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PRICE TWOPENCE

Abstinence from low pleasures is the only means of meriting or obtaining the higher.—LANDOR.

Captain Scott and Providence.

CAPTAIN SCOTT'S manly message to the world in general, and his own country in particular, was worthy of himself, his companions, and the cause in which he died; although there is no need to go into hysterics over it as so many clergymen and journalists have done, as if nothing worthy to be set in comparison with it existed in human literature. Had the hired speakers and writers been less sentimental and more sagacious they would have noticed that Captain Scott himself avoided all sentimentalism. There is no spontaneous religious expression in the whole of the document. The reference to "Providence" is merely formal. The dying explorer admitted that they would have to bow to the will of Providence, but he added that they would still struggle to the last—which is not exactly what a Mohammedan understands by "Kismet." It seems pretty clear that "Providence" meant little more to Captain Scott than the course of events.

There was far more piety in the address of Lord Curzon as president of the Royal Geographical Society on Monday. His lordship said that Captain Scott's "last thoughts were of his comrades, his last praise for them, his dying wish to impute no human blame, but to accept without a murmur the inscrutable decrees of Providence." This is a rhetorical elaboration of Captain Scott's words. But his lordship improved even on that. He expressed a personal hope that the explorers' remains might rest where they are, that "their bodies may be left where they lie, with the snow as their winding sheet, the eternal ice as their tomb, and the solemn Antarctic waste as the graveyard in which it had pleased God that they should sleep." Lord Curzon's rhetoric is good in its way, but it is still rhetoric. It does not represent the frame of mind of the dying explorers. Their thoughts were naturally about their honor in the eyes of their countrymen, and the future of those who were nearest and dearest to them at home. We do not suppose that they troubled themselves for a single moment as to what would become of their dead bodies. Men in such a situation would be quite careless of that problem. It would only exercise minds at leisure, with no personal interest in the matter. Lord Curzon was, to some extent, talking to shine; otherwise he would never have thought that the explorers' dead bodies *could* be removed if God had settled that they should sleep amidst the desolate scenes where they died. Captain Scott made but one formal reference to the Deity in the presence of death. Lord Curzon, as a comfortable spectator of the tragedy, plays with the subject in the most approved style of "eloquence."

One is bound to ask why there is so much talk about the tragedy of Captain Scott's death if "Providence" settled it—if it happened as it "pleased God." If it was settled by "Providence" there was no accident whatever, and a great deal of Captain Scott's last message, as well as of Lord

Curzon's speech, was a waste of paper and breath. What is the use of talking about adverse conditions, unforeseeable difficulties, and incalculable dangers, if the circumstances were the details of a divine design? Napoleon was beaten by the armies of the wind and snow. Captain Scott, though on a different expedition, was beaten in the same way. There is no luck in nature, but there is luck to man, whose mind cannot read the secrets of futurity—and the luck was against the gallant explorers. That is why they perished.

Some religious people assert the principle of general Providence, and deny the doctrine of particular Providence. They ask us to believe that God arranges everything in general but nothing in particular. But this is incredible. It is even absurd. It is a self-contradiction. We hold with John Wesley that there cannot be a general Providence without a particular Providence. Generals do not exist of themselves. They are the sum total of particulars, which alone have any real existence. Whiteness is only the name of a quality in which all white objects agree; whiteness is only their common characteristic. And the general providence of God on earth is made up of, and is another word for, the particular providence of God on earth. Providence, in short, must be particular, or it is no Providence at all. Limiting providence is like explaining a miracle. Both disappear the moment they are rationalised.

A particular Providence seems to have been in the minds of the search party who found the dead bodies of Captain Scott, Dr. E. A. Wilson, and Lieutenant H. R. Bowers in the tent where they drew their last breath through half-frozen lips—and erected a Cross and Cairn over their remains, with an honorable mention of another member of the South Pole party Petty Officer Edgar Evans; the memorial to Captain Oates, that "very gallant gentleman," being erected some twenty miles further south. After the record on the larger memorial the burial party added a Bible quotation: "The Lord gave, and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord." Evidently they had no Bible with them, in spite of their piety, or they might have turned to the text and got it right in the inscription. Job was the speaker; his wealth had gone, his children were all killed,—it was a particular providence by which he was afflicted. He was not thinking of religious theorems but of his own dread loss. His resignation to the divine hand was also particular. "The Lord gave," he said, and "the Lord hath taken away"—not "the Lord taketh away." "Blessed be the name of the Lord" came after that. It was all leading up to the "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."

Not even the clergy, who were in such haste to do a stroke of business for themselves in the memorial service at St. Paul's, have the courage to present the old doctrine of Providence in its naked horror. They dare not say that God deliberately killed Captain Scott and his companions. Ill luck did it, and God only permitted it—just as he permits everything else that happens. It suffices nowadays if God has a look in. His functions are uncertain but he must not be omitted. He is to be praised when things happen favorably, and not blamed when they happen unfavorably. But what a God is this!

G. W. FOOTE.

The Religion of Disease.—III.

(Concluded from p. 115.)

FASTING, as a religious practice, is too well known for it to be necessary to do more than call attention to its widespread character. The significance of the practice is well expressed by Tylor :—

"So long as fasting is continued as a religious rite, so long its consequences in morbid mental exaltation will continue the old savage doctrine that morbid phantasy is supernatural experience. Bread and meat would have robbed the ascetic of many an angel's visit; the opening of the refectory door must many a time have closed the gate of heaven to his gaze."

So long as we are dealing with the lower races this will be questioned by neither the serious investigator nor the fervent Christian. It is when we approach the religious beliefs and practices of later times, and attempt to apply the same principle of interpretation throughout, that a different theory is advanced. Thus, a missionary, contemplating the methods of a medicine-man, remarks :—

"It always appeared probable to me that these rogues, from long fasting, contract a weakness of brain, a giddiness, and kind of delirium, which makes them imagine that they are gifted with superior wisdom, and give themselves out for physicians. They impose upon themselves first, and afterwards upon others."*

This is shrewdly said, and is a good example of the readiness with which religionists recognise the obvious when recognition does not clash with their own prepossessions. The difficulty for outsiders is to discern any line of demarcation between ascetic practices as causes of spiritual illumination among savages and these among religious devotees in civilised countries. So far as one can see, the only distinction is that among savages the method is simple and open. With people who are in other respects on a higher level of culture the method is concealed among a number of attendant circumstances.

As a means of intensifying the sense of religious illumination, fasting is only one of many kinds of self-torture. Professor James confesses that :—

"Even more perhaps than other kinds of genius, religious leaders have been subject to abnormal psychological visitations. Invariably they have been creatures of exalted emotional sensibility. Often they have led a discordant inner life, and had melancholy during a part of their career. They have known no measure, been liable to obsessions and fixed ideas; and frequently they have fallen into trances, heard voices, seen visions, and presented all sorts of peculiarities which are ordinarily classed as pathological. Often, moreover, these pathological features in their career have helped to give them their religious authority and influence."†

Here, at all events, is a plain admission of the truth for which these articles are contending—that a large part of what has passed, historically, for proof of the truth of religion, and which has served to an enormous extent to perpetuate religion, has been nothing more than disease misunderstood. It is an admission that in religious ecstacy we have, to quote Dr. Maudesley's phrase, neither theolepsy nor diabolopsy, nor any other lepsy, in the sense of the possession of the individual by an external power. All that is there is a psycholepsy. Dr. Granger, dealing with this aspect of the question, says that "the religious genius is not proved to be morbid by the extent to which he diverges from the average type."‡ Quite so; but the reply quite misses the point. For it is not a mere divergence from the average type that warrants one in saying that much that passes for religious illumination is pathological in character, but the degree to which it is possible to affiliate certain types of religious exaltation with what are admittedly cases of disease when they occur out of connection with religious belief. Both Dr. Granger and Professor James simply stand as examples of how completely men will overlook the obvious in

their desire to find a footing for religion. Thus, had Professor James applied his scientific knowledge to religious experience, he would have been compelled to interpret the cases cited in his volume in terms of the "Medical Materialism" he is continually jibing at. Instead of this, he devotes best part of his book to an endeavor to discover the point at which these abnormal experiences impinge on a "hidden reality." And to all these attempts one need only put the decisive query, "In what way are the visions of a religious person, admittedly of an abnormal disposition, subject to fits of melancholy, to hearing voices, seeing visions, and presenting 'all sorts of peculiarities ordinarily classed as pathological,' in what way are the experiences of such a person differentiated from those hallucinations that are admittedly due to the influence of disease?"

Let us take as an example one of James' own cases, which he admits is "distinctly pathological," but without allowing this admission to disturb his belief that he, too, came into touch with a super-sensual world. The case is that of Suso, a fourteenth century mystic. As a young man he wore a hair shirt and an iron chain. Later, he had a leathern undergarment studded with 150 brass nails, points inward. To prevent himself throwing off this dress at night he had made a pair of leather gloves studded with tacks, so that if he attempted to uncliothe the tacks would penetrate the flesh. Next, he had made a wooden cross, with thirty protruding nails, to emulate the sufferings of Jesus. He procured an old door, and without covering, slept upon it. His feet became full of sores, his knees were dropsical, his body scarred with the horsehair, his hands trembled. During twenty years he fed scantily upon the coarsest food, slept in the most uncomfortable places, and during the whole of the time never once took a bath. One is not surprised to learn that as a result of these practices visions were vouchsafed him. No "Medical Materialist" would be surprised at that—he would only be surprised were it otherwise. He would only ask, in what respect does this case differ from those which can be frequently met with amongst savage races? Surely the sight of the Virgin or Jesus in the one case, and of the tribal ghost in the other, does not amount to a substantial difference.

In the case of Catherine of Siena the austerities began still earlier. At six years of age she flogged herself and saw visions. At seven she practised fasting. For years she slept but an hour or two every day. Santa Teresa, as a young woman, prayed to God for an illness, and describes how she remained for days in a trance, during which her tongue was bitten in many places. She was also subject to sudden attacks, during which, she would remain in the same attitude in which she was overtaken. All was, of course, due to the direct action of God.* St. Paul, Professor James admits, "certainly had once an epileptoid, if not an epileptic, seizure." All that one need add is, that it was this once that gave him the experience which led to his conversion. Mary Magdalene, the first who brought tidings of the resurrection, had been delivered of seven devils—that is, was either an epileptic or an insane subject. Martin Luther's visions, etc., may, on the strength of his own description of the symptoms, be traced to a neuropathic source. John Bunyan's nervous disorder is attested by the fearful dreams and visions he had while a boy, and by the voices heard in later years. George Fox, the founder of the Society of Friends, describes how, in the middle of winter, when approaching Lichfield, "the word of the Lord was like a fire in me." And, as he went through the streets, "there seemed to me to be a channel of blood running down the streets, and the marketplace appeared like a pool of blood." Reflecting on the meaning of the vision, he remembered that "in the Emperor Diocletian's time a thousand Christians were martyred in Lichfield. So I was to go without my shoes through the channel of their blood in the

* Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, vol. ii., pp. 412-13.

† *Varieties of Religious Experience*, pp. 6-7.

‡ *The Soul of a Christian*, p. 13.

* *Santa Teresa*. H. Joli; pp. 25-6-9 and 58.

market-place, that I might raise up the blood of those martyrs which had been shed above a thousand years before."

The classical example of the creation and strengthening of a sense of divine communion by the methods above noted is found in the annals of monasticism. For several centuries every conceivable torture of mind and body was practised in the name of religion. Ignorant, superstitious, believing that they were surrounded by demons, the monks by their habits and mode of life supplied all the conditions of hallucination; with the result that a large part of the annals of monasticism read more like the records of a lunatic asylum than a page from the history of civilised humanity. "Religious teachers," says Francis Galton, "by enforcing celibacy, fasting, and solitude have done their best towards making men mad, and they have always largely succeeded in inducing morbid mental conditions among their followers."*

The important thing to remember is that the history of religion is continuous. From the savage onward there is no break. Commencing with a simple but inevitable blunder, the initial error is perpetuated throughout the ages. First, we have the observing of the conditions under which intercourse with the spiritual world is believed to occur, and then the re-creation of these conditions for the sake of resuming the assumed communication. And when increased knowledge has robbed actual disease of its supernatural character, we have the same plan of misinterpretation of normally healthy human qualities. In the main, this is the position to-day among the more advanced communities. It is the social and moral qualities that are now chiefly exploited in the interests of supernaturalism. Learning nothing from experience, our "mystical" and "advanced" theologians babble of the social and moral qualities of man in exactly the same strain as the primitive savage talked of actual disease. He does not, or will not, see that the same principle of explanation holds throughout. Just as research in pathology has tracked the supernatural into its most obscure retreat in the workings of the most complex mechanism in the world, so research in the general nature of man will detect beneath the modern consciousness of a spiritual world no more than the normal feelings, ideals, and aspirations of humanity. The scientific study of religion does not bring man into contact with God. Its effect is to bring man to an understanding of himself, and thus realise the conditions that gave all the gods their being.

C. COHEN.

"The Four Toll-Bars."

It sounds extremely blasphemous for a Christian to declare that, in his religion, God has reached the end of his tether; or in other words, that Christianity represents the utmost that the Almighty can do for the world; or, in the elegant language of the Bishop of London, that herein "God has shot his last bolt." The inference from this is, that in Christianity we find God at his highest and best, so that if he fails here, he fails absolutely and finally. Christianity makes heavier and costlier demands upon Deity than any other religion the world has ever seen. As a popular preacher once said, the Cross of Calvary presents the impressive spectacle of God with his coat off, at work on, giving the last, supreme touch to, the masterpiece of the Universe. But Christianity is unique, not only for its phenomenal demands upon Deity, but also in its exceptional exactions from man. Its very first order to the latter is to make an immediate and complete surrender of himself. He is solemnly summoned to hand himself over to the Lord Jesus Christ as his slave, or property, for the rest of his life. He is nevermore to do a single

thing on his own initiative, but everything as commanded by his Lord and Master. He has neither intellect, will, nor heart of his own. He no longer lives; it is another that lives in him and uses him for his own purposes. The surrender is complete. Not only the *person* of a believer, but his *property* as well, is claimed by the Redeemer. Both he and his are holy unto the Lord. If we take the Sacraments of the Church we shall see this principle in full operation. This is how Mr. W. Carew Hazlitt, of the Inner Temple, puts the case:—

"Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, and Interment are four stages in our career, where the ecclesiastical arm intervenes for our supposed good and salvation. It is a species of quadrilateral, of which the sides are betraying some signs of an inclination to yield. Baptism, which is an adroit step to secure us all in advance, before we can have a voice in the business, has itself produced a volume of controversial literature sufficient to form a lifelong study for anyone disposed to lay out his time in such a manner. The broad issue has always been of course between Infant and Adult baptism: but nothing can be more certain than that as a saving process one is as efficacious as the other—it is the certificate alone which possesses any practical or other value" (*Man in Relation to God and a Church*, p. 61).

As a matter of fact, infant baptism has been of incalculably greater service to the Church than adult, because from the moment of its christening the child belongs to the Church and is a citizen of heaven. When the parents and godparents appear before the font they are informed by the officiating clergyman that all men are conceived and born in sin; that our Savior Christ has said that none can enter into the kingdom of God except through the door of baptism and regeneration; and that God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, is prepared to grant to their child "that thing which by nature he cannot have," which thing will be conferred upon him in the rite of baptism. The sooner baptism takes place the better in every way, because unbaptised children, if they die, go to hell, and are not entitled to Christian burial. It is impossible to overestimate the amount of worldly wisdom involved in the sacrament of infant baptism. If a child is to be secured for the Church, the earlier he is taken in hand the better. Though too young to take any vows upon himself, the first possible moment is seized to impress upon him the solemnity of the vows made on his behalf by others. In the Catechism he is taught to repeat day by day that his name was given him by his godfathers and godmothers in his baptism, wherein he was made "a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." Then he is instructed to describe what his godfathers and godmothers then did for him, thus:—

"They did promise and vow three things in my name. First that I should renounce the Devil and all his works, the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh. Secondly, that I should believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith. And thirdly, that I should keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of my life."

The next question put to the little one is, "Dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe and to do as they have promised for thee?" And naturally the child answers in the affirmative. "I heartily thank our Heavenly Father," he is taught to add, "that he hath called me to this state of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Savior. And I pray unto God to give me his grace, that I may continue in the same unto my life's end." The system is so perfect that it would be difficult to suggest any improvement upon it.

"Confirmation," Mr. Hazlitt observes, "may be regarded as a sort of corollary to the christening formula." Until quite recently practically all schools were under the wing of the Church, and religious instruction filled a large portion of the curriculum. In addition confirmation classes are conducted by the clergy, at which the children learn to regard themselves as heaven's favorites, whom God has

* *Inquiries Into Human Faculty*; 1883; p. 68.

accepted and forgiven for Christ's sake, and who are now set apart for a distinctly Christian life. At confirmation they formally ratify and confirm the promises and vows of their godfathers and godmothers, and acknowledge themselves bound to believe and to do those things which were undertaken for them at their baptism.

Is it not incontrovertible that children thus brought up are almost sure to become loyal members of the Church? Would not something like a miracle be required to make them renounce the Christian Faith? A born Freethinker marvels greatly that anybody can be so simple as to believe in God, Christ, and the Church; but to a young man or maiden duly trained on ecclesiastical lines nothing is so inconceivable as unbelief. The recent formation of the League of Worshipping Children among the Free Churches is an acknowledgment of the truth that the future of Christianity is dependent upon its being crammed down the throats of little children before they acquire the art of thinking. The leaders of all the Churches are now fully aware that unless they win the children before they arrive at years of discretion their profession is doomed. They know that to think is to doubt, and that doubt naturally leads to denial.

After Confirmation, in most cases, comes marriage, which the Church declares to be a sacrament, "instituted of God in the time of man's innocency, signifying unto us the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his Church, which holy estate Christ adorned and beautified with his presence, and first miracle that he wrought in Cana of Gallilee." Mr. Hazlitt says:—

"The assumption of control over the ceremony of marriage, and its admittance among the sacraments, by means of counter-balancing the civil plea, was a consummate piece of strategy on the part of the early hierarchy. The civil law said, and still says, 'This is a civil contract'; the canon law said, and says, 'But if you wish to appear *respectable*, and to be received into genteel society, you must subscribe to the dual form; we will accommodate you by allowing you to sign the book in the Vestry instead of going to the Registrar.' The latter demands a shilling; the clergyman looks rather sourly at you if you do not give him a good deal more—he is not shy or proud. Besides, it is an offering to the Church, and he is Cashier and Book-keeper, he says" (*Ibid.*, p. 63).

The attitude of the Church on the subject of marriage is perfectly scandalous; and must be held responsible for the major portion of the immorality that obtains in Christendom. She looks upon divorce, under any circumstances, as contrary to the law of God; and she resolutely sets her face against any reform of the marriage laws, with the result that in this country we have now two marriage laws, that of the Church, which the clergy call Divine, and that of the land, which the clergy denounce as being of the Devil. Of course, in the long run the law of the land will be so modified as to be recognised as the law of Nature, while the law of the Church will be remembered only as an unwholesome dream of the times of ignorance and superstition.

Equally irrational and degrading is the attitude of the Church on the subject of death. Believing in the resurrection of the body at the last day, she has persistently opposed the idea of cremation as an anti-Christian heresy. Consequently, our cities and towns are full of cemeteries which have been and are sources of corruption and infection; and within them is found something worse even than physical infection, namely, the accursed spirit of sectarianism, which has divided them into "consecrated" and "unconsecrated" sections. Was ever anything more ridiculous or more monstrously cruel and inhuman? Happily, however, to the non-religious, to the convinced unbeliever, "consecrated" and "unconsecrated" are unmeaning terms, terms of religion which he has left behind, while the multiplication of crematoriums enables him to dispose of his dead in a much saner, wholesomer, and less repulsive manner.

It is very gratifying to learn that the Church is steadily losing its hold of mankind. Thousands of children are now being brought up without any religious instruction whatsoever; and when they arrive at years of discretion the wonder of wonders for them is that there are any Christian believers in the world. In their estimation nothing can be more absurd than the popular belief in God and immortality. When they come to be married the services of the parson will be cheerfully dispensed with, the brief and simple ceremony at the Registry Office being amply sufficient for them. For them, too, death has lost its sting, being looked upon more as a friend and deliverer than an enemy. They are freed from the cramping prejudices and depressing superstitions of their ancestors and most of their neighbors. They are content with being the children of the earth, happy in their birthright, thinking only of life and how to utilise it to the best advantage, and being quite ready to die when the time comes. They can say, with Mr. Hazlitt:—

"We happen to have educated ourselves up to a loftier standard of thought and knowledge than the bulk of those around us. The benevolent and worshipful representatives of Jesus Christ, titled and untitled, can, however, only at best intern us, point the invisible finger at us, send us to Coventry. Is it not something that they have had their wings clipped and their talons drawn to this extent?..... We stand on an equal footing with the most exalted in worldly station of our adversaries and deceivers, and can meet them everywhere in the field openly and securely" (*Ibid.*, p. 73).

J. T. LLOYD.

Missionaries and Mrs. Grundy.

SOME time ago I wrote an article in the *Freethinker* (July 14, 1912) on the awakening of Freethought ideas in the minds of the natives of Madagascar, and I pointed out that the Malagasy Rationalists were waging polemical warfare with the missionaries. I now learn of an excellent piece of propaganda by the Madagascar unbelievers in retaliation upon the Catholics, who, this time, are being hoist by their own petard. It appears that the Congregations had circulated the report that the well-known French work, *Voyage humouristique à travers les religions*, by a French judge, Monsieur N. Simon, is only made up of lies written for the special purpose of turning the Malagasy away from the Catholic religion. Of course, this is a Christian lie, which, luckily, is not likely to abound to the glory of God. For the missionaries had not taken into account the energy and determination of the valiant Freethinkers in Madagascar. In order to pulverise the mendacious tactics of the holy men of God, a Madagascar Freethinker, M. Razanamabery, the General Secretary of the Société mutuelle des Amis Laïques, has undertaken the translation into the Malagasy tongue of the wise and witty publications of M. Simon. The first volume of the *Voyage humouristique* has already appeared, and the translation, with its 125 pages, is on sale at the price of 80 centimes. Evidently the half-baked Christians in the great African island are going to have some fine fun at the expense of the Christians in general and the Catholics in particular. I also learn that another Madagascar Freethinker, M. Rajaona, a native inspector of primary education, and therefore a French Government official, has just translated the excellent pamphlet, *La Bible expliquée*, written by our good friend, Eugène Hins. Evidently the Madagascar Freethinkers are going to keep the paunch-bellied missionaries on the run.

M. Simon's useful book, which is now increasing the gaiety of the Malagasy, consists of two volumes, and forms part of the popular "Collection A. L. Guyot."* Every page of the volume is freely

* A. L. Guyot (Paris). Vol. i. consists of 191 pp.; vol. ii. contains 189 pp. Each volume costs 20 centimes, and, no doubt, has had an enormous circulation in France and its colonies.

peppered with facts, arguments, and analogies drawn from the study of the non-Christian religions and philosophies. M. Simon, whose book has already been translated into Italian, makes no pretence to originality or profundity. His main idea is to present the case against Christianity in a light, bright, and amusing manner, without any of the ponderous affectations of solemnity that are so dear to the heart of many modern critics of Christianity. As he says, there is no need to dock one's language with crape when dealing with the death rattles of a decrepit religion.

The fact that in France a Judge, a Doctor of Law, and, consequently, a man of social position, like M. Simon, comes out boldly in the advanced ranks of Freethought advocates, and writes with unsparring pen against the whole doctrinal paraphernalia of Christianity, from the idea of God down to the most modern developments of sacerdotal puerility, is the sign (as our author declares) that the old beliefs are dying, and that the struggle between science and the religions that sprang out of the Bible is approaching its end. More than ever, the resistance offered to the modern spirit by religion is a matter, not of conviction, but of convention. What are the soul-throbs of Mrs. Grundy, the innermost religious certitudes nestling in the vacuous mind of the average middle-class paterfamilias? In both cases, the manifestations of religion are, for the most part, only the social badges of a blighting—I had almost said, a blithering—respectability. Of all the false gods ever foisted upon human credulity the most empty-headed of them all is the god "Respectability." Before this shrine Judge Simon refuses to bow with the obsequious deference of the conventional flunkey, and by that *gran rifiuto* which some modern Dante will yet have to sing, he sets his compeers a good example.

But the good example is not only put before us by this witty but judicial writer: it is, perhaps, more daringly shown by the enterprising publisher. The two volumes of M. Simon's *Voyage humouristique* form respectively volumes 851 and 852 in the Gayot collection. In England, popular publishers who are out to make money on their publications and to maintain the capricious favor of the big crowd of their patrons, would never risk their popularity or the forfeiting of their "respectability" by including in their list such an audacious piece of flat and flagrant "blasphemy" as the *Voyage*. Such temerity would spell ruin in England; or, at any rate, the fear of commercial disaster would limit the publisher's opportunity for the exercise of an intelligent hospitality to the out-and-out heretical thinker.

I do not pretend that the *Voyage* is a work fully abreast of modern criticism, or that its erudition, as, for instance, its reliance upon the Christ and Krishna theories of Jacoillot, is always well-founded. Nor do I claim that these volumes, sold at the cheap rate of twopence each, are models of typography. But I certainly claim that these little tomes of pungent Biblical criticism, with their twenty-seven chapters ranging through all the heights and depths of Christian dogma, form one of the most readable and entertaining samples of satire and refutation in the whole run of Freethought literature. In about 800 pages M. Simon writes an enormous number of witty epigrams at the expense of the doctrines and dogmas of Christianity. The puritanic severity of the English language, which no longer assumes the blunt directness of a Dean Swift, would shrink with terror from the winged shafts of satire which fly with such deadly force in some of these chapters, and our bashful Briton, with the fear of Mrs. Grundy before his eyes, would, perhaps, translate some of these daring but legitimate flashes of wit by blushes and asterisks. I understand that the Malagasy translator will not labor under these censorious conditions, but will render with unemasculated energy the virile thought of his author.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

That Wretched Goat.

"ONCE a year," said my host, as we sat in his bungalow at Poona, "a goat dies in my garden."

I waited inquiringly.

"You see a tree over there, with a few rough stones placed about its roots?"

I saw it.

"Well, it is sacred. Nobody knows why. Perhaps a Hindu saint was buried there generations ago, and the tree, or a tree that preceded it, was hallowed by his memory. The tree stands in my garden, but the pious souls hereabouts enjoy a prescriptive right to worship at this spot. Sometimes, I find at night a little earthenware lamp laid and lit under the tree. And, as I said, once a year a man comes with his friends, and they bring a goat as a sacrifice, and the wretched goat is killed in honor of the dead worthy."

The stones at the foot of the tree, I noticed, were daubed with red paint, as a symbol of the blood which gods and ghosts thankfully receive.

If an intelligent goat could write a book, he could put together a very interesting, though not very edifying, history of the connection between religion and the animal world. If he were descriptively and statistically inclined, he might portray a vast procession of oxen, sheep, goats, pigs, horses, and camels, over which hover immense swarms of birds. He would roughly calculate the number of sub-human creatures slaughtered for love or fear of Heaven, since the days of Primitive Man to the year 1918. He would then conclude his learned treatise:—

"In the name of mercy, I ask, Why should this vast procession have been sacrificed? Were the worshipers any the better for the holocausts? Even supposing the gods existed (and from modern researches conducted by my literary and scientific colleagues in the human species, the question is a very open one), surely they could not be justified by seeing their own creations flung bleeding at their footstools? Nor could we goats be expected to become very willing subscribers to creeds which disembowelled us in the name of the just and holy Gods. If it should come to my turn to be offered up under the tree at Poona".....

The rest of the agonised reflections had better be omitted.

Christian apologists genially assure us that their religion abolished the sacrificial slaughter of lambs, doves, etc. But they will also affirm that "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us, therefore let us keep the feast"; and some of them speak of Christ's sacrifice as perpetual. Into such mysteries, I do not now pry. My present object is to put a very simple query,—Why should we enjoy any religion that renders other beings,—human or animals,—uncomfortable?

You come across singular people who discuss the beneficence of pain; who say tragedy is part of the Divine order; who portray God Almighty as smiling serenely amid scenes of wreck, fire, battle, plague, and famine; who sneer at a possible world where goats are no longer wretched, and men no longer die, praying with parched tongues for a drop of water. Such a world, they say, would be too horribly pleasant! We should all degenerate into gaiety and music.

Well, no profession likes to be snuffed out. These prophets of melancholy would never be employed by the merry nations. Even their voluntary services would be declined. Very naturally, therefore, they seek to stave off the evil day, and they try to convince us that the cure for misery is misery, and that their servile Gospel, which excuses suffering, is worth paying for.

I have often thought that one of the finest opponents of religious melancholy is the sanitarian. The sanitarian has one of the most joyous occupations under the sun. It is his business to kill mosquitoes, and so exterminate malaria and yellow fever; to get rid of venom, whether in snakes or rotten fruit or meat; to purify our water; to make the air crystal-clear; to render clothing efficient for the protection of our bodies; to promote—oh, most glorious of

missions!—the spread of sunshine. Civilisation might well build a temple—at Paris, for example—to the genius of sanitation; and red-cheeked virgins, glowing emblems of health of physique and soul, should dance in its courts to the sound of the most magical drums, strings, pipes, and trumpets ever invented by human skill.

While the world was more or less insanitary, the priests and prophets had to do their best to justify its discomfort. But to-day, just as working men will positively not put up with bad wages, even though you crack their skulls by flinging volumes of political economy at them, so the world at large declines to accept dirt and disease and preventable accidents as necessary items in the cosmic program. As the world becomes healthier, its spirits rise, its temper sweetens, and its theology diminishes. It has had bad dreams. It refuses to be wretched any longer.

If we are to retain the term "religion" (and, in spite of the nervous protests of some of my Free-thought friends, I stoutly desire to retain it), let it stand for strength, for health, for cheerful households, for industry that sings, for capital that exploits not, for painless childbirth, for love that never knows prostitution, for a buoyant, agile, joyful human mind that discovers truth every day, and sleeps easily at night in smiling expectation of new discoveries and conquests to-morrow. Religion then will laugh, as naturally as waves leap, and winds blow, and snow whitens, and children play. Religion will reveal its splendor in expeditions to the far corners of the earth for the war against poverty and inhumanity. Religion will prove its sanity and its imperishable value in its capacity for joy and beauty. And Death itself, impelled by the abounding good companionship of the globe, will regard mankind with tranquil but no longer gloomy eyes, even as old men smile at the sports of little lads and lasses.

F. J. GOULD.

Karachi, India; February, 1913.

Acid Drops.

It is not surprising to find Mr. Frederic Harrison's books well noticed in the press. He is a rich man, and the worship of wealth is the national religion of England. Had he been a poor man his writings on Positivism would have been treated like—well, like the writings of other poor men on such subjects. The *Daily News* actually devoted a column to Mr. Harrison's last book, the *Positive Evolution of Religion*, but it should not have turned on an impudent ignoramus to write the review. The name of this creature is E. W. Sutton. In the whole of the column there is not a word from which the reader could get an inkling of the contents of Mr. Harrison's book. Incidentally, the silly scribbler says that "There is little of Comte's bitterness in the cultivated pages of Mr. Harrison." Strictly speaking, a "cultivated page" is sheer nonsense. A page in waiting might be cultivated, but not a page of printed matter. But letting that pass, what does the fool mean by "Comte's bitterness"? And what does he mean by the suggestion that Comte was not as "cultivated" as Mr. Harrison is. To mention Comte and Mr. Harrison in the same breath is like mentioning Mont Blanc with Primrose Hill. Mr. Harrison never had an original idea, or did an original thing, in his life. He is an elegant writer under the inspiration of his betters. Comte was a great and original thinker, one of the most seminal minds of modern times, from whom many sweet and "cultivated" philosophers have borrowed without acknowledgment. Comte has been dead nearly sixty years. Does anyone suppose that Mr. Frederic Harrison will be talked and written about sixty years after his death?

The Egregious ass who chatted in the *Daily News* in that way went one better still. "Comte," he said, "understands religion, that is, he is not without his religious experience, but because he understands the force of it, and can find no place for it in his system, he detests and mistrusts it." Comte finds no place for supernatural religion in his system; that is true enough, and hardly needs to be reiterated nowadays; but the whole of his philosophy was a preparation for the Religion of Humanity. It is indeed at this point that many Positivists break from him. They are grateful

disciples of the great teacher, but they cannot stand his religion. They call it reactionary; he called it progressive. The *Daily News* reviewer doesn't know this. We should be astonished if he had read two pages of Comte. If he has done so he is a hopeless donkey.

Here is another of the hopeless donkey's exhibitions. "There is no means," he says, "of proving that two and two make four, so far as I am aware; the public must be good enough to accept the fact." There is no need for proof; there is no room for proof; it is a statement of fact, which can be demonstrated to the senses. Properly speaking, two and two do not *make* four; they *are* four; that is what we call them when we put them together. Such are the poor ninnies that religion now pays to defend it!

Spiritualists and other "occult" people are now explaining why they did not get news of the death of Captain Scott and his companions from the spirit-world. The only explanation is that all the "spirits" in the universe cannot tell any man (or woman either) what he does not know without their assistance. There is a lot of foolish gabble after the event, and never any knowledge before it.

A sailor on horseback is as much at home as a nautical gentleman engaged in spiritualistic research. The *Daily Mirror* has recently twitted the Spiritualists with ignorance of the death of Captain Scott, and asked Vice-Admiral Moore for corroboration as to Scott's name being mentioned at seances. The Admiral's reply was immense: "Have heard word Scott, also Smith, Jones, Robinson, nothing to connect with Robert Scott Antarctic. Thanks for kind advice. Don't care damn if world is convinced or not of telepathy. Everyone worth convincing knows truth."

After speeches in Latin, the Archdeacon of Leicester was elected Prolocutor of the Convocation of Canterbury. It is appropriate that the priests of a dying religion should use a dead language.

At a Southend Mission Hall soup is to be supplied to poor people two days weekly. Are they to be left to the "loving kindness" of Providence on the other five days?

An "indoor picnic" was held at Chalkwell Park Union Church, Westcliff-on-Sea, recently. We prayerfully hope that the refreshments did not include "communion port" at one-and-three a bottle.

The Wesleyans of Canada are making for themselves a tremendous reputation as heresy-hunters. Within the last few years they have run more than one dangerous heresiarch to earth and duly dealt with the same. The latest victim is the Rev. Dr. Workman, whom they summarily deposed from his chair in their Theological College at Montreal simply because he could not see eye to eye with the renowned John Wesley. The subjects on which he differed from the standards were the Virgin Birth, the Deity of Jesus Christ, and the Atonement. On these questions no minister of the Wesleyan Church dares to think for himself, or to keep an open mind. All its teachers are compelled to bear the yoke of slavish submission to a mechanically constituted authority. To be tolerated at all they must be miserable, cowardly slaves, whose thinking was done for them more than a hundred years ago. And yet there are some who wonder why their Church fails to secure the allegiance of thoughtful people, and is visibly shrinking!

It is amazing with what thoughtless ease men of God often give their whole case away. Quite recently an eminent divine was urging Christians not to neglect family worship. It would better for you to omit the morning meal, he argued, rather than the morning prayers, because the omission of breakfast will never grow into a habit, whereas the omission of worship very soon will. But surely if a man has by nature a genuine appetite for worship, a real hunger for communion with God, his spiritual nature will be as clamorous for food as his physical nature, and it will be quite as impossible for him to go without family prayer as without breakfast. And yet the great preacher was right, because the need in the one case is *real*, and in other *artificial*.

How the truth leaks out! We all remember the boasts of Montenegro, at the outset of the war, that its object was the liberation of its fellow Christians in Albania, Macedonia, and other parts of European Turkey. That was only a

pretence. The real object of Montenegro and its pious King has just been set forth more specifically. We beg our readers to pay careful attention to the following extract from the *Westminster Gazette* of Feb. 21:—

“MONTENEGRO AND SCUTARI.

“Reuter's Agency is informed that, acting under telegraphic instructions from his Government, M. Popovitch, the Montenegrin delegate, yesterday afternoon visited the Foreign Office, and made a declaration in the following sense:—

“That in order to make clear the position of the Montenegrin Government, he was charged to explain the situation as it existed to-day. Montenegro had already lost much in the attack upon Scutari, the possession of which was for her the principal reason of the war, and in a short time her efforts would be successful and the town be taken. Under these circumstances he was charged categorically to inform the British Government that under no circumstances could Montenegro accept any transaction that might have in view Scutari not being Montenegrin, even if such were proposed by the Powers. Montenegro was determined never to evacuate Scutari, and if attacked was resolved to risk annihilation rather than give up the city.”

There you are. It is written quite plainly. It was the acquisition of Scutari that was the “principal reason of the war” for Montenegro. The soldiers of the Cross are simply after plunder. We have said so all the time—and now they say so themselves.

“Hubert,” of the *Sunday Chronicle*, can write an interesting and well-informed article, but he occasionally gets off his beat, and this happens, as is so often the case, when he is most certain of his absolute accuracy. Thus, writing on the death of Captain Scott and his companions, he asserts emphatically that the irappeasable desire of man for knowledge, quite irrespective of its making for comfort and convenience, “cannot be accounted for by the scientific evolutionist.” “Hubert” is apparently under the impression that only those qualities of mind or body that are of obvious and immediate value can be accounted for by evolution. Evolution may thus account for the engineer, but not for the philosopher. It may account for the man who is seeking knowledge as the means to some utilitarian end, but it will not account for men seeking knowledge with no other end in view but its acquisition; and, above all, it will not explain men sacrificing themselves to acquire knowledge of this kind.

This is a very common form of reasoning, and its attractiveness is entirely due to inadequate understanding of all that scientific evolution involves. To begin with, is it quite certain that the pursuit of knowledge, as such, has no utilitarian value, that is, does not add “to the comforts and conveniences of life”? or that the desire for mere knowledge does not “help him to survive”? Living in a Christian country, and fighting against the incubus of a Christian ancestry, “Hubert” appears to be under the impression that useful things must come under the category of either cash, or food, or some material thing, or, if knowledge, then must be convertible into some material form. Scientific evolutionists know better than this. In the case of play, so long an unsolved problem, it has now been shown that this is the young animals' preparation for the more strenuous life of maturity. And, on similar lines, the craving for knowledge of all kinds, and at all costs, is ultimately based on the fact that not only does it strengthen mental qualities as a whole, but because on knowledge rests man's power of mastery over the forces that surround him. It is because of these two facts that social opinion has in all ages laid emphasis upon the value of knowledge as an end in itself. No one can say what knowledge will become of actual practical value; we can only say that all knowledge is of use under some condition or other. It is thus that, in the course of evolution, means become ends in themselves, and also that a quality not useful to survival in a given individual, or a given occasion, may yet have a survival value from the point of view of the life of the species.

If “Hubert” had asked himself, Is any knowledge of value? he might have saved himself from confusion. For if the answer is in the affirmative, then the mystery disappears. And a quality of mind, once existing, may well go on developing, provided it be not actually injurious. Moreover, the opinion of one's fellows counts naturally and properly for something. And although public opinion may have condemned, at times, certain forms of knowledge, it has never failed to pay homage to those who possessed it—not individually, then in the mass. In brief, the place and function of the desire for knowledge in human evolution presents no difficulty to the really scientific evolutionist. He is not surprised at men forsaking home and comfort, and risking a lonely death, to gratify this craving. He would be

surprised were it otherwise. The end of Captain Scott and his companions is only another illustration of how fundamental social forces will assert their supremacy over a conscious commercialism and religious teaching.

The Suffragettes seem to be improving in the gentle art of making enemies, and we are wondering what they are likely to do next. We hope that they will draw the line before imitating the Biblical heroine, Jael, who had considerable fame as the user of a hammer.

Nottingham Baptists have taken the bull by the horns. Some Christians may denounce picture palaces, but those responsible for the Baptist tabernacle in that town have decided that they are good enough to make money on. So the building has been let to a cinematograph company during the week, the services continuing as usual on Sunday. The tabernacle has a seating accommodation of 2,000, and a membership of 211. Evidently no danger of overcrowding.

Our readers will probably remember how the great Talmage demonstrated the truth of the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by exhibiting a piece of pitch from the assumed place of their burial. At this game the Bishop of London is not to be beaten, and at the Brompton Parish Church, the other Sunday evening, he adduced his evidence in favor of the miracle of turning water into wine. He had been to Cana of Galilee, and had actually “seen the great water-pots, the successors of those very water-pots in which the water was placed before the miracle.” That settles it. The actual pots were no longer there, but their successors were, and, presumably, there was something about them that carried conviction to what Bishop Ingram is pleased to call his intelligence. They looked as though they would be connected with a miracle of that description. What a pity the Bishop did not bring home one of the pots and exhibit it to his congregation. The curious thing is that Bishop Ingram regards himself as a civilised person.

The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge has just received a gift of £10,000. It is a pity that the donor did not care for knowledge without the adjective.

A novel has recently been published with the title *The House of the Other World*. It is already a familiar object in theological fiction.

Of all the fantastic reasons why working men do not attend church, the one put forward by Canon Alexander, at St. Paul's Cathedral, takes the cake. This far-seeing, deep-thinking ecclesiastic has discovered that the reason why working men stay away from church—he means, of course, the Established Church—is that they have no part in the management of its affairs. We suggest that the working man is not quite such a fool as Canon Alexander seems to think him. We have heard of people leaving a church because they were not petted or praised, or were slighted in some way or the other; but in the main there is only one reason why people do not attend church, and that is because they have ceased to believe in the doctrines taught. While people believe in religion they will go to church somewhere. They may fall out with a particular preacher, but that only means that they will find another one, and so the number of church attendants is not materially affected. But the absence of church attendance affects all alike. Those which are managed by the congregation are no better off than the others. And the slump is not even confined to the working class. The clergy are more concerned with their abstinence because, as they sometimes say, it is the business of the Church to keep the people in order. And if it cannot do this one of the principal reasons for subsidising the Church disappears.

The abuse of one's enemies is often a compliment, and what is intended as an indictment may in reality be a tribute to one's worth. It has been proposed by some members of the French Chamber of Deputies that there should be a national celebration of the second centenary of Diderot's birth. If the proposal realises itself, the French people will honor itself in showing national recognition of the principal editor of the famous *Encyclopædia*, a work that had such an enormous influence, not only on French, but on European thought. The *Catholic Times*, naturally, does not welcome such a proposal, and remarks that, while Diderot's ability was indisputable, the effects of the *Encyclopædia* were “deplorable.” The *Encyclopædia* “encouraged the wildest speculation of immature minds and gave a vogue to Freethought. From the effects of the impulse then given to the conceptions of the most irreverent

theorists France has never recovered." We readily overlook the "immature minds"—that is only what one would expect from a Catholic editor—for the sake of truth admitted. Not only France, but the whole civilised world benefited by the work of Diderot and his fellow-workers. France has never ceased to benefit from their labors, and the Christian Church has never recovered the vigor of their onslaught.

Even when a clergyman hits on the truth, he is unable, in nine cases out of ten, to express it plainly. Says the Rev. A. E. Garrie:—

"I confront this vast physical universe, with all its wonder and world of being, and I ask myself, What does the physical universe tell me about God? and there is silence, and not a voice. And I turn my face to Jesus Christ, and he says to me that God is Father."

Now, in plain English, all this means that the familiar argument from design is all rubbish. Nature by itself bears no evidence of the existence of a God, and so far Atheism is fully justified. But if, after failing to find any reasonable proof of God, you will take a dose of theological soothing syrup and believe in Jesus, then you can believe in God. And with this the Atheist will agree. To have said this much quite plainly would have opened the eyes of Mr. Garrie's hearers. And it is just possible that by not saying it plainly he even prevented himself from recognising all that the statement involved.

Rev. Evan Edwards, the oldest Nonconformist minister, celebrated his ninety-eighth birthday at Torquay last week. Adam and Methuselah would have regarded the gentleman as a green youth.

Rev. E. T. Griffiths died suddenly while preaching in Cam Parish Church. He was referring to the death of Captain Scott and his party at the post of duty, when his voice failed, and he fell down the pulpit steps. The papers speak of "heart affection," and they are very likely right. But if a Secular lecturer were to fall down dead in similar circumstances it would certainly be a "judgment."

The Bishop of Chichester is courting danger. He has been complaining of the "church voice" among his clerical brethren. Many a time, he said, one came across a clergyman who spoke very nicely outside the church, but directly he got on his legs, or on his knees, in church he lost his natural voice, and spoke in "this miserable church voice." Quite true—and we venture to say the reverend gentlemen know what they are doing. They talk such nonsense in church that only artificial tones carry it off. If it were spoken in a natural voice everybody would laugh at it—and decline to hear it again.

The Bishop of Chichester, speaking at the House of Convocation at Canterbury, expressed the desire that "every young clergyman should have a pin with its point upwards just under his chin. It is a simple and safe cure for clergy who lower their heads when reading." He also said that "the reading of the lessons is the most melancholy thing in the church to-day." Does the Bishop imagine that any man could be very jolly whilst worshipping a Deity who is suspended to two pieces of wood with three tennenny nails?

A priest was shot dead at St. Englebert Church, Milheim, during the celebration of Mass. He was in one of the holy boxes confessing a young girl. But he was not the murderer's intended victim after all. The priest he meant to shoot had "stolen his guardian angel"—which we take to mean "his girl." Priests are not supposed to meddle with other men's "guardian angels." But they do sometimes. And sometimes other men's "guardian angels" meddle with them.

Mr. H. M. Hyndman has been interviewed by the *Daily Express* on "What is wrong with Socialism?" He says there is nothing wrong with Socialism, but there is ever so much wrong with England and the English people. Amongst the evils he notes is this. "I know of no country," Mr. Hyndman says, "in which a low type of supernatural religion is used so systematically to chloroform what little of intelligence is left to the wage-earning class." Why then do so many Socialists look askance at Freethought propaganda? Mr. Hyndman himself rarely opens his mouth on the subject. We thank him, however, for his straightforward utterance on this occasion. It justifies the policy of the National Secular Society and the *Freethinker*.

A few recent clerical wills, but none of them very large. Rev. John Matthews, of Rathmines, Dublin, left £9,240.

Rev. Ernald Lane, Dean of Rochester, left £3,851. Rev. John Nixon, Roman Catholic priest, Great Crosby, left £5,985. Rev. Charles Watkin Lewis, Castle-street, Hereford, left £11,541. "Blessed be ye poor!"

Emperor William has been preaching again. He evidently loves it, and we are inclined to think he has missed his proper vocation. This time he has explained how and why Germany rose from the dust in 1813. Of course the failing health of Napoleon had nothing whatever to do with it, neither had the statecraft of the German leaders, such as Stein. No, the explanation is that Germany recovered her faith in God, and based her moral views of life on religion. God was with Germany, and God is still with her, and Germany will be all right while she carries the shield of faith. "Armed with such weapons," the Kaiser continued, "we will, untroubled from right or left, pursue our straight path, eyes upraised, hearts upraised, trusting in God." Such weapons! Germany would want something better than the shield of faith if Russia and France were to fall upon her together.

It is a pity that "Providence" cannot look after its own places. The recent disastrous fire at Tokyo, in which 3,990 houses were destroyed, and 15,000 people rendered homeless, broke out in the Salvation Army Hall at Kanda. We are not aware of any good the Salvation Army has done in Japan to balance this mischief.

A two-year-old baby boy was fatally burned at Millman-street, London, last week. The eagle eye of Providence only sees sparrows.

The question of heating an open-air swimming bath has arisen at a seaside resort, and the question of the cheapest method has been raised. Why not try placing a few Bibles around the edge? The sacred volume is "hot" enough to make a bronze statue blush. Or the local clergy might be induced to discuss Christian Unity. There would be sure to be plenty of hot water then.

Europe's bill for military purposes this year will be four hundred millions. Yet the people profess to worship "The Prince of Peace."

The question of the treatment of the Mohammedan inhabitants of Macedonia and Thrace came up lately in the House of Lords. We were glad to see the report of Lord Cromer's speech in particular.

"Earl Cromer confessed that it was a very great disappointment to those of them who thought that the cause of Christianity was identified with that of progress and humanity that the massacres in Macedonia had not ceased. He acquitted the Government of any sort of indifference in the matter, but could not help contrasting the extreme indignation shown by certain classes in this country when it was a question of Turks massacring Christians with the apparent apathy which was shown when it was a question of Christians massacring Turks."

Lord Newton called attention to the Mussulman refugees in Asia Minor and other places. Some hundreds of thousands of these unfortunate people had been driven out of Bulgaria and were in a state of utter destitution, having literally lost everything they possessed. Lord Morley gave the usual polite assurance that "when the time came" the Government would do what it could on behalf of these refugees. Meanwhile —! Ah, meanwhile!

Mr. Pankhurst, of Manchester, whose widow is now so famous, was a barrister by profession and a Freethinker by conviction. He once brought an action against a political opponent for charging him with having declared that the Holy Ghost was the foggy member of the Trinity—and lost the case. Mr. Pankhurst was a little man, with a sanguine temperament, and a peculiar voice somewhat suggestive of G. J. Holyoake's. It was something between a squeak and a shriek. Yet he possessed great knowledge and considerable ability, and ought to have made a much greater mark in the world than he did. Mrs. Pankhurst is a very religious woman, judging by her public utterances. According to a correspondent of the *Observer* she lately stated at Essex Hall that "there was only one General to this movement, and that General was God, and only God's methods were the telling ones in this big work." Mrs. Pankhurst may be right. She seems to have been reading the Bible, anyhow.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, March 2, Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate, Leicester, at 6.30, Address at Anniversary Meeting.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £42 5s. 10d. Received since:—F. Rose (S. Africa), 10s. 6d.; A. Phillips (S. Africa), 10s.; James Moffat, £1 1s.; A. H. Deacon, 2s. 6d.; Fred Lucas, £1 1s.; W. Bean, 5s.; "Ernest," 5s.; D. Wright, 5s.; Robert Taylor, 2s.; J. Dunlop, £1; T. H. Elstob, 10s.; G. White, 10s.; Edward Oliver, £3 3s.; W. Bailey, £6 6s.; Wm. Feltrup, £5.

ANNIE BOLT.—We hardly want thanks for a pleasurable act.

ROBERT TAYLOR.—Will deal with it next week.

J. DUNLOP.—Shall be glad if your good wishes are realised.

R. YATES.—See the chapter on "Bible Animals" in our *Bible Romances*.

W. J. WILDES.—Next week.

"PAGANUS" writes: "Will 'Mimnermus' kindly give the name and address of 'a pioneer schoolmaster'? I am very anxious to place my children under the guidance of such a master."

R. CHAPMAN.—The South Shields effort commands our best wishes. We should very much like to see more Freethought work on the Tyneside.

E. B.—Many thanks for cuttings.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are always very welcome.

A. C.—What is "*Semper eadum*"? It is best to stick to the language one knows. You express yourself very well in English. Heaps of people can't do that. We read your tribute to your father with pleasure, and are glad to hear you are grateful to him for having introduced the *Freethinker* to you, or you to the paper, which-ver expression is preferable. Thanks for cutting. See "Acid Drops."

A. PHILLIPS (S. Africa).—Subscription all the more valuable because accompanied by such good wishes.

JAMES MOFFAT.—Glad to see your letter to our old friend Mr. de Caux. Your name is familiar to us from of old. It is pleasant to note the good health and good spirits you still possess.

R. C.—Pastor Russell's opinion on Darwinism, for instance, is not of the slightest importance to any educated person. It is certainly not worthy of criticism in our columns. Pleased you thought Mr. Lloyd's lecture "very interesting."

EDWARD OLIVER, sending cheque towards the President's Honorarium Fund, says: "I have increased my contribution this year by 50 per cent., and I trust others who can afford it will do likewise."

G. CROOKSON.—"Hard nuts" filled with sawdust. Wait till next week.

R. D. WEALANDS.—Passed over to N. S. S. Secretary. Glad the *Freethinker* has helped so much in your mental emancipation.

W. BAILEY.—Pleased to have your good wishes. We mean to hear them expressed—for we know we always have them.

W. FELTRUP.—Sorry to leave the Gypsy over till next week for want of space.

A good deal of correspondence stands over till next week.

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.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote visits Leicester to-day (March 2) to take part in the anniversary meeting in the Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate. Mr. Foote's contribution will not be a lecture but a speech. It will include some of his reminiscences of the Freethought movement in Leicester. He lectured there before the Secular Hall was built.

"George Meredith: Freethinker" is the title of a long and outspoken article by Mr. G. W. Foote in the March number of the *English Review*. Mr. Foote did not press the article upon the editor of that magazine,—he was invited to contribute it—and that fact witnesses all the more to the courage of the editor and the proprietors. If for no other reason, our readers should patronise the *English Review* for this month. Many of them will probably continue to take it, for it is a live magazine and a wonderful shillingsworth.

Mr. Foote is allowed to tell the whole truth in the *English Review* about George Meredith's relations to Freethought. Not a single sentence was objected to by the management. This is very satisfactory. The article in such a magazine will gain the attention of a much larger public than it would have reached in the *Freethinker*.

Mr. Foote's lecture at Queen's Hall on Sunday evening on "Captain Scott and Providence" was much applauded by a further improved audience. Mr. Victor Roger, who occupied the chair, elicited some questions, but no formal opposition.

London "saints" are asked to note that the 1912-1913 course of Queen's Hall Sunday evening lectures is now over. We shall have something to say about the experiment very shortly, perhaps next week.

Mr. Cohen lectures to-day (March 2) for the Manchester Branch at the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road. His subjects should prove attractive, and we hope to hear of good audiences.

Mr. Cohen had good audiences at Belfast, and they were very attentive and sympathetic. The questions asked after the lectures were more intelligent than the usual efforts of inquiring Christians. Good reports of the meetings appeared in the *Northern Whig* and the *Belfast News Letter*. Mr. Cohen unfortunately caught a cold at Belfast, and had a very rough passage back to England, and being a bad sailor he arrived home in a sad condition, having to take to his bed for some days. Such are the side pleasures of Freethought lecturing, in addition to the wealth in which Freethought advocates are known to be rolling.

Mr. Lloyd lectures this evening (March 2) for the West Ham Branch at the Workman's Hall, Stratford. District "saints" will please note.

The South Shields Branch is endeavoring to arrange a course of Sunday evening meetings in the Victoria Hall Buildings, Fowler-street, during March. Mr. J. Bryce, of Newcastle, well known to *Freethinker* readers, and always well worth listening to, has agreed to take the opening lecture this evening (March 2). The local "saints" are invited to do all they can for the success of this effort.

The Leeds Conference of the National Secular Society decided that a half-yearly meeting of the London members should be held. The first of these gatherings has been arranged to take place at the Chandos Hall, Maiden-lane, Charing-cross, on Tuesday evening, March 4, at 8 o'clock. Mr. Foote will preside and the Executive will be present. Cards of membership will have to be shown at the door to secure admission.

The Secular Education League's Annual Meeting will be held at Room 18, Caxton Hall, Westminster, on Tuesday evening, March 11, at 7.30. Members are earnestly invited to attend. A public meeting will follow at 8.15. The list of speakers includes Mr. Halley Stewart, Mr. George Greenwood, M.P., Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., Rev. Walter Walsh, D.D., and Mr. G. W. Foote. We hope there will be a really good attendance. There ought to be, considering that the Government promises or threatens to deal with the Education question again in the near future.

There should be a good attendance at the first public meeting organised by the Committee for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, which takes place at Essex Hall, Essex-street, Strand, on Friday evening, March 14. The chair will be occupied by the Rev. Copeland-Bowie, and the list of speakers includes Sir W. P. Byles, Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, Mr. H. G. Chancellor, M.P., Mr. G. W. Foote, Lord Harberton, Mr. A. L. Atherley Jones, K.C., M.P., and Sir Hiram Maxim. We may add that Essex-street is on the south side of the extreme east end of the Strand.

The Evolution of Wireless Telegraphy.

BOTH in its order of its discovery and in its method of application, wireless telegraphy furnishes a vivid illustration of the ubiquitous activities of evolution. Not to the genius of one, but of many men of science, are its triumphs to be attributed. Various writers have written volumes on this subject, but, from some points of view, Mr. A. Story, in his charming book, *The Story of Wireless Telegraphy*, and M. Lucien Poincaré, in his *The New Physics and its Evolution*, have presented us with the most lucid history of the genesis and development of this far-reaching discovery. The aim of this article is to prove that the numerous men who contributed their various mites towards the building up of one of the most wonderful modern scientific achievements, were all more or less necessary to its ultimate triumph. To chatter about priority, or to attempt to place in their exact position of importance, the innumerable theorists and investigators who were the instruments of the evolution of radio-telegraphy were utterly futile and vain. In this department of human effort, as in most others, some have perhaps obtained more praise than their merits deserve, but this in no way invalidates the contention that each pioneer has played a worthy part in the development of wave transmission.

In what may be regarded as early days in the life of electrical science, and shortly after the illustrious Ampère had conceived the idea of constructing a telegraph, and when Gauss and Weber had arranged a telegraphic line which carried communications between their respective houses at Göttingen, scientists began to speculate upon the possibility of the utilisation of the conducting properties of air and water for the transmission of messages.

While acting on certain suggestions of Gauss, Professor Steinheil, of Munich, in 1838 made the valuable discovery that it was possible to dispense with the return wire if the line wire was connected with the earth. This was a marked advance, as Steinheil's discovery enabled him to eliminate half the line of wire previously employed, thus solving half the problem. Even at this time Steinheil seems to have fully realised the importance of the earth's power as a conducting body.

Several physicists interested in telegraphy had by this time arrived at similar conclusions, and four years after Steinheil's discovery, the celebrated Morse, who then occupied the position of telegraph superintendent to the United States Government, performed a series of electrical experiments before a commission of experts and a numerous audience of the general public in New York. During his experimental demonstrations, he was struck by the happy idea of replacing,—

"by the water of a canal, the length of about a mile of wire which had been suddenly and accidentally destroyed. This accident, which for the moment compromised the legitimate success the eminent engineer expected, thus suggested to him a fruitful idea which he did not forget. He subsequently repeated attempts to thus utilise the air and water, and obtained some very remarkable results."

Researches on similar lines were prosecuted by Wheatstone, Wilkins, Highton, Bonetti, and other investigators, with varying success.

Lucien Poincaré has recalled with emotion an occurrence connected with the siege of Paris in 1870-71. The famous physicist, M. d'Almeida escaped from the besieged capital in a balloon, and descended in the midst of the Prussian lines. After a hazardous journey, he arrived at Havre by way of Bordeaux and Lyons. He journeyed to England to purchase the apparatus necessary for his projected experiments, and then returned along the Seine as far as Poissy. Two scientific friends, relieving one another at intervals, watched and waited day and night on a wherry on the Seine at Paris for a message from D'Almeida. In this experiment the river water replaced the customary

wire, but, unfortunately, no sooner was the communication received than Paris capitulated to the enemy, and D'Almeida's patriotic sacrifice was rendered useless.

Well worthy of remembrance are the experiments which were conducted by Melhuish and Johnson at the Indian Telegraph office. These led to the establishment, in 1899, of a service in which wire lines were replaced by the carrying power of the earth. Oceanic transmission was attempted, and at last accomplished, by means of the electric cable. But many efforts had previously been made, quite unsuccessfully, however, to transmit signals through the sea itself.

It seems but yesterday since wireless or radio-telegraphy secured its first practical success. The great engineer, Sir William Preece, successfully established clear and regular communications between certain stations. One of his earliest successes was the transmission of wireless messages over the Bristol Channel. These results, however, were soon overshadowed by the epoch-making experiments of the Italian, Marconi. Despite the dispraise with which the able efforts of Sir W. Preece have been rewarded in certain circles, it is undeniable that he generously welcomed the young Italian, and became his guide, philosopher, and friend.

The first philosophers who based their electrical inquiries on the properties of the lumiferous ether are probably numbered with the unhonored dead. The known practical workers, however, make up a formidable list of names. Lindsay, Smith, C. A. Stevenson, Bell, Edison, Henry, Rathenau, and Trowbridge may be mentioned as a few only out of a crowd of working scientists who obtained solid, practical results.

These practical scientists, however, did by no means evolve their concepts of electrical phenomena from their inner consciousness. They stood upon the shoulders of the theoretical physicists who went before:—

"If we speak of the propagation of a current in a material medium, can we forget the names of Fourier and Ohm, who established by theoretical considerations the laws which preside over this propagation? When one looks at the phenomena of induction, would it not be just to remember that Arago foresaw them?.....The merit of an inventor like Edison and that of a theorist like Clerk Maxwell have no common measure, and mankind is indebted for its great progress to the one as much as to the other" *

Young, Fresnel, Foucault, Fizeau, and other illustrious natural philosophers have all played their part in the evolution of electrical science. But the man whose labors were most precious to radio-telegraphy was the great German physicist, Heinrich Hertz. He it was who demonstrated beyond dispute that an electric discharge generates undulatory motions in the ether contained in the insulating media in its neighborhood. And to him is due the discovery of the mechanism of the evolved product, as also of the laws of electro-magnetic waves. It appears that Hertz failed to grasp the possibilities revealed by his own discoveries. But what might have been a long life devoted to human service was prematurely closed in 1894 at the early age of thirty-five. Other physicists whose contributions to electrical science smoothed the way for their successors' triumphs were Branly, Hughes, and Dolbear.

After the experiments of Hertz were published to the world, the evolution of wireless telegraphy became indissolubly associated with research work bearing upon the phenomena presented by electrical waves. Hertz' discoveries were carefully tested by Lodge, Righi, M. H. Poincaré, and others. These were completely verified, while the test experiments themselves helped to elucidate various problems previously unsolved.

Professor Threlfall, in 1890, surmised that the Hertzian waves might be rendered available as media of communication. In 1892 Professor Crookes

* Poincaré, p. 221.

stated the conditions in which this supposition could be put into practice. Tesla, Oliver Lodge, Rutherford, Popoff, and other electricians made fresh experiments with newly devised apparatus, and Threlfall's theory was proved correct in every particular.

It in no way detracts from the merits of Guglielmo Marconi to candidly acknowledge that his patented system of radio-telegraphy was immensely indebted to the pioneer work of his predecessors and contemporaries. Indeed, his obligations to his teacher, Professor Righi, were very considerable. Trained in the laboratory of Righi, the man of science who has probably done more than any other to confirm and elaborate the research work of Hertz, Marconi had been made thoroughly familiar with the properties of electric waves, as well as with the modes in which they could be manipulated most successfully. Some of Marconi's critics allege that his system is utterly devoid of originality; that his waves are generated by the oscillator of Righi; that his receiver was precisely that previously employed by Lodge and Bose, which in its turn was still earlier invented by the French scientist Branly, and that the entire arrangement of his system was that elaborated by Popoff.

Still, when all deductions demanded by legitimate criticism are adequately met, the fact remains that Marconi's contributions towards the establishment of his system were by no means inconsiderable. His combination far excelled anything previously contrived. He was ahead of all competitors in obtaining solid results, while he demonstrated that "electric waves could be transmitted and received at distances enormous compared with those obtained before his day."

The incidents which make up the historical development of this wonderful discovery prove that its practical triumphs are the outcome of the genius of generations of workers in Nature's elusive laboratories. What wireless telegraphy has so far accomplished is as dust in the balance compared with its coming achievements. Already, as Professor J. A. Fleming says,—

"Electric wave telegraphy has revolutionised our means of communication from place to place on the surface of the earth, making it possible to communicate instantly and certainly between places separated by several thousand miles, while at the same time it has taken a position of the greatest importance in connection with naval strategy and communication between ships and ships and the shore in time of peace. It is now generally recognised that Hertzian wave telegraphy, or radio-telegraphy, as it is sometimes called, has a special field of operations of its own, and that the anticipations that were at one time excited.....that it would speedily annihilate all telegraphy conducted by wires have been dispersed by experience. Nevertheless, transoceanic wireless telegraphy over long distances such as those across the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans is a matter to be reckoned with in the future."

Wireless, or as Oliver Lodge prefers to term it, electric space telegraphy, played a very decisive part in one of the greatest naval battles of the Russo-Japanese War. From the humanitarian side, it rendered signal service when the *Titanic* disaster occurred. In its absence the toll of life would have been far greater.

Signals first successfully spanned the Atlantic from Cornwall to St. John's, Newfoundland, in December, 1901. In the intervening years all the leading nations of the world have provided regulations for its use. Long-distance wireless stations to provide communication between New York and London are in course of erection. The Marconi Companies have arranged with the British Government a plan which will ultimately link up the Empire. At present the scheme embraces Egypt (from London), Aden, Pretoria, Bangalore, and Singapore. West Africa and Hong Kong remain to be included, while Australia and New Zealand have separate schemes of their own. Thus, in the course of a few years, a gigantic department of applied science has evolved from a few theories which were originally tested and confirmed by a few electrical

experiments. The workers in electrical science are now legion, and we have every justification for believing that the immediate future will yield most amazing results.

T. F. PALMER.

"Vital Lies."—III.

(Concluded from p. 118.)

"From the intellectual point of view I cannot advise you to restrain the spirit of investigation, which is the scientific spirit. It may lead you far, yet always to truth, ultimately,—you, or those after you, whose path you may be destined to prepare. Science requires a certain inward heat and heroism in her votaries, notwithstanding the apparent coldness of her statements. Especially does she require that intellectual fearlessness which accepts a proved fact without reference to its personal or its social consequences."—P. G. HAMERTON, *The Intellectual Life*; 1911; p. 218.

"What is the use of grounds of consolation and peacefulness over which is constantly hanging the Damocles' sword of deception? The truth, my friend, the truth alone holds good, and remains constant and faithful; it is the only solid consolation; it is the indestructible diamond."—SCHOPENHAUER, "Religion: a Dialogue," *Essays*, p. 121.

"To parley with science is fatal to theology."—EDWARD CLODD, *Pioneers of Evolution*, p. 108.

THE first volume of *Vital Lies* having dealt with Professor James' "Will to Believe" and with Father Tyrrell's "Will to Believe in the Roman Catholic Church," the second volume deals with Mr. Crawley, another type of latter-day obscurantist, who has written a book, entitled *The Tree of Life*, in which he attempts an apology for the beliefs and rites of the Church of England by a comparison of its mysteries to the religious notions of savage races! It also deals with "The Syndicalist Myth," and concludes with a general discussion of Truth and "Vital Lies." Our immediate interest centres more particularly upon the first and last part of the volume.

Of all the injuries inflicted by science upon Christianity in our time, none have been so deadly as those inflicted by the science of anthropology. Anthropology explains the origin of religious ideas; it shows that, instead of these religious ideas—such as the ideas of God and a future life—being supernaturally revealed—they have had a perfectly natural origin. Moreover, it teaches not only that these fundamental ideas have naturally evolved, but that the whole of the ideas of the Christian religion, including its rites and ceremonies, can also be traced back to their origin in the primitive beliefs, rites, and ceremonies of our savage ancestors who lived before the beginning of civilisation.

Now, Mr. Crawley's book, *The Tree of Life*, is a study in anthropology. Mr. Crawley traces the beliefs and practices of Christianity to their origin in what seems to us now very stupid, puerile, and often disgusting and indecent, beliefs and practices of the aforesaid savage ancestors. Mr. Crawley euphemistically speaks of these barbarous beliefs as "Elemental Views of Life." For example, he observes:—

"The analogues from savage culture show that religion is a direct outcome of elemental human nature, and that this human elemental nature remains practically unchanged.....If a savage eats the flesh of a strong man or divine person, and a modern Christian partakes sacramentally of Christ's body and blood under the forms of bread and wine, there is evidently a human need behind both acts which prompts them and is responsible for their similarity."*

That is to say that the Christian rite of the sacramental partaking of the body and blood of the Lord symbolically, in the form of bread and wine, had its origin in the same ideas which cause a savage to eat the heart of a lion or of a warrior, that he may secure to himself the qualities of strength and courage of which they were possessed. Mr. Crawley goes even lower still, and holds that "the religious emotion springs from the same source as the sexual"!

* *The Tree of Life*, p. 261.

Now, one would think that Mr. Crawley, having laid bare the origins of Christianity in these indecent and debasing superstitions, would give up, and recommend others to give up, belief in that faith. Nothing of the kind. In fact, Mr. Crawley founds an argument for keeping it in the very fact that it has such a human origin, and he quotes a writer in the *Church Times* to the effect that "These rites and beliefs"—that is, of savages and Christians—"declare eloquently that there are spiritual needs common to the whole of mankind." And Mr. Crawley finds in this "a new method of defence which is both positive and scientific." But, observes Vernon Lee, let us ask the Christians why they believe in the Savior and the sacraments?

"I think they will answer that they believe in it all because it has been revealed by God, registered in the Holy Scriptures, and taught by the Church. They will refer us to a thousand texts, a million ecclesiastical authorities, and, if we press them further, to the consensus of Christianity as expressed in the Creed and the Catechism. In other words, they believe because they have been taught."*

And Mr. Crawley is very anxious that they shall remain undisturbed in their unintelligent belief.

"Nor, to do him justice," says Vernon Lee, "have I found in all his book a single word suggesting that the truths of anthropology and comparative mythology (however much they justify those of Anglican Christianity) should be taught in the place of, or in addition to, the Catechism. This is one of those questions where modern philosophy has shown its superiority by recognising the existence of *different planes of thought*."

It will be seen that Vernon Lee brings a keen and trenchant wit to bear on the issue. But to continue: "These two planes—that of the believer and of the anthropological mythologist—do not conflict, because they do not come into contact: nothing even in the most empirical sense is rarer than that a Christian believer should be an anthropological mythologist, or *vice versa*;.....the anthropological mythologist, as is shown by this very book, never dreams of addressing his scientific" remarks to believers, and Vernon Lee arrives at the "legitimate and inevitable" conclusion "that Mr. Crawley's book is written for persons who are on the plane of *not believing in Anglican Christianity*," and further observes: "My own remarks in answer exist also, be it well understood, on that merely scientific and positive plain, for I have no sort of hope that any genuine Christian believer will ever come across, or coming across, ever be influenced by, them."† Which, by the way, is far too modest an estimate of this keen and brilliant work; for no educated believer could read it without being influenced by it.

But in all this new method of defence there is, as Vernon Lee points out, a very curious oversight:—

"In their anxiety to prove that religious beliefs, specified or unspecified, are desirable and indispensable, our apologists ignore that the essence of a religious belief is that it should be held to be true. They forget that although such beliefs may be quite wonderfully useful as long as they are held, they are not held except inasmuch as they are *held to be true*. And they will cease to be *held as true* so soon as it is understood that they originate not in Divine revelation but in the jumbled abortive thoughts and panic-ridden rituals of savage men."‡

Mr. Crawley also believes that we are in terrible danger from Socialism, and he observes, "It was no Socialist who died upon the cross"; upon which Vernon Lee caustically remarks:—

"A solid historical fact extremely valuable after Mr. Crawley's masterly recapitulation of all the conflicting hypotheses of his fellow-anthropologists and mythologists as to whether any person *did* die upon that particular cross, which cross was itself a derivation from some primeval *Tree of Life*" (vol. ii., p. 54).

We cannot refrain from giving one more sample of Vernon Lee's mordant irony. It deals with Mr. Crawley's division of those who know all the secrets

of mythology and anthropology—those for whom *The Tree of Life* was written, and those other simple souls who are to be left undisturbed in their innocence. The difference, says Vernon Lee, lies between *We* and *They*:—

"We, Mr. Crawley, you the Reader, and I, who are discussing the matter, are free to believe in Higher Criticism, Anthropological Mythology, and Evolution.....to believe also in the Elemental View of Life and the close affinity of the religious and the sexual instincts; in the derivation of morality from taboos and the derivation of the Eucharist from eating of the '*flesh of a strong man or divine person*'; in short, we are free to believe in the theories expounded in the *Tree of Life*. But *they*, who are *not* Mr. Crawley, nor you, nor I, nor perhaps anyone with whom we should care to discuss these subjects—*they* who are likely to lose respect for the national religion.....*They* had better be left to the '*instincts*'—'behind which' (says Mr. Crawley) 'there is sound human nature, which leads men to distrust an Atheist.' In fact, the perusal of the *Tree of Life* is to persuade *Us* that *They* had better not peruse that book, but stick to the Bible and the Catechism."*

We do not think there is any cause to fear that honest, truth-loving people will distrust the Atheist to place their confidence in Mr. Crawley, who advocates suppression of the truths of science to those who believe in the fairy tales of religion and the continued teaching of what is known to be false. What is this but the Jesuit doctrine that "the end justifies the means"; that it is allowable to act wickedly that good may come?—a doctrine so vehemently denounced by all the Protestant Churches.

Our thanks are due to Vernon Lee for stepping down into the arena, from those calm and serene heights of art and literature in which she has won name and fame among the choicest spirits of our time, to vindicate truth and right. And we hope that all truth-lovers who can afford it will buy a copy of this fine work—several chapters of which we have not dealt with—for themselves.

W. MANN.

The First Modern Man.

A Lecture delivered before the Independent Religious Society (Rationalist), Chicago.

BY M. M. MANGASARIAN.

WE celebrate again this morning the Festival of the Renaissance. It is hardly necessary to explain to this audience that the French word "Renaissance" means re-birth. After Athens and Rome, the two centres of ancient civilisation, had fallen, for over one thousand years Europe was left in darkness. Then the world slowly emerged from this long night, and the modern times were born. The birth of our world from the womb of the Dark Ages is the Renaissance.

If people only know how much they are indebted to that event, they would unite with us to make this festival, inaugurated by our Society, one of the happiest, as well as the proudest, in the calendar. July 4 celebrates the Declaration of Independence; Columbus Day commemorates the discovery of a continent; yet these are mere detail in comparison with the Renaissance, which helped us to discover ourselves. Moreover, July 4 in America and July 14 in France, celebrate events which would never have transpired but for the Renaissance.

There was a new humanity after the Renaissance. It was as if a slave and a beggar, dressed in tattered clothes and loaded down with chains, had suddenly discovered that he was of royal blood, and that the power and the glory ascribed to kings and gods belonged to him. This thought makes a new man of him. His fetters snap; his rags change into a robe of gold; his wail turns into a shout; and the stick he leaned upon for support becomes a magic wand in his hand.

* *Vital Lies*, vol. ii., p. 28.

† *Vital Lies*, vol. ii., pp. 31-33-34.

‡ *Vital Lies*, vol. ii., p. 39.

* *Vital Lies*, vol. ii., pp. 56-7.

But the Renaissance does not merely mean an epoch or a period in history. It means more than a date, and more even than a movement. The Renaissance is a mental attitude and a method. It is the consciousness of being awake. It is the sense of recovered powers. If you feel self-reliant, if you feel equal to the task of life, if you feel young despite the weight of years and cares, and if you feel confident that, for all the difficulties pitted against you, you are more than a match, why, *you* are the Renaissance!

Let us see if we cannot make the meaning of this charmed word a little clearer. The Renaissance is the man or the woman who can say—I. To dare say I, we must have faith in ourselves. It is the memory of past achievements that inspires self-respect. To feel capable we must have capital. Let me illustrate: Nature furnishes just enough brains to make the animal know what muscles to work in order to eat, drink; and perform the other necessary functions of the body—just enough brains to preside over the body and manage it. But in time we come to have more brains than we need for the immediate wants of the body. And out of that capital, or surplus, is born civilisation. He who can say, I think, I desire, I decide, is a new force, a new tendency, a new hope. His nativity ought to be celebrated as that of a savior. Who says, I think, or I will, creates the world anew. When he comes he brings with him the Renaissance.

During the period in history known as the Dark Ages, not a man could be found who could say I. The individual had not yet matured. In those times man was crowded out by the God of the king and the priest who filled heaven and earth. The Deity was purposely magnified to crowd out man. The only terms on which a man could live in the Europe of old was by repressing himself. His position in the world was very much like that of the man who attends a performance to which he has not been invited, and where no seat has been reserved for him. He manages to slip in, however; but the only condition on which he may witness the spectacle is that he shall take no part in it whatever—that he shall neither be seen nor heard. That describes the insignificant role of man during the ages of faith, when the stage was entirely in the hands of the gods. Then man was only a looker-on. He owned nothing in his own name. He borrowed his politics from the king, and his religion from the priest. He was no more than an echo, a copy, or better still, a beggar. Then came that most wonderful awakening we call the Renaissance; and as if by magic, the beggar, depending on crumbs for his existence, became a millionaire of the mind,—a lender to the gods out of his surplus! That is what the Renaissance did for man. It enabled him to say, This is my home; this is my country; this is my religion; this is my politics; this is—I.

But how explain the thousand years of night which preceded the rejuvenation of the world? I wonder if I could answer that question just in a few words. As a nation our biggest income is from the soil,—is it not? Our corn fields and cotton fields supply us with the bulk of our daily bread. Suppose, now, the cultivation of the soil is forbidden henceforth, and agriculture is condemned as a crime against God and man, and farmers wherever found are prosecuted and put to death. What would happen? I say, what would happen? Then suppose, after a long period of the reign of misery which would follow such a regime, some brave farmer would begin digging in his yard and planting once more his seed. The exquisite green returns to the browned face of the earth; the air recovers its fragrance; and the golden fruit in clusters is seen peeping at the sun again through the luxuriant foliage. His example becomes contagious. Other farmers begin cultivating their yards. The yards become farms; the farms expand into prairies; the whole land waves with wheat and corn and cotton again. That is the Renaissance!

In mediæval times the clergy actually did to the

mind what I have imagined some misguided State doing to the soil; that is to say, while we can only suppose such a situation in which the cultivation of the soil would be denounced as a crime, the culture of the mind was actually prohibited as a crime by the Church. Men went about armed with fire and the sword to exterminate the thinker and to make a bonfire of his books. Well, what happened then? What happened, I say? A thousand of the best years of the world's life were blighted. Knowledge was the forbidden fruit. To be stupid became an ideal. Dirt was given a prize. Poverty became blessed; and men fondled their chains like bondsmen who had never been free. Then there was night. The Greek fire which had lighted the world and warmed its brain into fruition went out completely. Disease followed the darkness. In the fourteenth century, the black plague alone carried away in the course of six years twenty millions of people. And disease and darkness dethroned reason. The world was turned into a madmen's camp. Everybody was spellbound with the fear of hell. Its glare was in every eye; its pinch upon everything that bloomed. Neither commerce, nor science, nor song, interested anybody. No one felt either hunger or thirst, and this loss of intellectual appetite was the sure herald of approaching dissolution. The world touched its nadir, a point lower than the lowest ever before reached.

Then appeared the first modern man!

What did he do? He cultivated his yard. He turned up the soil. He replanted Greece and Rome for seed. He did to the mind what the farmer does to the land, and the mind, like the land, responded to the magic of cultivation. But who was the first man to cultivate his yard? It will be impossible to state the name, the age, or the place of birth of the first modern man, and it is not necessary that we should. As I intimated a moment ago, the Renaissance is not a date or an epoch. Ideas have little to do with time or place. An idea may be three thousand years old and still be quite modern. And an idea may be recent, and still be quite worthless. Whatever is adapted to its environment, whatever continues in vital relations with the progressive life of man, and is affected by it, and in turn affects it—is modern. We mean by modern the opposite of moribund or obsolete. Two trees, both planted at the same time, and both still standing—one keeping up its commerce with the sun and soil—receiving and returning the forces of life—while the other has severed all relations with the earth in which its roots are buried, or with the sun its head is reared in, illustrate the difference between the modern, or the living, and the old, or the dead.

That the modernity of any idea has nothing to do with the question of time, let me call your attention to two radically different conceptions of life, both of which, as far as years are concerned, are very ancient. The story of Adam and Eve, as given in the Bible, must be a very old composition; but so is the story of Prometheus, told by the Greek dramatist, Æschylus. But the author of *Prometheus Bound* is modern, because he is just as much *en rapport* with the facts of human experience and the laws of human evolution to-day as he was three thousand years ago; while for the author of the Adam and Eve allegory, it is impossible to make room in our world. The Bible story is archaic, not simply because it is not true to the conditions of to-day, but because it never was true to any conditions that existed at any time.

(To be continued.)

YOU'LL NEVER KNOW FROM US.

When into ancient forms of speech and ways I did inquire,
Grandparents then, I found, were known as "grand-dam" or "grandsire."
Whereat this problem puzzled me far more than any other:
What term, I wonder, would be used in mentioning godmother?

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.

CHANDOS HALL (Maiden Lane, Strand, W.C.): Tuesday, March 4, at 8, Half-Yearly Meeting of Members of the N. S. S. Admission by member's card only.

CROYDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Ruskin House, opposite West Croydon Station): 7.30, Committee Meeting. New members are invited to be present.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Miller's, 8 Mathias-road, Stoke Newington, N.): 7.30, Business—Re Meeting of the Branches, etc.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workmen's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, J. T. Lloyd, "The Dying Gospel."

COUNTRY.

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate): 6.30, G. W. Foote, Address at Anniversary Meeting.

LIVERPOOL BRANCH N. S. S. (Alexandra Hall, Islington-square): 7, J. Arthur, "Christianity and Woman."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): C. Cohen, 3, "Primitive Religion and the Subjection of Woman"; 6.30, "Religious Ideas in the Light of Science." Tea at 5.

**Determinism or Free Will?
By C. COHEN.**

Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.

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