

# THE Freethinker

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*One hour in the execution of justice is worth seventy years of prayer.*—MOHAMMED.

## The Terrible Turk.

THAT profound thinker and self-sacrificing publicist, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, has just remarked that no English journal of any importance has a good word to say for the Turk. So much the worse for the English journals of importance. The *Freethinker*, of course, is a journal of *no* importance. But it is a journal devoted to principles, and it has never been known to desert or betray them. Amongst those principles are justice and truth. Perhaps it is fitting, then, that this odd sort of journal should say a good word for the Turk.

Poor Turk! terrible no longer, the Christians are upon him again, and apparently for the last time. They mean to finish him if they can. And there is some prospect, in the midst of the Christian charity of their common agreements, that they may half finish each other in doing it. Mr. Asquith says that they do agree wonderfully. Well, we shall wait and see. But this much may be admitted, that when they do agree their unanimity is wonderful.

The Turk has been a terrible fellow in his time. So has John Bull. Each has had an awkward way of smiting his enemies ruthlessly—in the name of the Lord. One objection to the Turk is that he got into Europe by conquest. Everybody knows it was not in that way that John Bull got into India. No doubt the Turk has been cruel when his blood was up, but that he was more cruel than his Christian neighbors is not only untrue but impossible.

The following good word for the Turk was written several years ago, calmly, carefully, and under a due sense of responsibility. We present it to the public again. We believe it is worth another reading at this crisis.

Historically, it is quite true that the Mohammedans have always allowed Christians to live amongst them in peace—at least to a far greater extent than Christians have tolerated Mohammedans. Mohammed himself never oppressed the Christians who would live at peace with him. Gibbon justly observes that he “readily granted the security of their persons, the freedom of their trade, the property of their goods, and the toleration of their worship.” Christian churches were permitted in Mohammedan States, although no Christian State would have tolerated a Mohammedan mosque. The Mohammedan conquerors of India showed religious toleration to the inhabitants; and the first empire in modern times in which perfect religious freedom was universal was that of Akbar, whose magnanimity has been sung by Tennyson. The Arabian caliphs gave freedom to all the oriental sects, employed Christians as secretaries and physicians, appointed them collectors of the revenue, and sometimes raised them to the command of cities and provinces. Saladin, on recapturing Jerusalem from the Crusaders, treated the Latin Christians as foreigners, and therefore as captives of war; but he regarded the Greek and Oriental Christians as inhabitants of the locality, and therefore permitted them to remain as his subjects, and to worship their gods in their own

fashion. Nor has this tolerant principle ever been violated. Many a fugitive of Christian bigotry has found shelter in Turkey. Jews and Christians enjoy equal liberty of conscience throughout the Turkish empire. Latin and Greek Christians are both allowed to worship in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem. Yet their hatred of each other is still so great that a line of Turkish soldiers stand between them to prevent them flying at each other's throats. What a spectacle! And how the Turk, who worships one God, without a rival or a partner, must look down with contempt on these quarrelsome superstitionists!

With regard to the Turks, in particular, it is a common Christian notion that they were always brutal conquerors, who upheld and extended their religion simply by the sword. This is a very mistaken notion. When the Turkish power was flourishing, before it began to decay under the attacks and diplomacy of Russia, and the general pressure of the European governments, it was renowned for its liberality.

Let us pause here to tell a story—a true one. During the bitter persecution of the inoffensive Quakers in England in the seventeenth century, many women were stripped and flogged on their naked backs in public places. The suffering and indignity was inflicted upon them by their fellow Christians; not tumultuously, but deliberately, in the name of the law, and by the order of the authorities. One simple young woman was flogged from town to town, and frequently imprisoned under shocking conditions. Being an invincible enthusiast, she took it into her head to go off to the East and speak to the Sultan of Turkey. She succeeded in making her way there, and found the Sultan encamped before Adrianople. She was brought before him, and he listened courteously to her “message from God.” When she had finished he told her that what she had said was very good, and thanked her for her trouble, although he could not quite believe all that she did. He then asked her how she came so far alone. She replied that she trusted in God. Whereupon he smiled, and said he hardly thought this protection enough for a lonely maid. He saw that her wants were supplied, and appointed a guard to conduct her safely through his own dominions.

Just think of the two different experiences of that Quaker maiden. Brutally ill-treated in her own country by her fellow Christians, and treated with the noblest courtesy by a Mohammedan ruler in a foreign land!

The spirit displayed by that Sultan was far from singular in the great days of the Turkish empire. There was, indeed, a tradition of magnanimity in the Mohammedan world. It was remembered how finely the Caliph Omar had acted after his capture of Jerusalem; how the lives, liberties, possessions, and churches of the Christians were respected. It was remembered how the Crusaders, hundreds of years afterwards, recaptured Jerusalem, and turned it into a slaughter-house. It was remembered how, in spite of this terrible provocation, Saladin listened to the voice of humanity when he won Jerusalem back from the Christians; how he shed no unnecessary drop of blood, and showed the tenderest compassion to his captives. Never had the great Mohammedan rulers dealt with the Christians after the method so often

employed in Europe. They could have swept Christianity out of their dominions as easily as Ferdinand and Isabella drove Islam out of Spain, or as Louis XIV. drove Protestantism out of France. But they did nothing of the kind. If they had, there would have been no Christian Churches or Christian provinces, left to give rise to the present-day troubles in the Turkish empire.

When the Turks took Constantinople, in 1453, the first thing Mohammed II. did, after re-establishing order in the city, was to issue a decree of toleration to the Christians, who were practically allowed to regulate their own affairs. Indeed, the majority of them found the change a welcome relief, after their experience of Christian misrule.

Mohammedanism spread in South-east Europe subsequently without compulsion. The fact is that freedom and toleration were only to be found under the Sultan's government. Jews fled to it from persecution; persecuted Protestants looked towards it with longing eyes. Even the Russians praised it when the Catholic Poles, in the seventeenth century, inflicted frightful atrocities on the members of the orthodox Eastern Church. It was in reference to these horrors that Macarius, the Patriarch of Antioch, exclaimed "God perpetuate the empire of the Turks for ever! For they," he added, "take their impost, and enter into no account of religion, be their subjects Christians or Nazarenes, Jews or Samaritans."

It may be objected that the Turks carved out an empire with the sword, and that this is tantamount to the spread of Mohammedanism by the same means. But is not this objection nonsensical? With what, pray, did the British carve out an empire in India? And is that empire, won as it was, a proof that Christianity is spread by the sword?

Now if Mohammedanism has, as a matter of fact, been far more tolerant than Christianity, there must be something wrong somewhere when Christians stand up and address Mohammedans as persecutors, represent them as being under a fatal necessity of propagating their religion by the sword, and accuse them of being a perpetual menace to all their neighbors.

Mohammed distinctly says in the Koran, "Let there be no compulsion in religion." "Wilt thou," he asks, "compel men to become believers? No soul can believe but by the permission of God." The Prophet of Islam never said anything really contrary to this. All the texts that are cited about war with unbelievers were, as we shall see presently, of local and special application.

That the Mussulman faith never force consciences was emphasised by one of the Spanish Mohammedans who was driven out of Spain in the last expulsion of the Moriscos in 1610, at the instigation of the bloody Inquisition. Here are some of his words:—

"Did our victorious ancestors ever once attempt to extirpate Christianity out of Spain, when it was in their power? Did they not suffer your forefathers to enjoy the free use of their rites at the same time that they wore their chains? Is not the absolute injunction of our Prophet, that whatever nation is conquered by Mussulman steel, should, upon payment of a moderate annual tribute, be permitted to persevere in their own pristine persuasion, how absurd soever, or to embrace what other belief they themselves best approved of? If there may have been some examples of forced conversions, they are so rare as scarce to deserve mentioning, and only attempted by men who had not the fear of God, and the Prophet, before their eyes, and who, in so doing, have acted directly and diametrically contrary to the holy precepts and ordinances of Islam, which cannot, without sacrilege, be violated by any who would be held worthy of the honorable epithet of Mussulman.....You can never produce, among us, any bloodthirsty, formal tribunal, on account of different persuasions in point of faith, that anyway approaches your execrable Inquisition. Our arms, it is true, are ever open to embrace all who are disposed to embrace our religion; but we are not allowed by our sacred Kurán to tyrannise over consciences."

This very toleration was urged against them as one of their principal crimes by the Archbishop of

Valencia, who presented Philip III., in 1602, with an account of the "Apostacies and Treasons of the Moriscos," with a view to their expulsion from the Christian soil of Spain. One article against them was: "That they commended nothing so much as liberty of conscience, in all matters of religion, which the Turks, and all other Mohammedans, suffer their subjects to enjoy."

In spite of all this it is urged that the Jihad, or Holy War, is taught in the Koran, and is a part of the law and faith of Islam.

Professor Arnold, who devotes a chapter to this subject, shows conclusively that the meaning of the verb *jahada* is really to "strive, labor, toil, exert oneself, take pains, be diligent." "Primarily," he says, "the word bears no reference to war or fighting, much less to fighting against unbelievers or forcible conversion of them, but derives its particular application from the context only." This he proves by citing all the passages in the Koran in which the word occurs.

There is no higher English authority than Lane, and his verdict is clear and decisive. "No precept," he says, "is to be found in the Kurán which, taken with the context, can justify unprovoked war."

Professor Arnold shows that the verses so often quoted from the ninth chapter of the Koran had reference only to the Meccans, who had violated a truce and compelled Mohammed to fight by attacking his allies. To accept them as of universal application is like accepting the Old Testament order to exterminate the Canaanites as implying a similar duty on the part of modern Christians.

We may observe, in passing, that it has been maintained that all the wars of Mohammed were defensive. He also appears to have warned his followers against beginning a war. "The holy war," as Dozy says, "is only imposed as a duty in the single case of the enemies of Islam being the aggressors; if the prescriptions of the Koran are taken otherwise, it is by an arbitrary interpretation on the part of theologians."

Professor Arnold's summary of the whole matter is as follows:—

"It is due to the Muhammadan legists and commentators that jihad came to be interpreted as a religious war against unbelievers, who might be attacked even though they were not the aggressors; but such a doctrine is wholly unauthorised by the Qur'an, and can only be extracted therefrom by quoting isolated portions of different verses, considered apart from the context and the special circumstances under which they were delivered and to which alone they were held to refer, being in no way intended as positive injunctions for future observance or religious precepts for coming generations. But though some Muhammadan legists have maintained the rightfulness of unprovoked war against unbelievers, none (as far as I am aware) have ventured to justify compulsory conversion, but have always vindicated for the conquered the right of retaining their own faith on payment of *jizyah*."

The only point to be added is that "some legists" are not all legists. As far as we can ascertain, the majority of Mohammedan legists have been against unprovoked war on unbelievers. There were always some of these gentlemen ready to second the policy of ambitious conquerors. But whenever has Christendom been short of the same fraternity?

When all is said and done, the fact remains that all the great Holy Wars in history have been fought by Christians. If the tree is to be judged by its fruit—or, to use a more homely image, if the proof of the pudding is in the eating—it follows that Christianity is the supremely intolerant religion. It was a holy war when Charlemagne offered the Northern Pagans baptism or death. It was a holy war when the Papal sword was sharpened against the Albigenses. It was a holy war when Alva butchered and burnt in the Netherlands. It was a holy war when the Great Armada sailed for England. It was a holy war when the heretics were destroyed by myriads in the massacre of St. Bartholomew. It was a holy war when Louis XIV. dragonnaded the Huguenots and swept the survivors out of France. It was a holy war

when Germany was devastated and depopulated for thirty long years. It was a holy war when the Moriscos and the Jews were driven, in the midst of unspeakable barbarities, out of Spain. It was a holy war when the Spanish conquerors of America, with the Pope's blessing, carried fire and slaughter amongst the mild and hospitable Indians. It was a holy war when the Protestants and Catholics, from England to Poland, fought each other all over the continent of Europe. It was a holy war when the Catholics burnt the Protestants, and the Protestants burnt the Catholics, for a mere difference of opinion. And it has been a holy war every time the Christians have let themselves loose, with massacre and violation, upon the poor inoffensive Jews.

But the greatest of all holy wars was the Holy War—the Crusades—whose history was written by Fuller before it was written by Gibbon, Michaud, and Mills. It lasted a hundred and ninety-four years, and was, as Fuller said, "for continuance the longest, for bloodshed the cruellest, for pretences the most pious the world ever saw." Christianity hurled itself against Mohammedanism in nine successive crusades, with the professed object of wresting the Holy Land from the hands of the "infidels." It was captured and held for a while; and then lost again for ever. The bogus sepulchre of Christ—for it is no more—was still left in the custody of unbelievers. And in less than two centuries afterwards the Turkish crescent floated over the first Christian cathedral in Europe, in the first Christian city ever built—the city of Constantine. It floats there now, after the lapse of four hundred and fifty years. Perhaps it is destined to disappear. Christian divisions allowed it to come, and Christian divisions may allow it to continue. But there is no need to vilify a people who had their great day of empire when our forefathers were little else than barbarians; and still less need, if possible, to sling bigoted libels at the faith they profess. If a proud nation must go down to its grave, those who are digging the pit for it need not prepare to heap over it a mountain of lies.

G. W. FOOTE.

### God and the "New Age."

It is evident that some of the readers of the *New Age* have been "going for it" on account of its recent notes on God and the Soul. Although it does not deal with any specific complaint, it does, after a delay of some six or seven weeks, and in an anonymous article, attempt a reply to a general criticism. I say "attempt" because it never once meets the essential point raised in the controversy. It does not, for example, defend its connection of philosophic materialism with social and economic exploitation, but merely engages in an ineffective attempt to justify the use of such terms as "God" and "Soul" as realities. And even here it succeeds, either of intention or by sheer blundering, in evading the real point at issue.

The article I am dealing with appears in the issue of the *New Age* dated November 7, and bears the title "What is the Soul?" It opens with the statement that complaint has been made of the use of "God" and "Soul" as words having a definite meaning; and by way of showing that they have, succeeds in proving quite the contrary. For what is meant by a word having a definite meaning? It does not mean that the person using the word does not attach a definite meaning to his own language. Of course, it may, in special cases, mean this, but not generally so. It is with the circulation of a word as controversial or intellectual coin that we are chiefly concerned. And a word which suggests to a half-dozen people who hear it as many different meanings, all of them differing from the meaning attached to it by the one who uses it, has clearly no right to be called definite. Words of that kind cannot but mislead; and it is one of the first duties of conscientious controversy that a writer or speaker

shall not only use words that actually express his own ideas, but that they shall convey the same ideas to other people.

Can anyone reasonably claim that the word "God"—we will deal with "Soul" later—does this? Does the *New Age* writer, Mr. R. J. Campbell, Cardinal Vaughan, Mr. Campbell Morgan, and a Salvation Army preacher mean the same thing when they talk about God? Most obviously they do not. And if they do not, how can the word be said to have a definite meaning and be suitable to helpful controversy. All that is established is the currency of the word, and the *New Age* merely assists in circulating a word that scarcely two controversialists accept at the same value. There is agreement in the use of a term, and complete disagreement as to what the term means.

Unconsciously, the *New Age* illustrates this truth. The readers of that journal are, it appears, a purified class. They "have crossed the Red Sea of Materialism and the Jordan of Atheism," and are in a position to "safely employ the old traditional terms with a purified meaning." Having accomplished this pilgrimage, they have achieved the possibility of definition—"definition that really does define." And, by way of example, we are told that "there is nothing vague.....in the definition of 'God' as the cause of the original disposition of matter." Nothing vague! It is not only vague, it is scientifically and logically meaningless. Except as a merely convenient jumping-off point, the "original disposition of matter," or by whatever other name one cares to denote the substance of the universe, is scientific nonsense. It is unthinkable. Any state of the universe is only original in relation to subsequent states, it is itself derivative in relation to preceding states. And these subsequent states are mentally inescapable the moment we reach an alleged original state. This is not really Atheism or Materialism, it is simply the exercise of a little logical brain-work.

"Dispositions of matter" means, I presume, qualities or properties of matter. But can anyone think of matter existing without properties? Our "definition that really does define," becomes more and more confused as we proceed. Or suppose we grant that at some time matter, hitherto existing without properties, suddenly became possessed of them, and that the present universe is the result. Why "God"? The *New Age* writer seems to regard "God" as an idea, or as an active principle. But, again, why "God"? People do not mean by "God" merely an idea. It cannot be this kind of a God who, according to the editor of the *New Age*, endows man with rights and who may "enforce them on his behalf." And if people do not understand by "God" this, how can anyone pretend that a term which means one thing to one person and a second thing to another person, is not vague, indefinite, and unsuitable to helpful controversy?

The writer of the article (whoever he may be) appears to be under the impression that early ideas of God are definite and later ideas more definite. This is quite an error, and he ought really to acquaint himself with the history of the idea of God before rushing into print. Early ideas of God are definite and genuine ideas. There is no doubt whatever—I am not stating this as an arguable proposition, but as an ascertained truth—that gods were originally made in the image of man, and that but for this primitive manufacture there would never have been a belief in God at all. Primitive thinkers, whether living in ancient or modern times, really have a more exact conception of God than other types of thinkers. It is knowledge that makes people uncertain and inexact in their thinking about Deity. The original magnified man is emasculated, first in one direction then in another. He is divested of one human attribute after another, until "God" is left as a kind-of-a-sort-of-a-something answering to nothing at all. In brief, the only intelligible God is a personal God, and that is precisely the kind of God that the best modern thinking rejects. And now we have the *New Age*, in the name of progress,

championing an idea of which the reality has been destroyed.

Next, what of the soul? The "soul" is "consciousness, or that which becomes aware of the manifestations of the dispositions of matter." Well, for my part, I have no serious objection to anyone calling the sum of our conscious states the soul. That name would do as well as any other if that was all that was meant by it. But that is not really what the writer of the article means by it, and it is not what the majority of people understand by it. In the first place, we have the ingenious confession: "I find in the native dispositions of matter everything, save one thing, namely, the soul."

Really! The *New Age* is to be congratulated on having made so brilliant a discovery. I wonder whether he finds in the "native dispositions of matter" the perfume of a rose, or the shape of a leaf, or a thousand and one other things that surround us? The "native dispositions of matter" (if we could see them) would show us—the native dispositions of matter. Only these, and nothing more. All subsequent phenomena result from the interaction of these native dispositions, and their ability to produce them is evidenced by their having transpired. And on what ground can anyone assert that the native dispositions of matter could not give rise to consciousness as they gave rise to other things? One needs something more than any person's inability to detect a product in the factors to say they are incapable of producing it. Indeed, the way of science is to determine the potentialities of a group of factors by observing the product, and testing the conclusion by the method of agreement and difference. And it may enlighten the *New Age* to learn that no Materialist ever dreamed of discovering consciousness in the "native dispositions of matter" any more than he expected to discover the laws of plant life by a study of spectrum analysis.

The question of a soul, or consciousness, leads the writer of the article to the subject of immortality. It is evident, we are told, that there is more in the mind than sense-impression has put there. (This belief is based on the quite gratuitous and false assumption that genius and intuition dispenses with some of the intellectual processes to which ordinary people are confined.) And among these things present in the mind is the desire, and the hope, of immortality. The truth of immortality cannot be demonstrated because—

"From the rational point of view, the truth of immortality can only be established by the medium of sense-impressions; and since these are for the present out of the question, immortality is rationally undemonstrable. On the other hand, we have to account for the presence of the belief in the mind at all."

Fallacy on fallacy. No examination of the contents of the mind yields a desire for immortality. To say otherwise is sheer pulpit verbiage. Even in the history of the race immortality is a comparatively late teaching. What an examination of the human mind shows is not a desire for immortality, but a desire for life, or, negatively, a dislike of death. And, again, a study of the subject from the historical side might have saved the *New Age* from perpetrating these hoary pulpit fallacies. The desire for life is nothing more than an outcome of the workings of Natural Selection. It is one of the conditions of survival, as essential to the perpetuation of a species as is breathing. The desire to live is universal, because it is one of the conditions of living. Life is not exhausted in hardly one case in a million, because we die deaths that are really accidental rather than deaths due to physiological exhaustion. And on these two basic facts is built the religious interpretation that we have a desire for a life beyond the grave, an interpretation that, by philosophical ingenuity, becomes elaborated into the doctrine of immortality.

This is really all there is in a subject concerning which so much mystical nonsense is uttered. Of course, it may be said that neither the desire for life

nor death, before the whole energies of the body are exhausted, account for the belief in survival. And this is true. But, and again I am stating ascertained truth rather than advancing mere theory, we really know how this belief originated. Historically and genetically, the soul is not the equivalent of consciousness. It is the double of the body. Primitive man has no "soul" in the modern sense of the word. He believes in no immaterial entity derived from spiritual principle that animates the universe. His "soul" is a copy of the body. It appears to others in dreams, as their doubles appear to him. It leaves his body during sleep; it leaves it finally at death. But at death it neither ceases from troubling nor sinks to rest. It is still there, and needs food and attention; can do good or inflict harm, as of old. The whole of savage life, ancient and modern, bears evidence of the truth of this theory. The belief in the survival of the ghost is the parent of all theories of immortality that were ever propounded.

But of this aspect of the subject the *New Age* writer shows not the slightest consciousness. He writes, as the ordinary parson preaches, as though we were living a century before Darwin and fifty years before Spencer or Tylor. And, in the name of all that is reasonable, what is the value of a writer's contribution who completely ignores the history of such ideas as "God" and "soul," but prefers to proceed by a purely introspective process, which can only result in the discovery of all that an ill-directed education has implanted? A metaphysic is quite permissible—provided one's physis is sound and reliable. But if this is not done, the foundation for a sane metaphysic is quite wanting. There is a possibility nowadays of understanding both "God" and the "soul," but it is not by the way of the *New Age*. That method merely darkens the issue with words, and drowns reason in a babel of sounds.

C. COHEN.

### The Audacity of Ignorance.

A HEARER of sermons complains, in the *Christian World* for October 31, that "the man in the pulpit is too apt to assume that he is capable of dealing with every subject in heaven and earth and under the earth, and his deliverances become invested often with oracular importance owing to the limited knowledge of an average congregation." When we were children most of us were taught to believe that sermons were made in heaven, and that ministers were specially inspired to deliver them on earth. Every preacher was in the habit of praying, at the commencement of the service, for "a message," and for strength to deliver it faithfully; and our natural inference was that the discourse that followed came down from heaven in answer to the prayer. Our only puzzle was how some preachers always received better sermons than others. From that vain delusion most of us are now entirely free. We have learned that sermons partake of all the imperfections of the men and women who preach them, and that when a minister says "I speak to you in the name of the Lord" he is simply airing his own opinions and investing them with false importance. The complainant just mentioned tells us that on the occasion of a harvest thanksgiving service, a few Sundays ago, the preacher declared most oracularly that it had been proved that corn, vegetables, and fruits were God's gifts to man, because there was no evidence of their existence prior to man's appearance. Had this preacher possessed the most elementary knowledge of botany he would have known that he was lying to the glory of God. It is a notorious fact that in its references to science the pulpit nearly always misrepresents it.

It is on subjects which transcend knowledge, however, that the man in the pulpit is most oracular. He knows much more about the next world than about this. He is infinitely more intimate with God than with his closest human

friend. He can give a much fuller and more eloquent description of the soul than of the body. A remarkable sermon by the Rev. Dr. Newton Marshall appears in the *Baptist Times and Freeman* for November 1, in which the pretence of impossible knowledge is very conspicuous. The subject is "God's Resources for our Sanctification," and the text reads thus: "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure" (Phil. ii. 12, 13). Dr. Marshall's first point is that "our world is held in the power of God." Having presented a laborious and grandiloquent account of the stupendous forces constantly at work in the Universe, hurricanes, earthquakes, rushing tides, even the flood of life at spring being "but little ripples and beautiful, glistening foam-flecks on the great ocean of power that is everywhere," he says:—

"And all this marvellous edifice of energy is God's for the realising of his purposes."

Such is the audacity of ignorance. Dr. Marshall knows absolutely nothing about God and his purpose, and this is why he talks about them with so much confidence. He maintains that "Nature is on the side of goodness," and adds:—

"There is nothing in the power of Nature which is not designed of God to build goodness, and it is only because of our perversity and failure to trust God that it is divested and distorted from its proper use."

Let us look at one or two of the "little ripples" or "glistening foam-flecks" on the universal ocean of power, namely earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. In what conceivable circumstances can these make for goodness or excellence of character, and what sane person can believe that they fail to do so because of man's perversity and lack of trust in God? Earthquakes and volcanic eruptions, in their relation to man, are invariably instruments of destruction. Take the rushing tides also, and tell us in what sense they contribute to social well-being or to the salvation of the individual soul?

Dr. Marshall's second point is that "our world testifies to the over-towering intellect of God." Here the preacher pronounces an eulogium upon brains in general and the brains of Moltke, Sir Oliver Lodge, and Dr. Sun Yat Sen in particular. He calls God "the majestic thinker whose mind can arrange and order his forces so as to achieve the most stupendous things." Why does he not speak of God's brains? Is it possible that such a being can think without brains? Be that as it may, Dr. Marshall assures us that God's intellect is on the side of those who seek goodness, just as his help is said to be at the service of those who help themselves. Does Dr. Marshall really believe that God's intellect does so arrange and order his forces that an earthquake or a volcanic eruption destroys towns and cities with thousands of inhabitants; and if he does, does he believe also that God so arranges and orders his forces because of man's perversity and lack of trust in himself? Would such a God deserve anyone's trust? The reverend gentleman delights to expatiate upon the marvellous, "stupendous" things achieved by the Divine intellect, and after exhausting the resources of language in doing so he quietly observes that "God's mind is beyond our searching" and "the very thought of him too high for us."

We now come to the preacher's third point, which is thus stated: "To Power and Wisdom add Love." A God of infinite power and intelligence might have been a fiend, like Nero and Richard III. Here the audacity of ignorance shines in all its glory. The preacher exclaims, "Well, we do know that God is infinitely loving." And yet, while infinitely loving, he is represented as helping only those who help themselves and saving only those who put their trust in him. If such a God existed would he not rather glory in helping those who cannot help themselves and in winning men's trust by saving them? This is a point which Dr. Marshall conveniently ignores. His contention is that we know that God is infinitely loving because man is capable of more, richer, and

nobler love than any of the animals below him; but this is a sheer delusion. An infinitely loving God would surely have made all his creatures equally capable of the noblest love, nor could he have been satisfied for millions of years with an utterly lifeless and loveless Universe. The truth is that love is a product of evolution, and that evolution is the method by which physical and chemical forces, which are the only forces known to us, do their work. That man is capable of the deepest love only shows that, so far, he represents the evolutionary process at its highest and best. We have no knowledge of anything beyond or higher than ourselves.

We do not mean even to suggest that Dr. Marshall does not believe what he preaches, though we know that some wearers of the cloth do not. What we contend is that no one can speak of God and the spiritual world with a single grain of knowledge. Supernatural beliefs are pure speculations. Many a defender of the faith has said to the Atheist, "You cannot prove the non-existence of God." Of course he cannot. No one can prove the non-existence of that of which he has absolutely no knowledge. But when Dr. Marshall asserts that God is a being of infinite power, wisdom, and love, the Atheist may legitimately say to him, "Verify your statement, or else withdraw it." Of course, Dr. Marshall cannot prove his assertion; but instead of withdrawing it he raises the repetition of it into a profession. What the Atheist insists upon is that there is positively no evidence of the existence of such a being; that all the facts of the Universe known to us testify against his existence; and further, that the belief in a being concerning whom not a scrap of knowledge is obtainable is both irrational and injurious. Atheism is logical and scientific, while Christian Theism is essentially illogical and unscientific.

Dr. Marshall romps about without restraint in his luxuriant ignorance. Many Christian scholars now frankly admit that legends abound in the Four Gospels, and that in consequence the historicity of Jesus is more or less doubtful. Ignoring this, Dr. Marshall employs the most extravagant language he can find in laudation of, at least, a semi-legendary person. Listen:—

"He [Jesus] was the mightiest personality the world has ever seen. He turned aside the whole stream of history. As a river has to turn aside when it meets a mountain, so civilisation turned aside when it met with Christ.....Jesus was also a great thinker. All the learning and religious philosophy of the Jews passed through his brain to issue purified, universalised, sublimised in his limpid and unapproachable teaching. His swift insight cut to the very roots of life, sheer through the stupidities and prejudices of mankind. None ever lived who understood life and the human soul and the ways of men as he did."

Such language is not only extravagant but positively untrue as well. Fancy saying all that in a world wherein Buddhists outnumber Christians, and many other religions still flourish. Such extravagances and untruths must be vigorously assailed as long as men and women indulge in them, or as long as there are men and women who can listen to them with seeming approval. What people need to realise is that supernatural beliefs are not items of knowledge, but varied forms of superstition. To convince them of this truth is the great mission which Freethought is gradually fulfilling in the world, using science as its supreme instrument. In proportion as men become enlightened they are compelled to renounce superstition. The belief in witchcraft is dead, and the belief in God and the world to come is dying in consequence of the spread of intelligence. Ignorance masquerading as knowledge is doomed. The whole of Christendom is steadily getting to agree with the Jews about Jesus and with the Buddhists about God, and all the religions of the world are being supplanted by scientific philosophy. The process is painfully slow, but it is as certain as the process of the sun; and in this knowledge we rejoice.

J. T. LLOYD.

## Tales of Our Times.

BY A CYNIC.

AN "Old Parliamentary Hand," who had spent half his life on the benches of the House of Commons, and who, in the course of that period, had walked many a mile through the division lobbies, was paying a visit to the land of Utopia. Of course, he saw there many things which aroused his curiosity and evoked from him much questioning, especially on matters political; and, Old Parliamentary Hand though he was, he encountered many surprises even in that department of inquiry. For instance, he happened one day to ask an Utopian with whom he had struck up an acquaintance whether their Parliament consisted of one chamber or two.

"No chamber at all," answered the Utopian, smiling.

"What!" exclaimed the visitor. "Do you mean that you have no legislative assembly?"

"No debating assembly," said the Utopian. "We have no Parliament in the literal sense of an assembly where legislators meet and talk. In fact, our legislators never meet at all."

"Then how on earth do you get your legislative work done? And how can your legislators vote if they hear no debates?"

"Have you ever known a vote influenced by a debate?" asked the Utopian. "Have you ever known a case of a member of your Parliament completely reversing his opinion on the subject under discussion, and reversing his intended vote, during a debate and because of the debate?"

"Well, I can't say I have," replied the visitor.

"And even granting that one or two votes may occasionally be so reversed, is it likely that such reversals would ever be numerous enough to affect the result of a division?"

"Scarcely so, I allow."

"Then, as the result of the division is what really matters, if this result be not affected by the debate, what is the use of the debate?"

"But confound it," laughed the visitor, "if you have no Parliament, how do you get the votes?"

"Simply enough," replied the Utopian. "Our legislators don't meet at all—they stay at home and study the science of legislation. Our legislative measures are drafted by a committee of three or four experts under the chairmanship of the President. The Draft Bill is printed and sent to each individual legislator, who is required, after studying it carefully for a month, to mark "Aye" or "No" against each clause accordingly as he approves or disapproves of it; while any amending clauses he wishes to suggest are inserted at the foot of the Bill. If he object to the Bill in its entirety, he merely scores a deep line in red ink across the front page. When the Drafts come back to the committee, each clause having a majority of "Ayes" against it is passed, each having a majority of "Noes" is dropped, and any amending suggestions appearing in a majority of the Drafts is embodied in the Bill. And if a majority of the Drafts come back scored across in red ink the Bill is dropped altogether."

"And is that all?" gasped the visitor, in amazement.

"Yes. And you will observe that every legislator is required to vote, and does vote. We have no such thing as the passing of important measures by only a section of the legislative body."

"But what about the public?" asked the visitor. "Our Parliamentary debates are the means whereby the public become acquainted with the doings of the legislators and are enabled to form their opinions."

"With us," said the Utopian, "every Bill is published in the press as soon as it is drafted, and is open to the fullest discussion throughout the country. In Utopia," he added, drily, "the country does not base its opinions on the palaverings of its legislators. We have a sort of idea that it is the legislators' business to give effect to the opinions of the country."

"But surely your method necessitates much labor. Think of the trouble involved in sending these Draft Bills to all the legislators and getting them back again."

"There are only sixty-eight of them," said the Utopian.

"What! Only sixty-eight legislators for such a vast population—some forty-five millions, I think you told me, with an electorate of about eighteen millions. You must have some pretty big constituencies."

"We long ago discovered," said the Utopian, smiling again, "that a legislative body need not be big because the population for which it legislates are numerous. What all countries, big and small, want are good laws, and if sixty-eight intelligent men, specially selected for the purpose, cannot manage our law-making properly it is not likely that ten times that number will do it any better. As for constituencies, we have none at all. The entire country is regarded as one corporate whole."

"Good gracious! And how on earth do you manage your General Elections?"

"We have no General Elections," and this time the Utopian laughed outright at the old Parliamentarian's look of amazement. "Seventeen of our legislators retire by rotation every year, but may be re-elected. Thus, we have a small election of seventeen members every year, which is managed very simply. Every elector puts into the ballot-box a voting paper containing a list of the candidates of his choice, not exceeding seventeen. When the papers are examined, the names are tabulated according to the number of papers they appear on, and the seventeen candidates whose names head the list are elected."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the visitor. "No canvassing? No election expenses? No vituperative speeches? No rotten eggs?"

"None at all," said the Utopian. "And you will observe that this system automatically keeps the Legislature in unison with the people's will. There is no sudden drastic change, but, as public opinion gradually changes, so the Legislature changes with it. And if the people so desire, the representative body can be entirely renewed every four years."

The visitor mused aloud. "Well, well. No Parliament. No debates. No constituencies. No General Elections. And yet a perfect democracy!"

"Yes," said the Utopian, "but we have had them all in our time, and we still have some interesting relics. That great building over there used to be our House of Parliament. It is now our National Museum of Parliamentary Antiquities. If you like, I shall be very pleased to take you over it."

They went through the Museum, and the visitor was shown many interesting curiosities, such as the Mace, the Black Rod, the Lord Chancellor's Woolsack, and the Speaker's Wig. Finally, they came to a little black volume reposing on a velvet cushion under a glass case.

"This," said the Utopian, "is what we ourselves regard as the most interesting and precious relic of all. It is the book with which used to be performed a curious ceremony called 'Taking the Parliamentary Oath.' I believe this is the only copy now in existence, and it is consequently of enormous value."

So the old Parliamentarian brought home with him several new ideas, though he cannot be said to have quite assimilated them. Indeed, he hopes that the old ways, whether right or wrong, may last his time—as they very probably will.

## The Death of Artan the Culdee.

[The Culdees were a most devoted and strictly celibate order of monks, with monasteries in Scotland and Ireland from the ninth to the fourteenth centuries, Anno Domini. The monk Artan was taken prisoner by the Celts and put to death.]

It is weary I am with the night crooping slow from this  
lonesome prison tent,  
And fain for the cold white day that shall bring the  
tramp of men who desire my death,  
And I wonder will Oona's white heart bleed red when my  
heart with the spear is rent,  
I wonder will Oona's warm mouth grow chill when the  
new-dug grave chokes back my breath?  
Bitter have I been while I lay in the darkness, cramped  
with the thongs on my hands,  
Cramped am I still, though bitter no more, for Oona's lips  
are in my hair:  
My head droops on her breast as it drooped one day long  
since on the Moyle's yellow sands,  
And sure above the noise of the feet of death I can hear  
her voice crooning there!

THOMAS MOULT.

"An interesting book on rural Middlesex tells of a bygone vicar in the north-west of the county. It was a sparse parish, and an irreligious, and it hardly seemed worth while to read a service for the few worshipers that did appear on Sunday. So the vicar suggested the alternative. Would they have a service, or come round and sample the vicarage beer? And the beer had it for several Sundays, until the church's fame spread around, a full congregation was obtained, and the alternative had to be withdrawn as too expensive."—*Daily Chronicle* (Nov. 9).

## Acid Drops.

The *Daily Citizen* says it is progressing famously. We are not surprised at it. The tone of the Labor daily is just as pious as that of the *Daily News*. We imagine it is catering for much the same public. In the earliest numbers the Bishop of This and the Bishop of That had good innings. They were allowed to talk as impudently as they pleased about Labor and Religion. No wonder, then, that the following news item appeared in the *D. C.* of November 4:—

### BISHOP OF LONDON AND THE ATHEISTS.

The Bishop of London (Dr. Ingram) recalled his experiences in the East End a quarter of a century ago, when addressing a men's meeting at St. James-the-Less, Bethnal Green, yesterday afternoon.

"Twenty-five years ago, when I first came to Bethnal Green," he said, "I was shocked by the way young fellows used to go into Victoria Park on Sunday afternoons and applaud the Secularist speakers. I was so moved by this that I went into the park myself and challenged the speakers. I found it better, however, to use my own platform there. One argument I put to them was this. Can a box of letters throw themselves into a Shakespearean play? The answer was obviously 'No.' Then I used to say to them, 'Can the atoms of the universe throw themselves into the universe?' Again, the answer was 'No,' and I replied, 'Then an intelligence must have made the world.'"

We had a very poor opinion of the Bishop of London before. We hardly thought it could be poorer. But it has dropped a bit. We must now regard Dr. Ingram as hopeless. A man who talks such downright imbecility deserves treatment as one of the "feeble-minded." It really puzzles us to conceive what analogy even his intelligence—if it may be called so—can see between letters and the atoms. The latter are natural existences—the former are artificial productions. Atoms obey their own inherent laws of attraction and repulsion. Letters are specially made for a human purpose, and it is impossible for them to serve any other. We do not infer this; we know it. Human intellect is manifest in the works of Shakespeare; it is also just as manifest in the construction of letters to print them with. Letters, moreover, don't throw themselves into anything. They do not move; they are moved; and they are moved by a being who made them, or had them made, for that object. The letters have no purpose of their own; the purpose lies in the mind of the being who made and uses them. And we do not infer his existence and his action; we know them both by actual experience. Now in what respect does the atom conform to any of these conditions? There is no mark of a definite purpose about it as there is about a letter. We know nothing of its being made or being used. Its maker is simply an inference drawn from a supposition; and is, indeed, about as solid and satisfactory as the Bishop of London himself.

Mr. Spurgeon, of Cassell's, the famous publishing house, seems to have touched the bed-rock of religious bigotry. We take the following from the report of his recent speech at the Holborn Hall in connection with the National Council of Public Morals:—

"He cited an interesting illustration. Mr. E. F. Benson had written for this month's *Quiver*—a magazine that had for many years endeavored to maintain a lofty tone—an article on "The Religion of a Middle-Aged Man." As the son of an Archbishop and a writer of repute, they thought that he was above suspicion, but a Christian society had written to him (the speaker) that because of their objection to the article they should refuse to sell that month's number of the *Quiver*."

What would these people say to the *Freethinker*? We fear they would be speechless with horror.

The Nonconformist Conscience is capable of anything. A correspondent sends us a cutting—a bit behind date now, but too characteristic to be missed—from the *Daily News* of October 15. It is a letter from the Rev. T. L. B. Westerdale, of Streattham, backing up the Bulgarian Premier's appeal to England. "M. Gnesshoff's appeal," the reverend gentleman says, "comes not merely from a bitterly oppressed people, but from fellow-Christians fighting for religious freedom against the Mohammedan Power." This is utterly false, for Bulgaria made herself independent of Turkey a few years ago. She was not "bitterly oppressed" or oppressed at all. It was not for that reason that she took up arms. Neither did Greece, nor Serbia, nor Montenegro. It was only in Albania and Macedonia that the Turk had any power left. As a matter of fact, also, religious toleration, with the full right of public worship for the Christians, has always existed in Turkey. No corresponding right for Mohammedans has been allowed in Christian Europe until quite recently. Surely the *Daily News* knows this. Why then did it insert this Christian clergyman's letter knowing it to

be untrue? The answer is the statement we started with. The Nonconformist Conscience is capable of anything.

Even the *Star* is not beyond reproach in this respect. It is generally fair even to Freethinkers. But not when the Cross is making faces at the Crescent. Christian papers have to stand up for the Cross then. That is why the *Star* declined to insert a carefully written letter from us correcting the blunder of a *Star* correspondent who tried to make it appear that Shelley sang as a warrior of the Cross against the Crescent—whereas he looked forward to both being lost in the wider fellowship of Humanity. We say plainly, without boasting, that the *Star* had no right to refuse our letter insertion. It would not have done so in the old days. Mustard wasn't as bad as cocoa.

What lies we get about the Turks from Christian sources of information! They were all engaged in a new pastime—that of running away from their enemies. The heroic Bulgarians were solely occupied in chasing fugitives. Yet the reports alleged terrific numbers of slain. How did that happen? The truth has now come to light that the Turkish soldiers fought splendidly whenever they had a chance. When they had no food for their stomachs, no ammunition for their rifles, and no means of replying to the devastating artillery of their well-equipped foes, they had no chance whatever. What happened is related by Mr. M. H. Donohoe, of the *Daily Chronicle*:—

"A stream of fugitives is arriving every hour of the day and night. Most of them are frost-bitten, wind-blistered, and in the last stage of weariness and hunger; and covered with mud from head to foot.

"It is difficult to estimate the number of those who perished in the concluding stage of the terrible forced march towards Chatalja, but it must be enormous.

"The usually placid Turkish soldier has now become a dangerous desperado maddened by starvation. Every house and hut along the line of retreat has been searched in the hope of finding a fragment of food—for even a crust of stale bread is a prize. The horses which were killed or which died from exhaustion have been eaten raw by the famished soldiers."

Such were the sufferings of the Turkish soldiers who had not fallen, as so many thousands of their comrades had, on the bloodiest of battle-fields. Think of it. Then think of the sufferings of the poor women and children whose homes were burnt down by the victors for "strategic" reasons—and cry "War, war, glorious war!" if you can.

The *New Age* must exercise care. Commenting on the recent decision of Parliament to reintroduce flogging—with the blessing of such Christians as Mr. McKenna and Mr. Will Crooks—the editor says that he would not favor flogging on any account. And even "if God commanded it we should tell him to go to the devil." The sentiment is excellent, and does the writer credit. All the same it is dealing with religious subjects in a manner calculated to shock Christians; and that, according to legal decisions, is blasphemy, and a punishable offence.

One of the suggestions before the Select Committee on Patent Medicines was that there should be a censorship of advertisements. The object was to protect the public against advertisements that made "extravagant and unsupported claims." There seems no end to the censorship that are being suggested and established, and it bids fair to end in everybody being everybody else's censor. But a censorship of the kind suggested, if it were once established, might be made applicable to others beside the vendors of patent medicines. There is the pulpit, for example. The claims made for quack medicines are nothing compared to the claims made for quack religion. In their way the clergy make exactly the same claims as do the vendors of proprietary medicines; and if no direct charge is made, the "Leave it to you, sir," method is quite as effective in fleeing the public.

We do not know whether any of our readers have observed the fact, but the testimonials that appear in the patent medicine advertisements are, in substance, identical with those that are published on behalf of religion. They usually run in this wise: "For many years my life was a wasted one. I paid little attention to my family; I neglected my business; I was ill-tempered with all about me; my life was rapidly becoming a wreck. On a fortunate occasion I attended a mission service [or bought a box of your pills]. From that time my life underwent a complete alteration. I became a better husband and parent, more attentive to my business, a better man all round. The benefits I have experienced from [the Gospel] your pills are incalculable. It is

now one of my greatest joys to [preach the Gospel] recommend your pills to those who were in the same terrible condition as I was." The words in brackets may either be read or left out. They are merely inserted here to show the complete identity of the two things.

We admire straightforwardness, even while we disagree with its object. For this reason we quite appreciate the character of a recent appeal sent out by the Lord's Day Observance Society. The Committee, in issuing this circular, protest against the disclaimer of religious motive, which wilfully discards "the strongest argument" against Sunday entertainments and the like. This is quite plain and straightforward, and puts the matter on an understandable basis. And it stands out in striking contrast to the greasy and hypocritical protestations of Nonconformist parsons and others who protest that their concern for Sunday is of a social nature. There is only one real objection to Sunday entertainments, and that is the religious objection. Everything else is a mere cover for this. And the Lord's Day Observance Society properly says that repudiation of the religious motive conciliates nobody. And, it might add, deceives nobody capable of thinking about the matter.

But at this point we are bound to part company with the L. D. O. S. For it asserts that Sabbath-breaking is directly responsible for "such national calamities as the drought of last year, the ruined harvest of this year, the destructive cattle plague, the social unrest, the menacing foreign outlook, the disunion and strife among religious bodies"—all these are "national chastisements" for our disregard of the Lord's Day. This is a fearsome list, and the justice of it is not very apparent. To take, for example, the bad harvest and cattle plague. Of all classes, Sunday entertainments have least vogue among the agricultural class. Concerts, etc., on Sunday, are necessarily confined to the towns. Yet, observe the Lord's sense of justice. The townsman goes to his picture show or concert, or to his excursion, and the Lord is angered thereat. So straightway he leaves the man of the town to pursue his wicked career with an unruffled mind and proceeds to pummel the poor stockbreeder and farmer who has done nothing at all. More curious still, if the Lord's Day is ever to be again strictly observed, it must be brought about by the activity of the religious bodies. But instead of inspiring these to united and energetic effort, the Lord foments "disunion and strife" among them. The policy is clearly unjust and nonsensical; and we would seriously advise the Lord's Day Observance Society to prayerfully consult the Lord as to whether they have not quite mistaken his intentions and the nature of his methods.

While we are dealing with such uncanny matters, we may as well call attention to an article by "Stella" in the *Portsmouth Times* for November 2. "Stella"—poor innocent soul!—has only just discovered that there are such things as Socialist Sunday-schools in existence. This is bad enough, but they have "been discovered next door to Church Sunday-schools," which is very much worse. More horrible still, the two schools are sometimes "only divided by a thin partition." In these schools the children are taught "envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness." At this point "Stella" evidently paused to read some literature, because she says the Catechism used says: "We desire to be just and loving to our fellow men and women, to work together as brothers and sisters, to be kind to every living creature, and so help to form a new society, with justice as its foundation and love as its law." But "Stella" is not to be deceived. Nothing can overcome the fact of their being next to Church schools, with only a thin partition between. Moreover, she knows that these children "in their processions through the streets of London carry banners bearing the terrible words, 'There is no God.'" That settles it. No wonder that infidel literature is "too awful to quote and too terrible to contemplate." "Stella's" soul is wrenched in agony, and she promises to return to the subject in another issue. Meanwhile, we congratulate the editor of the *Portsmouth Times* on having so truthful and so intelligent a contributor.

Rev. F. Hastings has been addressing some plain talk to the London Congregational Union. "Ministers," he concluded, "must think less of salaries and more of opportunities." Good advice, no doubt; but it's hundreds of years too late. Knowledge is so widespread that Christianity fails intellectually now, as well as morally. That's the trouble. And there's no cure for it.

Jack Johnson, the colored heavy-weight champion of the pugilistic world, was very ill-advised to beat a white man.

The whites will never forgive him for it. They have been trying to "down" him—good Christians as they are!—and they have pretty nearly succeeded at last. He ought to have been more circumspect in a land where black Christians are not allowed to worship "Our Father" in the same church with white Christians.

The Bishop of Birmingham is in favor of Sunday cinematograph shows if the Churches, or godly committees, run them. But he doesn't want to see them licensed, because that would render them a "money-making entertainment"—and everybody knows the strong objection the clergy in general, and the Bishops in particular, have against money-making. The Bishop of Birmingham only makes £3,500 a year himself. From that height of destitution he looks down upon the cinematograph millionaires.

"Thinking," the Bishop of Birmingham says, "is the rarest occupation of the average human mind." True. And it explains the long prosperity of Christianity.

The Rev. Dr. Newton Marshall is engaged in preaching a course of sermons by way of answer to questions put to him by young men. Unless the young men are almost miraculously unacquainted with Christian arguments, they will be quite well acquainted with all that Dr. Marshall has to tell them. When, for instance, the question is put, "Why does God permit pain?" the answer is that we cannot have happiness without pain, and God wants us to develop ourselves, through pain, in order to share his life. Dr. Marshall must be very simple if he imagines that a reply of this kind will satisfy a young man with any intelligence worth talking about. If a man believes in God, it is useless telling him that he arranged things as they are; that is part of his belief already. It is also beside the mark to point out that some good is achieved through suffering. This is not what is troubling inquirers. Their trouble is why that method of instruction or development should have been adopted by a God who was quite able to have arranged a better and more agreeable plan. Really, the way in which the fossilised intelligence of the pulpit goes on answering questions that are not put, and propounding new conundrums instead of solving old ones, depresses even while it furnishes amusement.

"I visited Ruislip Church, Middlesex," a correspondent writes, "and over the doorway is carved 'This is the gate of Heaven.' I tried the door and found it locked. Perhaps Peter knew I was coming."

Among "Recent Wills" are the Rev. Arthur Upton, M.A., 82, of Stowting Rectory, Hythe, Kent, £52,450, and the Rev. William Richmond, M.A., 85, rector of Rockhampton, Gloucester, £45,881. Have they met each other? Have they both met the preacher of the Sermon on the Mount? And how did they like it?

Another poor Jesusite! Rev. Canon Ernest Compton Gill, of the Rectory, Down Hatherley, Gloucestershire, left £34,645. How could a camel with a hump like that go through the needle's eye?

The Baptist Union of South Africa has been holding its thirty-fourth annual assembly. The report sent us from the *Rand Daily Mail* of October 17 includes some noticeable remarks from Mr. Dowell Ellis, the Mayor of Johannesburg. He was not at all pleased with the quantity or quality of the city's religion. He said that "he was a little piqued when, on assuming the office of Mayor, he had preferred the request that a short prayer should preface the Council meetings, and the request was not acceded to." Those who denied his request would suffer for it in some way or other. There was a shocking state of things in Johannesburg: "Not half, nor even twenty-five per cent. of the children were getting taught the Bible or any other religion." This is sad. The Mayor of Johannesburg has our sympathy. And a city which doesn't take his advice on matters of religion is doomed.

It appears from another extract from the same South African journal that religion is disappearing generally in South Africa. This fact was loudly lamented by a local clergyman in an interview. He confessed that in one district, containing 20,000 white inhabitants, the seating capacity of all the churches does not exceed 2,000.

"As long as I occupy this pulpit," said the Rev. William Lindsay, of Glasgow, "the people here will never have a pleasant Sunday afternoon." Was the announcement necessary?



## Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, November 17, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, Regent-street, London, W. : at 7.30, "Jesus and Mohammed: a Comparison and a Contrast."

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

## To Correspondents.

J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—November 17, West Ham—24, Leicester. December 15, West Ham.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1912.—Previously acknowledged, £244 4s. 1d. Received since:—James Robertson (Edinburgh) —collected by him some time ago for a lecturing visit by Mr. Foote, which did not occur—£2 10s; B. L., £2; F. De Lisle (N. Zealand), £1 1s.; County School Teacher, 5s.; Newcastle-on-Tyne N. S. S. Branch, £1; E. Raggett, 2s. 6d.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance, secretary, acknowledges: E. G., 10s.

W. GUELKE.—Sorry we cannot make any fresh lecturing engagements at present—though a visit to Bournemouth would have its compensations. Some other lecturer might be able to pay the town a visit. What do you say?

R. MORRISON.—Would it were otherwise, but as it is we are pleased to hear that the *Freethinker* is your "best friend now," and that you read it over and over during your confinement to bed. We shall continue sending the paper to you as long as you want it. We are also glad that you "take great delight in reading" our *Flowers of Freethought*, which Mr. Jessop (amidst other benefactions) has sent you. He is "one of the best."

JOHN JONES (Ashton).—That's it. The world is too full of the wrong sort of people. If it were full of the right sort of people there would be very few "problems" left. There will be no "new type of individuals" without Freethought.

E. B.—Thanks for the passage from Metchnikoff, which we were already acquainted with. Of course, the point involved, while very interesting, is entirely aside from the point involved in our article; as no doubt you recognise.

ALBERT LARKIN.—You are mistaken. We never managed to get *Bible Women* written.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

T. SHORE.—The matter all came originally out of *John Bull*. It was simply dished up again in South Africa.

E. T. JARVIS.—See "Acid Drops." Thanks.

A. C. WELLS.—We may print the substance of the lecture, with additions, some day, but not yet. See paragraph for the rest.

ALEXANDER WILSON.—Not without merit, but hardly up to the mark for publication yet.

"CONVERT."—Sorry we can't tell you when you will have Freethought lectures at Barry Dock. Your wish for the increased sale of the *Freethinker* is being fulfilled, though slowly. Thanks for cuttings.

B. L.—Thanks also for good wishes.

PRÆTORIA FREETHINKER.—Thanks.

F. DE LISLE (New Zealand) says it annoys him to see how the President's Honorarium Fund drags along. He wishes he were a rich man to contribute a good round sum, but he sends what he can afford, and hopes all other Freethinkers will do the same.

OLD READER.—We sent Mr. W. M. Meredith a copy of the *Freethinker* containing our article on "George Meredith's Last Letter." It was forwarded in an envelope in care of his publishers, and posted with our own hand. Mr. Meredith has made no sign. Apparently he means to allow his collection of his father's letters to close with a deliberate falsehood. How he imagines that this can do honor to his father's memory passes our comprehension. It is not our intention to let this matter rest where it stands. If Mr. Meredith's object is to minimise his father's Freethought, it is our duty to defeat that miserable object as far as we possibly can, and we shall do it.

R. H. ROSETTI.—Glad to hear Mr. Cohen's lecture at the Workmen's Hall, Stratford, was well attended in spite of the downpour of rain. We hope Mr. Lloyd will have as good a meeting to-night (Nov. 17).

E. RAGGETT.—Glad to hear of "the good you get from the *Freethinker*." We note your thanks to all who write for it.

S. WILSON.—We dealt with Musgrave Reade's case some years ago when he started the "converted infidel" business, and we see no reason for constantly advertising him. What is there in the pamphlet to make it important? A nobody turns Freethinker and then goes back to Christianity. He would be a nobody still if he hadn't gone back. Thousands of Christians turn Freethinkers and never go back. Some of them of far greater ability than Musgrave Reade.

J. G. BARTRAM.—Pleased to know the Newcastle Branch is getting £1 worth of literature for distribution as well as subscribing to the President's Honorarium Fund. Glad to have thanks of Tyneside Shelleys for our recent defence of the great poet.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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. This Fund is being raised by the Editor of the *Freethinker* by request of the N. S. S. Executive. Subscriptions should therefore be sent direct to G. W. Foote, 2 Newcastle-street, London, E.C. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to him.]

Previously acknowledged, £69 4s. 3d. Received since:—Council School Teacher, 1s; Arthur Firth, 2s. 6d.; E. G., 10s.; J. Griffiths, 5s.

## Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote's audience at Queen's (Minor) Hall goes on improving. Sunday's assembly, to hear the lecture on "Did Jesus Christ Ever Live?" was the largest as yet of the present course. Many strangers were present and a very gratifying proportion of ladies, who took all the points of the lecture with the quickness of their sex. No one could wish for a more interested and appreciative audience. Mr. Victor Roger made an excellent chairman—as usual. He invited questions and discussion with a persuasive smile, but none was forthcoming. It is to be hoped the "enemy" will "buck up" in the immediate future.

Mr. Foote's subject at Queen's Hall this evening (Nov. 17) is to be "Jesus and Mohammed: a Comparison and a Contrast." Should it be altered an announcement of the fact will appear in the Saturday and weekly papers in which these lectures are advertised.

There was a much better attendance at the Public Hall, Croydon, on Sunday, when Mr. A. B. Moss lectured on "Why is Christianity Dying Out?" A very pleasing feature was the presence of ladies who were very hearty in their applause. Mr. W. Heaford occupied the chair, and, in introducing Mr. Moss, said it was not the first time he had appeared on a Freethought platform in Croydon, as many years ago he took part in Freethought propaganda on Duppas Hill. At the conclusion of an able address, several questions were addressed to the lecturer, and two gentlemen spoke in opposition.

Mr. Cohen occupies the Public Hall (Croydon) platform this evening (Nov. 17), his subject being "The Benefit of Unbelief." No doubt the local "saints" will try to bring along some local Christians to hear what is sure to be an instructive and interesting discourse.

Here is an extract from another encouraging letter:—

"I am one of nine children, all Christians but myself. Of course, as soon as I was able to understand, I was stuffed with the idea of God, and intimidated as to my behavior on what my parents (and others likeminded) called 'the Lord's Day'. Six years ago I was baptised and became a member of the Baptist denomination. All went well for a time. Soon after I left my teens I gradually became very perplexed concerning the feasibility of a soul, heaven, hell, hereafter, and God..... Ample assistance was afforded me in defending my new opinions in the pages of the *Freethinker*. I am now a regular reader."

The letter is much longer, but this extract must suffice.

## The Scope and Limits of Eugenics.

EUGENICS is a term coined from the Greek, and relates to those children that are born of sound and serviceable stocks. Eugenics may be regarded as the final designation of the new science of which the late Francis Galton was both parent and apostle. Galton first chose the term "stirpiculture" for his great idea of scientific breeding, but this was subsequently abandoned in favor of the term "eugenics." For many years Galton conducted elaborate and extensive investigations concerning hereditary genius and the nature and nurture of the higher characteristics of the human family as a whole. In 1883 he described his new science as the investigation of the conditions under which men of a high type are produced. Another definition is as follows:—

"Eugenics may be defined as the science which deals with those social agencies that influence mentally or physically the racial qualities of future generations."

Although eugenics has the enthusiastic support of a large number of medical specialists, and is highly approved of by some of our ablest sociologists, it has not escaped ridicule, satire, and obstinate opposition. No new truth has ever yet been ushered into the world without encountering the bitter, and often unscrupulous, antagonism of the less progressive sections of society. Some calmly assume that there is no problem to discuss; others take for granted the proposition that all the civilised peoples are on the upward rather than on the downward grade. Another party contends that the methods favored by the eugenists are dangerous to the liberty of the subject, and that the evils which eugenics seeks to eliminate would be intensified if its principles were put into practice. It is further objected that the laws which govern the breeding of animals cannot be made to extend to human reproduction. But the main principles of eugenics easily withstand this combination of objections. For whether the civilised stocks are deteriorating or not, a vast sum of sin, suffering, and shame might be avoided if eugenic principles were applied even on a minor scale.

The science of eugenics has a negative as well as a positive aspect. The negative, being the more practical, usually takes precedence. Its main object is to discourage the increase of diseased stocks. The positive policy, on the other hand, tends to further the propagation of healthy stocks. Under applied negative eugenics the breeding of dipsomaniacs, deaf-mutes, epileptics, and other degenerates would be limited or even altogether prevented. Cancer and consumption also cry aloud for similar treatment. All these maladies appear to be hereditary—in any case, the progeny of parents who suffer from these diseases, tend to inherit them. After prosecuting most minute inquiries into family histories, Professor Riffel was compelled to conclude that consumption and other affections make their appearance mainly, and almost exclusively, in certain families, and that the offspring nearly always inherit susceptibility to infection. The country is annually spending over thirty millions sterling in ministering to the "halt and infirm, the weak and the maim, and the imbecile." Even the clergy are beginning to be impressed by the national importance of this problem. Quite recently, the Archbishop of York declared that a marriage may be considered void if unmistakable evidences of lunacy or contagious disease on either side of the parties to the marriage contract have been suppressed prior to the matrimonial union. But, unfortunately enough, the mischief is usually done before any discovery of this nature is made. Surely it would be more rational to inquire into the antecedents of the candidates for nuptial bliss before any form of marriage, civil or religious, is permitted to take place.

Epilepsy is one of the most dreadful diseases which attacks the human race. This malady has always been feared more greatly than insanity itself

by savage, barbaric, and civilised peoples alike. Among the cultured races of antiquity, as well as with the ancient Jews, it formed the foundation of the doctrine of demoniacal possession. Although not rapidly fatal in its action, epilepsy is one of the most agonising and hopeless afflictions with which mankind is cursed. It unfits most of its victims for the necessary duties of life. An epileptic may, at any moment, be reduced to a state of unconsciousness, or he may be changed from a harmless and affectionate friend into a dangerous maniac. Where life is prolonged these poor creatures nearly always descend to a state of drivelling idiocy. Dr. Strahan is satisfied that quite 12,000 deaths are annually due to this disease. And it seems that apart from those instances in which the affliction is traceable to accident or misadventure, it is invariably hereditary. Epilepsy is as strongly hereditary as melancholia, suicidal mania, drunkenness, and gout. The evidence for this is overwhelming. From this follows the unquestionable conclusion that epileptics should not be permitted to add to the population. It is true that many of these poor wretches are already guarded in asylums and unions, but as the law stands, neither the sufferer nor society can be protected until the disease has so firmly established itself that its victim may be legally certified as insane. But before this stage is reached the epileptic is frequently the parent of a family. And it is from such families that our mental, moral, and physical degenerates are largely drawn. With epileptics moral persuasion seems out of the question. The State has no logical alternative save segregation or sterilisation.

Sir William Aitken, Sir James Paget, and other authorities have dwelt upon the hereditary nature of cancer in the most emphatic terms. This agonising disease is probably the most revolting and mortal of all. It is indifferent to age or sex; it spares neither rich nor poor. Having settled on its victim, cancer never leaves him until kindly death intervenes. Unfortunately, we have many reasons for believing that this horrible disease is rapidly spreading. Its increase was for a time denied, but its steady growth is now generally admitted. Sir Spencer Wells proved that cancer has become more common throughout Great Britain and Ireland, as also in the United States of America. Concerning the origin of this loathsome disease very little is definitely determined. Some leading vegetarians attribute the spread of cancer to a diet much too largely composed of flesh foods. There is very little evidence in favor of this view, and many facts tell directly against it.

"The death-rate from cancer is actually higher in Scotland, where the diet of the majority is largely vegetable, than in England, where it is as largely animal. If this theory were true, the disease would have been rife among such peoples as the American Indians, who lived almost wholly on the spoils of the chase, whereas we know that such was not the case."<sup>\*</sup>

The conclusion best warranted by the facts is that cancer is a disease which denotes the degeneration of the stock in which it makes its appearance. An intimate relationship between cancer and other admittedly degenerate conditions such as scrofula, suicide, and insanity is well known to exist. Sir William Gull long since pointed out that scrofulous children were frequently the offspring of parents tainted with cancerous disease, or were members of families in which cancer was common. Again, the frequency with which cancer arises in families which betray the suicidal, epileptic, or insane diathesis is a matter of notoriety. The matrimonial alliance of cancerous with consumptive stocks forms a combination fraught with the direst danger to the offspring of such unions. From these pathological phenomena we should learn the truth that we run grave risks of cursing the innocent unborn if we countenance the intermarriage of degenerate families.

Apart from the fact that eugenics would discourage or prevent the union of cancerous and kindred degenerate stocks—where such stocks are

\* Strahan, *Marriage and Disease*.

positively known to exist—the science of race breeding is powerless against the insidious inroads of cancerous disease. It is an exasperating circumstance that cancer is one of those diseases which in the vast majority of cases cannot be recognised until life is fairly advanced.

"Many who bear within them, and convey to their children, the tendency to this disease, die of some other affection, without ever becoming aware of the curse they have borne about with them through life, and handed on to their children. To this fact is to be attributed those numerous cases where we find several children of parents who have died without displaying a sign of cancer, dying one after another of malignant disease."

The only counsel which science can give to those of known cancerous stock who have determined to undertake the risks of matrimony is, that they studiously avoid all those whose family history is tainted with hereditary disease. Those whose escutcheons are blotted by idiocy, epilepsy, scrofula, drunkenness, or insanity should at all costs be shunned.

Tubercular disease, particularly when it assumes the form of consumption, is a terrible scourge to the human race. It has cursed mankind from the earliest times. It adapts itself to every climate and is common to every race, and at the present moment is actively occupied in decimating every civilised community on the planet. It is answerable for one-eighth of the annual death-rate. Directly considered, eugenics is almost helpless in any attempt to stay its relentless hand. But indirectly something may be done to mitigate the evil. Consumption, scrofula, cancer, and various forms of insanity run together in families. And by preventing the propagation of epileptics and other degenerates, the curse of consumption may, to some extent, be averted. In all probability, however, other methods of preventive treatment will be devised by science. The bacillus responsible for the disease was discovered by Koch in 1882, and it appears probable that successful medical treatment of this pestilent micro-organism is merely a matter of time. One tremendous obstacle in the path of eugenics is the obstinate fact that many of those most prone to phthisis are exceptionally attractive people. They are frequently distinguished by—

"a clear complexion, fine skins, and well-cut and often beautiful features. The lips are red and the teeth white, the eyes are large and full, the eyelashes are long, curved, and silky. They are frequently highly intellectual, but are all doomed to an early grave."

Any deliberate bar to procreation among consumptives seems difficult to erect. Men like Mill, Kingdon Clifford, Buckle, Spinoza, Keats, and Mozart were tubercular, and the world would have suffered an incalculable loss had they never lived and worked in it. Another difficulty arises from the fact that even epileptics are sometimes men of marked ability. Julius Cæsar, Alexander the Great, and the first Napoleon were all subject to epileptic fits. Cowper was a pronounced melancholiac; Addison and Dr. Johnson suffered from the same disease in a minor form.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

#### ANECDOTAL.

"Well, Lord Rossmore," said the Duchess of Connaught, "I think it is my turn to try and relate something funny, so I'll tell you what happened to the Duke and myself coming up here. At every station where the train stopped a porter came to our carriage with a foot-warmer, and at last the Duke got so annoyed that, forgetting that the same thing had occurred all down the line, he said to the man:—'Go away; I've told you three or four times already that I won't have a foot warmer.'"

"'Ach, Duke, darlin', don't be angry,' answered the porter. 'Sure an' it's stone cold.'"—Lord Rossmore, "Things I Can Tell."

## The New Humanity and the Modern School.

[The present article has passed through many phases before I translated myself into English. It was first written by me in French, to be translated into Spanish, and then it was published in Valencia for *Humanidad Nueva*. I subsequently retranslated it into French and made several modifications therein both as regards language and treatment, in order that the article might be translated and read at the National Congress of Roumanian school teachers and professors at Jassy, last July. The paper was well received and afterwards published in our Roumanian contemporary, *Ratiunea* (Bucharest); then in *La Libre Pensée internationale* (Lausanne); and, finally, in our Portuguese contemporary, *O Livre Pensamento* (Lisbon). The chequered history of this article will, perhaps, explain certain rhetorical features, and also why the Church of Rome receives special treatment here, though without any sparing of other schools of theological malefactors. This article, in its present form, was written originally for our Roumanian friends as the continuation of the article in the *Freethinker* of November 10.—W.H.]

IN every land the old Church, that venerable champion of the ineptitudes and barbarisms of the credulous, dogmatic, and persecuting Middle Ages, is losing ground every day. Science, the daughter of the free and enlightened thought of humanity, has a long while ago proclaimed the bankruptcy of theology and of all the systems of spiritual exploitation based on pretended revelations made by an unknown and unknowable God.

Columbus discovered America, and the brave Columbuses of Science and Freethought, from Galileo to Servetus and Bruno down to the martyrs of these modern days, like Ferrer, the last but not least of them all, have discovered that new religion which is destined to become the religion of the Humanity of to-morrow—a religion of love and solidarity amongst mankind and of the different families of nations.

The past was the slave of obscurantism, and it knelt with devotion before the worst superstitions. To-day, Humanity is rising to its feet; she looks into the future with undimmed eye, conscious of her dignity, and more and more conscious of the certitude of final victory in the struggle that she is waging against the privileged ignorance which prides itself upon being the inheritor of the past. The School will yet win against the Church, and the educator will supplant the holy mystery man.

A new Humanity! These words are at once a program of social claims and of intellectual liberty, a declaration of war against superstition, a defiance flung in the teeth of all tyrants in every land, against those who, whether on the throne or at the altar, treat the people merely as a vile herd of beasts, with backs only fit to be laden with burdens. It is a program that means the abandonment of the superannuated ideas and errors of a past which is doomed to death and oblivion; it means the apotheosis of the modern scientific truths which assure to us, in the immediate future, and here below on this earth suffused with the sunshine of hope and love, a degree of material, moral, and intellectual well-being of which we are as yet unable to form a full and perfect idea.

A new Humanity! Yes, we must change the nature of mankind; we must transform these ferocious tigers and those sheep, now the stupid slaves of hypocritical wolves, who keep guard over them to-day in order to be sure of devouring them to-morrow, into self-conscious and loving beings willing to help and protect each other. And in order to bring about this miracle, as the theologians would say, or in order to purify humanity, as we would put it, from the ancestral instincts which it has inherited from the distant ages in which the wild beast in us was stronger than the man, it is absolutely necessary to begin at the beginning, that is to say, with the child, and to guide its dawning intelligence towards the beneficent sunlight of science, and so give to its emotions, to its sympathies, to its aspirations, a humanitarian direction in conformity with the ideal which we entertain in reference to all human beings, and especially in

reference to those who will be the child's close companions during the voyage of life, that is to say, the men and women who will compose the Humanity of the future.

The School, with character renewed in accordance with the principles of modern pedagogy, is the veritable ark of salvation of our civilisation, the victorious architect whose hands will yet build the temple of a regenerated Humanity.

The child is the young plant, the soaring spirit of Humanity, the new life which, tended with love and gladness and sincerity, will enrich the earth with a forest of vigorous men, of virtuous women, and intelligent citizens. You have only to neglect the human sapling, and soon you will find that the soil is covered with briars and thorns, and with all the poisonous weeds that we know as religious folly, patriotic hate, intellectual, moral, and economic servitude, the growth of which disfigures the face of society and spreads suffering and misery on every hand. The cathedrals will then be rich and numerous and the schools poor and neglected. The laboring classes, crushed by work and poverty, will become more and more brutalised with alcohol. The churches and the drink-shops will abound with clients, and superstition will anchor itself deep into the soul of mankind.

The laboratory from which we shall produce the new type of man is the school renewed and modernised on sound principles of pedagogy; it will furnish us with the battalions for the assault upon the citadels of religion; it will destroy the prejudices of the past, its dogmas and its gods. The school run on purely scientific and rationalist lines will kill the secular hatreds engendered by ignorance, which—and this must always be borne in mind—is suspicious by nature and vindictive and persecuting by sheer necessity, for ignorance has no conception of any form of life excepting one of continuous conflict and the rule of brute force.

No one has any right to say that it is impossible to change human nature. The history of our race, the discoveries of archæology, demonstrate the fact that human nature has been improved and transformed to a very considerable degree. Mankind has uplifted itself step by step from the lowest depths of animalism, and has risen progressively to the heights on which we now stand. These, indeed, are not the highest pinnacles of human possibility, for even at our present stage of development we can see the summit above us clothed with a light which pierces through all fogs of doubt and quickens our hopes of betterment with a newer and stronger vitality than ever before.

This assurance of hope is begotten in us, not only from the contemplation of the radical transformations which man as an animal has undergone in his physical nature; it springs, above all, from what we know concerning the profound modifications through which our moral character has passed in order for man to become a social being in lieu of the ferocious and selfish beast that he was originally. A ferocious animal and a feeble mind, on the one hand; a social being and an enlightened intelligence, on the other: these are man's points of departure and arrival. All this was the work of many centuries, of fifty centuries or fifty times fifty centuries, or more, of weary struggles and of age-long endeavors.

Shall we say that the stages through which we have to pass are longer or more difficult than those through which we have passed? No, a thousand times, no! What now remains to be accomplished is nothing more than a question of completion, of finishing a process, a matter of adaptation to an existence already foreseen and determined by a host of thinkers and philosophers who have clearly foreshadowed it as the goal of their speculations.

Man conquered this planet, armed only with his nails and teeth, with sticks and stones, and to-day we moderns have the formidable weapons that science is renewing and perfecting without any signs of exhaustion in her fecundity of invention, with the result that there is no longer any essential relation-

ship between the life of the most intelligent animal and man. It will not be long, relatively speaking, before science will furnish us with the means to eliminate from man the residual relics of the primitive brute that he once was.

But, in order that this may come about, it is necessary to humanise our institutions, our schools, and all our educational methods. It is necessary that these different *milieux* should no longer be so many clogs hindering the march of progress, but the seed plots from which there shall burst forth the generous and altruistic sentiments which ought to be the characteristics of every society in which the all-embracing law is that of justice, reason, love, and fraternal devotion.

The child is at the mercy of family, school, and of all the other circumstances in which he evolves. If these outer conditions are compounded of error, selfishness, prejudice, and injustice, how can you expect that the child will not become the perfect resemblance of these unjust, evil, and ignorant surroundings? Every crime, every species of tyranny, and all types of moral ugliness will become possible in conditions of this kind. The slave of his animal passions, the submissive slave of the strong, ready to suffer, and willing, in his turn, to make others suffer, the child will know nothing as to the means of ameliorating his lot, and will degenerate as the slave of all kinds of religious and social aberrations.

Of all European nations, the Spaniards have most suffered from the nefarious influence of religion. Religion has poisoned the public and social life of Spain, and has plunged the soul of the people into the abyss of an impossible and absurd belief in the supernatural. The work of Ferrer will stand as the great event in the pedagogic history of Spain. Ferrer is dead, but he had erected under the nose of the omnipotent Church the school without dogmas, without God, the school of the practical and the ideal, and the Church, understanding the danger to her influence that lurked in this new institution, did not hesitate for a moment, and submerged in Ferrer's blood the work of the innovator: for the school is the mortal enemy of the Church. In stifling all scruple in order to commit this judicial assassination, the Catholic clergy illustrated by one more example the profound truth that Catholicism (in that respect, like all religions, when they have the upper hand) is an oppressive power whose strength is all the greater in proportion as the people whom it oppresses is more ignorant, and that her moral value is in an inverse ratio to the education of mankind. It might have had some value amongst barbarians, but is of no utility to civilised man.

The superb manifestations of international solidarity provoked throughout the world by the murder of Ferrer are for us the undeniable demonstration that humanity is no longer limited by frontiers, and irremediably separated by the barriers of language or by climatic conditions, but that the humanity of the future is already born in the heart of millions of men who are conscious of the destinies of the race.

The future, then, belongs to us, and the generous aspirations of all the progressive and regenerating forces of the intellectual *élite* would be the consoling testimonies to remind us of the fact, even if we were inclined to forget it.

There is thus a pitched battle between the priest and the educator, between the Church and the school. We shall conquer. Our intellectual horizon enlarges exactly in proportion as the educator teaches our children the mighty discoveries made in their laboratories by our great investigators, like Darwin, Haeckel, and a hundred others. The salvation of humanity, then, is to be found in the rigorous application of the principles of Rationalism, and not in the cloudy preachings of the defenders of metaphysical systems enshrined in religions that are irreconcilable amongst themselves, and especially so with science, the true providence of humanity.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

**Juvenile Cruelty.**

We read one day last month of a horrible case of cruelty perpetrated by three boys, aged respectively eight, nine, and eleven years, who deliberately stabbed a horse with a fork over and over again in his legs and body, inflicting twenty-four wounds, and finally stuck the fork into his hoof so deeply that it was with difficulty extracted. After this they proceeded to stone some geese, ducks, and fowls, and beat them with sticks, killing several and crippling others.

The magistrates fined them 10s., and expressed regret that they had no power to order them a flogging.

With all due deference we venture to think that something much more drastic and far-reaching than the flogging of a few individual offenders is needed to cope with or eradicate this kind of evil. And it often seems a pity to us that so many people pin their faith to the efficacy of "a good flogging" to remedy all the ills to which they object, as it is apt to distract their attention from the real and only permanent and complete remedy for them.

True, a flogging might have the effect of deterring these particular boys from repeating the offence, especially when they would be likely to be seen or found out. It would, however, have no effect on the crop of other young barbarians who are growing up around us, and are likely to continue to do so unless we all mend our ways.

When all that can has been said in excuse of such savage behavior on the ground of thoughtlessness, ignorance, and dullness of brain in the miscreants, it still remains very discreditable to us as a nation and as a race that such dull, deficient, and undeveloped young savages are born amongst us. The whole community must share the blame. Magistrates cannot settle the matter by saying someone ought to be severely punished. Children's characters and behavior are mainly the result, firstly of their parents' qualities, and secondly of their surroundings in life. When we consider impartially the nature of these two great factors in the lives of tens of thousands of our population, we can only wonder that the large majority are so good as they really are.

With the qualities and characters of the parents of the present day we cannot do much, but we can do everything to see that the parents of the next generation shall give their children a better start, and the way to do this is to raise the surroundings and influences of the present generation of children, and in this we all share the responsibility.

Children are highly imitative. Last month we gave some painful particulars about children in France cutting into living animals, and excusing themselves on the ground that they were only doing as the doctors did. In the same way, we think all excesses committed by children may be paralleled by similar acts of their elders. These boys who stick a fork into a horse ought to be flogged, we are told, but the son of an emperor is not ashamed to publish the fact that he goes out "pig-sticking"—a game indulged in by many gentlemen who see in it only "good sport." Doubtless the boys also found the horse-sticking excellent sport from their point of view. The thoughtlessness and want of sympathy are the same in both cases, but the boys might, we think, claim more indulgence on account of their youth and inexperience.

For boys to throw stones at ducks and fowls and hit them with sticks till they are killed or disabled sounds shockingly barbarous, but for men to put bullets into animals and birds and let them go away to die in misery after many days, or for men to flog and spur horses in a steeplechase till they are overstrained and crippled for months, is only "sport." Doubtless their game was sport, too, to the boys. For a boy to take young birds from the nest and "slit" them is a dastardly act, and wiseacres predict that such a boy will develop into a murderer, but for a man to set a tooth-trap and hold a rabbit in it for hours is—well, quite legal, and consequently habitually done. We know which is the more barbarous act.

Let us be fair. Is there any reasonable ground to expect or demand that our boys of the least favored classes shall be better than our men of the most favored? We shall always have cases of brutalities like these occurring amongst children until the standard of humanity is raised amongst their elders.

At present the instruction we place in the way of the young of all classes of society is full of inhumane suggestions. At Eton the boys are taught to break up hares as a half-holiday amusement. At other so-called "upper class" schools the blood sport element is fostered, and in some elementary schools the children are permitted to attend meets and otter-hunts; books for boys are full of blood and fro, death and destruction; our music-halls all supply performances in which animals are ill-treated: the cinematograph shows, in the same spirit, go as far as they dare in

showing the horrible and sensational; and our schools, which ought to make it their first object to humanise the community, seem afraid to come near the subject. They are at present too much taken up with teaching French and algebra to think that moral education should have any place in their curricula. But a better time is coming. America is leading the way in human education, and England will have to follow, in spite of our fox-hunting, otter-worrying, and grouse-shooting legislators and magistrates.

—*Animals' Friend.*

ERNEST BELL.

**Man's Best Apology.**

COULD we ourselves choose whether to be born  
 How many would the gift of life accept,  
 Knowing how overburdened and forlorn  
 Are most of those who from the womb have crept?  
 And knowing, too, how profitless is life  
 Even when some measure of success is won,  
 Since, after we have borne the toil and strife,  
 And think to grasp the prize, our thread is spun!  
 Though in our youth a comedy it seems  
 Life ever proves a tragedy at last,  
 As all must feel who wake from early dreams  
 To find themselves in fate's strong fetters fast:  
 'Tis well that in our lives we have no voice  
 And for our deeds may plead we have no choice.

B. D.

We print every now and then a letter from some correspondent who relates how he first became acquainted with the *Freethinker* and how much he values it. Here is one:—

"I am only one of the great competing army of commercial travellers, and as I have two invalid women to keep—a mother and a sister—I have practically nothing over from the bare necessities of life. But a friend of mine (almost in as poor a way as myself, for he has an ailing wife and an old father to keep out of his earnings as a Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway booking-clerk) always puts his penny to mine, and we never miss buying the *Freethinker*, and feel proud to purchase it, although our regret is very keen that cruel circumstance prevents us helping the cause by subscribing to the funds in the *Freethinker*. I first got to know of the *Freethinker* through a used copy being posted to me by some friend or acquaintance unknown, but he—whoever he is—has placed me under a great debt by helping forward the liberation of my mind. I and my friend always look eagerly forward to Thursday for the paper which has given us so many hours of mental enjoyment and instruction, and has made us feel (despite our poor and dependent condition) something of the dignity of our own manhood. What a debt we owe to you we fully realise. I am afraid that sometimes I may have done myself harm by speaking out my mind, but one cannot always suppress one's wrath when one sees the religious hypocrisy around one—some of the most professing of chapel people being very bad as regards adulteration and giving short weight to the poor through the medium of their multiple shops. How I wish, sometimes, I was independent, and could out with all the fullness of my business experience. I could show up two merchants, who are great missionary enthusiasts in the dissenting denominations in which they are prominent. I can assure you if, and when, easier times come, the first thing I shall do is to become a member of the N. S. S."

We are proud of such letters. Even if we cannot raise a man's wages, or improve his worldly prospects in the slightest degree at the moment (though all that will follow logically enough in time), there is something in helping a man to mental freedom and moral dignity. To feel higher in the scale of being is a noble pleasure, which cannot be purchased at anyone else's expense.

**Obituary.**

It is with much regret that we have to announce the sudden death of Mr. P. H. Machray, who was for many years associated with the Freethought movement in Paisley. Mr. Machray was a brilliant speaker and debater, and did much to break down the prejudices of the "unco' guid." Our friend was interred on Wednesday (Nov. 6), when about a hundred comrades followed his remains to the graveside, where Messrs. Love, Mason, and Gallacher delivered interesting speeches suitable to the occasion. Mr. Machray had a good literary style, and was able to contribute some splendid letters dealing with Freethought and Socialism to the local press, some of which his friends hope in the near future to publish in small book form, as well as some descriptive articles which he recently sent from West Africa. All friends will sympathise with Mrs. Machray, who has been left with three children to mourn the loss of their breadwinner.—JAMES STIRLING.

## SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice" if not sent on postcard.

### LONDON.

#### INDOOR.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham-place, Regent-street, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Jesus and Mohammed: a Comparison and a Contrast."

CROYDON PUBLIC HALL (George-street, Croydon): 7.30, C. Cohen, "The Benefit of Unbelief."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workmen's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, J. T. Lloyd, "New Light on the Origin of Life."

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, Herbert Thompson, "Nature's Wonders." Illustrated with limelight views.

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): Guy Aldred, 12 noon, "The Why of Bible Forgeries"; 6.30, "The World's Redeemer."

#### OUTDOOR.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE: THOS. A. JACKSON—Burnley Market Place: Nov. 17, at 3, "The Faith of an Infidel"; at 6.30, "Blasphemy Prosecutions." Blackburn (Market Ground): 18, at 7.30, "Who Made God?" 19, at 7.30, "Bible Romances." Accrington (Market Ground): 20, at 7.30, "Bible and Beer." Burnley (Market Place): 21, at 7.30, "Deity and Design." Colne (Market-street): 22, at 7.30, "Secularism: Defended." Nelson (Chapel-street): 23, at 7.30, "Why I Reject Christianity."

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

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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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