallucinations of Mohammed, Luther, Swedenborg, Joan of Arc, Francis Xavier, and many others from this standpoint.

Luther was continually haunted by a spectre of the Devil. He says:—

"When I wake up in the night, the devil immediately comes to me and disputes with me, and gives me strange thoughts, until at last I grow enraged beyond all endurance and give him ill words. 'Bah, beast,' I say, 'the Lord is not irritated against us as thou sayest.' Early this morning, when I awoke, the fiend came and began disputing with me.

"When the devil comes to me in the night, I say to him, 'Devil, I must now sleep, for it is the command and ordinance of God that we labor by day and sleep by night.'.....The best way of getting rid of the devil, if you cannot do it with the words of Holy Scripture, is to rail at and mock him. He cannot bear scorn."*

He is said upon one occasion to have thrown the inkstand at the Devil.

We often read of cases of people seeing the apparition of a distant friend, and on the following day receiving news of his death; but when an opportunity is afforded of investigating these cases they turn out to be totally incorrect.

In the *Nineteenth Century* (January, 1909) Professor Simon Newcomb gives a case in point. He tells us that in the *Nineteenth Century* for July, 1884,

"an article appeared from Messrs. Gurney and Myers which was justly regarded as affording the most indisputable evidence ever adduced for the reappearance of a dead person. Sir Edmund Hornby, a Judge of the Consular Court at Shanghai, had been visited during the night by a reporter desiring a copy of a decision which he was to deliver on the following morning. He rose from his bed, dictated what he had to say, and dismissed the reporter with a rebuke for having disturbed him. Next morning, on going to court, he was astounded by learning that the reporter, with whom he was well acquainted, had died suddenly during the night. Inquiring after the hour of the demise, he found it to coincide with that of the nightly visitation. The authors also informed us in the article that the story was confirmed by Lady Hornby, who was mentioned in it and was cognisant of the circumstances."

"This narrative," Professor Newcomb proceeds, "was almost unique in that it admitted of verification. When it reached Shanghai it met the eyes of some acquainted with the actual facts. These were made known in another publication, and showed that several months must have elapsed between the reporter's death and the Judge's vision. The latter was only a vivid dream about a dead person. When the case was brought to the Judge's attention he did not deny the new version, and could only say he had supposed the facts to be as he had narrated them."

Professor Newcomb concludes:—

"I cite this incident not merely to show how the most conclusive case of telepathy ever brought to light was invalidated when the facts were made known, but to elucidate the further fact that a wonderful story may lose the element of surprise by quite natural and easily admitted addition and explanation. All the interest of such stories depends upon the element of wonder."

And, we may add, if a great Judge, used to sift the true from the false, could be self-deceived in such a manner, what of the ordinary untrained persons who generally give currency to these details?

(To be concluded.) W. MANN.

* Cited by Chambers, *Spectral Illusions*, p. 23.

† Chambers, *Spectral Illusions*, p. 11.

* Michelet's *Life of Luther* (Bohn's edition), pp. 330-2.

The Story of Nebuchadonozar.

I.

ONCE on a time there lived a mighty king
Whose mighty name was Nebuchadonozar ;
A sort of wooden empty-headed thing,
Much as the generality of those are
Who reign by sufferance and the grovelling
Of knaves and parasites. The Court composer—
Romancist, Laureat, or Improvisatore,
Out of these chips concocts the following story :

II.

This despot took into his royal nob
To build a monstrous image all of gold,
Something immense, intense, a sort of job
To flabbergast his people young and old ;
And then he swore by Dagon that the mob
(Grown somewhat malapert and overbold)
Should worship it or else be on the rack put
To sound of hautboy, psaltery, and sackbut.

III.

Therewith a score of varlets scour'd the town
And advertised for artists of all hues. [Brown,
A drove soon came—Smith, Tomkins, Muggins,
Some wearing crownless hats, some toeless shoes.
Gaius is ironhearted, and frowns down
Her ragged offsprings' too aspiring views :
Alas ! that brains, the greatest boon of heaven,
To flatter fools for lucre should be driven.

IV.

The image rose ; a huge mis-shapen mass,
Crook-limb'd, stiff-jointed, looming high in air ;
Albeit it seemed to please the royal ass,
Who sought therewith to galvanise and scare
The swarming legions of the servile class,
Too spiritless to scorn, too mean to dare ;
And so they all, to grace my lord the king,
Declared his toy a "nobby sort of thing."

V.

And now forthwent a royal proclamation,
Commanding that the lieges all should pay
This brazen hobby praise and adoration
At wake of morn and at the close of day ;
And all obedient to this intimation
Down dropp'd upon their marrowbones to pray,
Except three disaffected scurvy Jews
Who did the royal mandamus refuse.

VI.

That night two satraps watch'd the image throw
Long shadows on the plain : beyond them fell
The Orient moonlight. Safely scorn'd, these two
Look'd keenly out, and presently befel
This scene—'twas no illusion—it was true
As truth itself—the watchman knew 'em well,
Three Jewish knaves, their hindlers in despite
Turn'd to the image in the broad moonlight.

VII.

The satraps from their covert deftly crept,
One on one side, 'tother 'tother, till they came
In easy reach, and then at once they leapt
Upon the quarry. Thus their little game
Achieved, away unto the king, who kept
That night late wassail. He, with eyes aflame,
Roar'd out, " You knaves ! how are ye call'd
you three ? " [we."
" I'm Shadrack"—" Meshack"—" Abendizzy,

VIII.

" Well, then, ye dogs, heed well what I shall say ;
I've had this image built for your salvation,
And 'tis my will that every soul shall pay
Unto it the profoundest adoration.
'Tis no great sacrifice ; and, by the way,
Remember, 'tis unburden'd with taxation.
Back, then, ye rogues, and let your Jewish faces
Make some amends, and in the self-same places."

IX.

To him the trio : " Pig and mighty king,
Ye cannot vershup sticksh and stocksh and stones ;
Ye cannot pend to thish pig, prassy thing,
Your majesty has puilt ; ye only owns
Von cot, a Hebrew cot, to whom we pring
Our shacrifices on our marrowpones ;
Ye opes your majesty won't be too hard on
Our race, and grant us priv'legs and pardon."

X.

Upleapt the King, with pluck of royal beard :
" Good gracious ! what is this you tell me—what !
Oh, blazes ! three old-clothes men have demurred
To do our bidding ! Damn it ! Oh, od rot !
Tie 'em together—not another word—
And, meanwhile, make our furnace hot—red hot !
And when ye've made a raging, blazing fire,
As high as ye can make it, make it higher."

XI.

" Heap fiercest fuel : faggots, logs of pine,
Tar barrels, ambergris, and bags of tow ;
Pitch, candle, any gris, and turpentine ;
Get everything that's fast and nothing slow ;
Tie up these Hebrews with a hank of twine,
And skewer them fast as herrings in a row ;
Then drag them to the furnace in a minute,
And where it rages hottest pitch them in it !"

XII.

Assyria's hosts pour out to see the fun ; [dame—
A surging crowd—peers, princes, squire, and
Shoulder each other, thrusting, crushing ; some
From dizzy height suspended watch the game ;
When lo ! a miracle—the lookers on
Fall back aghast before the searing flame,
Observing where it roars and flames the most
The Israelites do neither singe nor roast.

XIII.

Had all the tongues of fire been fragrant flowers,
The glowing beds of cinders banks of thyme,
The red hot sparkles those translucent showers
Which greet us when the spring is in its prime ;
Nay, had the furnace been sweet garden bowers,
Odorous with lads' love, lavender, and lime,
It had not been more pleasantly betrod
By these three Israelitish men of God.

XIV.

Nebuchadnezzar, the king, knelt down to pray,
Both he and all his court. It was amazing
The change. The mob pull'd down that very day
The heathen scare-crow which they'd all been
The King went sad and silently away, [praising.
And, strolling through the meadows, took to graz-
Grew melancholy, querulous, and thin ; [ing ;
And died in doing penance for his sin.

PATROCLUS.

Some interesting facts relating to the Fiji census returns are given in the leading article of a recent issue of the *Western Pacific Herald*. It appears that this is the first census of Fiji to give statistics of religious belief, and as the *Herald* remarks : " The returns show such a heterogeneous mass of conflicting theological convictions as might well cause a foreigner struggling with the language difficulty to inquire : ' How many of there is she.' " The formidable list includes 3,475 Church of England (including Protestants), 9,112 Roman Catholic, 81,203 Methodist, 563 Presbyterian, 20 Baptist, 8 Independent, 9 Congregationalist, 4 Nonconformist, 41 Lutheran, 1 Swedenborgian, 520 Seventh Day Adventist, 1 Free Church, 1 New Church, 130 Tongan Free Church, 2 Society of Friends, 3 Salvation Army, 2 Latter Day Saints, 9 Unitarians, 607 Christians (so stated), 29 Jews, 3 Mental Science, 1 Theosophy, 40 Rationalists and Freethinkers, 10 Agnostics, 3 Atheists, 34,559 Hindu, 5,302 Mussulman, 27 Baddhist, 2 Parsee, 200 Confucian, 1 Worship of Ancestors, 2 Shinto, 878 " not stated," and 503 no religion. Missionaries used to talk of Fiji having been won for Christ, but the returns seem to suggest that the whole population, Native, European, Indian, Chinese, and Japanese, has a conglomerate of religious profession with as much, or, to put it more accurately, as little religious conviction as would be found anywhere else. It is one of the blessings of religion that it carries with it the seeds of difference and disagreement, so that there is no occasion for surprise when the *Herald* suggests the necessity for still another denomination, having for its object the unification of the numerous conflicting sects. It is pleasing to note the number of Rationalists, Freethinkers, Agnostics, and Atheists, for there is evidently plenty of superstition upon which the leaven of reason and common sense may work with good effect.—*Examiner* (Christchurch, New Zealand).

HEREDITY.

William Booth's father was in business at Nottingham... His son said of him, " He was a follower of *Grab and Get*," and then the General would add that he was a true son, for " I want to get too," he would say, flinging his arms out, " to get all the world to come and be saved."—*Daily Mail* Obituary Notice of the late General W. Booth.

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, C. Cohen, a Lecture.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.15, L. B. Gallagher, a Lecture.

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

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

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Ridley-road, High-street): 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Charles Bradlaugh."

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

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, R. H. Rosetti, "God, Faith, and Morality."

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers Hill, opposite Public Library): 7, F. A. Davies, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

FAILSWORTH (Secular Sunday School, Pole-lane): Joseph A. E. Bates, afternoon, "Religion, Science, and the End of the World"; evening, "The Religion of Ancient Egypt and its Survival in Modern Christianity."

OUTDOOR.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE: THOS. A. JACKSON—Burnley (Market Place): September 22, at 11, "What Would Jesus Do?" at 3, "The Philosophy of Secularism"; at 6.30, "Piety and Piffle." Blackburn (Market Ground): 23, at 7.30, "The Christ Myth." Great Harwood (Town Centre): 24, at 7.30, "The Salvation Army and Its Work." Accrington (Market Ground): 25, at 7.30, "The Faith of an Infidel." Burnley (Market Place): 26, at 7.30, "The Wonders of Life." Colne (Cumberland-street): 27, at 7.30, "The Cause and Cure of Christianity." Rochdale (Town Hall Square): 28, at 7.30, "Humanity's Debt to the Rebel."

BLACKBURN (Market Square): Joseph A. E. Bates—Sept. 23, at 8, "The Philosophy of Atheism"; 24, at 8, "The Paradox of Christian Socialism."

PRESTON (Market Square): Joseph A. E. Bates—Sept. 19, at 8, "The Catholic Times and Professor Schafer"; 20, at 8, "Omar Khayyam: Poet and Philosopher."

Bradlaugh Fellowship.

THE NINTH ANNUAL DINNER

WILL BE HELD AT THE

HOLBORN RESTAURANT,
On Wednesday, September 25, 1912.

Chairman, Mr. G. W. FOOTE
(President National Secular Society.)

The Tickets are Three Shillings each, this is One Shilling less than the cost of the Dinner.

The Committee are enabled to make this reduction by means of the bequest of the late James Dowling.

Chair taken at 7 p.m.

After Dinner there will be Speeches, Toasts, and Vocal and Instrumental Music.

The Splendid Oil Painting of Mr. BRADLAUGH, by the late Emile Girardot, will be on view at this gathering. The portrait, nearly life size, is undoubtedly the best and most characteristic representation of our great leader, and is well worthy of a place in some National Collection. G. STANDING will briefly explain the circumstances under which the canvas came into his possession.

Application for tickets must be made not later than Saturday, September 21, to the Hon. Sec.,

W. J. RAMSEY, 146 Lansdowne-road, Hackney, N.E.
Evening dress not desired, but quite optional.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY (LIMITED)

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Chairman of Board of Directors—MR. G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

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

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

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

Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

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

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of not less than five and not more than twelve members, one-third of whom retire by ballot each year,

but are capable of re-election. An Annual General Meeting of members must be held in London, to receive the Report, elect new Directors, and transact any other business that may arise.

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

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Friends of the Society who have remembered it in their wills, or who intend to do so, should formally notify the Secretary of the fact, or send a private intimation to the Chairman, who will (if desired) treat it as strictly confidential. This is not necessary, but it is advisable, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid, and their contents have to be established by competent testimony.

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