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From the Useful, through the True, to the Beautiful.
—GOETHE.

God's Birthday.

GOD is described to us as infinite and eternal; it is therefore difficult to see how he could ever have been born. But, in the philosophy of faith, the impossibility of understanding a thing is no reason for not believing it; on the contrary, the more unintelligible it is, and even the more absurd, the greater is the merit of belief. An Atheist can believe what he understands. There is no virtue in that. The true believer should feel like Sir Thomas Browne, who, in his *Religio Medici*, wished that the miracles of Scripture were more marvellous than they are, in order to show the transcendence of his faith.

Mysteries should be taught dogmatically. It is a mistake to explain them. If they are explicable they are no longer mysteries. Besides, to explain is to appeal to reason, which is the enemy of faith.

But some religionists, chiefly in the Protestant camp, will be explaining mysteries. They take a pride in sailing near the wind, though they often get swamped. Some of them tell us how it was that Christ, who was God, grew in *wisdom* as well as in stature, and why he was mistaken as to the authorship of Daniel and the Pentateuch. In becoming incarnate, they say, he emptied himself of his omniscience. But this is language without meaning. An omniscient being could not empty himself of his omniscience; and if he could, there is no power that could restore it to him afterwards. Omniscience is not a fluid, to be poured out like milk from a jug. It is a quality, and God cannot divest himself of his qualities and continue to be God. It is, in fact, a contradiction in terms. Could anything be more absurd than a being who knows everything saying to himself, "Go to, I will for thirty-three years know less than everything"? If he were capable of forgetting he would not be omniscient. The memory of God (if he exist) must act with the irresistible certainty of gravitation.

Let us abandon all attempts to explain the inexplicable. Let us become more prosaic, and at the same time more intelligible.

Jesus Christ was born of an earthly mother; his other parent was the Holy Ghost. He was the son of Mary, but he was also her father. She was his mother, but she was also his daughter. He begat her first, and himself afterwards. The relationship might be worked out through a thousand absurdities.

Reason cries "Halt!" and puts this pertinent question—"Who is the authority for the statement that Jesus of Nazareth was any other than 'the carpenter's son'?" Mary never signed an affidavit that Joseph was not the father of her first baby; Joseph himself never denied his paternity; and they were the only two persons in a position to speak with authority. The two gentlemen who wrote the first and third Gospels could not possibly know anything on this subject. They could only repeat what they guessed, or what they were told. If they guessed it, what is the value of a conjecture? If they were told it, who told them? If the reply is that God told them, why did he not also tell the

gentlemen who wrote the second and fourth Gospels? And how do we know that God told them? They do not say so themselves, and who has a right to say so on their behalf?

"How the world is given to lying!" exclaims Jack Falstaff. Had the fat knight lived in Asia Minor, nearly two thousand years ago, he might have uttered the exclamation with extra emphasis. Lying was so general among the early Christians, that they hardly suspected the virtue of veracity. They scarcely lied for an object, they lied by preference.

Nothing could exceed the childish artlessness of Luke's opening of the chapter in which he relates the birth of Christ. "And it came to pass," he says. What circumstantiality and precision! Such an exordium is sure to lead to what the Americans call "a tall one." And *when* did it come to pass? "In those days." Circumstantial and precise again, is it not? Can we imagine Thucydides or Tacitus, or any other ancient historian, writing in this fashion?

"It came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed." There never was such a decree, says Mommsen, the great historian, who is a much better authority than Luke. The evangelist, in fact, is positively silly. He says that, in order to be taxed, every one went into his own city. Fancy the whole population shifting from the places of their residence to the places of their birth! Is such a migration conceivable? And if it was for the purpose of taxation, would it not be a glorious muddle, unless "every one" was compelled to live for ever afterwards in his native town?

Luke says that this farcical taxing was made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. According to Josephus, this was several years after the beginning of the Christian era. If Luke is right as to the date of Christ's birth, our Christian chronology is wrong. Probably it is worse than wrong. It looks like a sheer invention. The Christian era was not invented till the sixth century, and its legal use only dates from the time of Charlemagne. Christians did not begin reckoning from the birth of Christ. They adopted a Christian era hundreds of years later, and then worked backwards. To a great extent it was mere guesswork.

We do not know the year of Christ's birth, nor do we know the day. December 25 is inconsistent with the Gospel story. Shepherds do not watch their flocks by night in Judea at that season. The fact is, the date is fictitious. It was absolutely unknown to the primitive Christians. All sorts of days between December and May were celebrated by different sections up to the fourth century. It was at Antioch, according to the New Testament, that the followers of Jesus were first called Christians; yet it was at Antioch that St. Chrysostom, preaching in A.D. 380, confessed that the Christians in that very locality had only known for ten or twelve years that Jesus Christ was born on December 25.

December 25 is really the birthday of the SUN, and was celebrated as such by the Pagans. The Christians borrowed the festival, and identified it with the birth of their "Savior." It was a barefaced, cunning plagiarism. And this is the whole secret of God's birthday.

G. W. FOOTE.

A Critic in a Fog.—II.

(Concluded from p. 787.)

THE list of Dr. Warschauer's misstatements have not been exhausted by what has been said, but I have neither the space nor the desire to deal with all of them at any length. A man may be considered as nearly hopeless from the controversial point of view, who, in the face of all that Determinists have said on this point, stupidly repeats that "Determinism tells man and woman that it is no good trying." As though, in the play of ideas, the idea of improvement has not its due place in the determination of conduct. Or that, "if Determinism is true, then there is no such thing as self-conquest, or moral bravery, no such thing as moral integrity." Or that the word "ought" has no place or meaning in the Deterministic vocabulary. Dr. Warschauer is so taken with the last point that he relates how, when he used this argument before an audience of Socialists, one of his hearers, "an extremely able man," got up and expressed his dismay at having thought he could work for reform and believe in Determinism. Evidently he *had* been doing both, and so had demonstrated its possibility. But, on the whole, this unnamed but "extremely able man" must have well matched our extremely able lecturer. Determinists who could be captured by this argument are not common, and Dr. Warschauer should make much of his prize.

Dr. Warschauer's pamphlet covers twenty-one pages. In a single sentence on p. 19, he effectively knocks the bottom out of all that he has been saying up to that point. For his assumption is that you can prove "Freedom" (that is, his kind of freedom) by an examination of human nature. In a sentence he throws this overboard, and admits that no mere study of nature and of man will yield any such result. The fact of freedom, he says, "is incompatible with any materialistic theory. If the universe, including ourselves, is simply the outcome of the inter-action of unconscious forces, freedom must be an absolute illusion." Of course, as Dr. Warschauer means by freedom "unfettered," and as he does not betray the slightest consciousness of "freedom" as a phenomenon of social origin, one is not surprised at his failing to find "freedom in the physical universe." But this is equivalent to saying that there is no room in a scientific conception of the universe for his "unfettered will," which is, scientifically, unfettered nonsense. Where, then, does the Warschauerian freedom come from? It "is only possible if it has been bestowed by God." It is, consequently, the only "free" thing in a determined universe. We have an "assurance of liberty"—many of us have nothing of the kind—and this assurance, which may, after all, be a mistake, is "a powerful argument for the existence of God."

The circle is complete. The only justification for a belief in "freedom" is to believe it has been "bestowed by God." But we also believe in God because we are assured we possess "freedom." "The fact of freedom implies Theism." How so? We can only believe in "freedom" by believing in a God who gave it us—that is, we must already be Theists. And if we are Theists because we believe in "freedom," how is it possible to get a start anywhere? It looks almost as if Dr. Warschauer were trying to paraphrase the Athanasian Creed. "Freedom is incomprehensible, God is incomprehensible, and Dr. Warschauer is incomprehensible." And as it is as easy to believe three incomprehensibles as it is to believe one, after accepting anyone of the three, there is no excuse for jibbing at the remaining two.

But once God is dragged into the controversy, a host of new difficulties arise. Dr. Warschauer is under the impression that the use of that religious narcotic, "God," smooths away all troublesome questions. As a matter of fact, it only adds to their number. Above all, there is a particular one that

Dr. Warschauer seems unconscious of, but which is fatal to his position. I will deal with this presently; at present let us note the difficulties that he does face, and his method of handling them.

One question put is that if God's power is omnipotent, how comes it that anything we do is contrary to his will? The reply given to this is that the power of God includes that of self-limitation, and God, in endowing man with a measure of freedom, limits his omnipotence. But this is really no answer at all to the question. It is really an admission that you cannot reconcile a belief in the omnipotence of God with the power of man to act contrary to God. Whether God voluntarily limited his own power or not (One wonders how Dr. Warschauer became aware of this? His familiarity with the plans of Deity is, to say the least of it, surprising) is quite beside the point. However it came about, Dr. Warschauer admits that God cannot be omnipotent in a universe in which man is "free," or man cannot be "free" where God is omnipotent. That is all the critic asserted. Dr. Warschauer did not meet it; he admits its truth, and tells you how it came about.

Another objection is that if God created man, he is ultimately responsible for all that man does. Created, mind. It is not a question of God being the immediate cause of man's existence in the sense that two people are the immediate cause of the birth of a human being. They are little more than the vehicle of transmission. But God is not only the cause of man's existence; he designed it. He endowed him with powers and capacities; he created these powers and capacities. Is he not, then, ultimately responsible for all that man does? It would seem so; yet Dr. Warschauer says that to say so is to propound "the most curious argument I have ever come across." He replies to it with an illustration; and please observe what the illustration is. A parent is responsible for a child's existence. Is he, then, responsible for his child's acts? Or, you give your boy a bicycle. Are you responsible for all that the boy does with it? And if the parent is not responsible, why charge God with responsibility for all that results from the exercise of the human will?

The answer to all this is so simple and so obvious, and it has been said so often before, that it is surprising Dr. Warschauer did not recognise its weakness. A parent, we say, is responsible for a child's being born; but a parent is not responsible for the kind of nature the child has. Consequently, no one blames a parent if a boy, in spite of all that can be done, turns out badly. A parent has a certain power in determining the development of a child's powers, and parents are held responsible up to the extent of that power. Thus, if a child has never been sent to school, we hold a parent responsible for its ignorance. If it has never been taught virtue, we hold the parent partly responsible for vicious habits. Or, again, if we give a boy a bicycle, see that he is taught to ride, and give him a sound machine, our responsibility ends. But if we put a boy on a machine that we know to be faulty, or leave him alone on a hillside before he is able to ride, then there is no one but will say we are responsible for all that occurs.

The application of all this is plain. God not only creates man; he gives man the capacities he possesses, and knows full well what use he will make of them. In this respect he resembles a parent who should give a boy a dynamite cartridge, knowing that the immediate consequence will be a disastrous explosion. God not only creates man; he creates also the forces that bear on man, and which determine his actions. To use Dr. Warschauer's own figure, he not only presents man with a bicycle; he does so knowing that he is unable to ride, and so will break his own neck, or will ride recklessly and endanger the lives of others. How, then, can he avoid responsibility? Responsibility is incurred when one sets in motion forces the consequences of which are foreseen. If I apply a charge of dynamite to a rock that it is my duty to clear away, I am not responsible for the death of anyone who may be

sitting on it, provided their presence is unknown to me. But if I *know* they are there, then, in proceeding to blast, I am responsible for their death. It is surprising that even a clergyman should use such futile illustrations; still more surprising that an audience should be deceived by them.

The amusing aspect of Dr. Warschauer's argument is his belief that he can escape Determinism by assuming God. This is sheer delusion. You may transform a physical Determinism into a psychical Determinism, but a Determinism is the inevitable result. And this is true because Determinism in some form is an *inescapable condition of coherent thinking*. You cannot escape this in even thinking about God. Assume the almost unthinkable position that "God" is free from the coercion of all external conditions. If he, or it, exists, he, or it, must still operate in accordance with the conditions of his own nature. Freedom from one set of conditions or from one force is thinkable; freedom from all conditions or from all forces is simply unthinkable.

Let us give Dr. Warschauer all available rope, and see the result. A self-existent God creates man. Dr. Warschauer says God has given man "the power of choice," "as an instrument to use." There is really no question about man having the power of choice. That is admitted by all Determinists, although our lecturer does not appear to be conscious of the fact. But God, we will say, endows man with "will," and leaves him alone as to its exercise. If all men exercised their will automatically and identically, we should feel nonplussed. But this is not the case. Some "wills" are exercised in one direction, some in another. Why is this? Why does one man choose whisky and another cocoa? Why is one man vicious and another virtuous? Because he chooses one in preference to the other, we shall be told. But that is only a restatement of the fact. Is it because of an ill-trained will or a vitiated will? But that is only another way of saying that the "will" is determined by its past habits and experiences. This is plugging Determinism in by the window after it has been thrown out at the door. And how can the "will" be free if it is coerced by past habits, or if it grows more efficient with use? Its greater efficiency is an admission of Determinism. Every power, says Dr. Warschauer, grows stronger with use, weaker with disuse. He has no business to say any such thing. This is a confession of the power of habit. And what is habit but the determination of action through the coercive force of past experience? Let us, says Dr. Warschauer, "increase our working capital of liberty." Good; but how can you increase an autonomous power? Autonomy is autonomy, and there is an end of it. Dr. Warschauer may claim the dictionary, but when he uses it he cannot avoid presenting it piecemeal to the Determinist. He cannot argue his case without implying the truth of Determinism. This is because, as I have already said, it is a condition of coherent thinking. All that is necessary to realise the truth of this is a due comprehension of what is a genuine Determinism.

Dr. Warschauer's task is a hopeless one; but even a genius cannot make a ridiculous case reasonable, and we, therefore, need not be surprised at Dr. Warschauer's failure. All that can be done is to make the anti-Determinist case plausible to an audience unused to philosophical discussion, and anxiously appreciative of familiar phrases and exhortations. Thus, a lecturer who denies the determinate nature of voluntary action, seeks by lecturing to give action and thought a determinate character. And his audience agrees with him and his lecture. Neither perceive that at every step the truth of the attacked position is conceded, and the falsity of the declared philosophy admitted. It reminds one of the way in which Charles II. explained why a certain preacher was popular with his congregation. Said Charles, "His nonsense suits their nonsense."

C. COHEN.

Dishonest Exegesis.

THE Sunday-school Lesson for to-day is Isaiah ix. 1-7, and it is entitled "The Unspeakable Gift." Throughout Christendom the scholars will be assured that here we have a prophecy which found its fulfilment only in Jesus Christ. They will be instructed to regard this passage as a Divinely inspired delineation of the majesty, lowliness, and supremacy of the Child-King so many centuries before he was born. And yet every Biblical critic knows quite well that the Lesson does not contain the remotest allusion to the Prophet of Nazareth. The context shows conclusively that the writer was thinking only of the condition of Israel and Judah in his own day. The Rev. J. P. Rogers, B.A., admits this in the *British Congregationalist* for December 12, but adds that the "words describe our Savior and the blessings that his kingdom has brought, with such insight that we can only account for them on the supposition of its being an inspired prophecy." One expositor says that "Isaiah spoke more gloriously than he knew," with the result that "this prophecy which he expected to see fulfilled in some Babe he could hold in his arms, had its double realisation and its far off and grander fulfilment." Another does not hesitate to assert that "the faith of the prophet in the Christ whom he had not seen is very impressive." In fact, all the expositions which have appeared in the religious press agree in applying the prophecy to Jesus Christ, and in intimating to Sunday-school teachers the best way to so interpret it to the children.

But that exegesis is utterly false. Isaiah's mind was concentrated upon the troubles and dangers of Judah under Ahaz. He knew that Israel and Syria had become allies with the object of effecting the ruin of Judah. Ahaz trembled on his throne and was strongly tempted to seek the help of Assyria. Isaiah vehemently opposed such a policy, and assured the king that the allies would not be able to execute their plot, but were themselves doomed to destruction. An alliance with Assyria, however, would be a serious menace to the future of Judah, because it would inevitably make it the arena of a conflict between Assyria and Egypt. Israel would certainly be annihilated, and Judah would be in grave peril; but let the king trust in Jehovah and obey his commands, and all would be well with him and his people. Then follows a glowing picture of the joy and glory of the restoration. The North and North-East districts, which had just been depopulated by Tiglath-pileser, were to be made glorious again. To the prophet's eye the whole process had already been completed:—

"The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased their joy: they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, as men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For the yoke of his burden, and the staff of his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, thou hast broken as in the day of Midian. For all the armor of the armed man in the tumult, and the garments rolled in blood, shall even be for burning, for fuel of fire. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, to establish it, and to uphold it with judgment and with righteousness from henceforth, even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this."

Such was Isaiah's conception of the forthcoming triumph and prosperity of Israel and Judah; and their triumph and prosperity were to continue to extend until all the nations of the earth became subject to them. Well, the prophecy was never fulfilled. The kingdom of Israel was completely blotted out. The ten tribes are lost to this day. Judah itself was never free from danger and worry. We cannot now trace its history through the various

centuries, but it is a well-established fact that it was its fate to be most of the time under some foreign yoke or another—Assyrian, Egyptian, Persian, Chaldean, Alexandrian, Roman. The ideal king never turned up. The Prince of Peace was conspicuous by his absence. The throne of David soon became vacant, and it has remained unoccupied to this day. It is frankly admitted by a few divines that Isaiah's splendid prophecy was not fulfilled in the fashion of his glowing vision. Of course, they attribute the blame, not to the prophet, but to the people. "The Old Testament prophecies," we are told, "were conditional. If men repented, if they amended their lives, God delivered his people from their terrors, and did not deal with them after their sins." This is a sophisticated way of getting out of a difficulty; and there is no truth in it. Ahaz was not the bad man he is often supposed to have been. His chief faults were disloyalty to Jehovah and opposition to Isaiah's political opinions. The same thing is true of the people generally. They did not suffer defeat so often, or go into captivity, because they lacked moral virtue and forgot Jehovah, but because they were geographically and numerically vulnerable.

Our contention is that Isaiah's prophetic song is still unfulfilled. We are entirely at variance with those who aver that "the words are wonderfully fulfilled in our Lord Jesus Christ." We are convinced that the fivefold name, Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace, is infinitely too great for him. He has never lived up to a single fold of it. No government has ever been upon his shoulder. Professor Clow exclaims, in the *British Weekly* for December 12, "To-day Christ is King." Where? We challenge the reverend gentleman to name the country or town in which Christ reigns. Dr. Clow adds: "His laws no one questions." This is a direct falsehood. Countless multitudes look upon the so-called laws of Christ as in every respect quite impossible. An Anglican Archbishop expressed the opinion, not so many years ago, that if the Sermon on the Mount were converted into practice social life would collapse in a week. Surely, Dr. Clow cannot be ignorant of the fact that Christians live as if such laws were not in existence. It is simply a lie to say that Christ's "life governs all human lives who know it"; and it is a greater lie still to affirm that "his personality is adored by increasing millions." It is a notorious fact, bitterly deplored continually on Christian platforms and in the Christian press, that for many years the number of his adorers has been steadily on the decrease. China, Japan, and India will have none of him, in spite of the desperate attempts made to force him upon them. "To-day," cries Dr. Clow, "a word of Christ is omnipotent." Again, we ask, where and for whom? To say that it is does not make it so. Will the reverend gentleman furnish us with one instance of the omnipotence of any word of Christ? To-day and on Christmas Day the Churches will be fervently singing the praises of the Prince of Peace, well knowing that Christendom has been, almost continuously from the beginning until now, a cruel, bloody battlefield, and that the overwhelming majority of the wars waged have been religious wars. As the editor of the *English Review* so aptly observes, "modern Europe is now infinitely more warlike, war-prepared, and war-dependent than in the days of Cæsar." Then, speaking of the practically inevitable result of the present European war, he says:—

"Europe, then, is now Christian, yet never—philosophically, ethically, and effectively—so utterly un-Christian, in that she has never previously been so war-clad and so governed by the rules of force."

And yet, in spite of the existing state of things, the clergy keep on talking everlastingly about lifting their eyes to Christ's throne "and seeing the humanity he has redeemed at peace with God and with all fellow-men." Madame Guyon may have believed that she had "already more than a thousandfold in that unshaken tranquillity" which Christ gave her; but she admits that she had it "in the midst of the most furious tempest"; and the question

naturally suggests itself, why was that "most furious tempest" permitted to rage when Christ could have stilled it by one omnipotent word? Besides, had it not been for her faith in Christ, Madame Guyon could not have enjoyed perfect tranquillity while "the most furious tempest" was howling round about her, because she would have been impelled to make an attempt to still it herself. As a matter of fact, faith in Christ has seriously retarded human progress. Instead of coping with life's problems themselves, Christians have always spent their time on their knees beseeching Christ to come and solve them.

The last sentence in Isaiah's prophecy is most suggestive: "The zeal of the Lord of hosts shall perform this." That is to say, Israel was to become all-powerful, with all nations at its feet, by force of arms. Jehovah was going to lead it to victory at the point of the sword. "The Lord is a man of war." "Who is the King of glory? The Lord mighty in battle." Is it any wonder, then, that Christianity owes whatever hold it has on Christendom to physical force? And it is physical force that is always employed to cow and silence its opponents. Christianity stands out in history as a bloodthirsty religion; and as a natural consequence its supreme and final appeal has always been, not to reason, but to blind zeal and prejudice. It has not brought "peace on earth and mercy mild," but division and strife. We have the authority of the Gospel Jesus himself for that statement. Does it not follow, then, that the disappearance of Christianity, which is now in progress, will mean the greatest and grandest riddance the world has ever experienced?

J. T. LLOYD.

The Passing of Jesus.—V.

(Concluded from p. 790)

"We may confidently conclude from what we know, and from the laws of human development, that the origins of the fundamental teachings of Judaism not yet discovered in cuneiform literature shall yet be found there. The doctrine of a coming Deliverer could arise only in the centre of culture where the prestige of power was no longer what it was in a greater part."—PROFESSOR WINCKLER, *The History of Babylonia and Assyria*; 1907; p. 158.

"Ah, Father, but he knew that he would rise again," said a sufferer to the Father who bade him have patience from the example of Jesus. And that was the case, doubtless, with all the suffering gods of antiquity; they knew that they would rise again to divine majesty, and achieve that great result for their human worshippers which was the object of their incarnation and their death."—CANON CHEYNE, *The Mines of Isaiah Re-Explored*; 1912; pp. 56-57.

"Woman is still prostrate on her knees before an error, because she has been told that somebody has died for it on the cross. Is the cross, then, an argument?"—NIETZSCHE, *The Antichrist*; 1899; p. 330.

"No soul that lived, loved, wrought, and died,
Is this their carrion crucified?"

—SWINBURNE, *Before a Crucifix*.

FRANCOIS DUPUIS, in his learned and able work, *L'Origine de tous les Cultes*, was, as we have remarked, the great pioneer in the mythological explanation of Christianity. He attributed the origin of Christianity to sun-worship, and in a sense he was right, for the apparent birth, death, and resurrection of plant life symbolised by the ancients in the religions of Adonis, Attis, Osiris, and others is, of course, dependent upon the sun.

David Friedrich Strauss, on the other hand, believed that the whole history of Jesus was a fabrication based on the prophecies contained in the Old Testament concerning a coming Messiah. For instance, the Gospel of Matthew, after narrating the virgin birth of the mother of Jesus, explicitly declares: "Now all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son" (i. 22, 23).

It is by a combination of the methods of Dupuis and Strauss, in the light of the astonishing discoveries resulting from the recovery and decipher-

ment of the records of the ancient empires of the East, that we have at last read the riddle of the origin of Christianity.

Professor Drews, in his valuable work, *The Christ Myth*, observes:—

"Every year the forces of nature die away, to re-awaken to a new life only after a long period. The minds of all peoples used to be deeply moved by this occurrence—the death whether of nature as a whole beneath the influence of the cold of winter, or of vegetable growth under the parching rays of the summer sun. Men looked upon it as the fate of a fair young god whose death they deeply lamented and whose re-birth or resurrection they greeted with unrestrained rejoicing. On this account, from earliest antiquity there was bound up with the celebration of this god an imitative mystery under the form of a ritualistic representation of his death and resurrection" (p. 65).

Primitive man believed that he could influence nature—that he could help in this struggle between life and death, and turn the scale to his own interest. For this purpose he imitated it. This was the origin of the worships known under the name of Tammuz, Adonis, Osiris, and many others. It was known and practised by the Babylonians, Assyrians, Phœnicians, Egyptians, the Canaanites, and the Israelites. As Frazer remarks:—

"As far as names go, they differed in different places; in essences they were everywhere alike. A man, whom the unrestrained phantasy of his adorers clothed with the garments and attributes of a god, used to give his life for the life of the world. After he had poured from his own body into the stagnating veins of nature a fresh stream of vital energy, he was himself delivered over to death before his own sinking strength should have brought about a general ruin of the forces of nature, and his place was then taken by another, who, like all his forerunners, played the ever-recurring drama of the divine resurrection and death."^{*}

Now, bearing in mind the fact, as we proved in our last article, that this worship was known and practised by the Hebrews, we can understand, says Professor Drews, the meaning of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. It is really a lament for the dead Adonis. It runs:—

"Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.....

"He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

"And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.....

".....he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sins of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

Christian theologians declare that this is a prophecy of the coming of Jesus Christ, and they have actually inserted chapter headings to that effect to several of the chapters of Isaiah. These have been, rightly, discarded in the Revised Version. For the prophet is speaking in the past tense, of something that has already happened, not of something that is going to happen at some future time.

Again, in the same way, as Drews points out, we can understand the words of the twenty-second Psalm:—

"My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring?.....

"All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,

"He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.....

"I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax; it is melted in the midst of my bowels.

"My strength is dried up like a potsherd; and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws; and thou has brought me to the dust of death.

"For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me: they pierced my hands and my feet.

"I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me.

"They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture."

Professor Drews remarks upon this:—

"When the poet of the Psalms wished to describe helplessness in its direst extremity, before his eyes there came the picture of a man who, hanging upon the gibbet, calls upon God's aid, while round about him the people gloat over his sufferings, which are to save them; and the attendants who had taken part in the sacrifice divide among themselves the costly garments with which the God-king had been adorned. The employment of such a picture presupposes that the occurrence depicted was not unknown to the poet and his public, whether it came before their eyes from acquaintance with the religious ideas of their neighbors or because they were accustomed to see it in their own native usages."^{*}

Let it not be thought that these are fanciful conjectures of unbelievers, brought forward to undermine Christianity; for Canon Cheyne, "Professor of Interpretation of Holy Scripture at Oxford," in his recently published work, entitled *The Mines of Isaiah Re-Explored*, speaks of "the light thrown by Oriental mythology on the Son of Man, on the Messiah, and on the Logos" (p. 27); also of the fourth ideal personage of Israelitish religion, "that highly mysterious figure, the 'Servant of Yahweh.'" Yahweh, as every scholar knows, is the real name of the Hebrew God, which the English translators have rendered Jehovah in our Bible. Canon Cheyne proceeds:—

"The credit of opening a new path belongs largely to Professor H. Zimmern, who, in treating of the possibility of a Babylonian connection for the Christ-myth of parts of the New Testament, took occasion to give (in translation) a cuneiform text in which an ideal righteous man describes his sore afflictions under the image of sickness (cp. Isa. liii. 4), closing with a brief expression of a sure hope of deliverance."

The person in the Babylonian text appears to have been a king, and Canon Cheyne points out that in some passages of the "Servant"-poems in the Old Testament "the hero seems to be a king." And he observes: "It is not, therefore, merely the suffering and yet triumphant Messiah for whom this Babylonian text supplies a parallel, but the suffering and yet victorious Servant of Yahweh." And further:—

"Not alone by the Euphrates and the Jordan were hearts warmed and minds exercised by this influential myth, but in other parts of Asia also there was apparently a current tradition of a god friendly to man, who for man's sake subjected himself to death, but came to life again—a tale of mystic meaning, told and retold in the sanctuaries to the devotees."

Our "best-known evidence," continues the Canon,

"for the cult of the dead god among the Israelites is Zech. xii. 11, where we read of 'the mourning for Hadad-Rimmon in the valley of Megiddon.'.....Still more important evidence for the cult referred to is a fine poetic prophecy of Jeremiah (Jer. xxii. 18), in which the honor of a public mourning is refused to King Jehoiakim. Its importance consists in the formulæ derived immediately from the mourners' liturgy, but ultimately from the primeval form of lamentation for the dead god and goddess" (p. 29).

When we wrote our article upon this subject fourteen years ago we little expected to live to see it endorsed by a Canon, who calmly speaks of "the possibility of a Babylonian connection for the Christ-myth of parts of the New Testament."

How, then, did the mythical Savior become converted into the historical Jesus. Professor Drews, dealing with this question, remarks:—

"As the question of the Messiah had become urgent after the destruction of Jerusalem and the collapse of all the political hopes of the Jews, and amid the sufferings of the people from the Roman oppression, the further questions were found to rise spontaneously to the lips: When did the Servant of God really suffer?

* Frazer, *The Golden Bough*; 1900; ii., 196 sq. Cited by Drews, *The Christ Myth*, p. 66.

* Drews, *The Christ Myth*, p. 69.

Where did he die? What was he like? What did he do before he was put to death by his enemies? Who were his enemies? And so on. And it was just as inevitable for the answer to be found in the indications of the prophets and of astral-mythological speculation, and thus to lead to the historicisation of the originally mythical figure of Jesus."*

The Professor does not believe that Christianity first arose at Jerusalem, "but, if anywhere, in the Syrian capital Antioch, one of the principal places of the worship of Adonis. For it was at Antioch where, according to the Acts (ii. 26), the name 'Christians' was first used for the adherents of the new religion, who had till then been called Nazarenes."†

Our own opinion is that the New Testament is the result of the fusion of Hebrew myth with Greek thought and literary style. When, by the wish of King Ptolemy Philadelphus, the Jewish Scriptures were translated into Greek, 285 years before Christ, and thus became known to the Greeks, the first step had been taken to the formation of the New Testament. For there is not a single Hebrew manuscript of the New Testament; they are all Greek. And although there was a tradition in the early Church that Matthew was composed in Hebrew, scholars tell us that our Gospel of Matthew is not a translation from Hebrew, but an original Greek composition.

The writers of the Pauline letters in the New Testament, says Eysinga, "speak Greek and think in Greek."‡ And he cites the testimony of the Jewish scholar, Montefiore, that—"Either this man [Paul] has never been a Rabbinical Jew, or else he has completely forgotten what Rabbinical Judaism was and is."

As people became more civilised they gave up the practice of a living sacrifice; but a dramatic representation of the ceremonial was continued as a mystery play, as Mr. J. M. Robertson has shown in his *Pagan Christs*. It was the Greeks who finally reduced the crude play into the finished drama as we have it in the New Testament.

The myth of Christ is a development of a Babylonian myth—a myth they received from a still earlier race, the Sumerians. It passed on to the Hebrews, like a snowball, gathering in volume as it went; receiving its final form at the hands of the Greeks. It is the result of an evolution extending over thousands of years and many nations. And it is the glory of science to have pierced the heart of this mystery.

The more advanced among the Christian army are already preparing to shift the camp. Schmiedel sounds the retreat when he says: "My inmost religious convictions would suffer no harm even if I now felt obliged to conclude that Jesus never lived."§ Professor Smith speaks of "the ominous appearance of such articles as Macintosh's in the *American Journal of Theology*, 'Is Belief in the Historicity of Jesus Indispensable to Christian Faith?' and observes:—

"Critics are inquiring if it be 'indispensable' only because they begin to suspect it may prove indefensible. They are preparing cautiously, not indeed to surrender—oh, no! perish the thought, never for an instant could that be dreamed of—but merely to evacuate overnight the citadel hitherto deemed impregnable. How long before some forget in their new surroundings that imperial palace whence they came, and even that they were ever there?"||

The knowledge of the mythical character of Christ and Christianity is confined at present to the scholarly few; it is our duty to spread the knowledge among the masses, to tear the veil aside, and show them Christians masquerading in the robes of a dead-and-gone Paganism.

W. MANN.

Acid Drops.

Towards the end of November a photograph picture appeared in some of the London newspapers, representing two Turks about to be hung by Bulgarian soldiers. It was stated in the editorial letterpress under the picture that the condemned Turks had been looting and murdering Christians in the neighborhood, that they were caught red-handed, and were naturally having a short shrift. The picture attracted a good deal of our attention. The obvious feature of it was the insolence on the faces of the Bulgarian soldiers. The next obvious thing was the discrepancy between the look of the doomed men and the Christian newspaper account of their crimes. There was something about the taller one which did not fit in with the letterpress. The more we looked at it the more we felt that the picture was wrongly described. It haunted us for days; then, of course, it began to fade from memory, and we might not have thought of it again if fresh circumstances had not brought it once more to our attention. We now see that our "prophetic soul" was right. The two Turks in that picture were not looters and murderers; they were two villagers who had fired upon the invaders of their country. That was the only "crime" they had committed.

The truth about that picture came out in the *Daily News* of December 11, in a letter from its correspondent, Perceval Gibbon. It appears that the execution of the two unfortunate Turks was surrounded by cinematograph cameras. Here is Mr. Gibbon's word-picture of the prisoners:—

"The people who thronged about them were motley enough in the diversity of their uniforms and accoutrement; but it was these two, with their arms bound behind them, who seemed suddenly to bring color and force into the scene. One was old, a short, stout, grey-beard, who once or twice murmured a low protest to the reading of the sentence. The other, tall, black-bearded, with a dark aquiline face, subtle and strong, spoke no word. His clothes were of that dull brown which peasants of that country wear, with a red sash about his waist, a red fez on his head, a gleam of a ring on one of his fingers. He gave no sign of hearing the drone of the Procurator's long reading, or the stuttering translation by the interpreter; his mood seemed to have power to create a solitude for him; his eyes rested on the rope, but absently, in mere preoccupation, without a tremor."

To meet death they first, like good Mohammedans, performed their ablutions, a bucket of water being brought to them for the purpose; the rest of the five minutes left them they spent in prayer:—

"The tall Turk, always with that air of preoccupation, of a mind screened and turned inward, had taken off his shoes and was now pulling at his ring. It came away, and he looked round for somewhere to lay it. His subtle, brooding face sought about him, and a camera, lifted on high in the hands of its operator, clicked at him. He blinked, and seemed suddenly to realise that he need no longer cherish his ring; with a faint shrug he cast it on the ground, and kneeled down to receive the water which a soldier brought him in a bucket.

"Then they will pray," prattled the interpreter.

"Eastward the sky was faint blue over a jagged horizon of low roofs and bare, written trees, and under it, infinitely far, lay somewhere Mecca. Kneeling, he bowed towards it, laying his forehead to the trodden and polluted earth; then lifted it to pray. His face was bowed with closed eyes, his hands were open before him, empty in supplication. The cameras went off in staccato volleys; the cinematograph machine sounded like the gritting of teeth; but it was all remote, trivial, unreal. What was actual was the kneeling man, ringed in and doomed, but alone none the less in an immense and mysterious solitude, like that of the dead. The occasion, which should have been merely horrible, grotesque, indecent, he made august and portentous."

When the Turks were hanging on that tree another touch of Christian charity was given to the scene. Mr. Gibbon writes:—

"Upon the hanging bodies that looked so little like men dying in agony, there leaped policemen, suddenly gleeful and active, to grasp them, to wrap their arms about them, to swing by them. It was the climax. The crowd jostled nearer, and greeted the spectacle with laughter, with cries and shouts of laughter, so that the two men who hung from the tree died to the sound of guffaws."

Such was this noble triumph of the Cross over the Crescent. We hope the Christians are proud of it.

Mr. Hardenburg, whose book on his travels in the Rubber Region of the Peruvian Amazon, with an account of "the atrocities committed upon the Indians therein," has just been published by Mr. Fisher Unwin. Mr. C. Reginald Enock, the editor, points out that the Peruvians were found, four hundred years ago, living under social laws "so beneficent as had never been known under ancient kings of

* Drews, *The Witnesses to the Historicity of Jesus*.

† Drews, *The Christ Myth*, p. 210.

‡ *Radical Views About the Old Testament*, p. 87.

§ Cited in *Radical Views About the New Testament*, p. xii.

|| *Ecce Deus*, p. 328.

Asia, Africa, or Europe, or under any Christian monarch," but now they are "defrauded, driven into slavery, ravished, tortured, and destroyed." "This has been done," he goes on to say, "not in single instances at the command of some savage potentate, but in tens of thousands under a Republican Government, in a Christianised country, at the behests of the agents of a great joint-stock company with headquarters in London.....In order to obtain rubber so that the luxurious-tyred motor-cars of civilisation might multiply in the cities of Christendom, the dismal forests of the Amazon have echoed with the cries of despairing and tortured Indian aborigines." There is no devilry that is not practised on these poor Indians. Men are flogged, mutilated, and tortured in unmentionable ways to death; women are treated still worse, with lust added to cruelty; and babes have their brains dashed out against rocks and trees by scoundrels who profess the Christian faith.

Mr. Hardenburg draws up an indictment of thirteen counts against these sanguinary and bestial exploiters of perhaps the most innocent and gentle people on earth:—

1. The pacific Indians of the Putumayo are forced to work day and night at the extraction of rubber, without the slightest remuneration except the food necessary to keep them alive.
2. They are kept in the most complete nakedness, many of them not even possessing the biblical fig-leaf.
3. They are robbed of their crops, their women, and their children, to satisfy the voracity, lasciviousness, and avarice of this company and its employees, who live on their food and violate their women.
4. They are sold wholesale and retail in Iquitos, at prices that range from £20 and £40 each.
5. They are flogged inhumanly until their bones are laid bare, and great raw sores cover them.
6. They are given no medical treatment, but are left to die, eaten by maggots, when they serve as food for the chiefs' dogs.
7. They are mutilated, and their ears, fingers, arms, and legs are cut off.
8. They are tortured by means of fire and water, and by tying them up, crucified head down.
9. Their houses and crops are burned and destroyed wantonly and for amusement.
10. They are cut to pieces and dismembered with knives, axes, and machetes.
11. Their children are grasped by the feet and their heads are dashed against trees and walls until their brains fly out.
12. Their old folk are killed when they are no longer able to work for the company.
13. Men, women, and children are shot to provide amusement for the employees or to celebrate the *sabado de gloria*, or, in preference to this, they are burned with kerosine so that the employees may enjoy their desperate agony."

This is hell upon earth. And the Christian Powers cannot stop it—or so they say. It is a damnable blot on human civilisation. The Pope hurls no word against it from the seat of "God's" representative on earth. "God" himself is just as unconcerned. The Czar, the Kaiser, King George, and the rest of the Christian potentates are all quiet. The President of the United States does nothing too. And Christianity proves itself a useless contemptible farce.

Mr. George Bernard Shaw and Mr. Sidney Webb are taking over the *Crusader* early in the new year. That is the little fact that comes out of the mountainous puff which was engendered through the press. The editors say they are going to speak out. "I think," Mr. Shaw says, "we shall be very thankful if we are not burnt alive by the end of the second week." Nonsense, Mr. Shaw, nonsense! You know you are safe enough. Who believes you have any taste or talent for martyrdom?

One sometimes wonders if there is a grain of honesty left amongst nine-tenths, at least, of the politicians of this country. Not that we suppose other countries are much better. Here is Mr. Walter Runciman, for instance, President of the Board of Agriculture—which we shouldn't have thought was much in his way, though, of course, the salary (£2,000 a year) is. Mr. Runciman is the chief lay official of the West London Mission, and he addressed a meeting of men on Wednesday evening, Dec. 11, in the recently opened Kingsway Hall, the Mission's new headquarters. The "men only" ticket did not prevent his being greeted with cries of "Votes for Women." But the interrupters being cleared out, Mr. Runciman proceeded with his speech. There was nothing in it that any woman need have troubled to listen to, and towards the end he seemed to be well under the influence of the gentleman who started the West London Mission—the late Rev. Ananias Hugh Price Hughes. After talking about the vices of young men at Cambridge University when he himself was there, twenty years ago, he went on to speak of their

septicism, which he appeared to regard as a branch of the vice department; therein paying an exquisite compliment to some of his Liberal colleagues, such as Lord Morley, Mr. John Burns, and Mr. J. M. Robertson. This is what Mr. Runciman said, if he was reported correctly in the *Daily News*:—

"He remembered when he was at Cambridge it used to be the fashion with the students about 20 or 21 years of age to regard it as the highest pinnacle of intellectual independence that they should call themselves Agnostics. He was back in Cambridge this year, after an interval of 20 years, and he found a complete change in the fashion of thought. Instead of being an Agnostic, the young man of 1912 was a simple, downright Christian, and not at all ashamed of the word."

Now the truth is notoriously the reverse of Mr. Runciman's statement. Both at Oxford and at Cambridge it is increasingly difficult to get intelligent young men to take "holy orders" and enter the service of the Church. Why doesn't the right honorable gentleman talk in that way at Cambridge, where he could be corrected on the spot, instead of bamboozling the sort of audience that meets under the auspices of the West London Mission? It would show more courage on his part—if that quality is amongst his natural endowments.

Mary Baker, of Conisbro', a domestic servant, aged twenty-two, hanged herself rather than marry the man to whom she was engaged, when she really loved another. She was found suspended by a clothes-line to a hook in the attic of the house of her employers. Close at hand was her Bible opened at the Psalms, with the following verse marked: "My days are like a shadow which declineth, and I am withered like grass." She had written: "I feel like the verse I had marked." The jury's verdict was "suicide during temporary insanity." Everybody may see how the Bible prevents people from committing suicide, and leaves all that crime to the Atheists—as Talmage and Torrey prophesied.

Pity our poor overworked, hard-living, self-sacrificing missionaries! This is how M. D. Crauford refers to them in his recent work, *Thinking Black*:—

"Christ's cause in Africa is too often wounded in the house of its friends, but never so grievously and gratuitously as when a missionary of the cross beats all his fellow Europeans in the matter of first-class get-up. The best houses, best furniture, best eating—all at 'The Mission.'"

Poor missionaries!

The *Christian Commonwealth* has been collecting opinions from a number of people as to whether we need a religion. This is the sort of inquiry some people delight in making, and presumably it gives many others some amount of gratification. Of course, the inquiry is always deliberately vague; were it otherwise the replies would either not be forthcoming, or they would lead to the conclusion that we can get on very well without religion. And that would quite give the game away. No Christian would admit that the religion of Mohammedanism was necessary. The Mohammedan would be quite clear that the world could get along without Christianity. Catholics would not allow Protestantism to be necessary; and Protestants openly pray for the downfall of Roman Catholicism. By a process of cancellation each one rules out the others, for the only religion that each one really believes to be necessary is his own. He only agrees with the others in the use of a word; he quite disagrees with them as to what it really means. It is a strange sight this of a number of people declaring as necessary to peace and goodwill the one thing that people have always hated each other for most persistently.

Some of the opinions elicited are quite amusing. Thus Miss Lillah McCarthy, the well-known actress, thinks "the Bible ought to be read, as it is so beautiful; but great care should be taken about other religious books, as they are generally beside the point." If Miss McCarthy is in earnest, her deliverance is a gem worth preserving. The slushy cant of the first part, and the wall-eyed prejudice of the second portion, is delightful. Mr. Forbes Robertson thinks we need a religion without a creed—which is rather like trying to breed a vertebrate without a spinal column. Mr. Will Crooks expends some of his tearful Sunday-school humor, and thinks we need a religion based on "Love one another"—as though that cannot be done without religion. Mr. Zangwill wants a religion that is not contradictory to reason, history, or experience. His search for that article deserves to be bracketed with the search for perpetual motion. Mr. Grayson says that he has "no religion other than Socialism"—which is not religion at all. The only sensible and honest opinion cited is that of Sir Francis Burnand. He says: "We need the one and only true religion as set forth by the Holy Roman Catholic and Apostolic

Church of which our Lord Jesus Christ is the supreme head, whose vicar on earth is the Pope." We congratulate Sir Francis on giving the only intelligible and straightforward answer in the bunch. And we venture to prophesy that as a reward his opinion will not be asked again.

The *Christian Commonwealth* winds up the symposium by saying that the opinions expressed show that "religion remains enthroned in human life, because it is based on a community of need." This is sheer fatuity. What common religious need is there in the opinions expressed? The only one who does express a need, or rather a desire for religion, is Sir Francis Burnand, and none of the others agree with him in the slightest degree. If all those who gave an opinion had anything in common, it was a vague desire that people would be better, that life should be better, that everything should be better. But what has that to do with religion? People who really experience a common need can usually find a common method of action. But on what point of religious belief would this hotch-potch of Agnostics, Catholics, Jews, Socialists, Nonconformists, and other religious odds and ends, work together? The truth is, they use the word "Religion" without troubling to ask themselves what it really means. It is an established word, and that is all they seem to trouble about.

The leading article in the *Daily Telegraph* on the King's habit of reading his Bible is a wretched specimen of sycophantic gush. As the King made his mother a promise, it is only right he should keep it; but why he should not be able to read a chapter in the Bible without the nation being awestruck at the performance is incomprehensible to every one who is not a congenital snob.

Every ten years the *Liverpool Daily Post* takes a religious census of the city. The figures show a positive decline in church and chapel attendance, in spite of the considerable increase in population:—

	1902.	1912.
Anglican.....	67,898	57,932
Nonconformist	66,712	52,462
Roman Catholic	35,330	38,262
Various Missions.....	8,837	12,065

Evidently the new Cathedral has not stemmed the Christian ebb-tide at Liverpool. Nor have the Orangemen, with the Rev. George Wise at their head, succeeded in preventing the Roman Catholics from increasing.

Pembroke Chapel, Liverpool, depended on God. That was the theory. Practically it depended on the Rev. Mr. Aked, who left this country for a better land. Not heaven. Oh dear no! The United States of America, where men of God wallow in wealth. In the religious census of 1902 Pembroke Chapel showed a morning attendance of 1,375 and an evening attendance of 1,978. In the 1912 census the figures had fallen to 214 and 564. A tremendous drop.

Rev. George Sutherland Mackay, of the United Free Church, Doune, Perthshire, left £26,411. This is a good haul for a Scotch "meenister." We mean in Scotland. Outside, of course, is another thing.

We have always protested against heavy sentences for minor offences. We see by a paragraph in the *Statesman*, Calcutta, that a Philadelphia boy of fifteen, charged with annoying railway passengers, was sentenced to go to Sunday-school regularly for sixteen Sundays. One would have been enough for the merits (or demerits) of the case. But sixteen! It is a case for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

Rev. John Bradbury, Primitive Methodist, Blackpool, is a good Bible Christian. He has been rejoicing in the presence of his congregation over the fact that flogging can be administered to prisoners convicted of taking part in what is called the white slave traffic. According to the report in the *Northern Daily Telegraph*, this reverend reformer congratulated the British public that "the bill provided that a man or woman found engaged in this traffic should be flogged with the 'cat.'" This is true, of course, with regard to men; it is false with regard to women. But as the reverend gentleman declared that he "really thought he could do a bit of the flogging himself," we have to conclude that he would flog women as gladly as men, and even give them the preference—especially if they were young and good looking.

The General Committee of the National Free Church Council has arranged for New Year's Day to be observed as a day for special prayer and intercession throughout the kingdom. For twenty-four hours the ears of the Almighty are to be bombarded by these zealots. They will advise him what to do and suggest how he should do it. Apparently he will have to put up with their impudence, but it is wonderful that he does not batter *their* ears with something harder than words.

The Bishop of Birmingham advised his hearers the other Sunday not to be alarmed when some prominent man in the Church makes a heretical declaration. Commonplace truth attracts little notice, he said, while a sensational statement, true or false, gains wide publicity. This is quite true, but it hardly meets the case. The significant thing is not that a man here and there in the Church should express his disbelief in certain Christian doctrines, but that so many people outside the Church should re-echo his repudiation. In fact, their repudiation is more than a re-echo. In this matter the heretical churchman does not lead, he follows. What one clergyman is daring enough to say, thousands of laymen have already said. Among educated people the surprise is not that a few of the clergy should disbelieve, but that so many of them should believe. And what the Bishop of Birmingham really has to fear is, not that the example of certain clergymen should lead congregations into open unbelief, but that the growth of unbelief among the laity should drive the clergy into a saner and more straightforward mental life. It is quite as fantastic to think of the clergy leading the people in intellectual matters as it is to think of politicians leading the way in social reform.

Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, the dramatist, having returned home from America, is delivering his opinions to inter-viewers. We are glad to see that he is in favor of Sunday cricket, Sunday football, Sunday cinematograph shows, and even Sunday theatres. But it must be Mr. Henry Arthur Jones's little joke to say that these things are quite welcome to the best English Puritanism.

A grand testimonial matinee to Mr. Charles Coborn, the well-known music hall artist, took place at the Oxford on Tuesday (Dec. 17). It was under distinguished patronage and we hope the result was gratifying from a financial point of view. Mr. Coborn is sixty years of age; we thought he was older. We saw him frequently in the early "eighties" when we lectured fairly often at the Claremont Hall, Islington. He used to oppose our lectures as a Christian, but there was nothing very original in his speeches. If he had spoken as well as he rendered "The Man who Broke the Bank at Monte Carlo" he would have been a formidable opponent.

By the way, the man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo was called Wells. He got into trouble some years afterwards, and more recently he figured in another criminal drama. It will be remembered that he was arrested on a yacht with a lady companion, and handed over to the French authorities, who wanted him for company frauds at Paris. He is now doing a long term of penal servitude. It is not generally known that he is the son of Charles Wells, the author of that "great dramatic poem," as Swinburne called it—*Joseph and His Brethren*—which was first published in 1824 under the pseudonym of H. L. Howard, and not again until 1876, when it was introduced to the public by Swinburne, with a powerful Preface. In 1908 it was reprinted in a volume of the "World's Classics" at the small price of one shilling. This edition included Swinburne's eulogistic Preface and an interesting Essay by Mr. Theodore Watts-Dunton, in which it was related how Rossetti, Meredith, and others had tried in vain to get a publisher for the "great dramatic poem," which was considered by everybody in "the trade" as quite unsaleable. Biographically the following facts are of interest. Charles Wells was born in 1800; he died at Marsoilles in 1879. He had been a friend of Keats, who wrote a sonnet to him. For fifty years of his life he passed the time in retirement, publishing only one other volume, *Stories After Nature*, which contains some remarkable writing after the manner of Boccaccio in his more serious and romantic mood. Charles Wells's son, who is an old man himself now, is the Wells who broke the bank at Monte Carlo and was the "hero" of the "yacht" arrest and the famous French swindle for which he is now "doing time." By profession he is an engineer. His father was a man of genius who published a "great dramatic poem" eighty-eight years ago. Thus we are taken back to the days of Keats and Shelley and Byron, and Waterloo and the Fall and Death of Napoleon, and the Holy Alliance. What a thing life is!

Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Suspended during Christmas Holidays.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1912.—Previously acknowledged, £261 0s. 1d. Received since:—W. J. Molineux, 2s.; D. J. D. (second sub.), £2 10s.; W. Leeson, 5s.; D. Winterton, 2s. 6d.; W. Wilber, 2s. 6d.; A. Wade, 2s. 6d.; J. Ainge, 2s. 6d.; Sydney Smith, 5s. 6d.; Samuel Leeson (West Australia), £1 10s.; T. S. (Wimbledon), 2s. 6d.; Jas. Blamford, £1 1s.

W. J. MOLINEUX.—Thanks for good wishes. There is many a battle for freedom yet to be fought.

H. C. BODE.—"Abracadabra" will turn up again. He has been occupied in other ways lately. Glad you are so pleased with Mr. Mann's articles.

SAMUEL LEESON.—We shall make use of your letter next week.

J. LUCAS.—We had already written on the subject in "Acid Drops." Thanks all the same. Pleased you consider last week's *Freethinker* "altogether lovely" and "enjoyed every word of it." Thousands, that we cannot reach, might do the same, if we could reach them.

J. AINGE.—Thanks to the Leicester friends who subscribe through you. Best Christmas and New Year wishes for yourself.

E. B.—We will read the reverend gentleman's article carefully. At the first blush it looks a lunatic production.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

H. MEREDITH.—See paragraph. Thanks.

A. ROSE.—We do not insert verses just to encourage the versifier, but primarily, at any rate, because they have some merit and interest.

R. H. ROSETTI.—See paragraph.

WEST EALING.—You will probably recognise yourself in this designation. Glad to hear you were introduced by an office acquaintance to this journal, and that you have found so much intellectual light from it, as well as from our separate writings. The prejudices of parents have often to be encountered on the road of reason, but filial respect goes a long way towards disarming them.

T. HODGSON.—You put your question wrongly then. You should have asked whether our *Flowers of Freethought* was the best reading for a beginner. Even that question is difficult to answer, if one doesn't know the beginner. You have done the right thing in deciding to read the two volumes, and judge for yourself whether they are the right thing for your sensitive friend.

D. D. B.—Will see if you send them on.

A. GALPIN.—Passed over to publishing department.

SYDNEY SMITH.—Divided as desired. You will receive formal receipt from our shop manager.

J. PARTRIDGE.—Pleased to hear Miss Kough had a really good audience at Birmingham in view of the wretched weather, and that her lecture was "most interesting."

J. B.—We don't know who "Ben Adhem" is in the *Liverpool Post*, but there is not a word of truth in his story of Bradlaugh and the young soldier at Portsmouth. Nobody ever heard of the ridiculous incident while Bradlaugh was alive. It is one of the many silly Christian stories floated since his death. The people who invented and believed the old watch story will invent and believe anything.

J. BRODIE.—See Romans iii. 7. We cannot answer your other query yet.

C. A. TURNER.—The reference was not preserved.

G. BERRISFORD.—Next week. We keep saying that Tuesday is too late.

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

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

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, £73 5s. 9d. Received since:—D. J. D., £2 10s.; Sydney Smith, 5s.; Samuel Leeson (West Australia), 10s.

Sugar Plums.

There is sure to be some disarrangement in next week's *Freethinker*. It will be dated Sunday, December 29, but it will have to be published—owing to the Christmas holidays—on the previous Monday (Dec. 23), and the pages will have to pass the editorial office on the previous Saturday (Dec. 21). That will be a good while before date, and the paragraph department of the paper is bound to suffer. We deem it advisable to tell our readers of this beforehand. We believe, however, that they will find no lack of interesting matter in our next issue.

The New Year's number of the *Freethinker* will, we hope, be specially interesting. Mr. Foote will begin a longish review of *George Meredith's Letters*, for one thing; and there will be other attractive items in that number's list of contents.

In spite of the rain there was a much improved audience at Queen's Hall on Sunday evening. It is hard to account for, but there was the unmistakable fact. It was a live audience too; from beginning to end Mr. Foote's lecture on "The Real Meaning of Christmas" was followed with the closest attention, and frequently and loudly applauded. Mr. Victor Roger, the chairman, succeeded in eliciting several questions after the lecture, but there was no set discussion.

That ends the Queen's Hall lectures for 1912. They will be resumed early in the new year. The precise date of reopening and other details will be announced next week.

Mr. Lloyd had a good audience, in spite of the wretched weather, at Stratford on Sunday evening, and his lecture gave great satisfaction. A lady—Miss Pankhurst—occupied the chair.

The Northern Tour has been sadly hindered by the weather, but Mr. Gott informs us that two meetings were squeezed in at Burnley on Sunday, and that there was a good sale of literature.

We expect to have something definite to say about our "Fighting Fund" and its object in next week's *Freethinker*. Consequently the less said this week the better.

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner, under the auspices of the N. S. S. Executive, takes place as usual on the second Tuesday in January at the Holborn Restaurant. A good dinner, followed by some good music and no doubt some good speeches, can be secured for a four shilling ticket, obtainable at the N. S. S. head office, 2 Newcastle-street, London, E.C. Mr. Foote occupies the chair, and will be supported by many leading Freethinkers, including Mr. C. Cohen, Mr. J. T. Lloyd, Mr. A. B. Moss, Mr. W. Heaford, Mr. F. A. Davies, Mr. Victor Roger, Miss E. M. Vance, Miss Alma Stanley, and Miss K. Kough. We hope to see a good gathering of old faces on this occasion and a good number of new ones.

As we go to press we hear that Zacchos, the Greek Freethinker, has been liberated. That is all we can say at present.

(Continued on p. 813.)

How Columbia Treats Its Magdalenes.

CENTRAL AMERICA has lately been enjoying an unenviable notoriety for barbaric horrors. First came the shocking, and as yet, unpunished abominations in Ecuador, with the torture, mutilation, and public burning of the Freethinking ex-President Alfaro and his associates. Then followed the crimes of Putumayo and the decimation of inoffensive natives in the ruthless search for rubber. And now from Columbia fresh abominations, of which the victims are the hapless inmates of the infamous "Good Pastor" at Bogotá, have just been brought to light.

Our immediate source of information is *El Radical* of November 14, a Madrid daily paper founded and edited by the celebrated Radical leader and deputy, Senor Alejandro Lerroux, and the disclosures in *El Radical* are but the comments on actual quotations made from the latest Columbian newspapers that have reached Europe (*El Republicano*, of Bogotá, and *Gil Blas*, of September 22, another Columbian paper). These journals are replete with denunciations of the outrage, which, as our Madrid contemporary states, are of such a character that no faith would be attached to them but for the serious nature of the accusations.

As will be presently seen, these revelations, in some respects, recall to mind the systematic cruelties enacted by the justly infamous congregation at Nancy, called "Le Bon-Pasteur," concerning which there was such a tremendous scandal about ten years ago. The abominations now brought to light are, indeed, but the distant echo and up-to-date revival in Columbia of the shameless system of cruelty and exploitation which, after a lengthy trial in the French courts, led to the decree suppressing the "Bon-Pasteur," and ordering the closing of the establishments connected therewith. The report of the trial and relative documents are now before me.*

The Columbian rival of the "Bon-Pasteur" is a religious congregation at Bogotá (the capital of the Republic), known as "El Buen Pastor." *El Republicano* describes the institution as "a prison for women," a description which only errs in one respect, viz., that the element of arbitrary cruelty in an ordinary prison is much less constant a feature than in "El Buen Pastor."

The incriminated institution at Bogotá really forms part of a rich "congregation," with many international ramifications. According to the Procureur-Général in the trial at Nancy, the "Bon-Pasteur" had already at that time under its control 47,000 females, whose ill-paid and cruelly ill-treated labor it exploited in different countries throughout the five divisions of the world. It is well known that after the expulsion of the religious orders (including "Le Bon-Pasteur") from France, many of the congregations settled like harpies upon the South American Republics. "El Buen Pastor" is, no doubt, one of the many protean manifestations of the notorious congregation which was expelled from France nine years ago on account of its abominable cruelties at Nancy.

"El Buen Pastor" of Bogotá makes the exploitation of fallen women a speciality. The institution is partly of a religious and partly of a penal character, and the specific complaint levelled against it is that cruelties are committed there with the knowledge and cognisance of the governmental authorities in the Columbian capital. According to *Gil Blas*, the victims are poor Magdalenes, who, for no other offence than that "they had loved much," are ill-treated in dungeons, are rendered mad by the straight jacket, and are retained, in some cases, for ten years in this "paradise of martyrdom." The scandalous aspect of the case is that they are kept and treated as prisoners, or worse, without any legal constraint having been put upon their liberty by the sentence of a judge. The mere whim of a jealous

husband or lover or of a hard-hearted father suffices to cut these creatures off from the outer world and leave them in duration vile, subject to hard slavery for the rest of their miserable lives or for as long a time as their "friends" care to keep them there.

It is stated that the victims are condemned to absolute silence; that they are not permitted to come in contact or hold any communication with persons in the outside world, not even with their parents or relatives; that their names are changed as soon as they enter the establishment; "that they are obliged," says *Gil Blas*, "to work as though they were the Indian slaves of the Arana Company, without any remuneration, and that they are liable to be castigated for the slightest fault with the dungeon, fetters, and straight jacket."

Gil Blas declares that the dungeons of Venice were not worse abodes, and that the poor wretches might think of the Panopticon as a place of delight. *Gil Blas* calls upon the Government to appoint a commission to inspect "this den of torture," which, of course, is run and controlled by the priests in the interests of religion. It insists that the commission should study what is going on, and inspect the secret book wherein the names of the inmates are inscribed, and verify whether the names therein noted are the true names borne by the victims; that discovery should be made of the number of years during which the poor creatures have been incarcerated in the so-called "Good Pastor," and how many of the victims have been spirited away since *El Republicano* began to denounce these inhumanities.

It is comforting to learn that, as a result of these denunciations, the Inspector Municipal of Bogotá has opened up an inquiry into the proceedings at "El Buen Pastor" in reference to the case—a typical one—of Senora Argemina Alonso. Her's was the old story: illicit relations with an individual, the birth of a child, and desertion by the irresponsible father, who passed with a light heart into the unknown. The poor creature was packed away into the institution by her brother, and kept there—a woman of twenty-eight years of age—against her will; nay, the authorities had intimated to her that she would have to remain a prisoner so long as her brother continued to pay her "pension" as the price of her continued seclusion. No doubt some of the godly people in this country who are so fond of chivvying about the high priestesses at the altar of illicit love would be glad of the opportunity of emulating the sanctified barbarities of their Columbian analogues.

Columbia has the better opportunity of dealing cruelly with these victims of our Christian lopsidedness of view in matters sexual, because its religiosity is of a more superstitious type than that which prevails in England. Columbia is bound hand and foot to the Jesuits and to the various orders of friars which haunt and exploit the country. The clericals have been in power for some years past, and the dedication of the Republic to the "Sacred Heart of Jesus" is more than sufficient to account for the triumphant reign of inhumanity in the cloistered recesses of "El Buen Pastor." In spite of the rise of an anti-clericalist movement in the country, Catholicism rules supreme in Columbia, and, as a distinguished and learned Columbian told me only the other day, the priests can do what they like with anybody and everything in the country. The mournful comment of *El Radical* upon these revelations is that they deepen the indelible stigmata of cruelty which Catholicism has engraved not only upon the Spain of the Middle Ages, but upon the all too familiar Spain of modern Montjuich, where men were but recently tortured and martyred with every refinement of inquisitorial ferocity before the silent image of the Crucified, beneath the shadow of whose cross of suffering a keener relish in inflicting torture seems to possess the souls of his disciples.

What is the moral underlying these revelations? It is this, that the devotees of an ascetic creed, like Christianity, with its unhealthy soul-searchings, its morbid introspections and fumbings after an un-

* *Le Procès du Bon-Pasteur* (Paris: 1903; pp. 235).

earthly ideal of self-emasculatation, can never be trusted—be they Catholic or Protestant, or of whatsoever other holy ilk—to deal with sex nonconformities in a sane and dispassionate manner. The copious stream of time can never cleanse Christianity of its "original sin"—viz., its constant tendency to stifle—or sterilise—the primordial and prepotent instinct of sex, or to drain off its mighty outflow into the desert sands of mysticism. Protestant and Catholic alike will always tend to hark back to Christian first principles with its morbidly ascetic outlook on life and its pulsating passions. This atavism of the Christian mind explains at once the frowning severity of the sex purist and the harshness with which the lightest peccadilloes of the daughters of Eve are treated by our Christian civilisation. With a sunnier and more humane ideal than the Christian one, our so-called charitable institutions would learn a sublimer pity and manifest a deeper love of the Magdalenes committed to their care.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

The Noble Quadruped.

THE horse is one of the most useful, instructive, and interesting of all animals. In various countries it is valuable as an article of food; its services as a beast of burden and draught are hard to overrate; it ministers to the twin passions of excitement and cupidity on the racecourse; it is indispensable to the maintenance of the huge circulations which all the sporting papers enjoy. Without its assistance the ordinary evening press would disappear, as its circulation so largely depends upon the betting news it publishes. The horse has borne millions of men to victory, or assisted their flight in defeat, upon countless blood-stained battle fields where human creatures have assembled in martial array for the purpose of laying each other in untimely graves.

The horse and its ancestral history are of supreme importance in the serene realms of science, inasmuch as its fossil remains furnish positive demonstration of an orderly evolutionary ascent from relatively lowly beginnings. And an added interest is lent to its history in days when its displacement as a carriage ornament, and as a drawer of humbler if more useful vehicles has already proceeded far on its way.

With the doubtful exception of that of the camel, the pedigree of the horse has been more elaborately worked out than that of any other animal organism. From a careful examination of numerous collections of fossil remains gathered from both the Eastern and the Western Worlds, Professors Huxley and Marsh constructed a general pedigree, and many details undiscovered in their day have been subsequently brought to light. The activities of Ray Lankester, R. S. Lull, Cossar Ewart, Lydekker, Andrews, and other scientists have established an array of evidence which completely satisfies the requirements of the most critical and competent judges.

At the very beginnings of the Eocene division of the Tertiary Period, there lived a little plantigrade creature no larger than a rabbit which we have every reason for regarding as the remote ancestor of the modern horse. Professor H. A. Nicholson was convinced that phenacodus, a five-toed fossil yielded by the earliest Eocene formation of North America, was the ancestor in question. Other authorities, however, are not fully satisfied that this particular animal is entitled to this place of honor; but there exists a practical unanimity of opinion among Palæontologists that the earliest ancestor of the horse was either phenacodus or an organism intimately related to it.

In the later deposits of this selfsame Eocene Period the fossil remains of the hyracotherium have been disclosed. This was a herbivorous animal no larger than a diminutive fox, which bore four toes

on its forefeet, with dwindling vestiges of a fifth. From the still later Upper Eocene rocks were recovered the remains of the palæotherium, an animal with three toes only. In the succeeding division of the Tertiary deposits—the Oligocene—the meshippus makes its appearance. This member of the horse group had grown to the size of a sheep; like its immediate predecessor, it was a three-toed animal, although the two side toes did not quite touch the ground and the fourth had almost disappeared.

In the subsequent Miocene and Pliocene Ages the hipparion flourished. The lateral toes of this animal were each furnished with a hoof, but had grown still shorter than those of the meshippus, while the toes of the anchitherium—the succeeding representative of the rising equine family—were in a similar dwindling state. Although neither of these animals is regarded as an ancestral form of the contemporary horse, that both are closely related to it cannot be disputed. No detailed horse pedigree has so far been framed which meets with universal assent. Extensive migrations have added to the complexity of the problem, but the recognised genealogy is regarded as substantially accurate. Differences of opinion among specialists are confined to details of definite relationship.

There is conclusive proof of an ascending evolution both in size and structure until the horses of history make their unmistakable entry into the world's affairs. The living horse retains abundant anatomical evidence of its descent from less specialised ancestors. Although it outwardly exhibits but one central, solid-nailed or hoofed toe, it still preserves below its integument the vestigial remains of two formerly functional toes—the "splint bones" of the anatomist.

Not only has a divided hoof been transformed into a single hoof; a modification in the structure of the teeth has also been necessitated by environmental changes. Originally a browser on soft vegetable growths, the horse family gradually adapted itself to less succulent plant foods. Various other modifications might be mentioned were space available. But let it suffice to say that, surveyed as a whole, the fully evolved horse is a swifter and stronger animal than its progenitors, and it is certainly more beautiful.

Primitive man was early acquainted with the horse. Our earliest knowledge of this is supplied by the remains of prehistoric times which have been brought to light by an examination of the Solutrean and Magdalenian caves of France. Representations of horses' heads were discovered in a cavern of the latter period. A broken horse's rib from the same site was engraved in a similar manner. Another valuable relic was discovered in a Dordogne cave. This is a bone incised with the figure of a nude savage, on each side of which was depicted a horse's head. Numerous French examples exist, but England appears to be represented by a single specimen. Robin Hood's Cave in Derbyshire yielded this example, which is a fragment of rib upon which a horse's head has been scratched. But this figure is so crudely drawn that, in the writer's opinion, it cannot be certain that it was intended to represent a horse's cranium at all.

When all the available specimens are examined it will be admitted that the following remarks of Mr. Walter Johnson, taken from his learned and fascinating volume, *Byways in British Archaeology*,* are fully justified:—

"From a casual inspection," he writes, "of these early and priceless works of art, we might conclude that the horse known to Palæolithic man was of a stunted breed, small and heavy, with a large head, rounded forehead, short neck, and an upright or 'hog mano.' But this generalisation would be lacking in precision. Professor Ewart has discriminated three types. The first type includes horses the features of which closely agree with those of the wild species (*Equus prejevalskii*) recently discovered in the Great

* Cambridge University Press; 1912.

Gobi Desert.....This horse, a specimen of which is to be seen in the Zoological Gardens, London, resembles pre-eminently the cave horse just described. The second type embraces animals which resemble the broad-browed ponies often met with in the Western Highlands of Scotland, while the third type suggests the slender-limbed, narrow-headed ponies of Western and North-Western Europe."

In this instance, as in many others, all the available evidence plainly indicates that, in order to discover the common ancestor of the numerous species of living horses, it is necessary to go back much further into past times than was formerly supposed. In any case, prehistoric man was the contemporary of at least three distinct varieties of that animal.

That early man had no sympathy with modern squeamishness concerning the palatability of horse-flesh is abundantly clear. In one French rock shelter alone "a veritable wall of horse bones, the remains of thousands of animals," encircled the primitive hearths. The hunting and eating of the wild horse seem to have prepared the way for its subsequent domestication. And there can be no doubt that aversion to the consumption of horse meat is of comparatively recent growth. Keyser has shown that this antipathy is religious in its origin. Our heathen forefathers were in the habit of sacrificing the horse to their divinities and eating its flesh in the succeeding repasts. The early Christian teachers looked upon it in consequence with grave suspicion, and it was forbidden as food to their converts. The Norwegians used horse meat as a table delicacy at their feasts to Odin. The Britons of the Round Barrow period utilised the horse as food, and this custom lingered for centuries. So late as the Church Council of Celchyth (A. D. 787) "the consumption of horse-flesh was noted as a stain on the character of the British Christians." And more strange still, "the monks of St. Gall not only ate horse-flesh, but returned thanks for it in the metrical grace, written by the monk, Ekkehard III., who did not die until A. D. 1036."

In the Neolithic age the horse appears to have become much more scarce than in the preceding Palæolithic Period. Among New Stone Age relics, its remains are either very rare or altogether absent. Although not entirely absent in the Swiss Lake dwellings, their scarcity is very noticeable. During the Neolithic Period in Britain, in Lord Avebury's opinion, our island was destitute of horses. A very high authority, Professor Ridgeway, has arrived at a similar conclusion. This scientist contends that in Neolithic Britain the earlier horse had become extinct, and that the remains discovered by Canon Greenwell and other antiquaries in prehistoric graves in reality belong to the Bronze Period or the beginning of the Iron Age. And he further conjectures that the remains unearthed are those of horses re-introduced in order to replace the earlier extinct species.

The labors of Greenwell, Professor Boyd Dawkins, Dr. Irving, and other anthropologists, however, all point to the persistence of the horse in Britain from early Palæolithic times right down to our own day. Although the remains of these animals are fewer in Neolithic deposits than in other formations, the positive evidence afforded by their occasional presence, is quite sufficient to establish this proposition. Nor need we wonder at the scanty remains of this particular period. We cannot with certainty state that the horse had as yet been tamed; a few young ones may have been captured and kept in captivity until full-grown. But it is quite unlikely that they bred in captivity at this early time. As Darwin pointed out, animals confined in cages seldom breed, as the reproductive functions are frequently arrested by artificial conditions of life. Moreover, the huge deposits of bones disclosed in Palæolithic settlements indicate that horses had been slaughtered in vast numbers for food. Primitive men were hardly likely to distinguish between a mare in foal and a young stallion, when pursuing their prey. And when we remember that the horse is a slow-breeding

animal, and was hunted by various beasts of prey as well as by his human enemy, little astonishment need be felt at the fact that its numbers were very materially reduced. In such disadvantageous surroundings it appears surprising that the noble creature survived at all.

In all probability the horse was first domesticated for its meat and milk supplies, and afterwards employed as a beast of burden. To primitive man the food problem was the primary consideration, and it is almost certain that the horse as well as the ox was yoked to the primitive waggon, long before the former carried a rider on his back. The horse was more easily yoked than ridden—the ordinary present day horses when just 'broken in' take more kindly to a conveyance than to a cavalier.

The materials for a connected narrative of horse-taming are very scanty. It has been pointed out, however, that the rock carvings of Norway and Sweden, which date from the Bronze Age, prove that at that remote period the animal was used for both riding and driving:—

"That this age was preceded in Scandinavia and Central Europe by an era when the horse was employed for traction and transport only, is very probable. Swiss lake-dwellings of the Bronze Age seem to indicate an overlapping of the stages. The discovery, on these sites, of numerous horse-bits and wooden wheels would suggest that the villagers both rode horses and drove waggons or chariots."

The earliest attempts at horsemanship must have been deeds of valor. It was no easy achievement to retain one's seat on a half-wild horse without the assistance of bridle or stirrup. Yet these necessary adjuncts to modern horsemanship must have succeeded and not preceded the early equestrian art. Nevertheless, all these initial difficulties were overcome. Julius Cæsar, that famous man whose wit set down those deeds which make his valor live, found the barbarian Britons "expert equestrians and charioteers." Their dexterity was so wonderful that it won even his admiration; and among other races the same equestrian powers were doubtless observed.

In improving their horses, the Saxons proceeded on scientific principles. They devoted some attention to breeding, and increased the speed of their four-footed servants and friends. In the reign of Athelstan, horses appear to have been imported from Spain with the object of bettering the native stocks. By the twelfth century the English racehorse excited the enthusiasm of at least one writer. During the reigns of John and Edward III., horse-breeding was further encouraged, and under the reign of the latter king the export of the native horse was prohibited. The Parliaments of the early Tudor Period continued this policy, and marked attention was paid to the deterioration which had resulted from the interbreeding of the various strains. The famous English cart-horse was slowly evolved "to some extent, perhaps, from sires and dams of the old war-horse type." Towards the close of the seventeenth century the modern horse was much what it still is. Various improvements have, however, since taken place and our horses are now equal to any in the world.

T. F. PALMER.

An Up-to-Date Prophet.

"To bear all naked truths,
And to envisage circumstance, all calm;
That is the top of sovereignty." —KEATS.

THOMAS MOORE, the poet, was nearly choked with indignation by being asked by a lady how he got his forecasts for his almanac. Yet the fact remains that the prophet counts more readers to-day than the author of "Lalla Rookh," a poem much admired on publication, and for which Moore received ten thousand pounds.

It used to be said that prophecy found a man mad or left him so; but an exception must be made in

the case of "Old Moore," the most genial of prophets. Not long ago there rose up, in an idle week, the old newspaper dispute over the names of the twenty greatest men now alive and famous. Reputations tossed and rose and fell. There were odd folk who were not quite sure about Mr. Robert Blatchford. Over the merits of the Bishop of London and "Gipsy" Smith there was unkind comparison. But none of the correspondents ever questioned the right of "Old Moore" to be considered a great man.

His is a fame that flourishes wherever the English language is spoken. He has shown to hundreds of thousands the vision of the future, and he has carefully preserved the secret of anonymity. As for the public, the prophet serves us well. His utterances set us right at the moment when a new bacillus has put us in bodily fear, when we are anxious over the coming eclipse or the inadequacy of the defences of our country.

With regard to the coming year, "the voices of the stars" are very clamorous. The principal hieroglyphic for 1913 is a fearsome sight. To the uninitiated onlooker the chief features seem absolutely weird. In the foreground is the picture of a baby smoking a cigar while sitting upon a barrel of gunpowder, and immediately behind is a horse with a wooden leg. Three sooty demons fill the upper part, one bearing a marked resemblance to a late-lamented evangelist. The remainder of the drawing is devoted to a shepherd in scant raiment, a flock of sheep, a kneeling woman, some half-starved children and well-fed sailors, with a figure of John Bull in front with a hand and dagger in his immediate neighborhood.

This artistic combination, the prophet informs us, "may well cause a thrill of horror"; but, lest any reader should have fever of the brow, he adds: things are not "so serious as one would first imagine. The dozen smaller pictures, thoughtfully provided for the twelve months of the year, supply considerable food for reflection. From the accompanying letterpress we learn that "a very great personage" will have a bad time in February, and a "world renowned foreign actress" will bid adieu to the stage of life in April. More saddening still, "a noble duke will be called away without any warning" in June, and a "well-known prelate" will shuffle off this mortal coil in October.

Of more interest to our readers is the forecast for May, when the prophet tells us that we shall encounter "a new religion." No details are given; but in the accompanying picture the new missionary is addressing an audience of five persons, which will reassure those Freethinkers who think there are already sufficient theological systems. Shareholders in breweries will be pleased to note that "during the latter part of the year there will be a most unexpected increase in the consumption of alcoholic drinks." The prophet does not inform us what particular events will induce our countrymen to take to drink in this terrible manner. Lest this calamity should induce pessimism, we hasten to point out that some priceless Egyptian manuscripts of great antiquity will be discovered in September, and that June will be "a fine month on the whole."

There are so many people out walking in the street who are celebrities that it is a novelty to find a prophet whose features are veiled. In this Bagdad of ours no Haroun al Raschid can venture abroad undistinguished. But "Old Moore's" fame is still safe without his portrait being reproduced in the halfpenny press. Let all other prophets give us as accurate anticipations, and there will be an end of the slump in prophecy.

MIMNERMUS.

(SUGAR PLUMS.—Continued from p. 809.)

Mr. J. Hammond, the president of the Liverpool Branch, gave an excellent address the other evening to the members of the Rev. George Wise's Debating Society on "Some Intellectual Difficulties of Theism." Mr. Wise himself replied to Mr. Hammond, but it appears that the latter more than held his own—as we should expect him to do. Mr. Wise must be congratulated, anyhow, on the intellectual hospitality involved in such a discussion.

The December number of the *Humanitarian* contains a note on the "Letters of George Meredith." Several letters were addressed to Mr. H. S. Salt, honorary secretary of the Humanitarian League, mostly on literary matters. Mr. Salt regrets that an important letter addressed by Meredith to the League on the discontinuance of the Royal Buckhounds was not included. It ran as follows:—

"The fewer words the better when success is reached. Your efforts have gained their reward, and it will encourage you to pursue them in all fields where the good cause of sport, or any good cause, has to be cleansed of blood and cruelty. So you make steps in our civilisation."

The supplement to this number of the *Humanitarian* is a verbatim report of Mr. George Greenwood's excellent speech in the House of Commons against the flogging clause of the Criminal Law Amendment (White Slave Traffic) Bill. The Humanitarian League does well to keep Mr. Greenwood's speech before the public mind. We hope it will have a wide circulation.

We have said all along that the action of Borough and County Councils in granting seven-days' licenses to cinematograph shows, or granting six-days' licenses with a proviso to close on the seventh, was perfectly illegal. Sunday entertainments are prohibited by Statute Law, which must be altered before a Sunday license can be granted—for local bodies cannot grant (valid) licenses to break the law of the land. On the other hand, licenses cannot contain conditions for other days than those for which they are granted. This should be as clear as daylight to anyone with a little common sense and a competent knowledge of the facts, yet nobody but the editor of the *Freethinker* seemed able to see it. But there is no disputing it now. The Brighton Watch Committee has taken counsel's opinion on the matter: and Mr. A. Macmorran, K.C., and Mr. A. H. Bodkin, have reported that Councils have no authority over cinematograph shows on Sunday where non-flammable films are used. The Brighton Watch Committee has therefore pulled in its horns, and the local bigots—especially the clergy—find themselves "up a tree."

If wife and child, and name and fame, were all lost to me, one after another, still I would not lie.

The longer I live the more obvious it is to me that the most sacred act of a man's life is to say and to feel "I believe such and such to be true." All the greatest rewards and all the heaviest penalties of existence cling about that act. The universe is one and the same throughout, and if the condition of my success in unravelling some little difficulty in anatomy or physiology is that I shall rigorously refuse to put faith in that which does not rest in sufficient evidence, I cannot believe that the great mysteries of existence will be laid open to me on other terms.—*Thomas Henry Huxley*.

The chief power of established error lies in its hereditary control of the great social ceremonies of life. It presides at the baptismal font, at the marriage altar, at the grave; when its hold upon these epochs of family life is loosened it will fail. And that time will come when all liberal men and women are perfectly consistent in life and in death, resolutely refusing to have their children subjected to an ancient exorcism, to pronounce the false formulæ of a sacramental marriage, or to permit over their dead bodies the rites and conjurations of superstition.—*Moncure D. Conway*.

Obituary.

I REGRET to announce the death of an old Liverpool Freethinker, Mr. James Bristow. He was the son-in-law of the Liverpool veteran, Mr. John Ross, and for many years he was an active member of the Branch. He was buried on Monday, December 9, at Smithdown-road Cemetery, many local Freethinkers being present; among others: Mrs. Bristow, Miss Mary Ross, Mr. J. Ross, Mr. W. Ross, Mrs. Hammond, Mr. and Mrs. Roleffs, Mr. Ludrigson, and Mr. J. Balfour; the Service being read by the Branch President, Mr. J. Hammond.—W. McKELVIE.

The fact is before us that Christianity has not Christianised the world, nor has the slightest prospect of doing so, failing even to produce the remotest likeness of itself where it is most loved and honored.—*Harriet Martineau*.

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.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workmen's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, W. Heaford, "A View of the Freethought Movement Abroad."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, G. Sweeney, "Theological Tipsters and their Pretensions."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Fred Morgan will recite Charles Dickens' "Christmas Carol."

OUTDOOR.

LANCASHIRE AND YORKSHIRE: Thos. A. Jackson—Leeds (Town Hall Square): Dec. 22, at 11, "The Cause and Cure of Christianity"; at 7, "The Blasphemer in Evolution"; 23, "The Birth of Jesus"; 27, "The Limitations of Jesus"; 28, "If I Were God."

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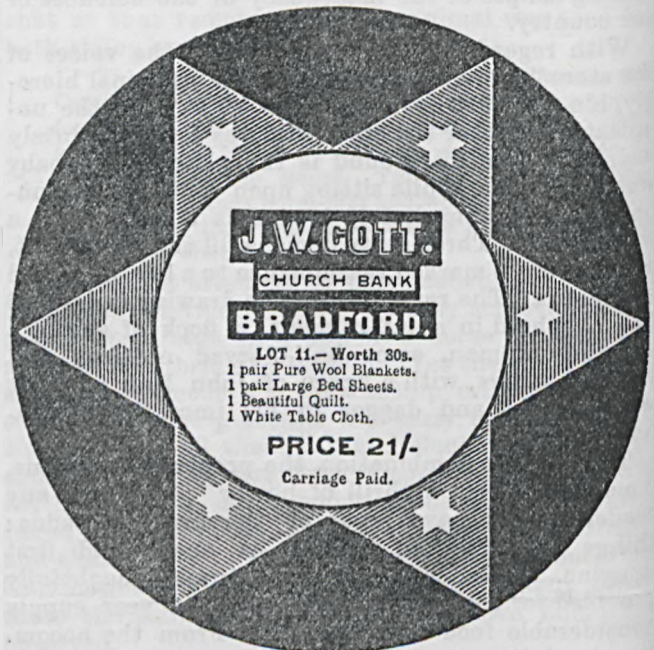
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