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PRICE TWOPENCE

Is it sublime to strain our vision into a fog? and must we fancy we see far because we are looking where nobody can see farther.—LANDOR.

God Damn!

“ 'Tis strange—the Hebrew noun which means ‘I am,’
The English always use to govern ‘damn.’ ”
—BYRON.

THE late Dr. Joseph Parker, of City Temple fame, once cried “God damn the Sultan!” It caused a tremendous flutter in many circles. Some papers cried “Bravo!” Several others cried “Shocking!” The religious press was much divided. Organs of the Nonconformist Conscience were quite delighted over Dr. Parker’s expletive, while the more sedate of the Church organs condemned it as an exhibition of very bad manners. For our part, we were neither pleased nor disgusted. If a minister likes to swear in the pulpit, we are not at all disposed to quarrel with him. It is more a matter for his congregation than it is for us. Besides, although swearing—as the angry rebuker said—is a damned bad habit, it is better to let off steam than to burst the boiler. There are occasions in life when the mildest-mannered man, even a saint of the first water, may be pardoned for indulging in a recitation from the slang dictionary. Has not Mark Twain said that when a man goes into a dark room, and sits on the business end of a tincture, his only refuge is profanity?

Great allowance, too, ought to be made for Christian ministers. In the first place, they are—or are supposed to be—diligent students of the Bible. Now the Bible is a first-rate cursing manual. Jehovah opens the ball in Genesis by cursing pretty nearly everything—the serpent, Adam and Eve, and the very ground under their feet; and the author of the book of Revelation closes with a red-hot curse on anybody who should presume to add anything to, or subtract anything from, that mysterious composition. Between this fine beginning and this noble end there is a vast variety of malediction. Most of the Bible writers take a hand in the business. Jehovah assumes the lion’s share, as is natural, for the boss should be the first in everything; but one or two of his subordinates occasionally run him pretty closely. Moses, though the meekest man on earth, could let out rarely when his blood was up. David, or whoever wrote the cursing Psalms, played up well for a front place in the competition. Some of the prophets did their level best. Even the great New Testament saints, Paul and Peter, labored to sustain the credit of their profession. Jesus Christ himself was very successful when he let himself go. His outburst in Jerusalem, towards the close of his career, was highly creditable. It was Professor Newman’s opinion that he outdid Tacitus and Suetonius in malignant denunciation of his enemies, who were after all simply his rivals. He called them hypocrites, whited sepulchres, vipers, and children of hell. In his last sermon on the Day of Judgment he used the words, “Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire.” And after

his Resurrection, according to the second Gospel, he declared that those who believed should be saved, and that those who did not believe should be damned. No doubt a great literary artist, like Shakespeare or Rabelais, could have considerably improved on this performance, but it is a good one nevertheless.

The fact is that “damn” is a remarkably common word in the Bible, and if an irate saint is not to be allowed to use it when he feels disposed, what on earth has become of English freedom?

But why, it may be asked, should Dr. Parker have damned anybody, even the Sultan of Turkey? Is it not written that Jesus came to save, not to destroy; and should not Dr. Parker have followed in the footsteps of his Master? But this question involves a very partial view of the glorious Gospel. Jesus did, indeed, come to save the few, but he also came to damn the many, or at least to let them be damned by his Father. Many are called, but few chosen; many slide down the way to Hell, few climb the path to Heaven; the sheep are a little flock, the goats are a countless multitude. Salvation is for the elect, and damnation for the mob. According to the old religion—instead of the modern makeshift—the chief work of the Lord is the damnation of sinners. He sometimes protests that he doesn’t like it, but he laid down his plan and abides by it, and even a deity must be judged by actions rather than by words. Byron felt, in the good old orthodox days of years ago, that he was very much alone in wishing to circumscribe the limits of Hell’s hot jurisdiction, and that the clergy would hold that he ought to be damned for “hoping no one else might e’er be so.”

On the whole, therefore, we think that Dr. Parker’s “God damn” is susceptible of an easy justification. But some people will ask why “God damn”? Why not call on the Devil to do it, as Macbeth does to the messenger who brings the tidings that Barnham wood has come to Dansinane?—“The Devil damn thee black, thou cream-faced loon.” Well, the answer is very simple. The Devil damns nobody; all who are damned are damned by God. When you look at it closely, the Bible God is the Devil. The two personages have got on the wrong tickets. This is felt to be so by unsophisticated people. When a rough fellow swears, he says “God damn you.” He knows instinctively who it is that presides over damnation.

Over in America they say there are three sorts of fools: fools, damn fools, and God damn fools. Wherever the English language goes, it carries with it the peculiarity which Byron noticed in the *Don Juan* couplet at the head of this article.

Many years ago Colonel Ingersoll was quoting a legal author called Moses in arguing a case of Mandamus in court, and the Christian judge, thinking he would take a rise out of “Bob,” asked: “By the way, Mr. Ingersoll, is that the gentleman you go about the country abusing?”—alluding to the then very famous lecture on “The Mistakes of Moses.” “Oh, no,” Ingersoll readily replied; “this is Moses on Mandamus; the other is Moses on God damn us.” That judge never tried it on “Bob” again. As for Dr. Parker, he was not exactly an Ingersoll, but he was not to be bullied for his “God damn,” at least by Christians. From every point of view the expression is strictly orthodox.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Religion of Disease.—II.

(Continued from p. 99.)

IT is not the least of the evils induced by the triumph of Christianity that, by its advocacy of the savage theory of the nature of mental and physical disorders, it arrested the advance made in Greece, Rome, and Alexandria, and saddled European life with a set of beliefs that now have their counterpart only amongst uncivilised peoples. The effect of this may be traced in many directions; at present I am concerned only with showing the extent to which it served to keep alive a sense of intercourse with a supernatural world. And it is not too much to say that every case of disease, particularly of mental disease, gave to the fervent Christian additional proof of the activity of the spiritual world. Indeed, the expulsion of demons from afflicted persons was one of the powers upon which Christians prided themselves, and a belief in its possibility continued at least up to the time of John Wesley. The most elaborate regulations and formulæ were devised, all inspired by the idea of making the evil spirit's dwelling-place as uncomfortable as possible, and so ensuring evacuation. If an insane person was to be dealt with, he was prayed over, drenched with incense, and evil-smelling drugs burned under his nose. Then a set form of objurgation followed, thus:—

"Thou lustful and stupid one.....Thou lean sow.....
Thou wrinkled beast, thou mangy beast, thou beast of
all beasts the most beastly.....Thou mad spirit.....
Thou greedy wolf.....Loathsome cobbler.....filthy sow
.....perfidious boar.....envious crocodile.....malodorous
drudge.....wounded basilisk.....swollen toad.....en-
tangled spider.....lousy swineherd.....lowest of the low
.....cudgelled ass," etc., etc.*

Then followed the exorcism proper:—

"By the Apocalypse of Jesus Christ by which God hath given to make known unto his servants those things which are shortly to be.....I exorcise you, ye angels of untold perversity.....May all the devils that are thy foes rush forth upon thee and drag thee down to hell.....May the Holy One trample on thee and hang thee up in an infernal fork, as was done to the five kings of the Amorites.....May God set a nail to your skull, and pound it with a hammer as Jael did unto Sisera.....May.....Sotter.....break thy head and cut off thy hands, as was done to the cursed Dagon..... May God hang thee in a hellish yoke, as seven men were hanged by the sons of Saul."†

All over Europe, for centuries, lunatics and epileptics were tormented and ill-treated under the obsession of these ideas. Whipping-posts were set up, and the insane soundly scourged. Here is a specimen recipe of this class:—

"In case a man be lunatic, take a skin of mere swine, work it into a whip, and winge the man therewith. Soon he will be quite cured. Amen."‡

In some parts of Scotland, as late as 1789, lunatics were placed in the churchyard all night, bound hand and foot, and with a holy bell over their heads. In Cornwall, St. Nun's Pool was famous for its cure of those possessed. Even the embraces of prostitutes were recommended as a cure for insanity.§ So proud were the priests of their power to expel demons that in Vienna, in 1783, the Jesuit Fathers boasted that they had cast out no less than 12,652 "living devils." Two centuries later (1788), in Bristol, a drunken epileptic, one George Larkins, was solemnly brought into church and seven clergymen as solemnly set themselves to work to cast out the possessing demon. Whereupon Satan swore "by his infernal den" that he would not come out—an oath, says the chronicler, nowhere to be found but in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Under date of October 25, 1789, John Wesley also relates how he was sent for, and assisted at the expulsion of a demon from the body of a young girl.

It is no wonder that we find a missionary from New Guinea confessing that the native demoniae "are certainly not unlike those described in the New Testament. Frantic gestures, convulsions, foaming at the mouth, feats of supernatural strength, furious ravings, bodily lacerations, gnashing of teeth, and other things of a similar character may be witnessed in most of the cases which are supposed to be under diabolical influence."* In truth, there is not a resemblance merely between these cases and those described in the New Testament; they are identical. No rational line of difference can be drawn between the uncivilised inhabitant of New Guinea or Africa, the early Christian, the mediæval Churchman, or John Wesley. Faced by the same facts, they arrive at the same conclusion. This conclusion is one suggested by their religious beliefs, and in turn it reacts and strengthens their religious convictions.

Of all diseases, that of epilepsy appears to have been most favorable to the encouragement of a belief in spiritual operation. One medical authority has pointed out, as the result of his own experience, that with epilepsy there is often an exaltation of the religious sentiments.† A still more recent authority, Sir T. S. Clouston, has also remarked that strong religious emotionalism often accompanies epilepsy.‡ Another eminent physician, while pointing out that "a high degree of intelligence, amounting even to genius, has in some cases been associated with epilepsy," points out that "The epileptic is apt to be influenced greatly by the mystical and the awe-inspiring, and he is disposed to morbid piety. He has an outward religiousness without corresponding strictness in morals."§ The very name of this disease shows its association with religion. Emanuel Deutsch says:—

"There is a peculiar something supposed to inhere in epilepsy. The Greeks called it a sacred disease. Bacchantic and corybantic furore were god-inspired stages. The Pythia uttered her oracles under the most distressing signs. Symptoms of convulsions were ever needed as a sign of the divine."||

So, too, a modern observer, Mr. W. Ellis, writing of the Polynesians, says:—

"As soon as the god was supposed to have entered the priest, the latter became violently agitated and worked himself up to the highest pitch of apparent frenzy; the muscles of the limbs seemed convulsed, the body swelled, the countenance became terrific, the features distorted, the eyes wild and strained. In this state he often rolled on the earth, foaming at the mouth, as if laboring under the influence of the divinity by whom he was possessed, and in shrill cries, and often violent and indistinct sounds, revealed the will of the god."¶

There is every reason for believing that Mohammed received many of his celestial messages and visions during epileptic seizures, hallucinations of sight and hearing being the normal accompaniments of such attacks. Swedenborg's visions may also be traced to a similar source. These, and others, were illustrating in their own person the policy of the Siberian Shamans, who actually select epileptic lads to be trained for the priesthood. Long experience had doubtless taught them that the hallucinations which beset epileptics are of exactly the kind that create a sense and appearance of religious illumination. Thus, Dr. Ball says that the most common hallucinations are those of vision. And Dr. Maudsley thus describes the normal accompaniments of an epileptic attack:—

"The patient's senses are possessed with hallucinations, his ganglionic central cells being in a state of what may be called convulsive action; before the eyes are blood-red flames of fire, amidst which whoever happens to present himself appears as a devil, or otherwise horribly transformed; the ears are filled with a

* Quoted by A. D. White, *Warfare of Science with Theology*, vol. ii., p. 107.

† White, vol. ii., p. 108.

‡ Tuke's *History of the Insane in the British Isles*.

§ Fort's *Medical Economy During the Middle Ages*, p. 345.

* Cited by Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. ii., p. 130.

† Dr. Howden, Medical Superintendent of Montrose Lunatic Asylum, in *Journal of Mental Science*, 1873.

‡ *Clinical Lectures on Mental Diseases*, p. 248.

§ Dr. R. Jones, in Allbutt's *System of Medicine*, vol. viii., p. 335.

¶ *Literary Remains*, p. 83.

¶ *Polynesian Researches*, vol. ii., 235-6.

terrible roaring noise, or resound with a voice imperatively commanding him to save himself; the smell is perhaps of sulphurous stifling, and the desperate and violent actions are the convulsive reaction to such fearful hallucinations.*

If anyone will bear in mind the numerous descriptions of religious visions and the accounts, written in all good faith, of the behavior of "inspired" personages during their seasons of inspiration, he will have little difficulty in realising that in all stages of culture, from Ellis's Polynesian medicine-man down to the modern revival, epilepsy has played no small part in inducing and developing a sense of intercourse between man and a spiritual world.

It has already been mentioned that one of the commonest methods of inducing a sense of spiritual intercourse is that of fasting. A lowered vitality is eminently favorable to hallucinations of every description. A shipwrecked sailor is placed in the same condition, through no act of his own, as is the primitive medicine-man and the mediæval saint by their own volition. There is really much more in the Christian outcry against "fleshly indulgence" than a revolt against mere sensualism. It might even be claimed that indulgence in sensual gratification in one direction was condemned in order to increase sensual gratification in another direction. A well-fed body has been deprecated because it out of one of the conditions of "spiritual" illumination. The Zulu maxim, "A stuffed body cannot see secret things," really expresses the philosophy of the matter.

Among the Blackfoot Indians of North America, when a boy reaches fourteen years of age he is sent away from his father's lodge in search of a spiritual protector or totem. Seeking some secluded spot, he abstains from food until such time as he dreams, or receives a vision of some animal or bird, which he at once adopts.† Similarly, the Malay, to procure supernatural visitations, retires to the jungle and abstains from food. The Zulu doctor qualifies himself for intercourse with the tribal ghosts by spare diet and solitary fasts. Fasting is part of the regular regimen of the Hindoo Yogi. In the New Testament, the encounter of Jesus with the Devil is preceded by a forty days' fast. Santa Teresa kept severe fasts for lengthy periods each year. George Fox confesses that he "fasted much," and "walked abroad in solitary places." Less fasting and more genial intercourse with his fellows might easily have prevented his hearing spiritual voices offering counsel. Perhaps the most curious religious reason for fasting is that cited from a monkish preacher by Brady, in his *Clavis Calendaria* :—

"As a coach goes faster when it is empty, a man by fasting can be better united to God; for it is a principle with geometers that a round body can never touch a plane except in one point.....A belly too well filled becomes round, it cannot touch God except in one point; but fasting flattens the belly, and it is united with the surface of God in all points."

(To be concluded.) C. COHEN.

"Personal Religion."

WHAT is religion? As a matter of fact, nobody knows. Everybody defines it to suit himself, and scarcely any two frame an identical definition. One divine assures us that religion is neither cultus, creed, nor conduct, but fellowship with the Unseen, or communion with God. Another is equally certain that religion means the sense of dependence and the various obligations which that sense carries with it. To others, religion signifies acceptance of a definite creed and the adoption of a mode of life suggested or enjoined by such a creed. At present, the Rev. W. E. Orchard, D.D., of Enfield, is issuing a series of what he calls "Modern Tracts on Religion," the

first of which appeared in the *Christian Commonwealth* for February 5, and which he entitles "Personal Religion—Your Concern." In the very first sentence Dr. Orchard falls into the common error of thinking that "we are all religious nowadays—more or less." It would be easy enough to bring the reverend gentleman into touch with thousands of people in London alone who glory in the fact that they have no religion at all in the popular acceptation of the term. Some of them were trained to live without it, while others have succeeded in throwing it off at the bidding of their reason. No doubt there are not a few even at Enfield who do not believe in a Supreme Being nor take part, in public or in private, in any acts of worship. Thomas Paine said that to do good was his religion, and Dr. Orchard refers to the man who declares that "his religion consists in doing all the good he can." But this definition is really a complete negation of religion in any of its approved significations; nor is Dr. Orchard himself satisfied with it. Speaking of the man who takes refuge in it, he says :—

"Is that right? No, for he, too, has not gone far enough back. Behind all the good we do there is the impulse to do it. And it is this that makes all the difference. Very few of us can be sincerely content only to yield to the impulse without inquiring where it comes from, for the one sufficient reason that the impulse seems never to be satisfied by what we are actually able to do. To do all that we could for one short day, would certainly involve us in very big adventures. When have we felt at the close of day that we had done all that we could?"

We must confess that we are rather surprised to find a man of Dr. Orchard's calibre falling back upon such spurious reasoning. Obviously the impulse to do good comes from the same source as ourselves. It is a product of social evolution, and is shared, more or less, by all the gregarious animals below us. Prince Kropotkin, in his excellent work, *Mutual Aid a Factor of Evolution*, furnishes numerous instances of its active presence in ants, bees, birds, and many others of the lower animals. And without a doubt the impulse is in its nature the same in them as in us. It is an essential requisite of a happy social life. We are aware that Dr. Orchard was bound, in the interest of religion, to ignore this undeniable fact in natural history. His ambition is to show that the impulse to do good is of supernatural origin, in which event religion may be defined as "a sense of connection with something higher than ourselves, something that has power to move us and inspire us to thought and activity." Now, Prince Kropotkin informs us that the impulse to do good, or mutual aid, "is to be met with even amidst the lowest animals." He writes :—

"Some land-crabs of the West Indies and North America combine in large swarms in order to travel to the sea and to deposit therein their spawn; and each such migration implies concert, co-operation, and mutual support. As to the big Molucca crab (*Limulus*), I was struck (in 1882 at the Brighton Aquarium) with the extent of mutual assistance which these clumsy animals are capable of bestowing upon a comrade in case of need. One of them had fallen upon its back in a corner of the tank, and its heavy saucer-like carapace prevented it from returning to its natural position, the more so as there was in the corner an iron bar which rendered the task still more difficult. Its comrades came to the rescue, and for one hour's time I watched how they endeavored to help their fellow prisoner" (*Mutual Aid*, p. 11).

If Dr. Orchard is right, those ministering crabs were acting from a sense of connection with something higher than themselves, something that had power to move and inspire them to such noble activity; that is to say, they were performing a religious duty, or taking part in a religious ceremony; but Dr. Orchard is not right. The impulse to do good is not a gift from above, but an acquirement instinctively won on the upward road. Its existence in man does not connect him with anything higher and better than himself, but is merely an indication of the stage he has reached in the evolutionary process. It simply shows exactly where he stands.

* *Physiology of the Mind*, p. 251. See also Dr. Mercier's *Nervous System and the Mind*, p. 55.

† Catlin, *North American Indians*, vol. i., p. 36.

For Dr. Orchard, all roads lead to God, only not one of them is a real road. That they are not genuine roads is proved by the fact that nobody knows who, what, or where God is. The reverend gentleman himself admits that the moment we pronounce the name of God we "are in the thick of a hundred controversies." Some are quite sure that he is a personal being, who hears and answers prayer; others refer to him as the Unknowable; to others he is the Ideal, their deepest self, or the Cosmic Consciousness; and each view "is supported with loud asseverations and mighty arguments." And yet, in the teeth of this admission, Dr. Orchard maintains that God is, at least, "a spiritual activity with whom we can have personal relationship and who can be incarnate in our personality." Personal relationship is possible only between persons, and, necessarily, to say that we can have personal relationship with God is to declare that he is a person, a declaration which, on Dr. Orchard's own showing, nobody is competent to make. We much fear that the famous divine is here guilty of "darkening counsel by words without knowledge." He has ventured beyond his depth, and is at the mercy of many contrary currents. He exhorts us to get "an increased sensibility to God." How shall we get it? "By meditation and laying ourselves open to the visitation of God." That answer is correct, and it lets us into the whole secret of personal religion. Without knowing in the least what God is, Dr. Orchard jumps to the conclusion that the term IT is obviously an inadequate description of him. Quite as obviously, then, God is a HE; and we are to arrive at a realisation of him as such by meditation. It is a perfectly simple and safe rule, and it never utterly fails. If you meditate upon God as a personal being he will certainly grant you a personal visitation in due course; but so will King Oedipus or King Arthur, or any other great fictitious character in literature, on precisely the same terms. Nothing in the world is easier than to get into personal relationship with purely imaginary beings if we are willing to pay the price. Martin Luther was in personal relationship with the Devil, and his Satanic Majesty paid him several memorable visits. On this point we are in complete agreement with the Presbyterian minister of Enfield. Religious experience is real, as real as that of any novelist who lives in a world of fiction. God used to be tremendously real at the old-fashioned Methodist prayer meeting, when the faithful deafened him with the thunders of their impassioned petitions. But the fact that God is real to ardent believers is no evidence whatever that he really exists. They think they can see him with the inward eye; but there is absolutely nothing to prove that he sees them or takes the slightest interest in their affairs. The reality is all on the human side; and surely Dr. Orchard will concur in the statement that the sense of reality enjoyed by devoutly religious people is no guarantee that there is any reality on the Divine side, or even that there is a Divine side at all except in their own minds.

Dr. Orchard has the temerity to think that he has found "the clue to the mystery of all the ages;" but, although we know that he is an exceedingly clever man, we are confident that he is mistaken. "The solution of existence" is not so easy of accomplishment as he seems to imagine. What is the fulfilment of human personality? Dissolution. We know of no other possible fulfilment. We do not even know what personality is; but we do know that, whatever it is, the time comes when it ceases to be. It fulfils itself only in the hour of death. Why we are here we know not; but, being here, our mission is to make the most and best of life while we have it. If this is religion, we are eager to be classed with the profoundly religious; but if religion means "a sense of connection with something higher than ourselves," then let us be put in the category of the notoriously non-religious. In Dr. Orchard's explanation of the term, we are not ashamed to publish it in Gath and to sing it out in the streets of Askalon that we have no religion at all. A hundred years

ago even Dr. Orchard would have been numbered among the non-religious, and probably put to death as an enemy of the cross of Christ. On the one side of his nature he is an out and out Rationalist; but the Rationalism is rendered of non-effect by the undiluted mysticism on the other side. In his Rationalism we are heart and soul with him; but when he retires for refuge into the shadowy realm of mysticism, we are obliged to part company with him, preferring to remain in as close touch as possible to Mother Earth. We also beg to assure him that there is no unbroken testimony that nowhere except in religion have men found themselves at home. On the contrary, we are in possession of very ample testimony from men and women who never felt at home until they got rid of religion, but whose emancipation from the bondage of superstition has spelt for them "peace, power, purpose, that which alone can make life worth living."

When, therefore, a tract comes our way with the arresting title, "Personal Religion—Your Concern," we reply thus: "Dear Tractarian, you are really laboring under a vain delusion—religion is no concern of ours. We have outgrown it and left it behind. In your sense of the word, as well as in that of your more orthodox brethren, we are proud to be numbered among the large army of the non-religious, and to be engaged in a distinctly anti-religious propagandism. You yourself repudiate much of what our forefathers loved as the very truth of God; and the only difference between you and us is that our Rationalism has compelled us, not only to drop the dogmas of orthodoxy, but also to renounce Supernaturalism in all its forms."

J. T. LLOYD.

"Vital Lies."—II.

(Continued from p. 109.)

"You appear to think, as I used to think in earlier days, that mankind are rational beings, and that when a thing has been demonstrated they will be convinced. Everything proves the contrary. A man is a bundle of passions which severally use his reason to get gratification, and the result in all times and places depends on what passions are dominant." —HERBERT SPENCER. Cited in Moncure Conway's *Autobiography*, vol. ii., p. 409.

"Every step towards truth has had to be fought for, and there has had to be abandoned for it almost whatever otherwise human hearts, human love, human confidence in life are attached to. Therefore greatness of soul is required: the service of truth is the hardest service." —NIETZSCHE, *The Antichrist*; 1899; p. 323.

NOTHING is more disconcerting to the young—at least we have found it so—than, having discovered the falsity of a religious idea and replaced it with a truth, to find that other people, instead of receiving the proof with pleasure, receive it coldly and grudgingly—if they receive it at all. They wish to believe, and do not wish to be undeceived.

We have just noticed a case in point in the *Saturday Review* (Jan. 25), where Mr. Filson Young, the novelist, dealing with Mr. Maskelyne's exposure of Madame Blavatsky,* and, incidentally, with Indian magic, declares:—

"I am sorry to have these great delusions destroyed for me.....I do not like to come near a thing which I have believed to be magic and wonderful, and find it tawdry and mean and insignificant.....To expose a thing is to rob it of its agreeable coloring, and lay bare its ugliness; and many people have a preference for the decent coverings being left on."

It is for these people who "Will to Believe" and do not wish to be undeceived in matters of religion that the books dealt with by Vernon Lee in *Vital Lies* are written.

Leaving Professor James, Vernon Lee deals next with the "Modernist" movement represented by

* J. N. Maskelyne, *The Fraud of Theosophy Exposed*. Our older readers will recognise that there is nothing new in this booklet. All the evidence in it, and a great deal more, appeared in this journal, and in two pamphlets by Mr. Foote, at the time of Mrs. Besant's defection to Theosophy.

Father Tyrrell. The Modernist movement, as our readers know, is the attempt of those Roman Catholics who, having an acquaintance more or less deep with the facts and hypotheses of modern science, and knowing the incompatibility of this knowledge with the traditions and dogmas taught by the Church of Rome, attempt to establish a right to believe in the demonstrated truths of science and yet remain in the Church, similar to the latitudinarianism of the Church of England, where little is required besides belief in God and conformity to the ritual.

In the part devoted to Father Tyrrell, Vernon Lee's writing is seen at its best; the style is not hampered by the necessity of tracking "ways that are dark and tricks that are vain," as was the case when dealing with Professor James. As Vernon Lee remarks, and the passage is an illustration itself of fine writing:—

"After a course of Pragmatic theory, with its hurry to talk over; its shirking of conclusions and shifting of responsibilities; its words thrown down at random, revoked when convenient; its twilight of suggestion and occasional Sludge-the-Medium gesture of turning on the light and showing that there's no deception; after the jumbled metaphors of Dr. Schiller, the verbal slovenliness of Professor James; after that lack of logical structure which makes even M. Bergson's magnificent volumes like caverns, glittering with gems and ores, but viewless and without exit; after all that confusion of genius and shoddy, of ideality and hustle, the satisfaction inspired by this book of Father Tyrrell's* is almost moral, and is most certainly æsthetic. It is like the satisfaction felt in certain churches: the recognition that all is swept and garnished, well set ashlar and massive silver, fair linen and pure vessels; everything done and spoken without hurry or passion; with no audience save the One, whom the Initiate carries in his own consecrated hands."†

Father Tyrrell is abreast of the scientific thought of the day; religion itself he holds to be the result of evolution, and has no more supernatural origin than science, philosophy, or art. Religion, beginning in magic and discipline, in the course of ages evolved, or developed, a spiritual element denied by Father Tyrrell to the primitive magic from which it sprang. Moreover, he holds that the continued progress and ultimate survival of religion depends upon its adaptation to the progress of science, and stands in the same relation as medicine does to the chemical and biological sciences. In other words, if religion does not accommodate itself to the progress of science it will become entirely extinct.

"Nor is this all," says Vernon Lee. "According to Father Tyrrell, the Founder of Christianity worked miracles only in the ignorant belief of men who did not even distinguish between natural and supernatural, because they had no conception of nature's regularity. Jesus did not rise from his grave and show himself to his disciples, but his disciples thought that he had thus risen."

Moreover—

"Jesus was an uneducated and superstitious Jew, of the reign of Tiberius; his mind was incapable of certain views which are nowadays attributed to him; him, on the other hand, full of ideas which had to be revised as a result of his own death, and the non-fulfilment of his own prophecies. Jesus was not a moral innovator, since his morality was current both among the Jewish pietists and the Gentile philosophers of his day."‡

We see by this that Father Tyrrell, a Catholic priest, had advanced far beyond the limits marked out by any of our tinpot Protestant sects, who look down upon Roman Catholics as superstitious image-worshippers.

Of course, there is a limit to Father Tyrrell's Rationalism, or he would have to proclaim himself an Atheist, or at least an unbeliever in Christianity. As Vernon Lee remarks, his thought starting on plain rationalistic lines, but "ever and anon running against that hidden centre of habitual and beloved beliefs, and against the need to believe in them

which he finds in himself" (vol. i., p. 189). To the scientific evolutionist the Christian God, like the Christian Christ, becomes more and more shadowy as man's thought progresses, until at last it shuffles out of the universe altogether. But according to Father Tyrrell the Deity, having allowed man to struggle and fight his way upward through the laws of evolution, suddenly discovered man's dire need of salvation, and, about the year one of our era, revealed himself

"in the province of Judea and through the miraculous mediation (we might almost say mediumship) of an ignorant and superstitious Jewish pietist, whose mind is, if possible, more incapable of grasping the divine reality than that of mankind as a whole, and of his contemporaries in particular."*

Then, again, we have the wholly irrational theory of good and evil:—

"For some inexplicable reason this absolutely Good, Infinite, and Eternal is crossed in its own designs (or crosses its own designs) by the presence of what Man knows as Suffering and Sin. But this contradiction is set right by the divine arrangement of an after-life in which suffering is compensated, and sin either obliterated, if we have arrived at a humanitarian stage in the interpretation of symbols, or if we are in a previous stage—let us say the Dante or Pascal stage—thoroughly well, indeed eternally punished."‡

These beliefs culminate in the direct communication—by means of prayer and the sacraments—between God and man. "But why," asks the Rationalist, "why did not Father Tyrrell carry his evolutionary science to its natural and logical conclusion, and dispense with the Deity and the supernatural altogether?" How are we to explain his partiality and fidelity to the Church of Rome? Vernon Lee supplies the answer: "Having arrived at the point where Father Tyrrell refuses to ask more questions, we must apply our further examinations, not in his company, but to his person." And the question immediately arises "What is this Modernist priest likely to have wished?" Thus, after a long circuit, we are back again at the *Will-to-believe*.‡ That is what we found at the bottom of Professor James's philosophy—the *Will-to-believe in an after-life in which everything will be set right*, and the efficacy of the sacraments of the Church in this life.

It is in explaining this phase of the problem that Vernon Lee shows the keenest sympathy and insight. None but those who have themselves believed in these legends and undergone the mystical state of conversion can really understand the strength of these non-rational states of the mind. As our author acutely remarks:—

"Religion is born not of Man's strength, but of his weakness.....Religion provides for the mortal want which cannot provide for itself; it promises more of whatsoever is stinted—more love, more justice, more life; the very promise arising from the felt insufficiency. The understanding and sympathy it brings is born of the loneliness of the lonely."

They want not only to love but to be loved:—

"Religious persons require also community of feeling, or the illusion, the feeling, of community of feeling. They would, indeed, like to be the best-beloved child, but they also want other children, brethren, with whom to love in company. For human creatures feel insecure and lost by themselves. They require almost as much as light and bodily warmth the sense that others are thinking and feeling like themselves."§

Vernon Lee, who resides in Italy, describes her visit lately, during the twilight of a wintry afternoon, to some of the humbler churches in her neighborhood:—

"The people who have stolen in one by one, barely lifting the leather door curtain, do not take heed of one another; and when each has sat or knelt down among the empty benches, he sees, in that gloom, only the mystic golden blaze of the altar and the vestments.

* *Christianity at the Cross Roads*; 1909.

† Vernon Lee, *Vital Lies*, vol. i., p. 165.

‡ *Vital Lies*, vol. i., p. 169.

* *Vital Lies*, vol. i., p. 173.

† *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 191.

‡ *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 227.

§ *Ibid.*, vol. i., p. 248.

But they feel that they are not alone: They are side by side with unseen fellow-creatures stripped by this darkness of all vain work-a-day personality, reduced to mere similar souls, suffering or hopeful, human, with a common human need for sympathy or consolation; the human being in its weakness and sadness, the ghosts that lurk in all of us, but shrouded in the majestic impersonal forms of that church, of its half-visible aisles and arches. And even if custom blunt and leaves things scarcely noticed, there must be peace and rest and refreshment to be brought back from these places; the sense of those other men and women, unseen, nameless, and almost shapeless, who murmur or chant the same (even unheard) words of supplication or thanksgiving, must leave the certainty that there is brooding, like the dusky architecture, thinning out mysteriously like the distant altar, a great Reality who hears and answers" (vol. i., p. 255).

And if an unbeliever like Vernon Lee can enter into and sympathise with the feelings of these worshippers,—

"What must not be the longing for all this of one who has participated without suspicion of his own fancy's share; the longing for that certainty such as neither act nor the imagination brings—the certainty that this is not the illusion of the Creature, but the reality of the Divine."

We can only wonder that the Modernists have travelled "so far from the full, unreasoned acceptance of all these things which the poor human heart has fashioned for its comfort during the innumerable ages."

As Vernon Lee further observes, "*Catholicism hinges not on doctrine but on Sacrament.*" Now, what the Modernists really wish to do is to get rid of the dogmas of the Church and retain the sacraments. But, as our author further points out, the soaring cathedral is built upon a foundation of alleged facts,—

"And if you pull up fact after fact, crumble one dogma after another into mere symbol, your edifice will speedily show rent after rent, and the day will come when it will strew the ground, as the pine-woods of Olympia are strewn with the column-drums of the temple of Zeus, which, in its day, was one of the seven wonders of the world."

And in the end Father Tyrrell's efforts were a failure, the Modernist movement was condemned by the Pope, Father Tyrrell himself was excommunicated, and died broken-hearted, not living long enough to see his book (*Christianity at the Cross Roads*) in print.

(To be concluded.) W. MANN.

The Jumping Bible.

WITCHCRAFT IN A GERMAN VILLAGE.

THE efficacy of white witchcraft as a means of detecting evildoers was raised in the second Berlin penal court yesterday when an elderly woman named Adelheid Gebhardt, who lives in the village of Bohnsdorf, was charged with slandering a neighbor, the wife of the village barber.

Gebhardt has an old leather-bound Bible which she declares is enchanted. When a crime is committed in the village she takes the Bible in one hand and puts a huge, ancient key between the leaves, holding the ring end of the key in the other hand. She repeats an appropriate text and then asks: "Dear Bible, say who is the guilty person," meanwhile herself reciting the names of possible offenders. When the right name is uttered the Bible springs out of her hand and falls to the floor.

This method of detecting crime naturally caused considerable unpleasantness in the village. Recently Gebhardt missed some money. The Bible declared that the barber's wife was the thief. Gebhardt promptly denounced her, but in the absence of evidence the charge fell through. Gebhardt was then prosecuted for slander.

She showed the court how she established the guilt of the barber's wife with the Bible, which actually again fell to the floor when the accused pronounced the woman's name. The court, however, decided that one reason for the falling of the Bible was that Gebhardt's septuagenarian fingers could not hold it while she was reciting twenty names; also that unconscious reflex action of the nerves at the mention of a particular name had something to do with it. But in view of her obvious sincerity Gebhardt was let off with a fine of 10s.—*Daily Mail* (Feb. 3).

Acid Drops.

How the clergy and their friends hurried up to reap all the benefit they could from the death of poor Captain Scott. It was Christianity and the Churches first with them. They even got the King to go to St. Paul's Cathedral and figure in a Memorial Service. What the service was for, except to advertise the Church, was a puzzle. Was it to thank God for calling Captain Scott "home," or for not calling him sooner, or for sending the continuous severe weather that settled the fate of the three sound men hindered by two sick ones? We should be glad to have some sort of an answer to these questions.

Captain Scott himself does not appear to have been troubled very much with piety. There is only one religious expression in the whole of that brave and pathetic message he left for his countrymen and the world, written with the hand of death pressing heavily upon him. It is the expression about bowing to the decree of Providence. But this must not be taken too literally,—for he went on to say that they would still struggle to the last; which makes "Providence" more a fashion of speech than anything else.

"Captain Scott and the Gospels" was a pretty heading in the *Daily Chronicle*, which always comes out strong on these occasions. It appears that Mr. F. J. Cross offered to send copies of the Gospels for the use of the members of the expedition. We are not told why he did so. Did he suppose that Captain Scott and his companions were not likely to take any religious literature—not even a Bible or a New Testament? If that was the idea it is a tribute to the failure instead of to the success of Christianity. And Captain Scott's reply was not gushing:—

"Thank you for your kind offer. I gladly accept it to the extent of ten copies of each Gospel—more raises difficulty of weight and transport. Perhaps you will be good enough to arrange delivery as follows:—

"Books to be in a box with plain statement of contents on outside; to be addressed British Antarctic Expedition, 1910, East India Docks, and forwarded between May 1 and 14.

"These precautions are necessary on account of the proper stowage of the ship and the chance of unauthorised goods being sent to us.—Yours faithfully, R. Scott."

This seems to show that Captain Scott and his companions had made no provision for their own religious reading themselves. Nor did they want the Gospels *en route*. The place for them was with the luggage, in a properly secured box; where, for all we are told, they may still remain.

The inscription on the cross and cairn erected over the remains of Captain Scott and his two remaining companions found dead in the tent with him, ended with the text, "The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." We are a wretched Freethinker, who only disbelieves the Bible because he does not know what is in it, but we felt certain the text was wrongly printed, so we turned to Job i. 21, where we found it printed thus—and it is the same in the Revised Version:—"Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Job spoke in that manner over the violent death of his children. He was making a personal confession. He was not concerned about the theory that "the Lord taketh away" but about the practical truth that "the Lord hath taken away." The "gave" is naturally balanced by "hath taken." "Taketh" would balance "giveth." Either the memories of the men who buried Captain Scott failed them or they shrank from the plain "hath taken away" and found refuge in the generalisation "taketh away." But what is to be said for the pious journalists who let the misquotation of the Blessed Book pass without recognition?

The late George Bigwood, the well-known comedian, who died recently, was witty off the stage as well as on. He used to tell a good story concerning a benefit concert in which he took part. The organiser was a bigoted teetotaler, and, after the show, he said in the ante-room, "I am sorry, Mr. Bigwood, we cannot offer you anything to drink; but will you take an apple?" Bigwood had no desire to follow Adam and Eve so closely.

Some of Harmsworth's young men have been quoting Swinburne and Whitman in their references to the death of Captain Scott. When it comes to ideas Christians have to fall back on the Freethinkers.

A Polish priest has been dragged to prison for refusing to mention the Czar in his prayers. That priest is now

probably, invoking the Almighty to bestow all the plagues of Egypt on the Emperor of all the Russias.

The Rev. A. J. Waldron is one of the vice-presidents of the British Federation for the Emancipation of Women. If this is a Suffragette organisation, the reverend gentleman must find it quite tame after the more vigorous propaganda of the Christian Evidence Society.

According to the *Daily Mirror*, the Rev. R. B. Exton, of Edmonton, said, speaking at a Suffrage meeting, "Until the word 'obey' is omitted from the marriage service, and women are put on an equality with men in that service, I shall decline to officiate at any more weddings." Is this to be regarded as a marriage-service strike?

The religious conspiracy against the mental integrity of children, known as "The Young Worshipers' League," is being energetically pushed by the *British Weekly*. The object of the League is to force upon children a "worshipful habit," so that when they are grown up they may become customers at some gospel shop or other. This is the real gist of the movement, and it is well to keep this plain fact before our minds. For ministers have been driven to form this League, not because children were less religious than they used to be, but because adults were staying away from church in increasing numbers. It is the grown-up clients they want, not the juveniles. And if clergymen could feel sure of the adult they would not trouble in the least about the child. The proof of this is, as we have already said, that not until the decline of adult patronage became serious did these traffickers in spiritual merchandise become seriously concerned about the child. For there is no immediate profit in making the child religious, that only comes when the child reaches maturity. The child is in the nature of an investment from which it is hoped to secure a handsome profit in the future.

In earlier times pressure of external forces secured a certain observance of religious forms by the adult. With current knowledge not in any violent and obvious conflict with religious teaching, the adult could give, at least, a passive assent to current doctrines. The child could, therefore, be let alone, and generally it was let alone. But, as the environment underwent a change, as the moral and mental life of the day became essentially antagonistic to religion, this was felt to be a dangerous policy. Something had to be done to protect the adult against the religiously corrupting influence of modern life, and it was rightly felt that the best way to do this was to so treat the plastic brain of childhood that it would be proof against change on reaching maturity. Hence the growing desire of priests of all denominations to practise the direct cultivation of religious habits in children, instead of depending upon the pressure of family and social life. The Rev. J. W. Butcher, one of the leaders of the movement, says it must be recognised as a truth of psychology that, unless a certain type of habit be formed in the pre-adolescent period, it will probably never be formed when the adolescent age is reached. This is all very well in its way, and no one would object to children being taught good habits. But it is not the cultivation of habits that these people are really aiming at. It is the implanting of doctrines, of beliefs, that is their real object. And they seek to implant these beliefs in the pre-adolescent period because they feel that otherwise the mature intellect would be sure to reject them. It is this to which objection is really raised. It is the deliberate exploitation of the helplessness of childhood in the interests of religious organisations that are afraid of the unbiassed adult intelligence which is going on. This is a point that Freethinkers should never lose sight of, and should take care that it is kept well in front of Christians.

At the funeral of Franz Schulmaier, the Labor leader, of Vienna, which took place on Sunday, upwards of half-a-million people took part. Twenty-eight hearses were filled and covered with wreaths, and the procession extended four miles. It is significant that the clergy had no place in the ceremony.

"On one occasion, being asked to meet an Irish enthusiast who went about the country enlightening people's minds on the subject of Popish errors, Hartley Coleridge after dinner asked to be presented to the lecturer; and, taking his arm while the guests were gathered round, he addressed him with solemnity: 'Sir, there are two great evils in Ireland.' 'There are indeed,' replied the Irish guest, 'but please to name them.' 'The first,' Hartley resumed, 'is Popery.' 'It is,' cried the other, in emphatic acquiescence; 'how wonderful you should have discovered it! Now, what is the

second great evil?' 'Protestantism,' was Hartley's reply in a voice of thunder, as he ran away screaming with laughter."—*Liverpool Post*.

Rev. William Stacey, of Charing, Kent, left £21,918. He is wintering in a place where there is no cold weather.

"England has ceased to be Christian," said Father Benedict, C.S.S.S., speaking at Chelsea. We wish this were true, but much regret to have to confess that there is a considerable quantity of Christianity still with us. Father Benedict declines to be cheered even by the fact that his own Church showed an increase of worshipers in the recent Liverpool census. He asks, plaintively, "What is the increase of a few hundreds compared with the tremendous loss and abandonment of all faith on the part of the rest?" We quite agree, however, with Father Benedict that there is a steady movement "away from God," and that this is "not the frenzy of a moment, but the steady tramp of a whole nation away from God." And we find pleasure in reflecting that this is only part of a still wider movement—the march of the human race from superstition to reason.

The early Christians believed in a community of property. Lingering traces of this belief may account for the fact that hotel managers place framed texts in their premises "The proprietor is not responsible for any articles left in the bedrooms."

Some of the clergy are clamoring for the multiplication of bishoprics. If the proposed "Fathers-in-God" are to be as handsomely rewarded as the present holders, we can quite understand the cause of the excitement.

The editors have been making headlines about a case in which a man had three wives. What a chance the scribes would have had if they had lived in the Holy Land in the days of Solomon!

Religion is not so brutal as in the days of yore. In old times the ladies who kicked over the matrimonial traces were stoned. This happens to-day; but the stones come from Bond-street.

The Pope is mourning the loss of his sister, Signora Rosa Sarto, who, the newspapers unkindly state, was unable to write. It is a popular failing in Catholic countries.

The Salvation Army's "Self-Denial" Week commences on February 22. It is being preceded by a week of prayer. Of course, the prayers are being well advertised, and the public are informed that the Lord will be asked to move their hearts to give liberally to the Army. The honest way to hold a week of prayer for this purpose would be to pray in secret, and only tell people afterwards. But the Army is too "slim" to work on this plan. It prefers to let the religious public know that it is praying to the Lord, so that genuine believers will feel impelled to back up the Lord's credit by giving; and the Army may even feel that, by making the prayers public, they are putting God Almighty on his mettle, and compelling him to support their efforts. An organisation that continuously supplies newspapers and journalists with laudatory accounts of its own work, and then reproduces these as independent testimony to the value of the work it is doing, is not likely to be caught napping. And there is always the stupidity of the British public to fall back on.

Everyone is familiar with the Christian pose about the non-existence of Atheism. Some Christians have kept this up so long that they believe in it themselves, and with the number of Atheists growing larger each year, will solemnly assert that there used to be Atheists in the time of Charles Bradlaugh, but they are now extinct. We are reminded of this by a remark of "Claudius Clear" (Sir Robertson Nicoll) in a recent issue of the *British Weekly*. He says, "There used to be persons who went about the country making public attacks on Christianity, but they seem somehow to have disappeared." If the assurance is really needed, we can inform Dr. Nicoll that he is quite under a delusion, and the propaganda of Freethought on the platform is still carried on under better conditions than it was ever carried on before. Of course, the newspapers do not report these meetings—or, at least, they do not often report them—but non-reporting and extinction are not quite the same thing. Sir Robertson says the attack on belief is carried on by books and papers, and he admits that "many attacks on belief are formidable by reason of the knowledge and power and sincerity of their authors." Well, it is something to

have even this much recognised. Presently, maybe, Sir Robertson Nicoll may realise that the attack on religion is considerably more powerful, more scientific, and, therefore, more potent than it was thirty or forty years ago. At the risk of being thought egotistical, we venture to say that there is no other movement in the country, religious or non-religious, that carries behind it the same weight of brains and ability that is to-day at the service of Freethought.

Every minister ought to properly understand the mind and temper of his congregation; and we may assume that the Rev. W. Patterson, of May-street Presbyterian Church, Belfast, understands his congregation thoroughly. In a little magazine, *The Greeting*, issued from the church, Mr. Patterson gives a number of reasons why his congregation ought to subscribe to the Foreign Missionary movement; and, knowing the spiritual spring of Christian conduct, he lays chief and first stress on the fact that it pays as a commercial investment. He writes:—

"When John D. Rockefeller was convinced that mission work in the Foreign Field would likely lead to an increased use of oil, he contributed a large sum to the cause, and from his standpoint he was right, for to-day hundreds of thousands of barrels of oil are being used in China since that sleeping nation woke up, and she was first roused from her slumbers by the missionary trumpet. What is true of oil is true also along other lines of merchandise. For example, in the same nation at the present time there is a wonderful demand for European clothes and for British commodities. Every shilling our country has contributed towards evangelising she has brought back to our treasury twenty shillings in return.....Every person who reads and does a little thinking on the subject is well aware that the Christianising, which includes the civilising of heathen nations, pays a hundred per cent. even on this lower level of the financial and commercial."

Of course every thinking Christian knows it pays, otherwise he would not support it. The missionary movement is the advertising agent for the trader, and both are the advance guard for the soldier. It pays the good Christian to see that the native's appetite is aroused for British commodities. If we can supply him with cotton goods, rum, and shoddy manufactures of various descriptions, why should we not do so? Whether the Chinaman or negro is the better for our trading is quite another question. He is Christianised. And as Mr. Patterson well says, for every shilling we give to send missionaries abroad we get twenty shillings in return. Christianising the native pays. Mr. Patterson does not say that it pays the native. But it pays the Christian at home, and that is the all-important aspect. As for civilising—well, the notion that a Belfast Presbyterian parson could civilise anything is one that could only find lodgment in the brain of a lunatic.

The Mormon missionaries have been active at Southend-on-Sea lately, and the local Free Church Council is up in arms. The latter has not the same financial interest in Brigham Young as in Jesus Christ.

Gerhart Hauptmann's *The Fool in Christ* has just been published in English by Methuen. We should turn the title the other way round.

Rev. Lionel Lewis, Vicar of St. Mark's Whitechapel, presents a fresh view of the atrocities perpetrated by the Balkan Allies. If they are true, he says, the Turk has no right to complain. If Christian regular troops have done these unchristian things it is the result of centuries of education by Mohammedans! This is the first time we ever heard that Christians needed lessons in cruelty. Perhaps the reverend gentleman will tell us who taught it to Alva, Torquemada, Louis XIV., or even the present Czar of Russia. We might also inquire what Mohammedan or other model is imitated in the English organisation for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. We have always understood that this Society is an original effort of Christian genius. Has not Mr. G. R. Sims been telling us lately that it is only in Christian countries that such a Society is necessary? We should like to hear from Mr. Lewis again.

One of the prisoners in the Paris motor bandit trial has the name "Diendonné." Another better-known criminal who bore that title was his Catholic Majesty, Louis XIV.

The police are making "further inquiries" about the eloping Vicar of Hunslet. Why not let him be? Is it such a luxury to pursue a bad egg? We should hesitate to get within a mile of such a Christian product.

The connection between Atheism and suicide was once more illustrated by Frederick Albert Phillips, who threw

himself over the Dover cliffs. A Bible was found in his pocket with passages underlined in red ink. Clearly an Atheist!

A religious census at Reading shows that one in thirteen of the inhabitants attends church regularly. This takes the biscuit. Christianity is getting on in Reading.

The Bishop of Oxford has been discoursing on "The Religion of the Poor." Is he an authority on that subject? We thought his income was several thousands a year.

Correspondence.

WATER FROM THE ROCK.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In times like the present, when many highly respectable Christians are very busily engaged in trying to explain the Biblical miracles on the basis of natural phenomena, perhaps a little experience of my own might be usefully added to their efforts.

From 1891 to 1895, I served in the Egyptian Light Camel Corps and took part in the dash to Khartoum in the attempt to rescue Gordon.

One night we encamped at a place called Jackdrill (Jack-daul) Well. On looking for the well in order to refill my water bottle, I found a rocky hill over 150 ft. high, instead of a muddy pool, as was usually the case. In the side of the hill, about 6 ft. from the ground, a pipe had been inserted, from which gushed forth a constant stream of water. Feeling rather curious, I climbed to the top of the hill and found, to my surprise, that the mass of seeming solid rock was hollow and formed a huge, natural reservoir.

Some days afterwards, I got into conversation with an interpreter, and mentioning the peculiarity of Jackdrill Well, he explained the matter to me.

In that particular district, rain falls but once in about six years, but when it does rain the downpour is tremendous. Some of it is caught in this natural cavity, and the thickness of the sides, combined with its depth, prevents the heat of the sun from evaporating the water thus accumulated.

Now, when I had received this explanation, my mind immediately flew to the alleged miracle of Moses, when in the desert he struck a rock in order to find water for the clamoring children of Israel. It is a moot point whether Moses ever existed, but might not the story be founded on some *hocus-pocus* trick of a wily old medicine-man of long ago.

Such an one, knowing of the existence of a well of this description, might have easily obtained a cheap reputation as a miracle monger by striking the rock, which had previously been weakened by artificial means on the spot struck. Naturally, the water would gush forth, and the pious multitude of that day would swallow the miracle as eagerly as they swallowed the water.

H. HUMPHRIES.

Jove nods, we have been informed, and God, or whoever is the author of the Bible, has a poor memory. We don't look for mistakes in a deity who is perfect, and for this reason we fear that a very imperfect God inspired the Gospel of Matthew or the book of the Acts, or both. In Matthew we read that Judas repented of having betrayed his master, Jesus, and "went and hanged himself," but in the first chapter of the Acts we are told by Peter that Judas "purchased" a field with the reward of iniquity and "falling headlong, he burst asunder in the midst and all his bowels gushed out." We should prefer to cut down Judas rather than pick him up, but, if he hanged himself, then Peter is up to his old tricks. If God inspired Matthew, who inspired Peter? The discrepancy in the two accounts of the end of Judas does not prove that "every word of the Bible is true," as some Christians claim.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

SAINT MICHAEL.

He contended with the devil about the body of Moses. Now, I do not believe that any reasonable person would contend about the body of Moses with the devil or with anyone else.—*S. Butler*.

"THE ANCIENT MARINER."

This poem would not have taken so well if it had been called "The Old Sailor," so that Wardour-street has its uses.—*S. Butler*.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, February 23, Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, Regent-street, London, W., at 7.30, "Captain Scott and Providence."

To Correspondents.

- PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £40 18s. 4d. Received since:—Juliet and Julian, 7s. 6d.; Mrs. and Mrs. James Neate, £1.
- MR. AND MRS. JAMES NEATE, sending their annual subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund, wish they could send ten times as much, and trust "to have the honor of subscribing" for many years yet.
- J. B.—Tuesday is too late for paragraphs. May do for next week. Mr. Foote is much better now.
- W. STEWART.—Shall be sent. Thanks.
- W. P. BALL.—Thanks for cuttings.
- G. BRITTON.—We are much obliged.
- A. C. WYKES.—Swinburne's poems (not including the dramas) are published in six volumes at 5s. each. It is ridiculous that there is not a cheaper collected edition. *Songs Before Sunrise* is published separately at 7s. 6d. we think.
- B. D. WINLAND.—Will look into it and write you.
- JOSEPH ALWARD.—Sorry to hear that the Christian Esperantists (bless them!) have made a dead set at Dr. Stromboli as an Atheist and brought about his resignation.
- T. HODGSON.—Clearly a case of confused memory after a great lapse of time. Thanks for cuttings.
- W. LOVETT.—We cannot let a political discussion be started in our columns. Article writers will indulge in incidental observations now and then, which must not be allowed to become themes of debate.
- GEORGE RENNIS.—We are a bit tired, as probably our readers are, of these "remarkable" faith cures. We will take them up again when we have recovered. Pleased that you regard the *Freethinker* as "the one paper for fruitfulness and intelligence." We think your opinion of the "Acid Drops" is widely shared.
- WILLIAM STOKES.—Accept our best thanks.
- E. B.—Much obliged for cuttings.
- W. DAVIDSON.—Glad you heckled the St. Pancras candidates so effectively.
- THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- WHEN the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the secretary, Miss E. M. Vance.
- LETTERS for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.
- LECTURE NOTICES must reach 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.
- ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C., and not to the Editor.
- 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 to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

The President's Honorarium Fund.

To the Freethinkers of Great Britain.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, January, 1913.

We the undersigned renew our appeal on behalf of the above Fund.

Its object is to relieve Mr. G. W. Foote—President of the National Secular Society, Chairman of the Secular Society, Ltd., and Editor of the *Freethinker*—from financial worries that would prevent his devoting himself entirely to his work as leader of the militant Freethought movement in this country.

During previous years Mr. Foote has actually had to pay money out of his own pocket to sustain the *Freethinker*, besides doing all his own work on the paper without any remuneration whatever. We are happy to have his assurance that this state of things

has improved. He has no longer to make up a deficit, but the slight profit from the increased circulation of the *Freethinker* is only sufficient as yet to treat the contributors a little more liberally.

This is the sixth year of the President's Honorarium Fund. We suggested that £300 might be raised in this way annually. During the first two years it was nearly raised, the third year it was fully raised, the fourth year it was exceeded, owing to a special donation of £50 from Mr. John Helm, of Canada, since deceased. Death has, indeed, been busy with the larger subscribers during the last year or two—such as Major Harris, Mrs. Donaldson, Mr. George Payne, Mr. F. Smallman, and Mr. Horace W. Parsons. Nevertheless, the Fund for 1912 only lacked some £20 of the total, which has been made up by a generous American supporter. It is evident, therefore, that Mr. Foote must have gained new friends to balance the (financial) loss of old ones.

All subscriptions received have been acknowledged week by week in the *Freethinker*, and will continue to be acknowledged in that way.

Subscriptions for 1913 can be forwarded to the undersigned. Those who prefer to do so can send, as before, direct to Mr. Foote himself at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

Subscribers who do not wish their names to appear in print should state how they wish their subscriptions to be acknowledged.

It would be pleasant if the bulk of the £300 could be raised in the first few months and the balance before the close of the summer.

Yours faithfully,

J. W. DE CAUX, J.P.,
92 St. Peter's-road, Gt. Yarmouth,

R. T. NICHOLS, M.D.,
28 Park-road, Ilford,

A. J. FINCKEN,
66 Mount Grove-road, Highbury,
London, N.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote's subject at Queen's Hall this evening (Feb. 23) will be "Captain Scott and Providence." It will enable him to say many things on Christian efforts to "justify the ways of God to men."

Mr. Foote was suffering from a bad cold last week end, contracted no doubt during the wretched foggy weather of the previous week. He was unable to fulfil his engagement at Queen's Hall on Sunday evening, but Mr. J. T. Lloyd kindly came to the rescue and delivered a fine lecture on the same subject, though with a different title, to a very appreciative audience, which was an improvement on the previous Sunday's. Mr. Lloyd was much applauded, being in his very best form.

The Secular Education League's annual meeting takes place on Tuesday evening, March 11, at 7.30 in Room 18, Caxton Hall, Westminster. It is hoped there will be a good attendance of members. A public meeting will follow at 8.15, with Mr. Halley Stewart in the chair, and Mr. George Greenwood, M.P., Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., Mr. G. W. Foote, and the Rev. Walter Walsh, D.D., in the list of speakers.

The Committee for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws is organising a demonstration in favor of its objects, which will take place at Essex Hall, Essex-street, Strand, on Friday evening, March 14. The chair will be occupied by the Rev. S. D. Headlam, if the County Council elections do not interfere with the arrangement. The list of speakers includes Mr. S. W. P. Byles, M.P., Mr. George Greenwood, M.P., Mr. H. G. Chancellor, M.P., Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, Lord Harberton, Rev. Copeland Bowie, Sir Hiram Maxim, and Mr. G. W. Foote. We invite our London readers to help make the gathering a great success.

London Freethinkers should heckle their London County Council candidates on the question of the attempted new

policy of refusing permits to *bona-fide* Societies to make collections, as of old, in connection with meetings conducted by them in the Parks and other open spaces under the Council's control. A number of advanced bodies, including the London Trades Council, the National Secular Society, and several Socialist organisations, are resolved to maintain the old right of collection if possible. The Parks Committee has evaded this question for months, and declares now that the matter must be left for the new Committee to settle. The fight, therefore—if it *must* be a fight—has to wait till the new Committee meets.

The Bethnal Green Branch holds its "Tea and Social Evening" at the King's Assembly Hall, Cottage Grove, Mile End, on Sunday evening, March 2, with Mr. C. Quinton as M.C. Tickets, 1s. each, are obtainable of Mr. James Neate, 385 Bethnal Green-road. District Freethinkers are invited to patronise this function. They will enjoy it. By the way, the tickets for the dance are only 6d. each.

The Birmingham N. S. S. Branch is going to present a token of appreciation to Mr. James Partridge, its honorary secretary, who has held the office for a quarter of a century. "He has managed our affairs," the Committee say, "for that long period in such an effective yet unassuming manner, that he has won, and retained, the goodwill and respect of all members and friends." Subscriptions are invited and should be sent to Mrs. Annie Bolt, 68 Brougham-street, Lozells, Birmingham. Mr. Partridge must have many friends outside the Midlands capital who would like to share in this tribute to his character and services to the Free-thought movement. We are having our own name entered on the roll.

The Rationalist Peace Society's annual meeting passed the following resolution: "This meeting of the Rationalist Peace Society has noted with grave apprehension the recent speech of Lord Herschell in the House of Lords, in which, speaking as a representative of the Government, he favored the idea of compulsory military training in secondary schools; the meeting strongly condemns any attempt to introduce any form of compulsory military training, or service, of men, or youths, into this country, and trusts that public opinion will be strongly expressed against such a proposal."

The Edinburgh free-speech case reported at length in a late issue, has attracted a good deal of attention in the Scottish press. The *Daily Record* leading article is particularly outspoken. The heading of "Bumbledom in Scotland" is itself striking. We quote the following passage with pleasure:—

"The Bumbledom that exists in Scotland is one of the most depressing features of the national life. Pettifogging authorities are everlastingly issuing proclamations interdicting people from obtaining refreshment on Sundays, however much they may need it, or invading other public amenities in the spirit of the days of the Inquisition. Scotland is bailie-ridden. Its people are shepherded and driven by magistrates, police, and presbytery. They hardly dare open their mouths in the streets, and it seems to be a criminal offence to be hungry on the Lord's Day. Public places seem to be no longer the possession of the people. They appear to have passed into the hands of the magistracy. In the eyes of the magistrates, the average citizen is a potential criminal, a trespasser upon the public thoroughfare, and if the estimable gentlemen who write J.P. after their names had their way we should not be allowed out after dark unless furnished with a police pass. And if we had the misfortune to be hungry we should be put into a police cell and admonished. It is very singular that the people of Scotland do not rebel against the magisterial and presbyterial tyranny. These juntas appear to be perpetually conspiring to diminish the sum of human enjoyment, and where it will end nobody knows. We have passed from the domination of the Kirk under the joint domination of Kirk and Justice of the Peace, and the change does not seem to be for the better."

We should like to see a good deal more of such plain speaking. It is as much wanted in England as it is in Scotland. The press is the slave of the authorities.

Would we have known that a man existed in the world if we had not seen his body? Have we any knowledge of man except that which has come through man's existence on the earth? Has a man any experience which he acquired in some other sphere prior to his advent on earth? If human souls exist independent of human bodies, where and how do they exist?—*Truthseeker* (New York).

The Jesus Legend.

La Légende Chrétienne, Auguste Dide. (Paris: 1912. Ernest Flammarion; pp. 254; 1 franc).

IN this useful book, so admirably adapted for propagandist purposes by reason of its short, crisp chapters and the simple ease with which the exposition of the Christ Legend is expounded, M. Auguste Dide delivers a frontal attack upon the religion which has Jesus as its central figure, and the obfuscation of the human intellect as its prime object. Courage, thoroughness, and deep erudition are the characteristic traits of this wise and wholesome piece of drastic criticism of the creed that had for its origin the belief in the resurrection of a corpse and a childish faith in the early reappearance of a reanimated dead Jew as vengeful judge in the clouds of heaven. Leaving on one side the historicity of the resurrection, we know that Jesus has failed, during nearly two thousand years, to redeem "his" promise to revisit the glimpses of the moon. Illusion, imposture, or folly; these, apparently, have been the determining factors in the causation of the primitive Christian beliefs concerning the miraculous life and posthumous apotheosis of the pale, mysterious phantom that flits through the Gospels but escapes the verifying grasp of the historian. In M. Dide's view, the historic personality of Jesus remains a problem enveloped in impenetrable doubt, and the twenty brilliant chapters of this, his latest work*, review in detail the elements of mystery and incredibility that form the fabric of the Christian Legend.

Chapter I., entitled "Did Jesus Exist?" introduces the damning inquiry by recalling the hypocritical attitude towards Christianity of Chateaubriand, Napoleon, and the then contemporary Pope, Pius VII. A few years before Chateaubriand wrote his pietistic *Genie du Christianisme*, he was, if not an Atheist, a pronounced anti-Christian. This fact is clear from what he wrote about God, the soul, and Jesus Christ at a time when religion was at low water in France:—

"God, matter, and fatality [he said] are but one. This is my system, and this is what I believe: All is chance and fatality in this world—reputation, honor, and virtue itself; how then can we believe that we are guided by an intelligent God?"

As to Jesus, he wrote "that it is by no means demonstrated that there ever existed a man called Jesus who was crucified at Jerusalem" (Dide, p. 12).

And yet it was this aristocratic unbeliever who subsequently dedicated his *Genie du Christianisme* to Napoleon, then First Consul of the Republic which, later, he strangled. Napoleon at that time had made his immoral peace with the Church, having brought her in aid of his nefarious plans of empire and domination. For all that, the Corsican prodigy no more believed in Jesus than in Osiris, and he only reimported religion into the political life of France for the furtherance of his vast ambitions. His case is a striking illustration of the cynical attitude of rulers, statesmen, and tyrants generally towards religion. Usually without stable convictions, and ready at any time to barter them for dynastic ends or for the high purposes of statecraft, they are astute enough to enlist God into their service and to utilise his priests, their soporific doctrines, and their terroristic influences in aid of the army and the police.

M. Dide cites two characteristic views of Napoleon about the historicity of the Jewish peasant whose religion he re-established in France by means of the Concordat. First, we have this revelation, called from the *Journal de Saint-Hélène*, in which General Gourgaud kept a record of the religious and philosophic opinions of the great conqueror: "As for me," he says, "my mind is made up; I do not

* I dealt with M. Dide's great book on Servetus in the *Freethinker* of December 27, 1908, and January 24, 1909.

believe that Jesus ever existed." And then, this other jewel:—

"At Milan [said Napoleon] I took an original manuscript of Josephus' History of the Jews, in which one could see between the lines some words speaking of Jesus, for Josephus makes no mention of him. The Pope worried me a good deal in order to get possession of this manuscript" (*Ibid.*, p. 17).

Evidently the Pope believed in Christ—as a profitable fable not to be endangered by the publication of a compromising manuscript.

When we pass from the dark region of historic doubt which surrounds the alleged personality of Jesus to the evangelic records themselves, the obscurity that envelops the misty figure of the Nazarene becomes deeper and more perplexing than ever. The Gospels are not the biographies of a real Jesus, but apologies for, and glorifications of, a supernatural and miraculously divine ideal God-man. They are but the echo of various oral traditions—"the tradition of many traditions." It is evident from the discrepancies, omissions, and additions appearing in the evangelic documents that fresh biographic supplements, new hypotheses, and legends transformed by faith into realities, sprang into acceptance and became embodied in the growing text:—

"Additions were introduced in conformity with the spirit of the time. The new facts were created by the process of affirming them. Thus the Church was engaged in a perpetual production of discourses, evangelic sentences, and miracles, until the time came when, all control being impossible and the prospect of serious verification having evaporated, the Church—that is to say, some anonymous reunion of the faithful—marked its preferences for the apologies which have come down to us, and brought about their acceptance to the exclusion of all the rest."

M. Dide very acutely remarks that if the facts that thus grew into the life of Christ escaped control, it is clear that the sayings were not likely to enjoy a more discriminating scrutiny. Who was at hand to gather the uttered words? There were no stenographers in those days to take down these improvised speeches. Some of the more important declarations of the Christ were made solely to one individual, who, sometimes, as in the case of the Samaritan woman, is presented to us as a person devoid of intelligence. Where, then, are the guarantees of authenticity, or even of probability? No wonder the Holy Ghost was invented as the infallible sponsor for the veracity of these astonishing documents.

This very story of the Samaritan woman only appears in the neo-platonic Gospel attributed to John. The fourth Gospel quite evidently represents in literary form the new departure impressed upon the narrow exclusivism of the early Christians by the universalistic movement typified or represented by the Apostle Paul—Paul, who seems to know surprisingly little about the Synoptic Jesus, and, indeed, only presents him to us as a resurrected man who had lately ascended to God and was soon about to appear with glory in the clouds of heaven. The opening words of the Johannine romance creates a new Christ. John knows nothing of the Holy Child, the lowly stable, the sordid environments of the early poverty which invested the Synoptic Jesus; he takes his hero—Christ—back to the beginning of time; locates him at the dawn of creation with God himself, and makes him, indeed, the fountain of life and light at the beginning of all things. As we witness "this fog of phrases" which settles on the opening verses of John, and as we notice how the haze and obscurity continue right through the theological romance, till the closing verses speak to us of Christ's inexhaustible verbosity and of his rich full life which all the books that ever were written could not contain or record, it is abundantly clear that fiction and not fact forms the substance of the Johannine story. The extravagant chemistry involved in the miracle by which water was instantaneously converted into 480 litres of wine—better stuff than the original tippie on tap when the wedding feast first began—should quite suffice to put this Gospel into the category of religious romance.

Dide's chapter on the "Sermon on the Mount" is valuable as showing that the maxims and sentences of which the alleged Sermon is composed are the result of diverse influences anterior to the date ascribed to Jesus. Nothing essential is to be found in the Sermon that may not be discovered in the ancient Biblical writings. M. Dide tells us that the historian, Joseph Salvador,* in his book, *Jesus-Christ et sa doctrine*; H. Rodrigues,† in his study on *Les Origines du Sermon sur le montagne*; Leopold Dukes,‡ in his dissertation, *Qu'est ce que le Christianisme a pris du judaïsme?* and Joseph Cohen,§ in his *Deicides*, have shown by incontestable citations that the commands of charity, meekness, and religious submission—the *tout ensemble* and all the details of the moral teaching of the New Testament—are nothing more than the transcription of certain parts of Jewish teaching. The saying which Rousseau places in the mouth of the *Vicaire Savoyard*: "Never man spake like this man," is thus nothing more than a phrase mouthed by an ignorant rhetorician.

If any reliance is to be placed upon the evangelic portraiture of Jesus, it is clear, amidst much that is doubtful and uncertain, that he held the belief that the end of the world was at hand, that it would happen in the lifetime of his generation, that he would come from heaven with angels blowing loud trumpets in order to plunge the wicked into a fiery furnace, and that the normal functions of sun, moon, and stars would be deranged and the cosmos generally upset as the theatrical accompaniment of the dire event. The existence, then, of Jesus can only be admitted, as M. Dide very properly insists, on the condition that we accept him as the deluded victim of a self-glorifying hallucination. Strauss has already remarked that there would never have been a Christian Church without the belief that the return of Christ to judge the earth was imminent. M. Dide justly insists that the peculiar morality taught by Jesus can only be understood in the light of that fantastic belief. In fact, Christ's ultra-mystic doctrines find their appropriate and logical explanation in an absolute contempt of every sane rule of life, framed on the principle of the perpetuity of social existence and based on the humane as apart from the divine organisation of communities. Here, too, is the key to the self-renunciatory position occupied by Jesus and his disciples, with their rejection of the family and personal property, and their insistence upon religious contemplation, celibacy and poverty, together with their detachment from all considerations as to labor, marriage, or the political and social organisation of society. The chapter dealing with this crucial aspect of the Jesus Legend is a very full and convincing exposure of the fallacies of ethical infallibility that cluster around the hazy figure of the Gospel hero.

Step by step, and chapter after chapter, M. Dide takes the reader through legend after legend woven around the mystic miracle-worker of Roman Palestine. He makes it clear that Messianic textual suggestions in the Jewish writings and the doctrinal necessities arising out of new controversies with Jews and heretics, created the ideal figure that looms so mysteriously in the Christian conscience throughout the ages. A trifling, but suggestive instance of the growth of ideas concerning Christ is set forth in the chapter on the transformations during many centuries of the physical personality of Jesus. The Messianic declaration in Isaiah xliii. having stated that the Christ would be ugly—like a leper, without grace and without beauty, as the Vulgate puts it—Jesus began his legendary career as a man void of beauty, of diminished stature, and with vulgar mien. The idea is traced through Eusebins, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, St. Cyprian, and all the old ecclesiastical writers. Later on, the Byzantine Church insisted

* Born at Montpellier, 1796; died at Versailles, 1873.

† Born at Bordeaux, 1812; died at Paris, 1898.

‡ Born at Presbourg (Hungary), 1810; died at Vienna, 1891.

§ Born at Marseilles, 1817; died at Paris, 1899.

on the material ugliness of the Christ. Ages passed, and then a new physical ideal was formed; Jesus became the *beau ideal* of human beauty, and artists and writers completed and fixed the metamorphosis.

But I must linger no longer over these delightful pages, and plunder no more from the rich stores of criticism and learning with which these chapters teem. This conscientious study has already been translated,* together with others of M. Dide's works, into Spanish, and I should be glad to see an English translation spreading the light far and wide in the dark places. M. Dide is a fine writer, a staunch and cultured Freethinker, who has labored in many fields of historic investigation on behalf of Rationalist ideas, and has won a high position amongst contemporary exponents of advanced philosophic ideas.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

Senor Moret.—In Memoriam.

THE death of Senor Segismundo Moret removes from Spanish politics a respectable and respected statesman. He had filled the highest positions in the State, having been Prime Minister, Leader of the Liberal Party, Leader of the Spanish Bar, President of the Ateneo (Madrid), and, at his death, President of the Cortes. He replaced Sagasta as chief of the Liberal Party, and, in that capacity, alternated with the now execrated Maura in the enjoyment of the pride and profits of political power according to the see-saw system in Spain, under which, the Conservatives went out after a time to let the Liberals in, the Liberals in their turn vacating the reins of power in favor of the Conservatives. Moret succeeded Maura when the indignation of Europe hurled that religious hyena from power. In the ordinary course of Spanish affairs, the death of Canalejas would have paved the way for a new lease of Maura and murder for religion's sake; but the Ferrer case and a dread of the revolution that would have supervened on the resumption of power by the Chueta of Majorca, has closed for ever the evil system under which the two orthodox political parties divided the spoils of the nation. From that point of view, if from no other, Ferrer's blood was not shed in vain.

My friend Lorand has paid a tribute of homage to Moret's memory, a note of which deserves to be recorded. Lorand declares that before Moret's resignation—brought about by a Court intrigue planned and carried out by Maura—Moret was on the eve of bringing about the restitution of Ferrer's property. During the remainder of his political career he not only supported Canalejas, known to be favorable to Ferrer's cause, but interested himself in Lorand's efforts to obtain the restoration of the confiscated property, and aided and assisted towards that end to a considerable extent. No one knows better than M. Lorand how deep is the debt of gratitude due from Ferrer's friends to the late Spanish statesman. To have wrought service for justice in the company of such a distinguished and capable man is not the least amongst the compensations with which one's sacrifices for right and truth are sweetened.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

To live is like to love—all reason is against it, and all healthy instinct for it.—S. Butler.

* Sempere & Cia (Valencia).

† The *Chuetas* (numerous in Majorca) are the descendants of the converted Jews in Spain, and were hated and despised by the Spaniards of reputedly pure race. The *Chuetas* were compelled annually, on various occasions, publicly to eat pork. Maura's gastronomic preferences are not known except that, unmindful of the persecutions and outrages suffered by his race, he meanly prefers to herd with the Catholics with wolfish appetites for the flesh and the blood of unbelievers.

A Pioneer Schoolmaster.

"Lofty designs must close in like effects."

—ROBERT BROWNING.

A SCHOOL in which Ingersoll's works and other Free-thought publications are used, and on the walls of which hang portraits of Bradlaugh, Foote, Ingersoll, Darwin, Huxley, Spencer, Whitman, and other Free-thought worthies, suggests an educational establishment of the future rather than one of to-day. Yet, about an hour's journey from London, such a school has existed for the past ten years, and the constantly increasing number of scholars testifies to the efficiency of the education imparted. The principal of the school is a man in the full prime of life. He is an ardent and enthusiastic Freethinker, and an earnest social reformer, and is full of a high and unflinching courage. As a schoolmaster, he may have his peers; he can scarcely have any superiors. He is among schoolmasters of to-day what Dr. Arnold was at Rugby in the schooldays of Judge Hughes. Animated with the idea of the high nature of his calling, he throws himself into forwarding the physical, mental, and ethical development of the boys and girls under his charge; and the growing popularity of this centre of education gives evidence of his success, and of the coming triumph of Free-thought. Like his famous prototype, he aims at training the children so that they are a credit to his system and a gain to the country in which they live.

In the course of an interview with the principal some interesting details of the work at this unique school were gleaned. "Nature studies," said the head-master, "are a feature. During the summer months weekly rambles are arranged, and the scholars journey to the heart of the country or to the seashore, and learn to read directly from Nature's 'infinite book of secrecy.' A short walk or train journey is usually sufficient; but once a year we go to London and visit the Zoological Gardens and the Natural History Museum. On our last trip Sir E. Ray Lankester, F.R.S., was interested in the young visitors to the museum. Daily talks form another part of our educational program. These range over a variety of subjects, principally scientific, historic, and biographic. Birthdays of great or famous men and women are honored. Quite recently Darwin formed the subject of an address; and a host of well-known names have been used in this connection, from Bruno to Bradlaugh. Ingersoll's works are largely used for dictation, especially his oration on *Shakespeare* and the famous address on *Liberty of Man, Woman, and Child*. Other books used are F. G. Gould's *Children's Plutarch* and *Brave Citizens*. Dennis Hird's volumes on *Evolution* are also favorites; but Ingersoll is easily first in the children's affection."

In reply to the question as to mixed classes, the principal continued: "Yes! boys and girls sit together, and the tuition is precisely the same for both. So far as physical culture is concerned, the Sandow system is in use. We have succeeded with the mixed classes, for experience has shown us that the girls become more self-reliant and the boys more amenable and courteous. Science is taught to all, and every scholar has a sound knowledge. Even the youngest children know the star groups and the fundamentals of science."

The school itself is a model one, and most pleasantly situated close to the sea and the open country. The class-rooms are examples of neatness and order, and the dining-room and dormitories well in keeping with the general order that reigned throughout. There are day-scholars and boarders, and the relationship between the principal and the pupils is of the happiest. Indeed, the prevalent impression is the absence of restraint; the whole school is simply one happy family of boys and girls, and the teaching staff foster parents. Questions are freely invited, and every opportunity is given for the development of individuality in the scholars. The critical faculties are kept alert. One day the scholars will be told the story of Richard III., and maybe on the next day that

of Socrates. Then they will be asked to contrast the two personalities. This is but an instance of how unconventional is the work at this school. Another point worth emphasising is the absence of corporal punishment. Discipline is maintained by moral suasion, and the radiant happiness of the pupils is a perpetual proof that the newer and higher methods are so far an improvement on the barbaric methods of Waakford Squeers and Dotbeboys Hall as the Himalayas are superior to Highgate Hill.

In a wholesome world the boy must always throw back to his barbaric ancestors; there should be a touch of barbarism left in the young man. There is not much to be said for the little boy who does not admire sport and physical culture. With this idea, many exercises are encouraged among the pupils, and in the eager air surrounding the salt gates of the sea the scholars grow famously. Illness is unknown among the pupils, and not a single case of serious sickness has taken place in the school since its foundation. The girls take a lesser amount of exercise and play the pleasantest games. Above all, both sexes have a proper amount of that social and literary activity which is delightfully necessary to the complete life of cultivated young citizens, who are destined to herald the dawn of a new era, and who are responding to the calling bagles of Liberty.

As we left the building, the fresh, young, childish voices were repeating in unison, "The time to be happy is now; the place to be happy is here; and the way to be happy is to make others happy," and we fancied that the large portrait of Ingersoll upon the walls smiled approval. Certainly, the great American's influence is not waning when his winged words lend inspiration to budding manhood and womanhood. Dead, he remains a living force by the nobility of his writing and the consistency of his example. Freethought, too, is undeniably spreading when parents can be found in sufficient numbers to entrust their children to the charge of a schoolmaster whose teaching ignores the "lie at the lips of the priest." In the ripe years when Freethinkers will get their rightful share of the inheritance of the world's wisdom, such schools will be multiplied through the length and breadth of the land. It will form a fitting sequel to the work of such men as the principal of this school, modest as he is brave, whose quiet but unshakable adherence to his own high ideals of liberty is typical of the best of the race of Freethinkers. It may be only in little ways or obscure that we may perform our part, our efforts may never be recognised, but such action forms the highest and most perfect tribute to the ennobling ideals of Freethought.

MIMNERMUS.

A Renegade Parson.

IF Laurence Sterne lived in the present day, his writings would probably adorn the pages of this journal.

Like the poor, he is always with us, either in the form of fresh biographies or new editions; in whatever manner he is presented, we find that his little excursions in the broad fields of humanity are ever marked with success.

Although his sentiment may ring false occasionally, we can readily forgive him, and, as Freethinkers on the lookout for good in everything, we can enjoy and appreciate the graceful writings of one whose heart was in the right place.

A keen student of emotions and an observer of mankind's faults, it was only natural that his generous judgment should fail to find a congenial reception in the narrow purview of the Church.

Most of his sermons seem to undervalue the worth of religion—for a parson; and this, along with a defect in speech, did not win for him the approbation of his brother clerics.

To judge from his exquisite effusions, a terrible God and a fiery hell would be as superfluous as stage

thunder to a Garrick. He could well afford to dispense with theatrical matter of that kind.

Well do we remember the painful pilgrimages to church two or three times each Sunday as a boy; better still do we recall the wondrous inspiration which our worthy vicar received from those three sources—God, Death, and Hell. By a priestly Prospero these were the spirits summoned; and, with the exception of one or two hardened church-goers, they would never fail to keep the congregation awake. We have too much respect for Sterne to compare him with the ordinary modern country vicar, hated and despised by the intelligent few and worshiped in ignorant awe by the feeble-minded many.

But it certainly stands to his credit that, despite position, he refused to rattle the dry bones of superstition, and chose instead to embellish his books with those human touches which make him so lovable.

In reading his numerous works we cannot fail to be struck by the rich fund of secular philosophy they contain.

Dealing with such diverse subjects as Death, Slander, Enmity, and Wisdom, he discards the Divinity, and chooses to speak of the philosophy of life rather than speculate about man's relation to God.

In *A Sentimental Journey* the description of his encounter with a monk soliciting alms is delightful in its self-analysis.

With an absence of acrimony, although the monk's religion differ from his own, he refuses to give, but not without serious after-thought that he had used the votary of St. Francis unkindly.

Later on Sterne has ample opportunities to make amends; the pair exchange snuff-boxes, and all's well that ends well.

Such small acts of courtesy well became this agreeable author's character.

His individuality was too powerful to be imprisoned by the Church; and in choosing the world as his parish, through the medium of his books, none will regret that he preferred this to the obscurity of a country vicarage.

Whilst not being openly a sceptic, his works have more of an earthly flavor than otherwise, and contain much that is now advocated by Freethought.

He died in poverty at the age of fifty-five. Perhaps if hypocrisy, that sure talisman to wealth, had been ingrained in him, affluence might have robbed us of one who can be read and appreciated by anyone, whatever their creed may be.

Shakespeare's luminous remarks in *Hamlet* truthfully apply to the gayer side of Sterne's life. The gadflies of slander were busy before and after his death; but, considering that this treatment is always meted out to any souls who dare defy the conventions, we are not surprised.

That a lesser light such as the "son of Yorick" should miss what befell Shelley at a later period is inconsistent with the history of those salacious-minded gentry whose loftiest ambition is that of pointing out spots on the sun. If Laurence Sterne hovered in the twilight between scepticism and expedient orthodoxy, we, as Freethinkers, regard him no less as a man who gave the world his best, and bequeathed to us some of the noble qualities which enlarge the vision of Humanity.

WILLIAM REPTON.

The parable of the Prodigal Son has made prodigals. It has made a lot of dead-beats think themselves better than honest, respectable people. If life's rewards are to be given to those who have wasted life's gifts, what is there for those who have kept themselves clean and moral? A story of a prodigal's career without a prodigal's shame is a poor lesson for humanity. But the truth is greater than parables, and the moral son is the only one to get the reward of clean living.—*Truthseeker* (New York).

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL (Langham-place, Regent-street, W.): 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Captain Scott and Providence."

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workmen's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, F. A. Davies, "Labor and the Churches."

COUNTRY.

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