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Intellectual cowardice is quite as disreputable as physical cowardice.

—W. R. PATERSON (Benjamin Swift).

The Witch Mania.

WITHOUT discussing whether magic precedes religion or not, it is plain that the practice of magic belongs to the very earliest ages of human culture. The witch and the wizard are familiar figures in all stages of religious history. Not only are their figures familiar, but their method of operation remains substantially constant. The methods of bewitching people or things described in European witch trials of the seventeenth century are precisely those practised by savages all over the world. A Fijian would have felt quite at home sitting on the judicial bench with Sir Mathew Hale condemning poor half-insane women for magical practices. To bewitch a person by securing a few hairs belonging to him, or to cause his death by manufacturing a lay figure and driving pins into it, are plans pursued by savages to-day, just as they were followed by the more civilised savages of these islands little more than two centuries ago.

In subscribing to the belief in witchcraft, Christianity only fell into line with other forms of religious belief. Its peculiarity is that, coming into existence when it did, it gave to the belief an authority that it was fast losing, while its intolerance of opposition prevented criticism doing the natural work of purification. The primitive theory of things, which holds that man is surrounded by spiritual agencies, mostly of a malevolent description, was fully endorsed by the early Christians. In the commonest as well as in the rarest events of life demoniacal agency was to be seen. The suppression of witchcraft had been ordered in the Old Testament, and demoniacal activity endorsed by the New. Moreover, the fact that Christianity, for long after its establishment as the religion of the Empire, was struggling with earlier forms of faith, gave further impetus to this belief. An easy explanation for miracles and marvels that occurred in connection with non-Christian beliefs was that they were the work of demons. And in all probability much that went on under the form of witch assemblies, up to a comparatively late date, a more detailed knowledge than we possess would show to be the exercise of prescribed forms of faith. The old saying, "The sin of witchcraft is as the sin of rebellion," has in it more than meets the eye. There is little real difference between the magic that appears as piety and the magic that is denounced as sorcery, save that one is permitted and the other is not. The gods of one religion become the demons of its successor; and the same rule applies to the practice of successive faiths.

But while witchcraft exists in all ages, it exists in a way quite different to that which presents itself from the fifteenth to the end of the seventeenth century. For centuries the attention of the vast majority of people had been directed and centred on questions of theological interest. Every branch of culture was under the control of the Church, and no explanation was tolerated that conflicted with its

teaching. The general mind was saturated with supernaturalism to an almost incredible degree. The wildest tale of witchcraft was suitable to such an environment, and there is no question that many of those who were tried and executed for sorcery actually believed the things they were accused of doing to be within their power. The fifteenth century saw, too, a rising tide of heresy against which the Church was forced to do battle, and to ascribe this to the agency of Satan was an easy plan to pursue—just as the heretics attributed the power of the Church itself to the same source. Social conditions were also favorable. Moral ties were as loose as they could reasonably be, and the attitude of the Church towards the sexual relation had forced the religious mind into wholly unhealthy directions. This aspect of the witch epidemic has been but little dealt with, but it is undoubtedly a very real one. A German writer says:—

"Whilst in the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth centuries, as those well acquainted with the state of morals during this period can all confirm, a most unbounded freedom was dominant in sexual relations, the State and the Church were desirous of compelling the people to keep better order by the use of actual force, and by religious compulsion. As forced a transformation in so vital a matter necessarily resulted in a reaction of the worst kind, and forced into secret channels the impulse which it had attempted to suppress. This reaction occurred, moreover, with an elemental force. There resulted widespread sexual violence and seduction, hesitating at nothing, often divinely daring, in which everywhere the devil was supposed to help; everyone's head was turned in this way, the uncontrolled lust of debauchees found vent in secret bacchanalian associations and orgies, wherein many without masquerade played the part of Satan; shameful deeds were perpetrated by excited women and by procurers and prostitutes ready for any kind of immoral abomination; add to these sexual orgies the most widely diffused web of a completely developed theory of witchcraft, and the sympathetic strengthening by the clergy of the widely prevalent belief in the devil—all these things, woven in a labyrinthine connection, made it possible for thousands upon thousands to be murdered by a disordered justice and to be sacrificed to delusion."*

That there was a very strong sexual element in mediæval witchcraft is undeniable. When we examine the stories current of the "Sabbath" of the witches, we find that a large part of the proceedings are of a strongly marked erotic character. The figure of Satan often enough reminds one of the old Pagan deity, Priapus, and it is possible that the "Sabbath" itself was little more than a carrying out of the old priapic ceremonies, with the mixture of Christian language and symbolism made inevitable by time and other circumstances.†

Universal as has been the belief in witchcraft, it was not until the end of the fifteenth century that it justly assumed what may be called an epidemic form. Then a fatal impetus was given by the issue of a Bull by Pope Innocent VIII. This precious document declares:—

"In truth, it has come to our ears that very many persons of both sexes, deviating from the Catholic

* Cited by Bloch, *Sexual Life of Our Time*, p. 120. Michelet, in his *Sorceress* (Paris; 1904), has dealt with this matter in an extremely vivid and picturesque manner.

† See Michelet, *The Sorceress*, particularly pp. 122, 181-3.

Faith, abuse themselves with the demons, Incubus and Succubus; and by incantations, charms, and conjurations, and other wicked superstitions, by criminal acts and offences have caused the offspring of women and of the lower animals, the fruits of the earth, the grape, and the products of various plants, men, women, and other animals of different kinds, vineyards, meadows, pasture land, corn, and other vegetables of the earth to perish, be oppressed, and utterly destroyed; that they hinder the proper intercourse of the sexes, and the propagation of the human species."

It was this Pope who commissioned the inquisitor, Sprenger, to root out witches. Sprenger's book on the subject remained for long the guide for all those engaged in the work.

Almost at once the mania for witch-finding and witch-burning, and one may also assume the belief of people that they could secure and utilise satanic power against others, assumed alarming dimensions. The number given as executed is so great that one would hesitate to accept them as genuine if the statements were not well authenticated. Says Lecky:—

"In almost every province of Germany, but especially in those where clerical influence predominated, the persecution raged with a fearful intensity. Seven thousand witches are said to have been burned at Treves, six hundred by a single bishop in Bamberg, and nine hundred in a single year in the bishopric of Wurtzburg.At Toulouse, the seat of the Inquisition, four hundred persons perished for sorcery at a single execution, and fifty at Douay in a single year. Remy, a judge of Nancy, boasted that he had put to death eight hundred witches in sixteen years.In Italy a thousand persons were executed in a single year in the province of Como.In Geneva, which was then ruled by a bishop, five hundred alleged witches were executed in three months; forty-eight were burnt at Constance or Ravensburg, and eighty in the little town of Valery in Savoy."*

In England, from 1603 to 1680 it is estimated that seventy thousand persons were put to death for sorcery.† Grey, the editor of *Hudibras*, says that he had himself seen a list of three thousand persons who were put to death during the life of the Long Parliament. The celebrated witch-finder, Hopkins, hung sixty in one year in the county of Suffolk. In Scotland, for thirty-nine years, the number killed annually averaged two hundred. The most remarkable, and the most horrible executions of all were those that took place in Wurtzburg in February, 1629. No less than one hundred and sixty-two alleged witches were burned in batches. Among these were actually no less than thirty-four children. The following details give the actual ages of most of them:—

BURNING.	NUMBERED.	AMONG THEM.
7th	...	7 ... 1 girl aged 12.
13th	...	4 ... Girl of 10 and young mother.
15th	...	2 ... Boy of 12.
18th	...	6 ... 2 boys of 10, girl of 14.
19th	...	6 ... 2 boys of 10 and 12.
20th	...	6 ... 2 boys.
23rd	...	9 ... 3 boys, 9, 10, and 14.
24th	...	7 ... 2 boys brought from hospital.
26th	...	8 ... Little boy and girl.
26th	...	7 ... 2 boys, 8 and 9.
28th	...	6 ... Blind girl and infant.‡

(To be continued.) C. COHEN.

Partial Knowledge.

THE Rev. F. C. Spurr, of Melbourne, assures us, in a sermon published in the *Christian World Pulpit* for May 28, that the confession that the supernatural can only be known in part in this life, constitutes what he calls Courageous Agnosticism, while the denial of the possibility of knowing it at all must be characterised as Cowardly Agnosticism. It is not our good fortune to have seen the reverend gentleman's discourse upon Cowardly Agnosticism, though

we can easily infer what it was like. His deliverance on Courageous Agnosticism lies before us, and we proceed to examine it. The relativity of knowledge is a scientific truism and almost a truism in philosophy. This being the case, where does the courage of Agnosticism come in? Surely it requires no courage to acknowledge an undeniable fact. If God and the theological unseen world are known at all, it is a foregone conclusion that they are known only in part. To say, "We know in part," or "We see in a mirror darkly," is simply to state a fact, even on the assumption that the subjects under consideration are in any sense or degree objects of knowledge. To break the force of this undoubted truth, Mr. Spurr disparages knowledge. "Knowledge is good and great," he says, "but there is something better and greater," even love. But what is love without knowledge? At bottom, knowledge and love are one, as they also are in their highest and noblest development. To know the truth is to love it, and to love is to know it.

In his championship of the relativity of all knowledge, Mr. Spurr falls into several grievous errors. Speaking of the progressiveness of scientific knowledge, he says, "No longer dare any scientific man repeat the confident declaration of Professor Tyndall in his famous Belfast address. The day has passed for that kind of thing." Evidently the reverend gentleman is not up-to-date in his scientific information. He makes that assertion in the teeth of the fact that from the platform of the British Association at Dundee, last September, Tyndall's theory of matter, so beautifully expressed from the Association's chair at Belfast forty years ago, was clearly and vigorously reaffirmed both by the President and several distinguished members. Has not Mr. Spurr read Professor Schafer's Presidential Address on "The Nature, Origin, and Maintenance of Life," and the report of the subsequent discussion on the subject, in the course of which, Professor McCallum and Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, among others, declared themselves "in agreement with Tyndall that matter is imbued with the potentiality of life"? "I have heard nothing," concluded Dr. Mitchell, "which makes it not possible to accept the exposition of our President in the fullest possible way." Equally inaccurate is the reverend gentleman's statement that "in one day" the scientific world's faith in the indivisibility of the atom "was shaken to pieces by the discovery of radium." Writing twenty years prior to the discovery of radium, Professor Buchner used the following language:—

"In fact the unlimited divisibility of atoms or of the molecules built up from them can be doubted when looked at either from a theoretical, a metaphysical, or an empirical point of view, and it can only be maintained that we are not in a position to divide them further by the chemical and physical forces known to us.It has also become very probable through recent investigations that the substances heretofore regarded by us as elements or original bodies are nothing of the kind, but are themselves compounds, and that the so-called atoms therefore consist of units of a higher grade, as the molecule does of atoms" (*Force and Matter*, pp. 48, 49).

Ten years before the breaking up of the atom actually took place, Professor Haeckel wrote:—

"We may conclude that the empirical elements we now know are not really simple, ultimate, and unchangeable forms of matter, but compounds of homogeneous, simple, primitive atoms, variously distributed as to number and grouping" (*The Riddle of the Universe*, p. 79).

It is perfectly true that we know Nature only in part, and see her marvellous operations only as if in a mirror darkly; but is there any evidence that we know Supernature even in part, or see it even in a mirror darkly? Mr. Spurr admits that "there are over-confident Christians who make unjustifiable claims to knowledge," but instead of expatiating upon this important admission the reverend gentleman forgets his manners and goes off at a tangent to deliver a violent and vituperative tirade against "over-

* *Rise and Influence of Rationalism*, vol. i., pp. 3-6.

† A. Williams, *The Superstition of Witchcraft*, p. 214.

‡ T. Wright, *History of Sorcery and Magic*.

confident unbelievers." These vile wretches are thus portrayed:—

"Inspired by vanity, they forget that they know only in part, hence they commit the indiscretion and the impertinence of challenging what others know. Wise men will ever be modest, remembering that the field of truth is so vast that it cannot be compassed by any human mind."

This is rudeness, and we beg to remind the reverend gentleman that rudeness is not argument. There are not a few in Melbourne who perceive the folly and futility of dubbing Freethought writers "backmen," rather than "scholars." To abuse an enemy is to increase the momentum of his arrows. Mr. Spurr is apparently ignorant of the fact that this style of attack only weakens his own case. He does not even know what the object of his attack really is. He speaks as if Agnosticism really meant a claim to superior knowledge, rather than a confession of complete ignorance. Agnostics are not people who cherish the belief that they "know all," but, on the contrary, people who humbly bow their heads before the majesty and grandeur of the Universe and admit their inability to explain it. Mr. Spurr is radically mistaken when he charges them with the indiscretion and the impertinences of "challenging what others know." They are not foolish enough to do anything of the kind. What they challenge is what others *imagine* they know. We wish to refresh his memory with the following famous utterance by Huxley:—

"When I reached intellectual maturity and began to ask myself whether I was an Atheist, a Theist, or a Pantheist; a Materialist or an Idealist; a Christian or a Freethinker; I found that the more I learned and reflected, the less ready was the answer; until at last I came to the conclusion that I had neither art nor part with any of these denominations, except the last. The one thing in which most of these good people were agreed was the one thing in which I differed from them. They were quite sure that they had attained to a certain 'gnosis' (knowledge),—had more or less successfully solved the problem of existence, while I was quite sure I had not, and had a pretty strong conviction that the problem was insoluble. And, with Hume and Kant on my side, I could not think myself presumptuous in holding fast by that opinion" (*Controverted Questions*, pp. 354-5).

We are neither Theists, Pantheists, nor Idealists, but simply Atheists, in precisely the same sense as that in which Huxley called himself an Agnostic, and what we challenge is, not what Mr. Spurr *knows*, but what he *believes* he knows. We venture to address him thus: "You make a claim to a true though imperfect knowledge of God and the spiritual world; you affirm that this knowledge comes to you by Jesus Christ, whom you proclaim as the Savior of mankind; and this knowledge thus gained you describe as saving, uplifting, ennobling; but we utterly fail to find anything in you or about you, as a member of society, to justify such a claim. You are neither better nor worse, in moral character, than millions of others in all parts of the world who pretend to possess no such knowledge." In thus addressing the reverend gentleman, we assure him that we are inspired neither by vanity nor by the belief that we know all, but by the honest conviction that Christians are in reality quite as ignorant as ourselves. We do not question their supernatural beliefs, nor those ecstatic experiences which naturally spring from them; but we do earnestly contend that such beliefs are so many illusions, or rather perhaps, that their objects are purely illusory.

At this point we come face to face with a most curious phenomenon. Mr. Spurr denounces Mr. McCabe, Mr. Robertson, and Mr. Vivian as charlatans. He accuses them of writing, "with assumed authority, on all kinds of subjects, many of which demand years of patient study"; but we submit that this accusation is much more applicable to members of his own profession than to the advocates of Freethought. Rightly or wrongly, we speak in the name of, and make all our appeals to, our own reason,

while the theologians base all their utterances upon an alleged revelation from above, conveyed to them indirectly in a book, or specially and directly communicated to every one of them by an alleged Holy Spirit. They speak in the name of the Lord and appeal to the authority of Heaven; but the Lord is eternally silent and Heaven's seal is lacking. That is to say, they hold an imaginary Heaven responsible for all their own blind prejudices and strange vagaries. What we challenge is their right to assume heavenly authority for their various and conflicting deliverances. The sincerity of many of them is beyond doubt; but, then, a man can so easily play the hypocrite unconsciously to himself.

With all due deference, we hold that in this discourse which has come to us from the Antipodes, Mr. Spurr adduces not a single proof that Christians possess even a partial knowledge of the supernatural; he merely contents himself with asserting that they do. He plays the dogmatist from beginning to end. We are aware that "intellectual vanity is a stupid and offensive thing," and we hope never to be guilty of it; but we are convinced that the numerous assumptions of the men of God are more stupid and offensive still, because not one of them has ever been or ever can be verified.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christianity and the Chinese.—IV.

(Continued from p. 342.)

"The East has been tolerant of all creeds which do not assault the foundations of its societies.....The hatred of Western religion in China and adjacent countries is undoubtedly due to the needless and implacable attacks which have been made upon the ancestor-cult. To demand of a Chinese or an Annamese that he cast away or destroy his ancestral tablets is not less irrational and inhuman than it would be to demand of an Englishman that he destroy his mother's tombstone in proof of his devotion to Christianity. Nay, it is much more inhuman,—for the European attaches to the funeral monument no such idea of sacredness as that which attaches, in Eastern belief, to the simple tablet inscribed with the name of the dead parent."—LAFCADIO HEARN, *Japan*, p. 518-9.

"The Chinaman, who is entirely content with his own religion, and only asks to be left alone, is assailed by a propaganda that commences with an attack upon all that he holds most dear. To him the ethics of Confucius sum up the whole duty of man to the family and the State; while the payment of homage to the higher powers is provided for by the polytheistic conceptions of the Buddhist cult. He hears the former disparaged, the latter derided. He is invited to become a convert at the cost of ceasing to be a citizen; to tear up the sheet-anchor of all morality as the first condition of moral regeneration. Small wonder that a propaganda, which thus lays the axe to the very root of the tree, should encounter the stubborn resistance of all those who have been accustomed to seek shelter under its branches."—LORD CURZON, *Problems of the Far East*, p. 288.

ANCESTOR-WORSHIP is so bound up with the national life and traditions of the Chinese that it is the opinion of those most conversant with Chinese manners, customs, and modes of thought that to destroy belief in it would be to undermine the moral basis which constitutes the Chinese the most peaceful, law-abiding, and industrious nation in the world.

Mr. R. F. Johnston, who served as District Officer and Magistrate at Wei-hai-wei in China, and, therefore, has an intimate knowledge of the Chinese, observes:—

"Most of my readers are doubtless aware that it has been, and perhaps still is, the custom of many missionaries to require their converts to surrender their ancestral tablets, or to destroy them, as a proof of their sincerity before baptism. There are many sad stories connected with this cruel proceeding, and it is refreshing to listen to the frank confession of so experienced and fair-minded a missionary as Dr. Martin, who admits that he himself once insisted on a convert giving up his ancestral tablets, and has ever since regarded this as one of the mistakes of his life, and looks back upon it with 'poignant grief.' As he adds decisively, 'I had no right to impose such a test.' It is to be hoped that his words have served as a warning to some, at least, of his successors in the missionary field."*

* R. F. Johnston, *Lion and Dragon in Northern China*, pp. 332-3.

He also believes, with other high authorities, that "If Christianity is to win its way to the hearts of the Chinese people, it will probably have to condescend to a compromise on the question of ancestor-worship."

The Jesuits, in the sixteenth century, as we have seen, made their compromise with ancestor-worship; Father Ricci professing to believe that the ancestral functions were merely civil and commemoration rites, and allowing the converts to continue their practice. But the Jesuits have always followed the practice of St. Paul in making themselves "all things to all men," holding that "the end justifies the means."

As Professor Giles points out, in reference to the ancestral spirits:—

"These offerings are made for the special purpose of conciliating the spirit, and of obtaining in return a liberal share of the blessings and good things of this life. This is the essential feature of the rite, and this it is which makes the rite an act of worship pure and simple, so that only superficial observers could make the mistake of classifying ancestral-worship, as practised in China, with such acts as laying wreaths upon the tombs of deceased friends and relatives."*

The Emperor of China, K'ang Hsi, being appealed to by the Jesuits, decided in their favor. The Pope, on the contrary, influenced by the jealous Dominicans, declared the rites to be rank idolatry:—

"The fact that several Pontiffs had successively boxed the compass on this point did not in the least mend the matter; the essential consideration was that an Italian gentleman assumed, and successfully assumed, to tell the subjects of the Emperor of China that the Emperor was wrong on a technical matter of Chinese interpretation."†

Then the great Emperor became aware that behind these wonderful men from the West "there was a mysterious foreign Power actively controlling the millions of all races who entered the fold of the Church."‡ He, therefore, forbade any missionary to remain in the country without his permission. After his death his son and successor issued an edict in the year 1724 prohibiting the propagation of Christianity; all missionaries not required for scientific purposes at Peking being ordered to leave the country. The Emperor condescended to state his views to three members of the Society of Jesus, as follows:—

"You wish to make the Chinese Christians, and this is what your law demands, I know very well. *But what in that case would become of us?* [We should become] *the subjects of your kings. The Christians whom you make recognise no authority but you;* in times of trouble they would listen to no other voice. I know well enough that there is nothing to fear at present; but when your ships shall be coming by thousands and tens of thousands, then, indeed, we may have some disturbances."§

This put a stop to the influx of missionaries, who reappeared to the sound of foreign cannon breaching the Wall of China.

Ancestor-worship was the stumbling-block which brought about the fall of Christianity in the eighteenth century. It is ancestor-worship that still bars the way to-day. To cite again from the work of Mr. Arthur Smith, the missionary:—

"Everywhere the critical question is, What shall be done with regard to ancestral-worship? And upon this point the rigid demands of custom and the verdict of the enlightened Chinese conscience remain at variance."

The same writer thinks that perhaps the best way to treat the subject would be the historical one, of showing that the rites and usages were neither ancient nor authoritative, and that the underlying idea in ancestral-worship can be expressed in Christianity without violation of conscience. This seems to us a confession of the hopelessness of fighting this cult, and a recommendation of the very methods of

compromise which proved so disastrous to their Jesuit forerunners. However, as he admits, that method is not applicable in this case. For he observes:—

"But to this method of procedure there are serious if not fatal obstacles. The mass of those who can be induced to listen to the claims of Christianity are not those with whom the historical method is possible, since the greater part of them have no education and many of them cannot read. With such it is literally indispensable to deal with as with children."*

As we have remarked, the opposition of the missionaries to ancestor-worship is a principal cause of the hatred entertained by the average Chinese towards the Christian converts. When a Chinese becomes a Christian, he severs himself, or, rather, he is discarded, by his family, his relatives, and his friends. He becomes an outcast. Says Mr. Smith:—

"The refusal of the Christians to perform ceremonies which they regard as idolatrous at the New Year season, at the Spring festival when the sacrifices are offered at the graves, at weddings, and especially at funerals, render them liable to severe persecution, sometimes to the extent of being driven from their homes, deprived of all rights of property, and expelled from the clan to which they belong, and from the district in which they were born. It is hard for those who are their shepherds to witness such occurrences (which, with varying degrees of severity, are of constant occurrence) without endeavoring to rectify matters in accordance with the rights expressly guaranteed to Chinese Christians by treaty. In many instances this is accomplished after a more or less severe struggle, and a measure of liberty for the Church as a result. In many other cases, however, the best that can be obtained is a cessation of acute hostilities, with a threat of renewal whenever it suits the convenience of the anti-Christian party" (*China in Convulsion*, pp. 36-37).

Of these Christian treaty rights above-mentioned, we shall have something to say later on, merely remarking here that these rights are founded upon one of the blackest pieces of forgery and fraud—the work of a French Catholic priest—ever recorded in history. Again, the theatrical performances, of which the Chinese are so fond, are also banned, and this is the cause of another grievance. The same writer tells us:—

"Persistent resistance to demands for *pro rata* contributions to the fund for holding theatrical exhibitions or the performance of the Taoist high mass necessarily irritates a wide circle of Chinese. Should the proposed celebration be given up for this reason, the animosity felt toward the cause of this undesirable result is shared by the main participants, and also by the public, which is always athirst for some excitement in the dead level of the monotonous Chinese daily life. If the Christians stand aloof and withhold their quota, others must pay so much the more; and as the passion for theatricals is such that a Chinese as a rule can no more withstand the temptation to witness a performance than he can help shaking when set upon an insulating stool with a stream of electricity pouring through his body, it will be singular if his presence even on the outskirts of the crowd does not lead to trouble. That the Buddhist and Taoist priests have not sooner and more generally recognised the 'divisive and perversive' nature of Christianity in relation to those religions, only displays the intellectual imbecility of those who are thought sufficient to represent these faiths in the care of the temples and the public ceremonies. It has been generally noticed that during the Boxer disturbances priests have often been prominent, sometimes as leaders. The only wonder is that this has not happened long ago" (*China in Convulsion*, pp. 39-40).

The tolerance of the Buddhist and Taoist priests is not due to "intellectual imbecility," as this missionary suggests, for, as we shall see, the Chinese have always been tolerant in matters of religion. Notice, by the way, the testimony to the dividing and perverting nature of Christianity, which has always carried out the teachings of its founder, who declared, "I have come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her

* H. A. Giles, *The Civilisation of China*, pp. 65-6.

† A. H. Smith, *China in Convulsion* (1901), p. 47.

‡ Arthur Diosy, *The New Far East*, p. 221.

§ Arthur Davenport, *China from Within*, p. 236-7.

* Arthur H. Smith, *China in Convulsion*, pp. 34-5.

mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household." And many a household in China has found to its bitter cost that this was no idle boast of the Prophet of Nazareth.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

"Portuguese Political Prisoners."

(Gill & Son, Ltd. London: 1913.)

PUBLIC opinion in Portugal has been irritated and outraged by the publication of an audacious pamphlet in this country bearing the above title. The pamphlet is the more astonishing from its lachrymose but misleading sub-title, "A British National Protest." As a matter of fact, there is no evidence at all that (with the exception of the "Foreword," of which more anon) the "Protest" is either British or national, unless the "nationality" be Portuguese; and the "Protest" seems none other than that of some anonymous and inventive exile. All the magnificent fustian in the first three pages about the glories of "the Portugal of old" (which was also the Portugal of the Inquisition and the wholesale murder or robbery of heretics and Jews), betrays the hand of the unrepentant partisan of the ancient regime as it triumphed in the days of the late pious and lamented Carlos. The cloven hoof of the vexed and defeated exile shows itself, too, in the sentence (p. 11) which refers to:—

"A Republic which for over two years has perpetuated oppression and injustice such as no country would endure for one single week were it inflicted under monarchical rule instead of in the sacred name of freedom."

No Englishman who knows what unparalleled abominations have gone on, not merely "for one single week," but for decade after decade, and generation after generation, "under monarchical rule" of the holy Tsars, could possibly put pen to paper and write this stupid and astonishing declaration. We have heard often enough of "British" goods produced in Germany, but we were scarcely prepared for "British National Protests" made in Portugal.

Now about the "Foreword." This is a short and sweet production of eleven lines, by Adeline, Duchess of Bedford, the distinguished writer whose inflamed impeachment of Portugal coruscated recently in the columns of the *Daily Mail*. The "Foreword" is a surprisingly cautious commendation of "the writer of the following pages," whose name is discreetly withheld, and concerning whom we are offered the non-committal statement that our Great Unknown "had exceptional opportunities of collecting information concerning the sufferings," etc., of the prisoners—all of which, of course, one readily accepts, subject to the observation that the art of "collecting information" does not always imply the faculty of checking and verifying it when received, or collating it with the necessary relative facts for the formation of a sound judgment. The Pentateuch is a classic case in point, with its fantastic mosaic of "collected information."

In this same "Foreword" the revealing sentence is found that: "During my recent visit to Lisbon I was able to learn the opinions of many people in very varying conditions of life, and their testimonies were all entirely in harmony with the standpoint set forth in this pamphlet." All this is quite beside the question. The opinions of "many people," *quid* opinions, are, in fact, worth nothing; and testimony, even when it descends in cataracts, is clearly not evidence. All depends upon the competency of the witnesses, and the scientific validity of their testimony. Opinions can be freely and copiously gathered from all sorts and conditions of men for the most outrageous nonsense under the sun, as witness the lives of the saints, where biography rhymes with lie. After reading this "Foreword," one has an uneasy feeling that the basis of the

Duchess's *Daily Mail* impeachment of the Portuguese Government was built only on the multitudinous tongue-wagging of irresponsible slanderers.

I observe in *O Mundo* that public opinion has been unduly perturbed by the issue of this precious pamphlet. I hope that the Portuguese Republicans will not be frightened by this nightmare of a bogus "British National Protest." No Briton to-day, not even the editor of the *Daily Mail* itself, would go out of his way, as this pamphlet does, to speak of the Portugal of to-day (page 1) as "ground down by tyranny and oppression, depopulated by emigration, bereft alike of freedom, credit, honor, law, and order." If British public opinion formed such an erroneous view of the Portuguese nation, the Republicans would, indeed, have cause for grave regret and anxiety. But the voice of the Portuguese monarchist simulating the bluff growl of John Bull is distinctly audible in the theatrical palaverings of this "National Protest," and this fact discounts the value of the ducally applauded lucubration.

On page 3 mention is made of certain mythical "82,000 Carbonarios, who, as they draw a handsome wage for denouncing to the State supposed 'conspirators,' are naturally much enamored of a system which gives good financial profit in exchange for small exertions!" It is a pity that the writer did not embellish the narrative by "collecting information" as to the amount of the "handsome wage," or attempt to ascertain why a naturally wicked regime is lavish enough to pay so dearly for "small exertions." The slime of exaggeration which settles thick on this beautiful accusation makes it too incredible for serious consideration. A rationalist Republic which disestablishes and disendows the Church and secularises the schools may be sinful, according to ducal codes, without necessarily being stupid.

Burke stated that it is impossible to impeach a nation. Our writer transcends Burke and all possibility, human or divine, by offering a solemn impeachment of the Portuguese people. We shall see that his statement is one the ridiculousness of which is only equalled by its monstrosity. For instance, on page 18 he actually dares to tell us, with evident marks of acceptance and approval, that—

"Another informant relates that on one of the occasions when the prison van was stormed by the Lisbon mob, and the Royalist occupants dragged out and brutally attacked with knives and whips, a prisoner exclaimed, 'Do not beat me, I am not a Royalist, but a thief.' Whereupon the mob welcomed him as a brother."

The British nation will want evidence more trustworthy than that of "another informant," vouched by an unknown writer, before it will accept such an evident fable as "gospel" truth. The coda of the sentence, about Lisbon revolutionaries welcoming a thief as a brother, is one of those artistic embellishments that befit the novelist rather than the dispassionate historian. The writer had evidently taken his cue from the theatrical story of the Jewish mob clamoring for the release of Barabbas.

Another graphic touch, which certainly was not laid on by a native "British" artist, but by some Portuguese dauber, is the fine story, on pages 23-24, that in February this year Dr. Affonsa Costa, Senhor Alvaro de Castro, and Dr. Rodrigues, and their secretaries, visited the Penitenciaría; that the political prisoners and the lowest criminals being assembled in the disused chapel, they were all ordered to remove their hoods at the sound of Dr. Rodrigues' whistle; and when the miraculous whistle whistled the Doctor delivered an oration to them, which was greeted with applause from murderers and thieves." An excellent theme for comic opera, but quite alien to the sober genius of history.

On page 84 our Portuguese Briton talks dramatically about the "active" volcano of English adverse criticism—"that criticism will grow to such proportions that there will be no restraining it"! After this alarming diagnosis, the "informed" writer—who is an optimist by nature—talks on in the dark

and mysterious Guy Fawkes style of melodrama:—

"The time has long gone by [so he writes] when national opinion was controlled or led by diplomats [Great Jupiter! how I admire his sweet simplicity and childlike innocence!—W. H.]; and the English Foreign Office, *however anxious to look leniently upon the difficulties of a friendly Power*, is utterly unable to dominate popular feeling in a country where free writing and free speech are the hereditary birthright even of the humblest."

All this is the wildest nonsense out of Bedlam—it takes such little account of the omnipotence of diplomats and the serious limitations of speech and writing in this country! No Government in so-called Christian England would dare to affront the conscience of civilisation by strangling the Portuguese Republic. Governments to-day go to war, not for ideals, but for new markets; for goldfields and diamonds, and not to restore exiled monarchs or rehabilitate effete regimes, however pious they may be. When, therefore, we are told, on page 38, that "unless the Carbonaria assassins" are disbanded and the other ferocious ultimata of this fervid writer conceded, "it will no longer be within the bounds of possibility to stem the rising tide of British public wrath," the only thing I can say to Portugal, as a Briton myself, and living on the spot where "the tide" is supposed to be rising, is that not a ripple of wrath has yet appeared on the frothy waves of ink poured out from the indignant pen of our excited scribe, and that the only ebullition that sentiments of this fantastic kind are likely to excite in the British people is a contemptuous outburst of incredulous hilarity.

Portuguese public opinion can afford to disdain the hectoring threats of a writer who concludes his thirty-nine pages of rhodomontade by branding England's "ancient ally," as he calls Portugal, "as the shame, the scandal, and the plague spot which united Europe cannot but condemn." My final word to this writer is to convert his screed into a ragtime revue, with a coryphantic spectacle of exiled kings, disendowed bishops, and sour-faced patron saints.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

Acid Drops.

The truth is coming out at last about the war of the Balkan allies against the "unspeakable" Turk. Even the *Daily Chronicle* is beginning to let the cat out of the bag. In its issue for May 30 there was an outspoken letter from a "Correspondent lately returned from Montenegro." In a general way this writer says, "The Allies, there is, alas, no doubt, have often out-Turked the Turk.....Whole tribes have been exterminated, if the boasts of Serb and Montenegrin are to be believed." The capture of Scutari was at once a farce and a tragedy. It was not captured by Montenegrin valor at all. It was reduced by starvation, and by a deliberate policy in direct defiance of the rules of civilised warfare. "The trenches were safer than the town. The fire of the siege guns was "directed on the civil population" to force the town's surrender:—

"All the while, in defiance of Europe, the Montenegrins rained shells and shrapnel into the best quarter of the town. Every church, school, convent, and hospital was a mark. Two thousand wretched refugees were sheltered in the cathedral, believing it would be safe. But the guns of the Orthodox sought specially each Catholic building. A searchlight turned on the cathedral at night enabled the gunners finally to get the range, and 40 shells in and near it completely wrecked the finest building in these lands."

This is what pious King Nicholas called "fighting for the independence of Montenegro." The Christian old savage.

The *Guardian*, which was, like other Christian papers, rabidly anti-Turkish at the outbreak of the Balkan War, now confesses that unless the Allies show more honesty and common sense, "the condition of the Balkans, Slav and Hellenic, will be worse than under the unspeakable Turk." Those not blinded by Christian prejudice are not at all surprised at the present state of affairs. When a party of thieves set out for plunder, a quarrel about its division is not unusual. We venture to say that unless outside pressure is effectively employed the lot of many in the Balkans will be worse under the Cross than it was under the Crescent.

Mrs. Besant is in London again. A number of her English supporters met her at Victoria Station. "She was attired," the *Chronicle* reporter said, "in a tussore silk costume of flowing Oriental lines and a kind of turban, in the front of which a jewelled brooch glittered." This get-up reminds us of Gerald Massey's lines to Annie Besant, when she left her work on the London School Board to run about the world for the Mahatmas. The last of Massey's stanzas were these:—

"Now there's woe and wail for her,
True hearts ache and ail for her,
Poor wee faces pale for her.

And the deeds she might have done,
Not as Sophist, but as one
Worker in a Million.

Ignis Fatui of the fog,
Lured and led her all agog
Into the Blavatsky bog.

Cursèd fraud that could entice
Her to that great Sacrifice!
Priceless SOLD without her price.

Is she dreaming? Let us make
One more call for Love's dear sake;
Annie Besant, won't you wake?"

Gerald Massey's appeal fell upon deaf ears. Annie Besant did not wake. She will dream to the end now.

The Hindu boys, whom Mrs. Besant was ordered to restore to their father, were brought to London with her. They prefer being with her to living in their own home. No doubt. It is far more comfortable for their bodies, and far more flattering to their minds.

Shakespeare has been interviewed at last; this time on "the astral plane" by a Theosophist. An account was given at the headquarters of the Theosophical Society at Charing Cross. It appears that Shakespeare admitted that Bacon wrote the plays; but, added the poet, "I edited them." Shakespeare also remarked that "up there" they did not take much interest in the controversies "down here." From this we imagine Shakespeare to be in "heaven"; but may we assume that Bacon is "down under"?

Souls in Pawn is the title of a book. The "next world" has been often described as "the New Jerusalem"; but we did not know its business included pawnbroking.

The Assembly of the Scottish United Free Church reports a serious shortage of ministers. We do not know that anyone is complaining except the ministers themselves; the rest of the people seem to be bearing up well in the circumstances. The Rev. J. R. Sclater says that a commonly given reason is that payment in the ministry does not compare favorably with payment in other professions. At present the stipend of half the ministers of the Free Church does not amount to more than £160 per year. This, of course, is not a great salary for men of real ability, but it is quite as much as many thousands of people get in other walks of life who make no pretence to self-sacrifice, spiritual election, etc., etc. It may be that the Church cannot get men of ability and honesty at this figure, but can they get them at any figure? Suppose the Church could raise salaries to £500, or even £1,000 a year all round. It might then be able to purchase ability, but could it purchase honesty and character? We very much doubt it. There is always a certain amount of ability in the market ready to sell itself to the highest bidder, but the ability that goes with genuine conviction is not for the Church. That finds a more useful and more congenial outlet in other directions.

This is the real crux of the situation. Mr. Sclater says that "a proportion of the possible candidates does not think that the peculiar opportunity of Christian service afforded by the ministry overbalances the narrowing of life" involved in a ministerial career. This is only saying in a confused fashion what has been said above. The pull of life is away from the Church. Science and literature and art and social life all open up avenues of employment that a man can take up without a keen sense of self-stultification. He does not have to spend the rest of his life explaining away or apologising for the beliefs he is paid to defend. Given a belief worth defending, and there will not be lacking defenders. But given beliefs such as are enshrined in the doctrines of the Churches, and generation after generation a lower degree of ability and character is attracted by them. It is this, and not salaries, that is at the bottom of the trouble over both the quantity and quality of the clergy. It may still command ability without honesty or honesty without ability, but it cannot, to any considerable degree, command both.

Rev. R. H. Armitage, of St. Mary's Vicarage, Whittlesey, suggests that every person ordained should be compelled to spend five or six years out of the country. The suggestion strikes us as a good one, and we should favor a very liberal extension of the time during which the newly fledged parson should be kept abroad.

Father O' Halloran, rector of a Roman Catholic church at Ealing, borrowed £76 from a poor old Miss Mary Hynes, who was left £400 by the late Lord Kilmorey, in whose service she had been. When the reverend gentleman was invited to refund he set up the plea that the money was a gift. The jury, however, held that the transaction was a loan—the defendant exercising a dominant religious influence over the plaintiff, who had received no independent advice. The man of God has to shell out both cash and costs.

They have been holding a Missionary Exhibition at Leeds and the Rev. J. Hinton Kaowles has made it the occasion of denouncing the religion and morals of the "heathen," particularly in India. Local circumstances might surely have made Mr. Kaowles more modest on this point. He is the new vicar of Christ Church, Hunslet. His predecessor left the Lord's Vineyard some time ago—leaving his wife and family behind and taking with him a younger piece of what the Bible calls "flesh."

Another poor Christite! Rev. Thomas Samuel Curteis, of 99 Philbeach-gardens, London, S.W., for many years rector of Sevenoaks, Kent, left £29,508. "Blessed be ye poor!" "Woe unto you rich!" "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth." And more to the same effect.

The *Methodist Times* asks the question: "Are the Gospel Records Reliable?" and in reply admits that many blunders may have been made by the New Testament writers. But, it says, the Gospels do not rely for their validity upon "mere historical tests," but upon "the spiritual sense of the man who honestly reads the narratives and lets them make their natural impression upon him." Well, for our part we should not be seriously disturbed if it were shown that the four Gospels were actually written by Jesus Christ himself, and that they have descended to us unaltered. To have the actual narrative in our hands would not prove the story to be credible; it would only show, at most, that the writer or writers believed it to be true. But why go back two thousand years for this kind of testimony? Thousands of people, since the time of Jesus, have witnessed to their sense of supernatural possession and illumination, and others have endorsed their testimony. But this does not make the stories themselves a bit more believable. It only throws us back upon the task of explaining how they came to have such a conviction. Instead of exposing a deliberately concocted falsehood, we have to explain the genesis of a psychological delusion. That is all there is in the matter.

As to the "spiritual sense" of the man who reads the Gospels deciding whether they are reliable or not, that is sheer verbiage. The faculty invoked is itself pure myth. There is no such thing as a "spiritual sense"; there are only the normal qualities of the mind which judges so-called spiritual things. Anyway, the spiritual sense judges as it been taught to judge. The Christian decides, on appealing to his "spiritual sense," that the picture of Jesus Christ is authentic. The non-Christian decides in quite the opposite direction. Why should we accept one more than the other? As mere impressions, both are equal. As a matter of fact, the writer deserts his "spiritual sense" as soon as he has utilised it. He appeals to the influence of the life of Jesus on the world. And, again, we ask, How do you know? Has a mere reading of the life of Jesus ever affected anybody? Has the reading not always been accompanied by suggestions that the life would produce certain consequences? And if the consequences occasionally follow, to what are we to attribute them—to the reading or to the suggestion? How often have people discovered an aperient in bread pills, or a narcotic in cold water? The psychology of the religious process is quite simple, as simple as that of advertising a patent medicine.

Canon Masterman says that "after all, it is not much good trying to prove the Virgin Birth to men who don't believe in God." True; but how does the Canon propose to deal with unbelievers in God? He clearly discerns the futility of arguments based on the external world, because the external world is itself an unanswerable argument against the Divine existence; but is it, can it, be much good appealing to human consciousness? Leave human consciousness alone and it never knows anything of God. The belief in God is not an inheritance, but an acquirement,

made only by a limited number of mankind, and made by these not spontaneously from within, but artificially, under pressure from without.

We now learn that the second person in the Holy Trinity lost his self-consciousness for the space of twelve years. During the period between his birth as the "Holy Thing" from Mary's womb and his appearance in the Temple as a boy of twelve, he was not aware that he was in existence. For this most marvellous information we are indebted to the Rev. Dr. David Smith, who, in the *British Weekly* for May 22, tells a correspondent that, while meditating in the sacred building and arguing with the doctors, in the twinkling of an eye he remembered, or, as Dr. Smith puts it, "discovered," who he was. Subsequent to the re-awakening of his self-consciousness, he worked for eighteen years at his father's trade at Nazareth, making carts and chairs and tables and such things. Then at his baptism he was formally called to begin his ministry as Incarnate God. And yet some people pretend to be surprised to find that supernatural belief is dying throughout Christendom.

An American divine tells us that "God is like Christ"; but what is Christ like? Nobody knows. There are at least a thousand Christs on earth to-day, and they are all different. If it be said that Christ is like the Gospel Jesus, and God like Christ, then we are bound to declare that we will have none of God. The Gospel Jesus was rude to his mother, disowned his family, cursed his enemies, enjoined non-resistance to evil, pronounced beatitudes on poverty, blessed the sword, and depreciated the present life; and if God is like him we are glad that we have no dealings whatever with him.

Rev. A. Huntley, vicar of Christ Church, Hull, deplures the growing desecration of the Sabbath. He says that the leisured classes show a bad example. He knows of a church in the South of England where all the choirboys have left in order to earn money as golf caddies on Sundays. Very sad, no doubt, from the reverend gentleman's point of view. But most people will sympathise with the boys; for a little money is acceptable, and the air is fresher on the golf links than it is in the average stuffy Bethel.

Dare to be a Daniel! But don't try it on with a sledge-hammer. The Chancery Court has had to teach this to the Rev. Daniel Hughes, of the Crane-street Baptist Chapel, Pontypool, who has been using that instrument to settle a legal question between the trustees and himself.

Dr. Horton's manners are not improving. However much he may have grown "in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" during recent years, it is clear that growth does not include a corresponding progress in charity and toleration. It is quite impossible for the reverend gentleman to make the slightest allusion to opponents without losing his temper and resorting to bad language. In one of his latest sermons, he admits "that the great majority of people to-day, as in the time of Jesus, deliberately and defiantly shut God out of their lives." This fact makes him angry, and "the great majority of people" are set down as the dupes of "puerile—yes, it is very puerile—self-confidence." The man who overturns the Bible is "a feeble critic"; he who denies that Jesus can save is "stupid and ignorant"; while the rejecter of the historicity of Jesus is the victim of hopeless infatuation and ignorance. What makes him wild is the fact that "the great majority of people" hail such "feeble critics," "stupid and ignorant" deniers, "infatuated and ignorant" rejecters, with boundless delight, and turn a deaf ear to him and his message. And yet, "in spite of the fact that never was there a time when unbelief was so hardened, so infatuated, so ignorant, so daring, and so destructive—in spite of all that," the reverend gentleman assures his hearers that they who do believe shall certainly be saved. Now, on the assumption that "the great majority of people" are on the wrong road, are Dr. Horton's hostile attitude and abusive language likely ever to bring them to the feet of him who died for their redemption? Is it really true that the more pious and devout a man becomes the less of a gentleman he is?

The Bishop of London is constantly treating the world to a fresh imbecility. His latest outbreak is to the effect that he knows East London and its misery more than most people, and even there for every miserable person that could be produced he had got nine happy ones up his sleeve. We dare say he could find them *there*—and nowhere else.

In his presidential address to the London Diocesan Conference, the Bishop of London, made some pungent remarks

on the report of the Divorce Commission, in the course of which he told an anecdote. "Charlie and I," he was told a girl said the other day, "are going to be married, and if we don't get on, we can always be divorced!" Did his lordship hear this yarn from the lips of Charley's Aunt?

Dr. Dixon, of Spurgeon's Tabernacle, says that "men to-day exalt human nature and reject the Deity of Christ." That shows their superior wisdom. The men of yesterday exalted Christ and belittled, maligned human nature. That is what the Church has always done. The present revolt from her is our most hopeful omen.

According to a weekly contemporary, the King is a great reader, and keeps in touch with modern literature, particularly historical and sociological works, besides the best fiction. As the King also reads a chapter of the Bible daily, if the religious papers are to be believed, he must be quite a bookworm.

Speaking at Mansfield Hall, Canning Town, on a recent Sunday afternoon, Dr. Massie said that Christianity has conferred dignity upon labor. Sentimentally, this may be true, but actually it is the very reverse of true. "Amongst Christians," he is reported to have said, "the man who worked for his living was respected, and the man who did not work was condemned." Is not Dr. Massie aware that the man to whom the greatest deference is paid and the highest respect shown in Great Britain to-day, is not the man who works for his living, but the man who lives upon the labor of others? The Church is fully as culpable in this respect as the world. Are not all her seats of honor occupied by the rich? When a wealthy Christian gentleman gives a dinner party, are carpenters and masons and unskilled laborers found among their guests? No, Christ has never done anything for labor save keep it in subjection. Labor is at last waking up, however, and beginning to do a little for itself.

The Rev. J. T. Forbes, M.A., of Glasgow, is an exceptionally wise man. He is able to compare man's knowledge with that of angels, and to declare that, in some respects, man's is the greater of the two. Angels "cannot know the conditions of a tempted, tried, delivered man," though they experience a vast amount of curiosity regarding them. As a matter of fact, Mr. Forbes knows absolutely nothing about angels, not even that they exist. It may sound exceedingly ridiculous, but there is no denying the fact that pulpit eloquence is always at its best when dealing with subjects on which no knowledge is obtainable on any terms.

Mr. Dan Crawford, the much-talked-of African missionary, is returning to Africa. He finds Western civilisation very disappointing. Western civilisation will doubtless survive Mr. Crawford's disapproval; all the same, it is curious that he should prefer the country where there is so little of Christianity to the country where there is so much of it. If Mr. Crawford were not in the missionary business himself, one might expect him to be less ardent as to the necessity of Christianising the natives. We understand that Mr. Crawford originally took up with missionary work for the benefit of his health.

The Canadian Government census gives details of the religious opinions of the population, which numbers seven and a quarter millions. These profess seventy-nine religions, including 15,971 Mormons, and various other fancy theologies. The non-religious total 29,161. Canada is being dechristianised at a greater rate than China is being converted.

The *Times* says that Canada is a country of religious liberty because no one Church dominates. That is very good so far as it goes, but it needs more than this to make a country a land of religious liberty. All that the *Times* understands by the expression, apparently, is that all the Churches are on a legal equality. That may be so, but it is, after all, a domestic concern. That the State should not favor any one Church is good, but if it ceases to favor one because it favors all, then we do not know that there is very much in it. It is liberty of opinion that is needed, and this is only secured when the State definitely declines to consider religion as coming within its province, either to attack or defend.

The Church of Scotland is in the doleful dumps. Her mission funds are reduced, the Jewish mission groaning under a deficit of £1,300. Her communicants decreased during last year by 1,066, the first decrease within living memory. The number of her baptisms has decreased by 2 per cent. in sixteen years. Scotland is at last beginning

to emancipate herself from her long-continued bondage to credulity and superstition. Buckle's picture of her during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is no longer true.

A baby shirt worn by Nelson on the occasion of his christening is to be sold at Sotheby's Sale-rooms, and is expected to fetch a high price. Priests sell relics at higher prices of persons who never existed.

The *Christian Commonwealth* is ostensibly a Christian journal issued for the purpose of furthering the interests of the Christian religion. Yet for some years it has been loudly singing the praises of Mrs. Besant, and publishing full reports of her London lectures on Theosophy. To this we have no objection whatever; but we wish to call attention to the fact that Mrs. Besant, not only is not a Christian in any accepted sense of the word, but is pronounced by the Rev. Dr. Horton to be "by far the most formidable opponent of Christianity in India." Furthermore, in any accepted definition of the term, Mrs. Besant is not even a Theist. Dr. Horton candidly admits that she is doing an enormous amount of good in India, but "feels that to the chief opponent of missionary work in India a Christian can only say, 'You go that way, I go this, for I am on Christ's side for his glory, and he is Lord of all.'" So far good; but why does our contemporary so energetically "boom" in England one who is said to be in India "by far the most formidable opponent of Christianity"?

We welcome the Rev. S. J. Poole, vicar of St. James's Church, Gravesend, as a valuable ally. In his series of sermons on "The Observance of the Lord's Day," he has been unconsciously fighting our battle. His plea for the observance of the Lord's Day has exposed the essential falseness and impotence of Christianity. Its hold upon mankind is so slender that if Sunday loses its religious character it will certainly drop off. Thank you, Mr. Poole, you have rendered us splendid services. You are quite right. A secularised Sunday will infallibly result in—*Godlessness.*

"Couple's appeal to Washington," runs a scare line in a newspaper. Dear old George died over a century ago, and he won't hear. The clergy constantly appeal to another "gentleman," who has been "dead" twenty centuries.

An article in a weekly contemporary is headed "Why We Need Not Sneeze in Church." It is a snuffy subject; but Freethinkers sneeze at the Church.

The Union Government Native Affairs Department (South Africa) draws attention to the increase of consumption among the natives, chiefly due, it is said, to the infection spread by those who return from the mines. There is also great difficulty in combating the "fearful ravages of syphilis." The natives are evidently in for the usual consequences of Christian civilisation. The report also says that South Africa "appears to suffer from a superabundance of denominations." Increase of consumption, ravages of syphilis, and an overdose of religious denominations. Quite a pretty trinity!

A circular issued at Wibana, Ill., U.S.A., in connection with a crusade to increase church attendance, characterises Sunday papers as being full of "so-called funny pictures and lurid sensationalism." The Bible, which is considered suitable reading on that day, contains such serious and non-sensational stories as those of Noah's Flood, Jonah and the Whale, and Balaam's Ass.

At a recent sale at Christie's 155 guineas were paid for six dessert plates, and 58 guineas for two other plates. The price makes us think they were used at the Last Supper.

A cynic might suggest that there were no plates at the Last Supper, but only a common dish into which each guest plunged his hand and took out what he fancied. "He that dippeth his hand in the dish with me," said Jesus, "the same shall betray me."

"Clever Stage Clergyman" is the heading of a paragraph in an evening contemporary. The parsons are not so brilliant in ordinary life.

The late Lord Avebury, formerly Sir John Lubbock, who created two new holidays, was termed admiringly, "Saint Lubbock." He did more for the working classes of this country than all the "saints" in the Calendar.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £141 18s. 5d. Received since:—R. Wood, 5s.; H. Wyllie, £1 1s.; L. Martin (West Australia), 5s.; J. Wordhough, 13s. 6d.

E. B.—Thanks for welcome cuttings.

D. R. WILLIAMS.—A very good letter. No wonder the preacher did not reply. Thanks for your good wishes.

R. WOOD.—Mr. Foote steadily improves, but the last screwings up to concert pitch are slower than he anticipated.

ELIZABETH LECHMERE.—Duly attended to. Thanks.

W. P. BALL.—Much obliged for cuttings.

S. FERRIDAY.—Sent as desired. Pleased to know you value the *Freethinker* so highly.

C. W. CHRISTIE.—We are obliged to you for your long account of the career of the Rev. Stanley Parker, but he is not worth so much of our space or your trouble. What really interests us is the fact that you despise the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and all it stands for, as much as you were once attached to it and preached its doctrines.

H. V. S.—Under consideration. Sorry to hear of your illness, and hope you are quite yourself again now.

JOSEPH CLOSE.—It is not necessary for Freethinkers, when affirming, to hold up their hands—or their feet. Pardon the joke. But the whole matter, thanks to the good Christians, is so funny. We will take your hint, and call attention to Bradnagh's Oaths Act from time to time. Glad you held out and set the Court right.

R. M.—We cannot express a dogmatic opinion about a particular occurrence within your own experience—it would have to occur within ours in order to justify an attempt at explanation. So much depends upon the person influenced, the character of the product, and many other circumstances. All we can say here is that the marvels related as having occurred at Spiritualistic meetings have never been verified in a way that was satisfactory to a committee of scientific experts and trained observers. You would probably find *Abnormal Psychology*, by I. Coriat, and *Evidence for the Supernatural*, by J. L. Tuckett, of value to you as aids to understanding what you have witnessed.

J. E. FISH (Santo, New Hebrides).—Pleased to hear from one who was an ardent worker in the N. S. S. ranks in this country, also to learn that your enthusiasm for the good old cause still lives. Unfortunately, there is need for this in all parts of the globe. Superstition is world-wide, and the antidote must be world-wide also. Your desire to do more than you are doing is laudable and natural, and none of us are too great to be without the same kind of feeling. The best way is to do what we can, when we can, and rest content. Miss Vance is attending to the other matters mentioned in your letter. The new edition of Frazer's *Golden Bough* has reached its seventh volume. Each vol. is published at 10s. net.

E. DALLES.—We note your delight at our exposure of the Wheeler slander; and, as you will see, we are dealing with the matter at length in the present issue. You say you have "heard it read many times," and we wish we could feel sure that after our exposure you will not hear it again. A lengthy experience, however, has convinced us that a certain type of Christians will repeat a lie just so long as it pays them to do so. All we can do is to supply the matter for its refutation.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Sugar Plums.

We are devoting a little extra space this week to our exposure of the latest Christian Evidence lie concerning the late J. M. Wheeler, but we believe that most Freethinkers will consider the space well used. Apart from our own

personal interest in the matter, the party as a whole owes a duty to the memory of its writers and speakers, and attack should be met with a prompt defence. A lie about a living person is bad enough, but a lie concerning a dead one carries with it something specially contemptible. We have done our best to make the exposure of this particular slander complete and final, and we hope that Freethinkers will bear the facts in mind so that they may meet the statement, whenever and wherever made, with a prompt contradiction.

We believe our readers find extracts from correspondents' letters interesting. Here is one which expresses rather a fresh view:—

"The thanks of the readers of the *Freethinker* are due to you, not only for your own work, but also for that of the remarkably able body of writers your personal qualities have drawn to co-operate with you during so many years. I am only looking at it from the standpoint of an ordinary reader, and it impresses me; but I am confident that the strength of this impression deepens upon those who know the difficulties of editorial work, to say nothing of the special circumstances of the case."

There is discrimination in this eulogy—whether it is deserved or not.

Mr. T. Martin, an old-time London Freethinker, now of Perth, Western Australia, writes us that he is commissioned "to convey to Mr. Foote and staff of the *Freethinker* the compliments of the Right Hon. T. Walker, Attorney-General of this State, and to wish them every success in their propaganda." Mr. Walker is an old associate of Sir Robert Stout, whose Freethought opinions are well known. Both were also associated with Mr. Joseph Symes in the earlier portion of his activities in Australia, and we are glad to learn from Mr. Martin that our old friend's work in the colony is still bearing fruit. We are not surprised at this being so. Joseph Symes was a born fighter, and the memory and work of such live on long after the names of more timid souls are forgotten.

From the last number of the New York *Truthseeker* to hand, we see that Dr. Jacques Loeb has been refused membership of the New York Century Association. Dr. Loeb is among the world's greatest living biologists, and many of his investigations into the reactions of the nervous system of the lower organisms have become classics. Several reasons are given for rejecting his membership. One, that he is of Jewish descent; another, that he has strong predilections for Socialism; a third, that he is erratic in his views. The first reason is ruled out by the fact that the club already has a number of Jewish members. The second also rings hollow. We believe the third is nearer the truth. Dr. Loeb's views are erratic. By that is meant, we presume, that he has not scrupled to express his antagonism to the religious interpretation of nature, and to avow a thorough-going scientific Materialism. We question whether America holds a dozen men of greater or more daring scientific genius. We decline to condole with him on his rejection from the Century Association. He would have conferred honor by his presence. The Association alone loses by his absence.

"Mr. Dunnybrig has terrible coorious ideas, I warn 'ee. He says the Almighty lets us see more and more of Him as the world goes on, and that God larns from his creatures, just like we larn from our dogs and cattle.

"In a word, he declares that God be improving," said young Harry Hawke. "I've heard him tell it at the meeting-house where we go. And many suchlike things he'll dart out in the fury of prayer as comes over him."

"Should you say that was true, or be it just a pinch of madness in the man?" asked Pancras. "Do God Almighty change, or be it blasphemious to think so? I should reckon it was, for 'tis as much as to say He ban't up to His high-water mark."—*Eden Phillpotts*, "Widcombe Fair."

If we believe the language of the devotee, we must admit that the most spiritual of men hide in their heart thoughts of which they are heartily ashamed. It is not into the mouth of the reprobate, but into the mouth of her devoted members, as they enter upon their sacramental service, that the Church puts the significant prayer—"Almighty God, unto whom all hearts be open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid; cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of thy Holy Spirit." Inconsistency in adults is far too well recognised to need proof.—*F. A. Sibly*, "Youth and Sex."

The Christian resolution to find the world ugly and bad has made the world ugly and bad.—*Nietzsche*.

Another Lie Nailed Down.—II.

AFTER writing the first part of this article, which appeared in last week's *Freethinker*, it occurred to me that the Christian bigots might say, "Oh, yes! What you are writing now is all made up for the occasion. You can say anything you like fifteen years after the event." Consequently I decided to start by reprinting what I wrote immediately after Mr. Wheeler's death. The following is reproduced verbatim from the *Freethinker* of May 15, 1898.

JOSEPH MAZZINI WHEELER.

For thirty years he and I were close friends; for twenty years we were close co-workers. We were so much to each other personally, so intimate in every respect, that with his death a certain savor has gone from my own life. We worked together for Free-thought—I nominally his chief, he nominally my subordinate, but with no thought of anything but absolute equality and brotherhood ever entering into our actual relationships. We had the same essential interests, hopes, and aspirations. We communed in spirit—if I may say so without being misunderstood. Our thoughts were as open as daylight to each other. No reticence but that of self-respect stood between us. He influenced me, as I influenced him; and sometimes his thought passed into my work, as my thought passed into his. Rarely, I imagine, are two men so associated as we were. And then we had passed through the fire of affliction together. A common suffering lent a final tenderness to our friendship, and gave it a special sacredness.

I must go back over a long tract of years to make the reader understand my dead friend's story. It was in 1868 that I made his acquaintance in London. We were both eighteen; I his elder by a fortnight—a difference I used sometimes to tell him he could never reduce. We were both Freethinkers, both fond of good reading, both full of young enthusiasm for the triumph of our ideas. I think he contributed to the *National Reformer* a little before I did. For a short time I lost sight of him, though we corresponded, when he went with his family to live at Glasgow. I met him there when I went to deliver my first lectures in Scotland. It is all as fresh as yesterday. We talked and talked and talked, especially about poetry, capping quotations from Shelley and Swinburne, and always recurring to Shakespeare, who was ever the supreme god with us. As we said good-night one evening, he put his hand on my shoulder in his impulsive way, and said: "George, you must be the leader of the Freethought party." I laughed; it seemed so absurd. Neither of us foresaw how we should one day be fighting at the front together.

Those were the golden days of bateless hope and tireless energy. He went over with me once when I had to lecture at Edinburgh. We climbed Arthur's Seat, on the abrupt side, before breakfast; and while he sat down on the summit I stood up at his desire and recited Swinburne's "Song in Time of Order" as though I were addressing an audience on the other side of the Firth of Forth. When I was last at Edinburgh, only a few months ago, he wrote to me on business matters, and ended by saying he wished he was there with me, and would go up Arthur's Seat once more in my company, if I would only recite that poem again for him at the top.

I think it was after the death of his father that Mr. Wheeler removed to Edinburgh, following his profession as a lithographer in a publishing house there. Mr. Wheeler, senior, was a man of liberal opinions. He had a great affection for the noble Italian liberator, Mazzini, and named his eldest son after him.

When I started the *Secularist* in conjunction with Mr. Holyoake, in 1876, Mr. Wheeler became a regular contributor. Some of his articles were extremely valuable, particularly those on Buddhism, which he had studied profoundly. He wrote gratuitously and ungrudgingly till the paper was merged in the *Secular Review*. This was in the summer of

1877. I was in the midst of great personal trouble at the time, and his loving sympathy was a steadfast star in my night.

When I felt equal to fresh labors, and started a monthly magazine called the *Liberal*, Mr. Wheeler once more gave his ready co-operation. Good reading from his pen appeared in nearly every number. We were both, as it were, feeling for our way in the Freethought movement, and at last we found it definitely. Mr. Bradlaugh's brutal treatment by the bigots of England opened our eyes to the real nature of modern Christianity. Previously we had thought it to be nearer death than it was. We knew it had no power left for good, but we learnt it had still much power left for mischief, and we changed our policy accordingly. He was with me in heart and head when I started the *Freethinker* in 1882, and when the paper began to make its way he threw up his employment at Edinburgh and came up to London to take his chance with me. I was only able to guarantee him £1 per week then, but we could both work hard and live on little. As soon as possible, of course, I paid him more. The amount was further increased after my imprisonment, and from that time, until his death, the sub-editorship was the principal source of his income.

Delicate as his organisation was, with an overplus of nervous susceptibility, and an exquisite sympathy that made him feel too acutely the sufferings of others, he had, nevertheless, a dauntless courage. There was not a shadow of fear about him. He would have done his duty, and stood for his convictions, in the face of any danger. I always knew that if I had to go to the pass of Thermopylæ he would go cheerfully with me. When he praised me for the way in which I had faced prosecution, knowing as I did all the time that I was pretty sure to go to prison, I laughed and said, "Nonsense, Joe; I'm not braver than you, only a bit bigger." When peril is really near you don't find courage universal. I did not find it so. But I knew my old friend would never quail. The *Freethinker* was left in his hands when I went to Holloway Gaol for twelve months as a "blasphemer." Not to lay too great a burden upon him, however, I forbade him, in black on white, to publish any illustrations during my absence.

Weeks rolled by, and I knew nothing of what was going on in the world outside my prison. But one day Mr. Bradlaugh came to tell me that the trial of the other indictment, in which he was included, was coming on before Lord Coleridge in the Court of Queen's Bench. I asked him about Mr. Wheeler, and was told that he had "gone mad." Mr. Bradlaugh put it too abruptly; he did not know how dearly we loved each other. The news stunned me. When I got back to my prison cell I walked up and down like a caged animal. The word "mad" was burning in my brain. It was long before I felt the relief of tears, but at last they came in a deluge. This was the only blow that wrung them from me. I had nothing but a lofty scorn for my enemies, but the fate of my friend was too terrible. It was worse than mine, and I could not foresee the end of it.

Mr. Wheeler had to be placed in an asylum. He got better, but he was liberated too soon. He came back to work and broke down again. Once more he recovered and resumed writing for the paper. When I was released from prison at the end of February, 1884, he was reasonably well, and I hoped he was as free from his trouble as I was from mine. But less than three months afterwards he broke down again. It was a very bad attack, but I was able to look after him myself. I kept him in the asylum until he was quite fit to leave, then I sent him for weeks to the seaside, and his residence was changed so that he might return to new surroundings. He had fourteen years before him of happy, useful life; and now the end has come he has left behind him a host of friends, without a single enemy, and hundreds of men and women whose intellectual life-blood has been enriched by the fruit of his studies. Surely he did not live in vain. More than most men he deserved to live longer, and death should have come

to him more gently. As I knelt down and kissed his brow in death—for I was too late to see him living—I could only say "Poor Joe!" And as I rose to my feet again and looked down on him, and around at the strange place in which he died, I could only think: "Is this Nature's last boon to a good man? Is this her only laurel for a noble head?" In the light of the doctrine of Theism such a spectacle was a ghastly mockery.

I only learnt that Mr. Wheeler was dying after five o'clock on Thursday, May 5. I drove to the asylum as fast as I could, but I was too late to look for the last time into his eyes and perhaps catch a last word from his lips. It was all over when I arrived. He died at half-past five. Fortunately, Mrs. Wheeler was summoned earlier. She exchanged a word or two with her dear husband. He tried to say more, but failed. She asked him if she should send for me, and she tells me that a beautiful smile spread all over his face. I shall think of it as long as I live.

The acute mania, lasting for ten days, had completely worn him out. His recuperative power was gone. All that was possible was done for him. He was treated with kindness and attention and medical skill, but he could not be saved. We wish he could have died in more pleasant surroundings, but it was impossible. It was necessary to remove him from his home to the asylum; indeed, it was his only chance of recovery, and that was the supreme consideration. The decision, of course, rested with Mrs. Wheeler. It was not my doing, though I should have done the same. All who know the facts are perfectly satisfied that everything was done for the best.

Had I known this trouble was coming I would have dragged my friend away from his work and his books to the country or the seaside. Perhaps it would have saved him. But one cannot tell. I did not know there was anything wrong until the Monday morning, May 2, when he sent a note round to my house saying that he had no sleep and was unfit for work, and asking me to call round. I advised him to potter about in his little garden while I attended to the paper. In the evening when I called again he was much worse. There were clear symptoms of the old disorder. Medical and other help was obtained, but the malady developed rapidly, and on the Thursday he was removed. He was just a week in the asylum. The doctor said a change would probably take place at the end of that period—for better or worse. When the end came it was without suffering. The mania subsided. He was quite calm. His wife found him quiet and rational. He dozed away into his final rest.

On the Saturday morning before he was taken ill I met him as usual at business. He seemed a little flurried at first, and I looked at him keenly; but the agitation disappeared, and I felt no apprehension. We disposed of business, and had a delightful talk about Shakespeare. There could be no better topic, and it was the last rational conversation I had with him. He mentioned it to Mrs. Wheeler when he got home. She tells me he was so pleased, and apparently happy. And I am pleased to know that our last communion was in the great serene depths of thought—soul to soul.

I have neither time nor space to write now of Mr. Wheeler's great intellectual gifts, his wonderfully wide reading, his profound acquaintance with the whole subject of the evolution of human society, and his minute knowledge of religion, from Christianity down to the most savage superstitions. At such a moment it is character more than intellect that claims our attention. He was brave, gentle, pure, loving, and benevolent; full of kindness towards his fellows, and all dumb animals. His nature had no stain of malignity. He loathed cruelty of every kind. He was as honest as truth, as veracious as daylight. He did whatever he undertook with a whole-hearted devotion. He was true to others, and true to himself. He knew and felt that philosophy is barren without the fertilisation of

love. He was one of the heralds of a new and more glorious day for humanity.

Mr. Wheeler has left a will, bequeathing all he dies possessed of to his dear wife, and appointing her executrix and me executor. As soon as possible I shall estimate the value of his small estate—of course it is comparatively trifling. I shall also have a talk with Mrs. Wheeler about the future, and with something definite before me I shall make whatever appeal I may think necessary for the widow of this dead soldier of the army of human liberation. Meanwhile I shall see to what is requisite.

All this is necessary to be said in view of the reference to how the Christians "cared for" Mr. Wheeler.

I will state the precise facts. The National Secular Society paid the expenses of Mr. Wheeler's funeral. I myself paid the expenses of his removal to the asylum and his expenses there for the week. I also paid Mrs. Wheeler her husband's salary in full for six weeks, and half that amount for another six weeks. She also received money from another source, the details of which I did not trouble to ascertain, although it was referred to as follows in the *Freethinker* for May 29:—

"I also venture to refer, in passing, to another matter. I have been told that some who are not very friendly to the National Secular Society mean to do something for Mrs. Wheeler. By all means let them do so. I should be sorry to divert a single penny from her pocket, although I think a common effort on such an occasion is in every way desirable. But in order that I may not be misunderstood—and it seems so easy to misunderstand me—I deem it advisable to say that Mrs. Wheeler is not in immediate want of anything. I have paid her Mr. Wheeler's salary in full since he was taken ill, besides defraying other (not large) expenses; and although I cannot go on at this rate—and indeed it will not be necessary—I shall continue to provide her with a sufficiency until her affairs are settled. It is not very pleasant to mention these things, but one has sometimes to choose the lesser of two evils."

Mr. Wheeler's estate was soon wound up. It included his library, the house he had lived in for many years, and a little money in the Birkbeck Bank. Mrs. Wheeler was thus in possession of some £400. In addition to that I raised a "Wheeler Memorial Fund" for her through the *Freethinker*, which amounted to nearly £150. Mr. George Ward, acting on her behalf, checked the total of the weekly acknowledgments, and Mr. S. Hartmann, the N. S. S. Treasurer, who acted as treasurer to this Fund, paid over the amount by cheque to Mrs. Wheeler in the presence of Mr. Ward and myself. Mr. Hartmann is dead—Mr. Ward is still living. I mention these details for the sake of accuracy.

It will be seen, then, that there was no room for the Christians to "care for" Mr. Wheeler. He was well cared for without them. I am not surprised, however, that they boast of what they never did.

The house that belonged to Mr. Wheeler was a small one in Enkel-street, near the "Nag's Head," Holloway. I believe he became possessed of it through the kindness of Mr. W. J. Birch. He had lived in it for many years, he was taken ill in it, he was removed from it to the asylum. Judd-street, Euston-road, is therefore somewhat cryptic.

There never was any suggestion at the time that Mr. Wheeler had in the slightest degree reverted to Christianity. His utterances while in a state of acute mania (for he died in a padded room) count, of course, for nothing. I was told that his ravings were largely about the Devil; but it is easy to understand that, for he had been collecting materials for a "History of the Devil." Mr. Wheeler's funeral was thus described by Mr. H. Clifton—who reported my address at the graveside, a report which I may reproduce for the newer readers of this journal:—

"The funeral of the late Joseph Mazzini Wheeler took place at Finchley Cemetery on Saturday afternoon, May 14, at four o'clock. Beautiful wreaths covered the coffin from Mrs. Wheeler, Mr. and Mrs. Foote, Mr.

Graham, the Misses Bell (Glasgow), Mr. and Mrs. Pilcher, the N. S. S. Executive, and Edith Vance and Annie Brown. A large number of London Freethinkers were gathered round the open grave. There were also Captain Adams (of Montreal), Mr. Pinder (Leicester), and Mr. W. B. Thompson (Chatham). The N. S. S. Executive was represented by G. W. Foote, Charles Watts, R. Forder, E. M. Vance, Annie Brown, E. Truelove, S. Hartmann, P. Sabine, W. Heaford, A. B. Moss, E. Bater, W. Leat, T. Gorniot, and F. Schaller. Among the crowd of mourners were Toby King, Miss Truelove, Mr. and Mrs. Bonner, Mrs. Forder, Mr. G. Bedborough, Mr. and Mrs. Chilperic Edwards, Mr. Tom Shore, Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Watts, Mr. C. Herbert, Mr. and Mrs. Stranding, Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, Mr. Fagan, Mr. and Mrs. Caisey, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, Mr. H. R. Clifton, Mr. W. P. Ball, Mr. Pitt (Birmingham), and many other ladies and gentlemen whom we have not space to enumerate. The beautiful weather gave the fullest opportunity to Freethinkers from all parts of London of paying the last sad mark of respect to the deceased, who was respected and loved by all. When the coffin was lowered into the grave Mr. Foote delivered a brief address. He spoke under great emotion and with much difficulty."

While I am on this subject I venture to reproduce Mr. Holyoake's tribute to Mr. Wheeler shortly after his death:—

"A LOST WORKER.

"Few men to whom a great name has been given have better illustrated it in their lives than Joseph Mazzini Wheeler did in his. He had much of the silent devotion, disinterestedness, and incessant effort associated with that name. I often think children should have the right of two names—the one given by parents in honor of someone whose career has great value in their eyes, and a second name which should be the child's right of selection when he comes of age and is able to decide for himself under what name he will be known. Mr. Wilks, an editor of the *Morning Star*, had been more fortunate had he not borne the great name of 'Washington.'

"Mr. Wheeler was happier in his name, as he really had qualities which illustrated it. He gave all his days and more than all his strength to the service of Free-thought. He was the most painstaking of all those who have written on the careers of heretical thinkers. He was the biographer of the soldiers of the cause of unfriended progress. He took unstinted pains to find out the facts. He wrote books himself which could be trusted for substantial accuracy. He was more than a historian; he was himself a thinker. In reviewing Grant Allen's notable book on the *Idea of God*, Mr. Wheeler wrote this memorable sentence: 'To me, it appears that the necessity man is under of interpreting things outside himself in terms of his own consciousness is a sufficient explanation of the origin of all theistic beliefs.' He who could write this was an authority in thought. There is a campaign in the sentence; there is a volume in it. I know of no sentence on the subject so simple, so comprehensive.

"Behind the veil of Mr. Wheeler's modesty there were usefulness and power of no ordinary kind. It may be truly said of him, his life helped to shorten the days of superstition and to lengthen the days of reason.

"G. J. HOLYOAKE."

There are reasons for the special pleasure I have in reproducing this eulogy.

I think I have nailed down this lie about Joseph Mazzini Wheeler. I have shown that the Christians had nothing whatever to do with "the close of the late Mr. Wheeler's life." He was in my employment, as sub-editor of the *Freethinker*, up to the last moment of his sanity. Secularists gave him a public funeral. The President of the National Secular Society delivered the valedictory speech over his coffin. Mrs. Wheeler (he had no children) was treated with every kindness and consideration by the Secular party. Christians did not "care for" her any more than for him. I never heard that one of them contributed to any fund raised for her advantage. It was her misfortune that she fell into the hands of designing persons, who had no relation whatever to the Secular party, who relieved her of her money, and shortened her life. I do not say they were Christians. I know they were not Freethinkers.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Life and Labors of Haeckel.

THOMAS HOOD once referred to the musical, mystical Germans. But although modern Germany has been wonderfully prolific in musical genius, and has mystified the world with the most cloud-creating, metaphysical systems, it has also given birth to some of the very greatest of nature's students and interpreters. Among these, Ernst Haeckel, the Darwin of Germany, occupies a pre-eminent position. This distinguished Naturalist was born at Potsdam on February 16, 1834. The child was father to the man. As a boy, the great biologist was instinctively attracted by living nature. He revelled in light, color, and beauty. He adored the sun and the wondrous blue of the heavenly vault. He was fascinated by trees, butterflies, and blossoms. Although the fair-haired, blue-eyed boy would sit silently for hours and pull a daisy to pieces, and then triumphantly restore the florets to their original place in the flower disc, he nevertheless displayed that sturdy independence and thoughtful originality which were destined to characterise him through life. Both parents of Haeckel were of cultured stock. The father was a man of considerable ability, and the mother helped to deepen her son's loving interest in the wonders of nature. The lad's inclinations were strengthened as he came under the influence of the writings of the great Pantheistic poet and philosopher, Goethe. The famous traveller, Humboldt, likewise helped to deepen Haeckel's desire to study and understand nature and nature's laws. Then Darwin's *Voyage of a Naturalist Round the World* set the lad's brain aflame, although as Bölsche truly says, at this early period no one could have foreseen what the celebrated English naturalist was to mean to him through the coming years. While still a higher form schoolboy at Merseburg, Haeckel elected to make the study of the vegetable kingdom his life's work.

At this time, the immortal Schleiden was teaching botany at the University of Jena, and the young Haeckel regarded him as the teacher of teachers in all matters that related to plants and plant life. The young botanist was about to begin his studies under Schleiden when a serious attack of rheumatism necessitated his return to his parents, who were now domiciled in Berlin. This incident to some extent determined Haeckel's career, as his studies shortly afterwards recommenced under Dr. Alexander Braun in the Prussian capital. Braun was a close friend of the Haeckel family, and the pupil was brought into friendly personal touch with that progressive man of science. Haeckel's enthusiasm for botany was boundless, but his matter-of-fact father could not be persuaded to regard its serious study as in any way appertaining to the practical. He therefore decided that his son should embark on a medical career; and it was during his medical course that Haeckel came under the influence of such celebrated professors as Leydig, Kölliker, and Virchow. From their teachings he derived the ideas which afterwards created such a sensation throughout the world of science. Another eminent man who played an important part in the fashioning of Haeckel's ideas was Professor Johannes Müller, the Berlin physiologist and anatomist. Müller encouraged his promising pupil to accompany him when, during the summer vacations, the master studied the marvels of aquatic life along the shores of the lakes and seas.

Having taken his medical degree, Haeckel was sent to Vienna to walk the hospitals, and although his old love for botany revived, he soon passed the State examination, and, in 1858, became fully qualified as a practising physician. His patients reached the magnificent number of three; but as his hours of consultation were fixed at from five to six in the morning, his slender success need not awaken much astonishment. The elder Haeckel was now fully satisfied that his son was not cut out for a successful doctor, and, in these circumstances, he consented to furnish the funds for a twelve months' tour in

sunny Italy, and to the garden of Europe the young physician journeyed in 1859. The marked artistic tendency of Haeckel's nature now for a time asserted itself. In Sicily, he tells us, "I was nearly thrown out of my line and made a landscape painter." He possessed a positive genius for painting, but this special passion for art proved but a transient phase of his career. In the waters of the sunlit Italian sea Haeckel commenced the loving and patient study of minute marine organisms, which laid the foundations of his subsequent scientific fame. With the aid afforded by his microscope and fishing-net, he made the acquaintance of a world of wondrous living creatures previously undreamed of. His newly discovered treasures served the double purpose of ministering to his love for the beautiful while materially assisting him in mastering an important province of zoological science. Out of those investigations arose his monumental monograph on the Radiolaria, which is undeniably one of the most elaborate contributions to biological science ever written.

Haeckel returned to Germany in 1860. In Berlin he heard for the first time that the Englishman, Darwin, had published a preposterous book, entitled *The Origin of Species*. Darwin, it seemed, dismissed the then almost universally accepted dogma of the fixity of species with scant ceremony. This revolutionary thinker had undertaken in his book to prove that plant and animal species had arisen through the agency of natural selection. All living things vary, and those that fluctuate in a favorable direction become the winners in life's race, while those that vary in an unfavorable manner or fail to adapt themselves to a modified environment are sooner or later destined to perish. In the light of the innumerable facts and arguments resistlessly arrayed in Darwin's masterpiece, the current theory that the world of life existed just as it came from the Creator's hand was no longer tenable. Haeckel immediately plunged into the pages of this amazing book, and became deeply impressed by its teaching.

"It profoundly moved me," he wrote to Professor Bölsche, "at the first reading. But as all the Berlin magnates (with the single exception of Alexander Braun) were against it, I could make no headway in my defence of it." It was not until Haeckel had debated the matter in lengthy conversations with his friend Gegenbaur at Jena that all doubts disappeared, and Haeckel became a firm adherent of Darwin's philosophy.

Many able men who might at that time have embraced the evolutionary gospel were held back by the benumbing influences of traditional doctrine. But Haeckel had already outgrown the theology of his childhood. The man-like god of the Churches had been displaced and dethroned for the all-pervading deity of Spinoza and Goethe. The utter spiritual degradation which Haeckel had recently encountered in Naples and Sicily among a so-called Christian population made him realize that an anthropomorphic divinity is but one step removed from the miracle-working saints and madonnas of Roman Catholicism. He was, therefore, disposed at the commencement of his career to look to the powers inherent in nature as affording the only possible explanation of the phenomena of living matter. In this frame of mind, he discarded his earlier prejudice against the probability of spontaneous generation, and completely abandoned his faith in the existence of a special vital force.

Haeckel was at this time a private teacher at Jena, but became Extraordinary Professor of Zoology and Director of the Zoological Museum shortly afterwards. And now this new professor published his work on the Radiolaria, in which the doctrine of descent was unreservedly accepted. The book and its author caused much searching of heart among such authority-bound biologists as Giebel and Agassiz. Haeckel had now definitely thrown all theological preconceptions to the winds, and in this early work he wrote in a vein which plainly indicated that he regarded Darwin's politic reference to the "Creator" as a concession "not

"consistent, and, I think, not quite sincere." That this surmise was well warranted, is, of course, sufficiently obvious to every candid reader of Darwin's *Life and Letters*.

In the second decade of the nineteenth century, the evolutionary philosopher, Oken, was inspired with a desire to spread the light of science among the people. He scorned the then fashionable doctrine that science could never enter into the lives of common men. Largely owing to Oken's influence, scientific congresses were occasionally held, and the utterances of the more democratic and progressive scientists thus reached a wider public through the powerful medium of the press. One of these gatherings took place at Stettin in September, 1863. Haeckel led off as first speaker, and in a brilliant address he carried Darwin's views to their logical conclusion. In the *Origin of Species* Darwin had avoided all definite allusion to the human race, and had patiently awaited the publication of his epoch-making *Descent of Man*. But the younger and more impetuous Haeckel refused to wait, and at the Stettin Congress he declared that—

"as regards man himself, if we are consistent we must recognise his immediate ancestors in ape-like mammals; earlier still in kangaroo-shaped marsupials; beyond these, in the secondary period, in lizard-like reptiles; and finally, at a yet earlier stage, the primary period, in lowly organised fishes."

Bold as this utterance was, it was at the time fully supported by Virchow, who was present when Haeckel's speech was delivered. But upon the old school of scientists, who struggled under the disadvantages imposed by traditional dogmas, it descended like a bolt from the blue. All things that live or have ever lived, Haeckel assured his auditors, were the outcome of orderly natural evolution.

Haeckel pictured the world of life in the form of an all-embracing genealogical tree.

"The thousands of green leaves on the tree that clothe the younger and fresher twigs, and differ in their height and breadth from the trunk, correspond to the living species of animals and plants; these are the more advanced, the further they are removed from the primeval stem. The withered and faded leaves that we see on the older and dead twigs represent the many extinct species that dwelt on the earth in the earlier geological ages, and come closer to the primeval stem the more remote they are from us."

This remarkably realistic conception may be phrased in a slightly different way. If we examine an aged elm, we may notice the evidences of growth and decay which have characterised its development. There are many dead boughs and branches, and, although the trunk may be hollow, the stately tree goes on spreading its branches in the light and air. New trees are born from its seeds, and its far-extending roots may give rise to saplings in the vicinity of the parent plant. And so in the organic kingdom when regarded as a whole. Despite the fact that multitudinous species have disappeared during the course of organic development, countless new forms have arisen to carry on the vital processes of nature. For this assertion there is absolutely conclusive evidence. Having made a very critical and conservative estimate of the palæontological discoveries of the previous century, Huxley was ultimately compelled to conclude that, even if the evolutionary theory had not existed, the striking testimony to its truth furnished by the fossil remains which had been found in the rocks would have forced men of science to invent it.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

SNUBBED.

Several medical men and a newspaper man were visiting an insane asylum. The employce who was showing them about pointed out a man who considered himself the Lord.

The newspaper man, true to his instincts, seeking to have an interview, asked the insane one whether he really made the earth in seven days.

The latter gave him a look of utter contempt, and said as he passed on, "I'm not in the mood to talk shop!"

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.
OUTDOOR.

- BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15 and 6.15, James Rowney, Lectures.
- CAMBERVELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30, John Kellard, "Christianity the Enemy of Progress."
- CROYDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Katharine street, near Town Hall): 6.30, a Lecture.
- EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, Miss K. B. Kough, "Thomas Paine: a Commemoration."
- KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, F. Schaller, "Why I am an Atheist"; 7.30, R. Miller, "Christians v. Mohammedans."
- NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, C. E. Ratcliffe, "Further Replies to Christian Critics." Finsbury Park: 6.30, Mr. Hope, a Lecture.
- WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, W. Davidson, a Lecture.
- WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers Hill, opposite Public Library): 7.30, J. Hecht, "Science and Superstition."

COUNTRY.
OUTDOOR.

- BOLTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Town Hall Square): 7.30, R. Mearns, "Historic Christianity."—A meeting of the Branch for the purpose of electing officers for 1913 at the Socialist Club, Woodstreet, at 3 o'clock.
- BURNLEY BRANCH N. S. S. (Market Place): Arthur Thompson, 3, "Why I Ceased to be a Christian"; 6.30, "Bible Beauties."
- BURY BRANCH N. S. S. (front of Circus): Matt Phair, 3, "Socialism and Religion"; 6.30, "What must we do to be saved?"
- FARNWORTH (Market Ground): Monday, June 9, at 7.30, Gilbert Manion, "Uncrowned Kings."
- OLDHAM (Park Gates): Gilbert Manion, 11, "What Do We Know of the Soul?" 3, "Christian Socialism Exposed"; 6.30, "Reason versus Emotion."

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