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When men will not be reasoned out of a vanity they must be ridiculed out of it.—L'ESTRANGE.

To the Rescue.

SOME years ago the English newspapers contained reports for a whole week of seven explorers who were accidentally imprisoned in a cave in Austria. The unfortunate men were known to have some food and some candles, but the extent of their supply was uncertain, and their condition was suspected to be desperate. Extraordinary efforts were made to effect their release, the Government even sending engineers to assist in the undertaking. It may be said that the whole of Europe was interested in their fate. Many people in England looked anxiously at the morning and evening papers for tidings from Gratz; and when at length, after eight days of entombment, the seven explorers were released, a sigh of satisfaction was breathed by millions of men and women who never saw them, and never would see them, and who would soon, perhaps, forget or half forget that incident in the bustle of our eager civilisation.

While those seven imprisoned explorers were, so to speak, in the very shadow of death, thousands of other persons were passing out of existence. But they were expiring in the "ordinary course of nature." Familiar things do not strike the imagination. Old soldiers on the battle-field see comrades fall around them with absolute unconcern. Undertakers lose all sense of the solemnity of funerals. And in the same way we do not shudder at the ordinary bills of mortality. But in circumstances of exceptional peril a fresh appeal is made to our sympathies. Thus it was that thousands of men, women, and children died of all sorts of painful or loathsome diseases, while the fate of those seven explorers trembled in the balance, without causing a single pang to the general heart of the community.

It is not our object, however, to write an essay on sympathy and imagination. What we really want to do is to indicate the religious moral of this episode.

Seven men were in peril of death—a horrible slow death from starvation in utter darkness. The world at large knew nothing of them but their danger. It was ignorant whether (as men) they were good, bad, or indifferent. Whatever their characters, it was impossible to leave them to such a terrible fate. Society insisted on every effort, at any cost, being made for their release. Many persons near at hand—not relatives, nor even friends—could scarcely sleep for thinking about them in the lone still night with its "giant heart of memory and tears."

Now all this is something new in the world. Not that sympathy is new, not that there is anything novel in help between man and man. The novelty is in the scope of the emotion. A cosmopolitan humanity is growing up which realises the sentiment of the Roman poet who made a stage character exclaim that, as a man, nothing human was alien to him. The world is becoming more sensitive. It shivers at the thought of suffering which, hundreds

of years ago, it would have regarded with sheer indifference. And this intensity, this expansion, of the sympathetic emotions, is not due to any religious causes. It is due entirely to the progress of science, which has brought about a rapid intercommunication between different parts of the world, multiplied interests and attachments, and quickened all the springs of life.

Directly, this progress is material; indirectly, it is ethical; still more indirectly, it is religious. It is a fond conceit of the theologian that religion is a *cause* of progress. Religion is a purely conservative agency. It stereotypes what it finds. Always the last to move, it brings up the rear of the great procession of humanity. The gods of to-day reflect the ideas and characters of the men of a thousand years ago.

Still, religion *does* move, however slowly; though it only moves because it must, because it cannot afford to be left utterly behind. In an age of humanity, the brutal old doctrines of divine caprice, holy vengeance, and heavenly malignity, die a natural death. Yet they are not buried; they become transformed. The old words are retained with new meanings. Some little adjective, adverb, or preposition is seized upon, and magnified into infinite meaning; and thus, by changing the proportion of the ingredients, the compound is totally changed in its character. Once it was taught that most men went to hell; now it is taught that most men go to heaven. There has been no alteration in the "inspired" text, only a change in its interpretation. The Word of God is compelled to follow the growth of the Spirit of Man.

How is it possible for men and women who are wretched at the thought of the peril of seven men they never heard of before—how is it possible for men and women who make frantic efforts to save them—to believe in their heart of hearts that the Creator of *all* men and women will thrust the majority of them into hell, and hold in his un-trembling hands for ever the key of their dungeon of torture? Hell is doomed when the very worst of men would shrink from keeping their enemies in it for a single hour. Cruel lynchings and other atrocities may be wrought by "civilised" men in moments of fierce passion, when the beast within them leaps through the restraints of civilisation. But cruelty is no longer inflicted deliberately in cold blood. How then can we go on worshiping a God who coolly plans, and remorselessly carries out, the wholesale damnation of his own creatures?

Gradually, but surely, generation after generation, the world is growing sweeter, purer, and brighter. The barbarous ideas of the old theology are fatally discredited. A new religion is springing up—the Religion of Humanity. Rescuing souls from hell is a decaying employment. Science and brotherhood are striving to rescue the poor, the downtrodden and the wretched. The policy of the new reformation is to make the most of *this* life. The promises of bliss in another life begin to fall upon the people's ears as idly as the threats of future pain. Man is entering upon his heritage of comfort, hope, and dignity in this world—which is the world of all of us, and where, in the end (as the poet says), we find our happiness, or not at all.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Witch Mania.—II.

(Continued from p. 354.)

THE vast majority of those executed for witchcraft were women. At all times witches appear to have been more numerous than wizards, owing, one may assume, to their closer connection with the world of supernatural or ghostly beings. It was said "For one sorcerer, ten thousand sorceresses," and Christian writers were ready to explain why. Woman had a greater affinity with the Devil from the outset. It was through the woman that Satan had seduced Adam, and it was only to be expected that he would utilise the same instrument on subsequent occasions. James I., Macaulay's "wisest fool in Christendom," writes in his *Demonologie* that it is easy to account for the greater number of witches, "For, as that sex is frailer than man is, so it is easier to be entrapped in the gross snares of the Devil, as was over-well proved to be true by the serpent's deceiving of Eve at the beginning, which makes him the homelier with that sex sensine." To be old, or ugly, or unpopular was to invite persecution, and in an overwhelming majority of instances to be accused meant conviction. It was said that it was common with women of the lower classes, during the height of this mania, to pray that they might never grow old.

Upon the most trivial signs, women were accused of dealings with the Devil. If the crops failed, or the milk turned sour; if the head of a local magnate ached, or a minister of the gospel fell sick; if a woman was childless, or a child taken with convulsions; if a cow sickened or a sheep died suddenly, some poor woman was charged with witchcraft, and tortured until she confessed her alleged crime. A mole or wart on any part of the body was a sure sign of commerce with the Devil. Every such woman was believed to have one part of the body that was insensible to pain. To discover this, she was stripped and long pins run into her body. If a suspected witch kept a black cat, could not shed tears, or failed to repeat the Lord's Prayer correctly, these were all so many signs of guilt. More serious tests were the following: A woman's legs were tied across, and she was so seated on them that they bore the entire weight of her body. In this position she was kept for twenty-four hours, and on the first sign of pain condemned as a witch. There was the torture of the boot—a frame in which the leg was placed and wedges driven in until the limb was smashed. A variation of this was to place the leg in an iron boot and slowly heat it over the fire. There was also the thumbscrew, an instrument which smashed the thumb to pulp by turning a screw. More barbarous still was the bridle. This was an iron hoop, passing over the head with four prongs, two pointing to the tongue and palate and one to each cheek. The suspected witch was then chained to the wall, and watchers appointed to keep her from sleeping. The slightest movement caused great torture, and in the majority of cases a confession was secured. The favorite and most general test, however, was by water. The right hand was tied to the left foot, the right foot to the left hand. She was then thrown into a pond. If she sank, and drowned, she was innocent. If she floated, she was guilty, and was burned.

This water test was a favorite of Matthew Hopkins the celebrated witch-finder, appointed to the work by Parliament during the Commonwealth. Hopkins travelled up and down the country, much like an assize judge, putting up at the principal inns, and at the expense of the local authorities. He charged twenty shillings a visit, whether he found witches or not. If he discovered any, he charged twenty shillings for every witch brought to execution. In addition to the water test the following was practised. The witch was placed crosslegged on a stool in the centre of the room. Doors and windows were kept open to watch for the entrance of some of the Devil's imps. These imps might come in the form of a fly, a wasp,

a moth, or other insect. If the watchers failed to kill any insect that came into the room, it was clear evidence that this was a demon, and the proof of guilt was established. Hopkins was responsible for the death of a large number of people, and it is comforting to know that he eventually fell under suspicion of witchcraft himself. His success in discovering witches led to the accusation that he was in league with Satan, who provided him with a list of witches. He was seized, tried by his own favorite water test—and floated.

It is hard to realise, nowadays, the gravity with which these trials were undertaken. An outline of a very famous witch-trial will best bring this home, and which I take from the report published in 1682, at the sign of the Bible, Duck-lane, London. The trial was that of Rose Callender and Amy Duny, before Sir Mathew Hale, "Lord Chief Baron of His Majesties Court of Exchequer." The two women, both widows, were charged with bewitching Anne Durent, Jane Bocking, Susan Chandler, William Durent, and Elizabeth and Deborah Tracey. William Durent was an infant, left in charge of Duny. For some fault the mother reprimanded Duny, who, in reply, threatened her. The same night the child was taken with fits, and on consulting a Dr. Jacob, of Yarmouth, was told to hang up the child's blanket at night and see if anything was therein. A great toad was found, which, on being thrown into the fire, "made a great and horrible noise," and was no more seen. Stranger and more conclusive still, the next day, Amy Duny was found to have her face "all scorched with fire."

Elizabeth and Deborah Tracey, aged nine and eleven, were also bewitched by Duny. They were seized with lameness, fits, and extreme pain in the stomach. Upon recovery they "would cough extremely, and bring up much phlegm and crooked pins, and one time a twopenny nail." These pins and nail were produced in court as evidence. The children's aunt also declared that she saw flies, bearing crooked pins in their mouth, come to the children. The father tried to cure them by reading the New Testament. This would proceed well enough until they came to the name of Lord or Jesus or Christ, whereupon they would suddenly fall into fits. The other charges and evidence followed in precisely similar lines.

Quite a number of eminent persons were present in court, among them being Sir Thomas Browne, the author of *Religio Medici*. The latter being "desired to give his opinion what he did conceive of him; was clearly of opinion that the persons were bewitched, and said that in Denmark there had been lately a great discovery of witches, who used the very same way of afflicting persons by conveying pins into them, and, crooked as these pins were, with needles and nails." The judge, Sir Matthew Hale, in directing the jury, said "that there were such creatures as witches he made no doubt at all. For, first, the Scriptures had affirmed so much. Secondly, the wisdom of all nations had provided laws against such persons, which is an argument of their confidence of such a crime." He also "desired the great God of Heaven to direct their hearts in this weighty thing they had in hand; for to condemn the innocent and let the guilty go free were both an abomination to the Lord." The jury duly returned a verdict of Guilty, and they were executed four days later.

There is not much variety in the numerous reports of witch trials. I have cited this one because it is among the most famous in English history, and because of the eminence of the men who testified their belief in the reality of the offence. There has, indeed, never been a delusion that could call a more numerous array of great names to its assistance than this one. Sir Thomas Browne, whose testimony at the trial of the two widows has already been cited, said in the most famous of his writings, "For my part I have ever believed, and do now know, that there are witches. They that doubt of these do not only deny them, but spirits; and are obliquely, and upon consequence, a sort, not of infidels, but

atheists."* Henry More, the great Platonist, asserted that they who deny the agency of witches are "puffed up with nothing but ignorance, vanity, and stupid infidelity." Ralph Cudworth, one of the greatest scholars of the latter half of the seventeenth century, said that they who denied the possibility of intercourse between Satan and human beings "can hardly escape the suspicion of having some hankering towards Atheism."† Writing nearly a century later, when the English law merely prosecuted as rogues and vagabonds those who pretended to witchcraft, Blackstone thought it necessary to point out that this alteration did not deny the possibility of the offence, and added:—

"To deny this, would be to contradict the revealed word of God in various passages both of the Old and New Testament; and the thing itself is a truth in which every nation in the world hath in its turn borne testimony; either by examples seemingly well attested, or by prohibitory laws, which at least suppose the possibility of a commerce with evil spirits."‡

About the same time Wesley gave utterance to his famous declaration on the subject:—

"It is true likewise that the English in general, and indeed most of the men of learning in Europe, have given up all accounts of witches and apparitions as mere old wives' fables. I am sorry for it, and I willingly take this opportunity of entering my solemn protest against this violent compliment which so many that believe the Bible pay to those who do not believe it. I owe them no such service. I take knowledge that these are at the bottom of the outcry which has been raised and with such insolence spread through the land in direct opposition, not only to the Bible, but to the suffrage of the wisest and best of men in all ages and nations. They well know (whether Christians know it or not) that the giving up witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible."§

This was written at a time when, as Wesley says, the educated European mind was beginning to reject tales of witchcraft as mere fables, although as late as 1773, the "Associated Presbytery" passed a resolution deploring the fact that witchcraft was dropping into disrepute. At the commencement of the witch epidemic, Montaigne had written:—

"How much more natural and more likely do I find it that two men should lie than one in twelve hours should pass with the winds from east to west? How much more natural that our understanding may, by the volubility of our loose, capering mind, be transported from his place, than one of us should, flesh and bones as we are, by a strange spirit be carried upon a broom through a tunnel or a chimney."||

Montaigne's voice was quite unable to arrest the development of the epidemic. Against his influence were the many centuries during which people's minds had been saturated in superstition, and which had created an atmosphere favorable to all kinds of delusion. Fortunately, other forces were set in operation. The growth of physical science, and the weakening of direct theological influence in social affairs, gave rise to a temper of mind fatal to the continuance on a large scale of such a belief as that of witchcraft. To-day it has ceased to interest the world except as a problem of historical psychology.

(To be concluded.) C. COHEN.

Weighed in the Balances.

Father Ralph. By Gerald O'Donovan. (Macmillan; 1903. 6s.)

THIS is a book which Catholics dare not read. From their point of view its rightful place is on the *Index Prohibitorius*. It constitutes a terrible indictment of the Irish Catholic Church. Her motives, methods, and aims are weighed in the balances and found wanting. She contains many thoroughly sincere and noble characters who, though as a rule extremely

ignorant and superstitious, love what they believe to be the truth better than life; but the priests rule the people with a rod of iron, which is bound to be bad for both. Such is the Irish Church as depicted by Mr. O'Donovan in this fascinating though painful story. From his mother's womb Ralph O'Brien was set apart for the priesthood. His mother had prayed for a son, solemnly promising that if the Lord gave her one he should be a priest. He came in answer to her prayer and promise. She was a fanatic to whom the Church was everything, and in whose sight a priest was holy and could do no wrong. Major O'Brien thought that his wife was more or less mad and took her religion much too seriously; but he allowed her to have her way with Ralph. Brought up in a convent, she had been taught to hate the world because of its extreme wickedness, and she was determined that her son should grow up unspotted from it. Her supreme care was to guard him from the slightest worldly contamination. In providing a permanent nurse for him, her first concern was that she should be decidedly religious. On the advice of her confessor, Father Eusebius, a Carmelite friar, Mrs. O'Brien engaged Ann Carty, a member of the third order of Mount Carmel, who made it a condition of service that she was allowed to attend mass daily, and a number of sodalities several times a week. Formerly her religiosity had made it difficult for Ann to get or keep a place, but Mrs. O'Brien regarded it as her highest recommendation.

Inniscar, his family place, being let on a long lease, Major O'Brien had settled down in Dublin; and after his marriage he took a house in Harcourt-terrace, in which Ralph was born. To his mother Ralph was the child of miracle. When Ann Carty arrived she was informed that her charge was a dedicated vessel, holy unto the Lord; and it was as such that Ann always looked upon him. Every day she took him in his pram to the Carmelite church, and then, lifting him out of the pram, she bore him in her arms to the rails of the high altar, where she knelt and prayed. As the boy grew older he began to take notice of his surroundings and to ask questions. Ann was as ignorant as she was devout, and her answers to his questions were not convincing, except when heaven and hell were concerned. At breakfast one morning the following dialogue occurred:—

"What is heaven like, Ann?" he asked, as he ate his porridge.

"Oh, it's a grand place entirely. There's God sitting on a throne of gold, and the Blessed Mother near him on another throne, and all the angels playing on harps and fiddles."

"Is it as fine as the altar in Clarendon-street when the candles are lit?"

"Oh! it's more beautiful than anything you could think of."

"Will we go there, Ann?"

"If we are good, dear."

"And why don't we go there now, this very day?"

Ann busied herself for a minute buttering some bread, while he waited, spoon poised in the air, eagerly watching her.

"Why, we'd be only paving stones in heaven if we went now, but when you are a priest and have done a lot of good things, you'll be high up in heaven, with maybe a harp of your own."

He sighed, ate his porridge in silence, and then said:

"I suppose we couldn't go to hell either?"

"What put that into your head?" Ann said, startled.

"Of course we won't go to hell. Hell is a bad place, and no one that says their prayers, and does what they are told, will go there."

"But there are lots and lots of people there."

"Only the wicked, darling."

"Tell me some."

"Oh, there's Cromwell, and Henry the Eighth, and millions more."

"Were they wicked?"

"You'll learn all about them when you grow up."

Ralph turned out a splendid learner. At eight years of age he knew the whole Catechism by heart, and was being prepared for his first confession. He now discovered that he was a great sinner, and the place he was most familiar with was hell. He thought

* *Religio Medici*, pt. i., sec. 30.

† *True Intellectual System*, vol. ii., p. 650.

‡ Stephen's edition; 1883; vol. iv., p. 238.

§ *Journal*, 1768.

|| *Essays*, bk. 3, ch. xi.

about it by day and dreamed about it by night. He read and re-read again and again, with avidity, that most horribly wicked book, *Hell Opened to Christians*. He went to his first confession, and later to his first communion. He attended a Jesuit school, and soon won an exhibition and a gold medal for Latin. He loved Latin because it was the language of the Church, but was greatly puzzled when he found that the Jesuits and the Carmelites held opposite views on the subject of Pagan learning. Many other questions troubled him, such as the idea of Oliver Goldsmith being in hell, as well as many other Pagan and Protestant writers, whom he so greatly admired.

After twenty-seven years' absence Major O'Brien returned to Inniscar, and Ralph entered the Bunnahone Seminary, still believing he had a vocation and always worrying about his soul. This Seminary was a preparatory school for Maynooth, and its speciality was spiritual training. The President, Father Phil Doyle, was neither a scholar nor a saint, but a man of the world who loved night parties and playing nap. French was taught by a man named Nolan who was nearly always drunk. He was late for his class one day, and the boys sat waiting. At last the door opened and closed, and Mr. Nolan was seen, hat on head, walking cautiously towards the desk, touching the wall with his left hand and leaning heavily on the stick in his other hand. Halfway he stopped, keeping one hand on the wall and one on the stick, glared at the boys, and said in measured tones—"What are you looking at, you country bumpkins? Have you never seen a gentleman before?" At last, he reached the desk, took off his hat, overcoat, and gloves very slowly, and sat down with difficulty. "I have to apologise, gentlemen, for being so late," he said suavely, "my rheumatism is very bad to-day." "He has been oiling it with Pat Darcy's rum," said one of the boys; "I smelled it the moment he came in the door." Such was the Bunnahone Seminary for spiritual training. Ralph's mental eyes were being slowly opened; but he still believed he had a vocation, and was anxious about his soul.

After six months at Bunnahone Seminary, Ralph went to Maynooth, and soon learned that the latter was not much of an improvement upon the former. There was scarcely one Professor who could be pronounced a genuine scholar, or who had mastered the branch of learning committed to his care; and the majority of students left the College almost as ignorant as when they entered it. Ralph worked hard, however, and was amazed at the incompetence of so many of the teachers. Doubt now assailed him; but he still believed in his vocation. In due course, he was ordained and obtained a curacy under Father Molloy at Bunnahone. Father Molloy was a drunkard and lacked principles. The Bishop of Bunnahone had the reputation of being an exceptionally holy man. Mrs. O'Brien half worshiped him. Major O'Brien had always disapproved of the choice of the priesthood for his son; and when Ralph was appointed a curate at Bunnahone, close to his home, his resentment rose to such a height that it upset his mental balance. His anger against him was so strong that he made a new will, leaving his entire property to his wife. He indignantly refused to see his son whenever he called; and in this frame of mind he died. The Bishop was now his mother's sole consolation. His lordship was never absent from Inniscar, and Mrs. O'Brien responded to his every whim. He wheedled her money out of her by the thousand; and last of all she made everything over to him and entered a convent. Other rich women in the diocese had done the same before her.

Father Ralph became a popular favorite; but his intercourse with the people soon convinced him of the fact that, as a class, the priests were universally hated. The people submitted to their rule simply because they feared them. Here and there a priest was to be found who was a good man, such as Father Duff, who confessed that he never gave ten minutes to thinking about his soul in his whole life, and that if the Catechism didn't tell him he had one

he wouldn't know it, and Father Sheldon, who was obliged to admit that doing any thinking on his own account was "a dangerous occupation for a priest"; but being good men they made bad priests. Father Molloy was declared to be the typical priest, and he was a heartless tyrant in his parish. Father Ralph established a club for working-men which proved a great boon to many of them. Father Molloy frowned on that club from the beginning. When three of the members were nominated to fill half of the six vacancies for the office of Town Commissioners, Father Molloy and his friends canvassed the town against them with complete success, and the club itself was smashed up. "One by one half-a-dozen workmen were dropped by their employers, and found it impossible to get work elsewhere." This was done out of spite because they had ventured "to set themselves up against the respectable shopkeepers of this ancient town." Father Ralph did his utmost to find employment for them, but he "could get no one to take them." When he asked Father Molloy to get them work his reverence, pursing his lips and frowning, said, "A little starvation will do them good and bring 'em to their senses." Eventually he promised to think about it, but he added:—

"I won't lift a finger though for Byrne and Dunne. They may go to hell for all I care. I wish to God they were out of the town. I'll have no man in the parish that won't go my way. I met that little Danne yesterday and he had the impudence to cheek me. I'll make mincemeat of him yet."

Father Ralph became a Modernist, and the present Pope's Encyclical against Modernism compelled him to renounce his Orders. No one can honestly peruse this book without coming to the conclusion that the curse of Ireland is priestcraft, and that the Irish nation cannot possibly prosper as long as this curse remains. There are many thousands who do not believe in the Church, but they are afraid to say so openly. In every parish the priest is supreme. When Monarch Reason awakes in Ireland the Fathers Molloy will have to flit, and Mr. O'Donovan's book will do much to accelerate the advent of that happy time.

J. T. LLOYD.

Christianity and the Chinese.—V.

(Continued from p. 357.)

"I am fully aware of the delicacy of the subject of which I write. It is hedged around by a curiously impalpable barrier. Men in certain positions dare not speak their minds openly about it for fear of their words being misconstrued at home. The power behind the missionaries in America especially, and also in England, is great. The brand of 'Atheist' or 'Unbeliever' can easily be attached to a [Cabinet] Minister, so it comes to pass that one hears opinions in private that they dare not imperil their position by expressing openly."—GEORGE LYNCH, *The Path of Empire* (1903), p. 47.

"The Boxer patriot of the future will possess the best weapons money can buy, and then the 'Yellow Peril' will be beyond ignoring. Wen Hsiang, the celebrated Prime Minister of China, during the minority of Tung Chih in the early 'sixties, often said, 'You are all too anxious to awake us and start us on a new road, and you will do it; but you will all regret it, for, once awaking and started, we shall go fast and far—farther than you think—much farther than you want!' His words are very true."—SIR ROBERT HART, *These from the Land of Sinim* (1901), pp. 52-53.

BEFORE proceeding further, it will be as well to clear up one or two popular misconceptions—due to the wholesale misrepresentation and downright lying of missionary propagandists. To hear some missionaries, over here for a six months' holiday, discourse at the annual missionary meetings held in our churches and chapels, one would think that the only recreations of the Chinese consisted in smoking opium and murdering their female infants; or, if they permit them to live, to torment them by binding their feet; added to which they worship idols and are immersed in the most degrading superstitions. The opposition encountered by these great and good men in China is accounted for by the "opium war," by which Indian opium was forced

upon the unwilling Chinese at the point of the bayonet, and to the intolerance of the Chinese religions.

As a matter of fact, the Chinese are, of all nations, the most tolerant in matters of religion. Professor Parker, in his *China and Religion*, observes:—

"It is surely very much to China's credit that at no period of her history have the ruling powers 'in being' ever for one instant refused hospitality and consideration to any religion recommended to them as such. If there has been hostility, it has always sprung up from political and economical causes" (p. 2).

And the same author declares:—

"That the Chinese Government has always been one of the broadest-minded and the most liberally inclined towards pure religion; that it has never persecuted to the merciless and cruel extent once so common all over Europe, and that when it has seemed to persecute at all, it has really only defended what it honestly believed to be its own political rights; it has never encouraged religious spite, mental tyranny, or the stifling of any free opinion that keeps clear of State policy, scandal, or libel" (pp. 6-7).

To make this point clearer, says the Professor:—

"If we put it in another way, suppose the 2,500 missionaries of innumerable Protestant sects now in China applied for passports to go about the same work in Russia, what would be their reception? How would their rights compare with those they enjoy in China?" (p. 8).

And, as he further points out, we know nothing of "final causes" or of a man-like "Supreme Ruler":—

"Why, then, should the *odium theologicum* be so persistent except on the hypothesis that no one possesses the least knowledge about either life or soul, and therefore each apostle feels angry at being driven into a corner when pressed for demonstration? Such, at least, is the tolerant view the best rulers of China have always taken of religion" (p. 15).

This toleration is the outcome of that natural and ingrained scepticism which we have seen to be characteristic of the Chinese mind. We could give many more citations as to the toleration of the Chinese in matters of religion, but it will suffice to give the testimony of Mr. Alexander Michie, whose work, *The Englishman in China during the Victorian Age*, is the standard book on the subject. He says:—

"One trait in the national character was highly favorable to the reception of a foreign religion. The Chinese were of all nations the most tolerant of opinion. They had already accepted and assimilated two foreign religions—Buddhism and Mohammedanism; indeed, they had also, two hundred years before, accepted and retained Christianity until it was expelled in convulsions provoked by the foreign missionaries themselves. Its second advent need not have caused convulsions had it come as the others had done, with clean hands, as a religion and nothing else."*

So much for the missionary charges of intolerance. Now for the charges of infanticide so boldly and repeatedly brought against the Chinese by the missionaries.

Dr. Morrison, who says that this subject, of the prevalence of infanticide in China, has been discussed by a legion of writers and observers, and the conclusion generally arrived at is—the prevalence of the crime has been enormously overstated. He goes on to observe:—

"The prevalent idea with us Westerners appears to be that the murder of their female children is a kind of national pastime with the Chinese, or, at the best, a national peculiarity. Yet it is open to question whether the crime, excepting in seasons of famine is, in proportion to the population, more common in China than it is in England. H. A. Giles, of H. B. M. Chinese Consular Service, one of the greatest living authorities on China, says: 'I am unable to believe that infanticide prevails to any great extent in China.....In times of famine or rebellion, under stress of exceptional circumstances, infanticide may possibly cast its shadow over the empire, but as a general rule I believe it to be no more practised in China than in England, France, the United States, and elsewhere' (*Journal, China Branch R. A. S.* (1885), p. 88). G. Eugène Simon, formerly

French Consul in China, declares that 'infanticide is a good deal less frequent in China than in Europe generally, and particularly in France,' a statement that inferentially receives the support of Dr. E. J. Eitel (*China Review*, xvi., 189). The prevailing impression as to the frequency of infanticide in China is derived from the statements of missionaries, who, no doubt unintentionally, exaggerate the prevalence of the crime in order to bring home to us Westerners the deplorable condition of the heathen among whom they are laboring. But even among the missionaries the statements are as divergent as they are on almost every other subject relating to China."*

After citing several of these contradictory statements, Dr. Morrison observes:—

"One of the best known Consuls in China, who lately retired from the service, told the writer that in all his thirty years' experience of China he had only had personal knowledge of one authentic case of infanticide. 'Exaggerated estimates respecting the frequency of infanticide,' says the Rev. Dr. D. J. MacGowan, 'are formed owing to the withholding interment from children who died in infancy.' And he adds that 'opinions of careful observers will be found to vary with fields of observation'" (*China Review*, xiv., 206). †

Of the love of the Chinese for their children, we have ample testimony. Miss Elizabeth Kendall, in her recently published book, *A Wayfarer in China*, tells us:—

"The way to the heart of the Chinese is not far to seek. They dote on children, and children the world over are much alike. More than once I have solved an awkward situation by ignoring the inhospitable or unwilling elders and devoting myself to the little ones, always at hand. Please the children and you have won the parents" (p. 56).

Mr. George Lynch observes:—

"As to the love of the Chinese and Japanese for their children, it has to be seen to be appreciated. Those wise-eyed little mites, who before they can walk sit perpetually enthroned upon their mothers' backs throughout the live-long day, are a source of so much joy and adoration to their parents that one feels no surprise not to hear them cry as other children do." ‡

And these are the people who, according to some missionaries, practice wholesale murder of their helpless infants!

As for the practice of foot-binding, it is indeed a barbarous custom. It has been condemned by the reform party now in power in China, and is well on the road to extinction. Mr. R. F. Johnston, in his valuable work on the Chinese, says:—

"In spite of the cruelty involved in foot-binding, the rather common impression that the Chinese have no affection for their daughters or regard the birth of a girl as a domestic calamity is very far from correct. That a son is welcomed with greater joy than a daughter is true, but that a daughter is not welcomed at all is a view which is daily contradicted by experience. Mothers especially are often as devoted to their girls as they are to their boys. In the autumn of 1909 a headman reported to me that a woman of his village had killed herself because she was distracted with grief on account of the death of her child. The child in question was a girl, fourteen years of age. 'Her mother,' said the headman, 'begged Heaven [*Lao T'ien-yeh*] to bring her daughter back to life, and she declared that she would willingly give her life in exchange for that of her daughter.' It is erroneous to suppose that the old loving relations between mother and daughter are necessarily severed on the daughter's marriage. It is often the case that a young married woman's happiness consists in periodical visits to her old home."§

Moreover, it should be carefully remembered, says Professor Giles, that Manchu women do not compress their feet, and the Empresses of modern times—who belong to the Manchu race—have feet of the natural size. Neither is the practice in force among the Hakkas, nor among the hill tribes, nor among the boating population of Canton and elsewhere. The same authority observes: "Neither is there any foundation for the generally received opinion that

* Dr. G. E. Morrison, *An Australian in China*, pp. 129-130.

† *Ibid.*, p. 130.

‡ G. Lynch, *The War of the Civilisations*, p. 292.

§ R. F. Johnston, *Lion and Dragon in Northern China*, p. 247.

* Alexander Michie, *The Englishman in China during the Victorian Age* (1900), vol. ii., p. 228.

the Chinese lame their women in this way to keep them from gadding about. Small-footed women may be seen carrying quite heavy burdens, and even working in the fields."*

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

Acid Drops.

We have received a long, chaotic letter from Mr. H. A. Marsh, which he rightly surmises will not be printed in the *Freethinker*. The only relevant statement he makes is that his contemptible babblings about the late J. M. Wheeler—who died fifteen years ago, and might have been left, as the saying is, to rest peacefully in his grave—did not refer to anything that occurred during his last illness, in 1898, but to something that occurred during his first illness, in 1883—at which time, we believe, Mr. Marsh was either very young or unborn. His own authority on the matter may be treated as negligible. The authority he advances is that of a Mr. Richards, who states, in a letter to Mr. Marsh, dated March 26, 1913—that is, thirty years after the event—that he heard Mr. Wheeler utter certain words as to whether blasphemers could be saved, etc., etc. We have no room for more of such nonsense. For its importance to the lower sort of Christians depends upon that word "illness." They take it to have been a common illness, whereas it was mental illness. Mr. Wheeler broke down after our imprisonment, and had to be placed in an asylum. Surely every sensible person will excuse us from discussing samples of his ravings while in that condition. We may add that Mr. Wheeler's illnesses were always mental. His body was frail, but not unhealthy; he ate well and slept well; it was brain trouble every time that he broke down. He was in three asylums in 1883—the year of my imprisonment; he was in another asylum in 1884—after my release; and he died in another asylum in 1898. We did our utmost for him during that fourteen years. We had been warned that another attack would probably be fatal.

We decline to consider the ravings of a madman—for such Mr. Wheeler was during every recurrence of his malady. We heard plenty of them one Sunday afternoon in 1884, when we had to rope him (with the assistance of Mr. W. J. Ramsey) and take him to a lunatic asylum ourselves. That horrible performance just left us time to swallow a cup of tea and step upon the Hall of Science platform.

The greater part of Mr. Marsh's letter is occupied with an invitation to us to go to Hyde Park and hold a public discussion with him. On what? Why, on whether Mr. Wheeler was fair to the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale in an article in the *Freethinker* in 1893—twenty years ago! What on earth has Mr. Marsh to do with that article? What has anybody to do with it at this time of day? We don't remember what the article was, and we decline to take the trouble to refer to it. Any mistake, misrepresentation, or injustice it might have contained should have been corrected or challenged at the time. It is not going to be discussed by us, or in these columns, to-day. Only born fools—or designing persons trading on the folly of born fools—would quarrel with our decision.

A word in conclusion. Is it not, perhaps, the most decisive condemnation of Christianity that the champions of its "Evidences" have always devoted most of their time to raking over the muck-heap of personalities. We never knew them to do anything else. We never heard of their doing anything else. Were we to imitate them we could fill whole *Freethinkers* with similar cackle about Christians. But we decline to follow their disgusting example and sink to their ignominious level.

Since writing the foregoing paragraphs we have received a most amusing letter from Mr. W. Davidson, a member of the N. S. S. Executive, residing at 131 Warwick-road, Edmonton. The opening paragraph of this letter shows what sort of stuff the latest yarn about a distinguished dead *Freethinker* is made of. Mr. Davidson writes:—

"Inquirers are referred to Mr. Allen, and we are informed that a letter exists written, it is supposed, by a sister of Mr. Wheeler's; the letter being in the possession of a Mr. Richards, of Edmonton. Mr. Allen lives three doors from me, but I was so unkind as to pass his door, and seek out Mr. Richards who holds 'the original letter.' He received me with a courtesy that is very rare among the elect and placed the whole case before me. To come to the point.

There is no letter from Mr. Wheeler's sister; in fact, there is no letter at all. To cap it all, Mr. Richards knows nothing about the sister; he does not know if there is one."

Mr. Richards tells his own story and seems to be his own witness. He repeats to Mr. Davidson, with several fresh decorations, what he has already said to Mr. Marsh and others. He admits that Mr. Wheeler, on the night of March 9, 1883, was "off his head." Why, then, go further? How on earth can it matter what poor Wheeler said? We don't care a straw *what* he said. It cannot be of the slightest interest or importance to any sensible person in the world. And we repeat that we decline to cumber our pages with it.

Mr. Davidson goes on (Mr. Richards took him there) to that wicked article of Mr. Wheeler's in the *Freethinker* of January 29, 1893. This part of Mr. Davidson's letter is extremely funny, and we would print some passages if we had not already given the matter too much space. "The whole thing," Mr. Davidson concludes, "is an escape of Marsh gas, which has produced the usual will-o'-the-wisp."

A protest against the use of religious terms in business advertising has been made in a new direction and in rather a novel manner. The Annual Convention of the Society of Friends, held recently in New York, protested strongly against the use of the word "Quaker" for advertising articles of commerce. The committee asks, if "Quaker Whisky," and similar expressions, why not permit the following?—

- "Baptist beer is the best booze."
- "Congregational cocktails makes multitudes marry."
- "Episcopalian paint covers a multitude of sins."
- "Catholic cocktails are a cure for all cases."
- "Presbyterian purses for plethora pockets."
- "Lutheran looking-glasses give pious reflections."

The committee appointed to consider the matter invites the co-operation of other religious bodies for their mutual protection. Perhaps, if this invitation meets with no response, Quaker business men may contemplate reprisals. The subject opens up almost infinite possibilities.

Dr. Campbell Morgan says he only really believed in the Bible when he put all other books on religion aside and said, "I will read it without prejudice and without pride, as every man should. I will let it make its own appeal to my soul. And it did." Of course it did. So would any other book read in the same circumstances. It is as plain as it can be that Dr. Morgan expected that it would appeal to him, and, in such cases, the expected usually happens. That is not reading the Bible without prejudice; it is commencing with a prejudice of a very strong and definite character. Dr. Morgan is either deliberately fooling himself or fooling other people.

A new novel bears the title *The Naked Soul*. The very essence of nudity! And no doubt full of piety.

A woman named Kate Martin was charged recently with riotous behavior in a church. As she wanted to see "God," and not the clergy, she was committed to an asylum.

The *Church Times* professes itself greatly disappointed at the outcome of the Balkan war. So, we imagine, are many others. These others who may have pictured the Allies as undertaking a war in the interests of freedom and brotherhood will have had a rude awakening on finding the movement disclosed as a mere piratical enterprise, with the Christian Allies ready to fly at each other's throats over the plunder. The regret of the *Church Times* is not, however, on this score. Its grievance is that the "hope of December"—"the entire destruction of the Ottoman Empire"—is not to be realised. It is not content for that Empire "to continue another day." We do not imagine that it matters much whether the *Church Times* is content or not. Its shriekings are only noteworthy as showing how far Christian bigotry will carry some people. The *Church Times* has never raised a word of protest against the now admitted barbarities of the Christian Allies. It is a case of the Cross against the Crescent, and anything the former may do in such a contest is wholly justifiable.

Only a week or so ago this same very Christian journal was indulging in another shriek in favor of conscription—we beg pardon, compulsory military discipline, which is a new name for the old thing. It laughed at those who thought a military training injurious to character, an incentive to militarism, or economically wasteful. As though any form of compulsory military training could avoid producing all these effects. It argues that many would be better off

* H. A. Giles, *The Civilisation of China*; 1911; p. 105.

under military training than they are at present. Very likely; but that is an argument for better social organisation, not for conscription. And how is it possible to maintain a large army of men in a wholly non-productive pursuit without saddling the rest of the community with their support? Even though it be necessary, it is economically disastrous.

The Christian Church, says the *Church Times*, holds it not merely permissible, but even laudable, to bear arms at the bidding of lawful authority, and that without questioning the fundamental justice of the conflict. That is the proper spirit of militarism. Fight on order, whether the conflict be just or unjust, and without even inquiring whether it be one or the other. And that, we are asked to believe, is not detrimental to character? If such a course means anything at all, it means the entire abrogation of a sense of right and wrong. And how can we expect men trained in that school to become as useful citizens as they might otherwise be? The *Church Times* also reflects that a nation that relies on a voluntary army may rush light-heartedly into war, but a nation in arms will act differently. It is "precisely the obligation of military service" that has "turned France from drunken dreams of glory to become the most stable upholder of European peace." We welcome this good opinion of France, which has disestablished religion, and which contains so large a leaven of Freethought in its councils. But the reasons upon which the good opinion is based are simply idiotic. France had its "drunken dreams of glory" under conscription, not under voluntarism, which never existed in modern France. And, if conscription leads countries to become powerful factors for peace, are we to conclude that it is England—Christian England, with its voluntarism—that is ready to rush light-heartedly into war, and is the storm centre of European life? Really, the *Church Times* is getting on dangerous ground. Its theology is stupid enough, but its sociology is even worse.

Mr. Balfour has been repeating his attachment to "religious education." Who doubted it? That is the "ticket" of his party, and it was his party he was addressing. Of course he talked with his tongue in his cheek. On other platforms, and on other subjects, he would never dare to say that "no thinking man" could differ from the views he was expressing. He knows very well that "thinking men" differ from him on all sorts of subjects. Perhaps it only needs to be said that the Archbishop of Canterbury (Chairman of the Church of England, Limited) presided at the meeting.

The Rev. David Barron is greatly mistaken when he says that it is "a certificate of character to be attached to a Church." It used to be a certificate of respectability, but never of character. It is a notorious fact that the biggest scoundrels in history were professing Christians. In many centres now, however, to be attached to a Church is not looked upon even as a sign of respectability, the Churches having completely lost the place they once held in the estimation of the public.

Mrs. Besant has been addressing big meetings at Queen's Hall. This is not surprising when we consider her natural gift of speech, the way in which she dresses herself now she is a Theosophic high priestess, the large amount of money spent on advertising her lectures, and the tomfoolery she pours forth in a flood. Talk sense—and how few will listen! Talk nonsense—and what a crowd will hang upon your lips! Mrs. Besant has learnt the truth of this by joyful experience. The moment she left Atheism and embraced one of the most foolish and pretentious superstitions in the world, she found that she had combined "conviction" with "respectability." People could go and hear her without loss of social dignity. There was a rush of disciples (we should call them by a harder name) who were tired of Christianity, and many of whom saw through it, but were naturally of a religious temperament, and dying for something to take the place of the faith they had abandoned. They had to have some faith, and Mrs. Besant supplied it. Moreover there was a special business advantage in Theosophy. You could make it up as you went along—on the principle of the American political candidate who ended an eloquent speech by saying, "Well, gentlemen, those are my sentiments; and if they don't suit—they can be altered." The very advertisements of Mrs. Besant's recent Queen's Hall lectures hold out a bait to every variety of superstitionists. Catholics, Protestants, Buddhists, Hindus, Mohammedans, Jews, Salvationists, Mormons, are all invited to walk into the Theosophic Annex and enjoy themselves. Mrs. Besant is working the "happy family" arrangement in religion. That is all she does. It would be a waste of time to discuss anything she says. She does not discuss nowadays; she delivers oracles. She knows no

more than she did when she was an Atheist. She asserts a great deal more, but it is all about the unknown. Some day or other (after death) you may find that Mrs. Besant's assertions are true; meanwhile you give her unlimited credit for the cheques she draws upon your credulity. It is by this that all the religious charlatans in the world succeed in their operations. They supply you with information about the next life, and you supply them with position, comfort, and cash in this life. We are sorry that Mrs. Besant has joined that tribe, but there is no shirking the fact. Don Quixote told Sancho Panza that there never were but two parties in the world—the Haves and the Have-Nots. Just in the same way there never were but two mental camps in the world—the camp of Faith and the camp of Reason; and Mrs. Besant is in the wrong one.

The Rev. Dr. Meyer told his congregation at Regent's Park Chapel that he delighted in the posters on the hoardings. Did he include the pictures of the musical comedy girls?

Theologically speaking, the Rev. H. S. McClelland, B.D., of Finchley, is clearly a coming man. At present he has charge of the Correspondent Column in the *Christian Commonwealth*. He is exceedingly ingenious and very well versed in the art of playing with words. An anxious inquirer asks, "Can any cultured mind believe any longer in the Genesis stories of the Creation and the Flood, or the Nativity stories in certain of the Gospels?" Mr. McClelland answers thus: "Certainly, my friend. My difficulty is to understand how they can be believed by any except the cultured mind." This may strike the thoughtless as an extremely smart answer, but in reality it is no answer at all. It is rather an instance of verbal jugglery.

By a cultured mind, the reverend gentleman tells us, he means "the mind that has learned to distinguish actual truth from ideal truth, and has realised that ideal truth is nearer reality than any cumbrous happening of history." If he is right it follows that the cultured mind is only about fifty years old. The stories referred to had always been regarded as actual "cumbrous happenings of history" until scientific criticism rendered it quite impossible to treat them as such any longer. So great a man as Gladstone had not a cultured mind, for he strenuously argued that the stories under consideration were actual truths; and the same may be said of a vast number of divines at the present moment. The fact is, that the New Theologians imagine that the cultured mind belongs exclusively to themselves.

Take the story of the Virgin Birth as an example. If it is not actually true, if it never happened, how on earth can it be ideally true? Mr. McClelland is perfectly right when he says that to regard "these statements as the record of actual facts is to deprive them at once of their spiritual significance for thousands of devout and holy men who simply cannot believe they ever took place." If the Virgin Birth never took place, what "spiritual significance" can it possibly have? Certainly no more in the case of Jesus than in that of Gotama, Plato, Alexander the Great, Scipio Africanus, Augustus, or any other person whom the ignorance and credulity of admirers deified after he was dead. Such juggling tricks will save neither the Bible nor Christianity.

The Rev. John Appleyard, of Burnley, says that "when Jesus encountered social evils he promptly sought a remedy." On what authority does the reverend gentleman make such a statement? Can he name one social evil which Jesus attacked and sought to remove? Was he not known as "the friend of publicans and sinners [harlots]?" What help did the poor ever get from him? Did he not rather mock them, saying "Blessed are ye poor"?

The Dean of Norwich and Mrs. Florence Barclay are at loggerheads about the Bible. Dean Beeching is to some extent a Higher Critic, but Mrs. Barclay, with greater consistency, holds that God's Word must be characterised by absolute infallibility. We agree with the lady. The Word of God *must* be infallible. The Bible is fallible; therefore it cannot be the Word of God. As a scholar the Dean admits its fallibility, while as a clergyman he treats it as the Word of God, which is the very acme of inconsistency.

The usually well-informed correspondent of the *Christian World* has a remarkable article in that paper of June 5, on the state of religion in Germany. He says that about 40,000 persons left the State Church during the first four months of this year. In 1905 the number of seceders was 12,000; in 1911, 60,000; in 1912, 100,000; and this year

the number is expected to reach 200,000. In the official papers they are compelled to fill up, stating their opinions, they describe themselves as Free-religious, Freethinkers, Monists, Atheists, Pantheists, Humanists, Theosophists, Gnostics, and no religion at all. English religious leaders, with that ingrained duplicity which seems inseparable from British Christianity, are in the habit of referring to such movements as losses that affect the Roman Catholic Church or the Lutheran Church alone, and leaving it to be inferred that evangelical Protestantism is the gainer. On this point the *Christian World* correspondent is most explicit. He says:—

"Observe, this is not a movement from one Christian denomination to another. It is not a movement against Episcopacy as such, against Presbytery as such, against State connection as such. Unbelief is at the bottom of it, and the men who secede, save in a very limited number of cases, are not ridden by any principles of State policy or dogma. They care for none of these things. The seceders reason thus: 'I do not believe any longer in the Church or its dogmas. I regard the Christian Church as an absurd and antiquated institution, which may have played a useful part in the past, but has no longer any reason for its existence. Its Bible, its creeds and confessions, have been shown by science to be untenable things to which no modern and educated man can consent.'"

"Unbelief is at the bottom of it." That, we believe, is a perfectly honest and accurate summary of the situation.

Rev. David Smith, who runs a correspondence column in the *British Weekly*, was trying last week to cheer up a mother who had lost a girl of nineteen years of age. He tells her that the mother's revolt against God is a "heathenish attitude." When pagans did not get their desires they blamed their gods, and "What better are we than those dark pagans if, when sorrow comes, we cry out against God and charge him with cruelty?" Personally, we should say that Christians are in this respect decidedly worse than "these dark pagans." It may be all right praising one's God for doing well, when he does well, but it shows a lack of courage and intelligence not to tell him he does badly when things are done ill. Paganism, in this respect, left a man a man, with enough courage to resent ill-treatment and impeach its author. Christianity taught man to keep on its knees and return thanks to the hand that flogged him. For our part, we prefer to see one stand up to whatever he has to face—God or man.

Mr. Smith gives the mother two grains of consolation, after administering the rebuke. He tells her that sorrow is the universal lot, and if she looks around she will "find others whose case is far worse." Maybe; but that really does not affect the issue. Each one's sorrow is one's own, and one's grief at the loss of a child is not really lessened because someone else has lost two children. It is an old piece of religious consolation, "Thank God, there are many worse off than I," but those worse off have their grievance increased, if possible, by the fact of others being better off. God may hit some people harder than others, but the real question is, "Why should he hit anyone?" The second crumb of comfort is that "there are sadder places on earth than the grave," and "Taken away from the evil to come" might be written on every child's grave, for "what the evil would have been God only knows." Well, that is a pretty way to compliment God! The "dark pagans" stood up to their gods and told them what they thought about their conduct. The Christian, lacking the courage of plain speech, tells God, by way of praising him, he has arranged the world so well that every person born is lucky who dies young. The difference between pagan and Christian does not, after all, seem to be in a difference of perception of the facts, but in strength of mind and honesty of expression. Dr. Smith is evidently a very bad case.

Mr. Blatchford denies a statement "said to have been made at a public meeting in America by Mr. Mangasarian" that he had abandoned rationalism and declared himself a Christian. "I think," he adds, that "someone has been pulling Mr. Mangasarian's leg." Perhaps so. But isn't it possible that someone has been pulling Mr. Blatchford's leg?

Mr. Blatchford is further concerned about another report that has reached him,—namely, that "Mr. Mangasarian prophesies an alliance between the Roman Catholics and the Socialists against Freethought." "What strange bees some men do get into their bonnets," Mr. Blatchford exclaims. True; the German invasion of England, for instance; which as the comic song says "hasn't come off up to yet."

"That, by God, we can't stand," exclaims Mr. A. M. Thompson. Never mind what it is that the stout knight and his friends can't stand—though they know quite well

that they have got to stand it. Why does Mr. Thompson take the name of God in vain? We understood that he (Mr. Thompson, not God) was an Agnostic, a Rationalist, or something of that sort—not an Atheist, of course; perish the thought! Why does he cry "by God"? If a Theist cries it he may be sincere. It is by no means a proof of sincerity in a Non-Theist. Mr. Thompson should try to recover his sense of humor.

Mr. Silas Hocking says that if the Church is in a decline, Christianity is not. "Christianity was gaining ground, but—it might as well be said first as last—it was outside the Church." We have heard this many times before; but it is sheer nonsense. Christianity and the Church are identical. They have never existed, they never can exist, apart. We do not know what Mr. Hocking means by Christianity, but we should be very glad to learn exactly where and in what manner it is gaining ground outside the Church. If he understands by it the teaching of Jesus, as Professor Harnack does, he knows as well as we do that in that sense it has always been a dead letter.

The Christian Pulpit is the strangest institution in the whole world. In proportion as the tide of its power recedes the tide of its audacity rises. The latter was never higher than it is at this moment, and the former never quite so low. The consequence is that it does not matter in the least what the Pulpit says on any subject, because nobody takes its utterances seriously. Like the clever writer of "The Office Window" in the *Daily Chronicle*, the great majority of people seldom hear a sermon, and rather than read one would play with Bradshaw. But as there are a few who still both hear and read sermons it may be useful to call attention to the fact whilst the influence of sermons is at ebb-tide, their extravagance is at flood-tide.

In the *Christian World Pulpit* for June 4 there is a sermon by the Rev. Dr. Newton Marshall which abounds in the wildest, most extravagant statements. One is that we know more about the man Jesus than we do about almost any other man who ever lived, and that we of to-day know more about him than any people in the past knew about him, except his personal friends. This statement is absurdly untrue. Why, there are scholars among us who deny his historicity, many more who doubt it, while theologians not a few regard him as largely a legendary character. Dr. Marshall is, therefore, talking sheer nonsense when he says that Jesus is almost the best known man that has ever lived. Greater scholars than he, who proudly call themselves Christians, such as Professors Schmiedel, Harnack, and Bacon, though believing in the historic Jesus, frankly admit that it is extremely difficult to extricate him from the webs of legend in which he is entangled in the Gospels.

But Dr. Marshall waxes more extravagant still. He goes on to assert that the historic Jesus is the Eternal and Universal Christ. That we may do him no injustice we give his own words:—

"Christ is the light of the world. By that we do not mean that he may be the light of the world, or that when missionaries have carried the Gospel everywhere he will be the light of the world—no, we mean that he is the light of the world. We mean that all the real light that men have had has been Christ. Edwin Arnold wrote a poem about Buddha and called it *The Light of Asia*. Students of non-Christian religions tell us of much light for the soul that those religions possess. And it is all Christ. Is this too daring?"

No; *nothing* is too daring for the Pulpit; but we are obliged to pronounce it frothy cant and twaddle, of which a man of Dr. Marshall's intelligence ought to be incapable. If such a Christ existed and beheld even London, he would shed tears of blood at the thought of his own infinite failure.

Rev. A. J. Waldron says he is ready to "back Disraeli any day against Jack Johnson." Very likely. It's easy odds on the ghost in such an encounter. Few blacks, or whites either, would stand up long to such an adversary. But that is not the end of Mr. Waldron's wisdom. "Don't spoil everything on the wedding day," he told the same Brockwell Park audience, "by telling your wife what ripping tarts your mother makes. Swallow the bride's pie, tell her it's a dream of delight, and then take a pill on the sly." This beats Confucius hollow. Jesus Christ did not die in vain. With-out his sufferings on the cross the world would never have had Mr. Waldron playing the Christian philosopher in *Tit-Bits*.

M. Bertillon, the eminent French criminologist, says the gentleman robber is found only in fiction. Evidently he does not regard priests as gentlemen.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £144 2s. 11d. Received since:—J. Barry, £1; Bogey, 15s.; J. N. V., 2s. 6d.; T. M. Mosley, 2s.

W. KENT.—The "twaddle" you send us from the *British Weekly* is too tiresome for criticism. We don't know where to begin and should never know where to end. Rev. Dr. Forsyth may take his verses for poetry, but it is rather odd that the editor should agree with him.

M. J. LEWIS.—We do not see what there is "to throw some light" on in the printed tract you send us. These stories of unnamed converted Atheists are manufactured by the dozen. They are mostly written by people of poor character for readers of weak brains. The only thing that needs explaining is the quantity of deliberate lying that goes on in connection with Christianity. We are glad to have your appreciation of the articles printed in the *Freethinker*.

T. M. MOSLEY.—We will glance through Mr. Ballard's production and see if there is anything in it that merits criticism. We are aware that Mr. Ballard has a vogue in certain circles, but we do not think any serious thinker is likely to be affected by what he says. We can quite understand that Mr. Ballard feels neglected when Freethought writers of repute ignore him, but as they invariably direct their criticism against writers of much better standing, their consciences are clear.

A. HOPKINS.—We note your opinion that our Wheeler articles "have given the C. E. people a nasty jar." Also, that you will expect them to lie low for the future. We feel more sanguine about their low lying.

E. B.—Many thanks for cuttings.

F. COLLINS.—We do not undertake to hunt up books and report prices for our readers. All we can tell you is that Holyoake's *Eyegones Worth Remembering* was published in two volumes by T. Fisher Unwin.

SYDNEY SMITH.—Shall be sent as desired. We wish you good luck in the New World.

J. BARRY, sending his annual subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund, writes: "Allow me to express the hope that by this time you have entirely recovered from your late illness, and that for many years yet you will be able to preside at the Annual Conference in the efficient manner that you did at the one recently held." Mr. Barry is a vice-president of the N. S. S. and a Director of the Secular Society, Ltd.

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

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.

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Personal.

I AM in the *Freethinker* editorial chair again. It is not fair to leave a responsibility to others when I feel able to bear it myself. Moreover, there are serious reasons why I should attack various arrears of work. Work, I mean, which cannot very well be delegated, but must be done by myself.

My pen has not been absent from the *Freethinker* for some time, as readers will have seen. In resuming the editorship I do not suddenly undertake a too heavy task. I am taking this step with my eyes perfectly open.

There are a few things I want to say to the party in general, and to my friends in particular. This I will do next week. Meanwhile, I beg to tender hearty thanks to Mr. Cohen for doing the duties of the editorial chair so long and so well, and to Mr. Lloyd and "Mimnermus," and other contributors for special help.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

The following paragraph is from the editorial "Notes" of the June number of the *Humanitarian*, the organ of the Humanitarian League, edited by the League's honorary secretary, Mr. H. S. Salt:—

"We are extremely glad to hear of the recovery of Mr. G. W. Foote, the President of the National Secular Society, from a recent serious illness. There are but few public men who have given such unwavering support to humanitarian principles—not merely to this principle or that, but to the movement as a whole. As editor of the *Freethinker*, Mr. Foote has again and again made courageous and powerful protest against the various forms of brutality with which the Humanitarian League has to deal. We say 'courageous' because it does require courage to speak freely (when one is not obliged to speak at all) on such subjects as flogging and vivisection, and 'powerful' because we know of no writer of the present day who goes to the root of a question with a keener and more unerring logical instinct than Mr. Foote. And in an age when there is so much flabby sentiment and slovenly writing, what better help can humanitarianism receive than the tribute of a clear and cogent mind?"

This is a very handsome compliment—no doubt too handsome; but the writer's discrimination makes it valuable. We have never had any inclination to "gush over scoundrels," as Carlyle would have put it; yet we would rather do them good than harm, and whoever feels otherwise is something less than a man. Our chief objection to brutal punishments, for instance, is that they not only brutalise brutes still further, but impair the dignity and self-respect of those who inflict them. Mr. Salt puts this aspect of the matter as well as it could be put in the present number of the *Humanitarian*, in reply to Canon Horsley, who had been talking nonsense about the "theorist humanitarian" who points to the hooligan and says "Love him!" Mr. Salt—unlike Canon Horsley, by the way—does not belong to the "love your enemies" faith, and does not "cant about 'loving' a peculiarly unlovable type." "We approve," he says, "of discipline for the hooligan; and the reason we oppose flogging him is not because we are under any sentimental illusions as to his qualities, but because we regard judicial flogging as a loathsome and useless practice, quite incompatible not only with any 'love' for the person subjected to it, but with any intelligent self-respect." That is the great point. Let us keep our self-respect, even if the hooligan has lost his. Surely that is a wise, dignified, modest, and unassailable position. Heroics are not wanted in the case; only steady common sense.

It would seem that Alfred Austin, the late poet laureate, was more heterodox than was supposed. His remains were cremated at Golder's Green on June 5. No funeral service was held, and no members of the family attended. A memorial service was held the next morning in the Chapel Royal, St. James's Palace, and another at the crematorium. Evidently there was a "rift within the lute" somewhere.

We are glad to say that patience has not been wasted, after all, with regard to the London County Council's attitude towards public meetings in the Parks and other open spaces. The Council has agreed at last that collections may be taken up at meetings held by *bona fide* Societies. We are able to announce that the N. S. S. "permits" are on their way to the General Secretary (Miss Vance). There is something more to be said, but it will keep till next week.

An anonymous reader, signing himself "Bogey," sends a subscription to the President's Honorarium Fund. If all the "bogies" of the world subscribed as much, in person or proxy (we guess it would have to be the latter), we should never have to make another appeal.

The Independent Religious Society (Rationalist) holds Sunday morning meetings in the Studebaker Theatre, Chicago—which it was fortunate enough to secure after being driven out of a larger hall by Christian bigotry. We are very glad to see by the brief official report on the front of the last Sunday Program (May 18) that "The Society has had a healthy growth this winter, and is now more firmly established than ever. This is a great tribute to the ideas and the ideals which command our loyalty and service. Our audiences have frequently taxed the capacity of the theatre and hundreds have been unable to gain admission." Chicago, of course, does not present the same difficulties that colossal London does; nevertheless the difficulties there are great enough, and Mr. Mangasarian performs a fine achievement in holding his audience together Sunday after Sunday for eight months in every year. We are sure he must feel the strain of such a task, and look forward eagerly to his annual holiday.

Mr. Mangasarian has favored us with copies of his two recent books—*The Bible Unveiled* and *The Truth About Jesus*. We have only had time to turn over the pages yet, but that assures us of a treat in store,—and as far as possible we will share the treat with our readers. We may add that Mr. Mangasarian has also favored us with a more than friendly letter, which many of our friends would very much like to read, but which we can hardly subject to the light of publication. The last sentence of all may perhaps be excepted. "I hope to be in England," Mr. Mangasarian says, "during the coming summer, and it goes without saying that you will be the first man that I shall look for."

The formation of the Secular Society, Limited, by Mr. Foote—a constructive achievement which those who call him a "destructive" have been able to imitate but not to equal—has settled the question as to whether funds can be received, held, and expended securely for the promotion of Freethought. We are not, surprised, however, that Mr. Will Crooks, who would be a wiser man if he played the buffoon less, is not aware of the fact. We may tell him at once that the help he seems now to proffer is not needed. Freethinkers have maintained their rights without his assistance and may continue to do so on the same conditions. Speaking at an Upper Holloway chapel on Sunday, Mr. Crooks was good enough to say (see Monday's *Daily News*) that "If a man wishes to leave his money for the propagation of Freethought he should be allowed to do so. He will regret it as soon as he's dead." Freethinkers are already allowed to leave their money in that way and for that object. Thank you for nothing, Mr. Will Crooks! You are not up to date in that matter. Neither is your humor very fresh. Charles Lamb asked Coleridge whether a man might not be damned without knowing it. Suppose you find *yourself* in the wrong box hereafter. There's no certainty, you know, until you get your ticket and address.

The most striking article in the June number of the *English Review* is Mrs. Billington-Greig's "The Truth About the White Slave Traffic." Like the good Freethinker and wholesome sensible woman that she is, with a natural revulsion against lies and wrong-doing, Mrs. Billington-Greig determined to see for herself what truth there was in the stories of the trappings of girls on which the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1912 was founded. She discovered—and she produces her detailed evidence in support of the statement—that those stories were very bad marionettes; that the people who solemnly told them back out of their responsibility when properly challenged; that official persons "in the know" flatly deny that any such White Slave Traffic existed; and that, as far as all the obtainable evidence goes, this new Bill, with its reintroduction of flogging, is simply hysterical legislation, brought about by "Parliament, the pulpit, and the press, the three chief public agents of irrational emotion." "The Fathers of the old Church," Mrs. Billington-Greig concludes, "made a mess of the world by teaching the Adam story and classing women as unclean; the Mothers of the new Church are threatening the future by the whitewashing of women and the doctrine of the uncleanness of men." This article should be read by everyone who cares for right and just relations between the sexes. For what is all the good intention in the world worth without thinking? Mrs. Billington-Greig's word to her own sex may be summed up as "Let us think."

A lively article in the *English Review* is Professor Rouse's on "Our 'Melancholy' Hymnal." Dr. H. Charlton Bastian contributes an important article on "Spontaneous Generation," ending with the statement that "For the Evolutionist the metaphysical conception of mind as an entity should disappear, and with it all forms of 'spiritualism'.....To speak of 'mind acting directly upon mind,' by way of so-called telepathy and other communications from the 'Spirit' world, must be for him a barren form of words." Mr. Arnold Bennett continues his articles on "The Story Teller's Craft." We differ from some things he says on Writing Novels, but we gladly endorse his fine tribute to Henry Fielding—one of the healthiest as well as strongest of writers, in spite of Charlotte Brontë.

The Edmonton Branch of the N. S. S. takes its annual outing on Sunday, June 22. The place selected is Loughton, and friends in the district who desire to join the party will meet on Edmonton Green at 9 o'clock on the morning of the above date. Those desirous of joining the party later may do so at the "Robin Hood" Hotel, Loughton, at 12 o'clock. Tickets for the excursion are 1s. each, from the Branch Secretary, or from Mr. Hecht, 34 Chiswick-road, Lower Edmonton.

The Life and Labors of Haeckel.—II.

(Continued from p. 365.)

IN 1866 Haeckel published his *General Morphology*, a two-volumed book running to twelve hundred pages of printed matter. This proved a work of the very first importance, which displayed a wonderful knowledge of organic nature. It marked an epoch in the science of animal classification. Huxley hailed it as one of the most solid scientific works ever written, and the eminent German zoologist, Richard Hertwig, has recently said that "Few works have done as much towards raising the intellectual level of zoology." Our own distinguished biologist, Professor J. A. Thomson, has spoken of it in the highest terms of praise. Nevertheless, despite its acknowledged value and importance, it fell practically still-born from the press. Its few readers were confined to the higher and more advanced students of the natural history sciences.

The term "morphology" now embraces the entire science of organic form. The generalisations of this science, like those of every other, are the outcome of a lengthy evolutionary development. Morphology commences with Aristotle, and that great Greek philosopher's contributions to the science were elaborated and extended among others by Linnæus and Ray. At a later date, Cuvier, Lamarck, Hilaire, and Goethe deepened and broadened its study. In 1865, quite independently of Haeckel, Herbert Spencer devoted special attention to the relation of morphology to physiology. His wonderfully fruitful discussion of the problems relating to the shapes of organic structures, which forms part of the *Principles of Biology*, is one that no reader who desires to master the philosophy of evolution can afford to neglect.

But the two thinkers who influenced Haeckel most profoundly were Oken and Goethe. He accepted Oken's main principles without repeating the few blunders which that philosopher admittedly made. But the author of *Faust* was the guiding star of Haeckel's philosophical and ethical system. From first to last Haeckel has unfalteringly claimed the "physician of an iron age," as Arnold called Goethe, as a consciously consistent evolutionist. In the writer's opinion there can be no doubt that this judgment is just. As Geddes and Mitchell have put it,—

"Goethe lived for forty years after the publication of his *Metamorphosis of Plants*, was familiar with the whole scientific movement, and warmly sympathised with the evolutionary views of Lamarck and Geoffroy St. Hilaire. Independently of Vicq d'Azyr, he discovered the human pre-maxillary bone; independently of Lorenz Oken he proposed the vertebral theory of the skull; and before Savigny he discerned that the jaws of insects were the limbs of the head."

Haeckel's *General Morphology of Organisms*, with the sub-title, *General Elements of the Science of Organic Forms, mechanically grounded on the theory of descent as reformed by Charles Darwin*, contains in embryo practically all the doctrines subsequently expounded in a score or so of important scientific works. The main contentions of the *Evolution of Man* and the *Riddle of the Universe* alike lie latent in the earlier work. The gastræa theory and the doctrine of recapitulation are both to be traced to the pages of the *General Morphology*.

The two succeeding years were divided between his professorial duties at Jena University and his happy and fruitful journeyings to various parts of the world in search of further materials for his biological studies. In 1868 Haeckel determined to popularise his *magnus opus*, the *General Morphology*, and the university lectures he had just delivered on this subject were published in a small, plainly bound volume. This was the first edition of *The Natural History of Creation*. Its success was instantaneous. Although it is but an abstract from the great *Morphology*, it is, perhaps, the most vivid description of the genesis and development of life ever penned.

This is certainly true of its later editions, containing, as these do, so many amplifications and improvements. The tenth edition is a handsome and splendidly illustrated production.

But the first edition, issued as it was when its author was a poor, ostracised, and comparatively unknown man, contained but a few crude woodcuts, entirely different to the fine plates and figures which now adorn the work. In comparing the embryos of different animals, the same blocks were sometimes employed, and this has led to a considerable amount of vindictive misrepresentation, both in reactionary circles in Germany and elsewhere. The facts have been very temperately stated by Professor Bölsche, himself a biologist of considerable standing. He writes:—

"For instance, there was the question of demonstrating that certain objects, such as the human ovum and the ovum of some of the related higher mammals, were just the same in their external outlines. The fact is quite correct and established to-day. If I draw the outline, and write underneath it that as a type it is applicable to all known ova of the higher mammals, including man, there is no possibility of misunderstanding. But if I print the same illustration three times with the suggestion that they are three different mammal-ova, the general reader is easily apt to think, not only that they are identical in the general scheme of this outline, but also in internal structure. He imagines that the ova of man and the ape are just the same, even in their microscopic and chemical features. This leads to a contradiction between the illustration and what Haeckel expressly says in the text. *We read that there is, indeed, an external resemblance in shape between these ova, but that there is bound to be a great difference in internal structure, since an ape is developed from the one and a human being developed from the other.* It would have been better if the general reader, who is not familiar with these outline pictures, had been more emphatically informed in the text below the illustration that even the outline is to be taken as a general and ideal scheme. In this sense we must certainly admit that the illustration was bad, since it might lead to a misunderstanding of the clear words of the text. But what are we to say when the opponents of Haeckel's views viciously raise the cry of 'bad faith' on the ground of a few little slips like this, and suggest that he deliberately tried to mislead his readers with false illustrations?.....All these wild charges are of no avail. The human ovum, which corresponds entirely in its general scheme to that of the other higher mammals, was not discovered in 1868 by the wicked Haeckel, but in 1827 by the great master of embryological research, Carl Ernst von Baer. The considerable external resemblance, at certain stages of development, between the embryos of reptiles, birds, and mammals, including man, was decisively established by the same great scientist. These really remarkable stages in the development of the human embryo, during which, in accordance with the biogenetic law, it shows clear traces of the gill-slits of its fish-ancestors, and has a corresponding fin-like structure of the four limbs and a very considerable tail, can be seen by the general reader at any time in the illustrated works of His, Ecker, and Kölliker (Haeckel's chief opponents), or in any illustrated manual of embryology, and their full force as evolutionary evidence can be appreciated."*

Another outstanding masterpiece is the *Evolution of Man*, in which, with great wealth of embryological detail, the origin and growth of the human race is elaborately traced from the primal protoplasmic speck. No contemporary biologist disputes the facts presented in this work, although some naturalists still hold out against Haeckel's deductions from the facts. The *Evolution of Man* continues the story of life's development as narrated in the earlier *History of Creation*, and was the first, and still remains the ablest and most successful, attempt to popularise the main discoveries in embryology on broad philosophic lines.

The great works above considered served to render Haeckel's celebrated Gastræa Theory familiar to the educated world. This theory was no wild speculation, but was based on a secure foundation of demonstrable fact. As is well known, the fertilised ovum

from which all animals are developed consists of a single cell. This divides into two cells, and cellular cleavage proceeds until a whole cluster is formed. In this cluster the cells arrange themselves at the surface, thus leaving a hollow cavity within. This stage is succeeded by the formation of two layers of cells, which arrange themselves like a double skin in the walls of the cell cluster, thus leaving an opening at one spot in the walls of the cell colony. This is now a free-swimming embryo with a mouth—the opening just mentioned—an outer skin, and an internal digestive skin. A creature such as this attaches itself to the floor of the sea and develops into a sponge. It is important to notice that this mode of development is common to corals and jelly-fishes as well as sponges. Moreover, this identical process is found among all orders of animal existence, including the very highest, man himself. But in the case of the lowly sponge the gastræa stage represents its full maturity. With the higher animals, however, the gastræa stage is merely an early embryonic condition which is quickly passed through and left behind. Hence Haeckel was constrained to conclude that the gastræa stage stands for a form of life which constituted the adult condition of the common ancestors of fishes, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals, including man. This seemingly far-fetched theory was once laughed to scorn, but is now frankly accepted by the majority of biologists throughout the world.

Another theory which is closely associated with the one just outlined is known as the Doctrine of Recapitulation. The underlying principle of this doctrine had long commended itself to philosophical naturalists. The pioneer embryologists were both puzzled and surprised at the phenomena which their studies revealed. Among these pioneers Oken occupies a high place, and to him the idea occurred that the caterpillar represents the worm-like stage of the ancestors of butterflies and moths. For instance, he says: "There is no doubt that we have here a striking resemblance, and one that justifies us in thinking that the development in the ovum is merely a repetition of the story of the creation of the animal groups."

Oken's theory that the embryological development of animals represents in reality a record of their past evolutionary history was received with ridicule. To some extent he was himself to blame for this, as his assumptions were not always accordant with anatomical and palæontological science. Haeckel, however, reformed all this; and in framing his generalisation he made the necessary modifications demanded by the sciences in question. Instead of discovering an unblurred record of life's development in the phenomena presented during the ascending stages of embryological growth, Haeckel discovered a condensed, abbreviated, and to some degree modified, epitome of the evolutionary history of animal forms. These qualifications and reservations amply suffice to account for the gaps and leaps which the developing embryo displays.

The law, then, that the numerous phases presented by the embryo or foetus—the unborn animal or child—more or less correspond to the stages through which its ancestors have slowly ascended in the course of their evolutionary development offers the only conceivable explanation of the facts. This explanation is now almost universally accepted by biological experts, and it certainly seems a remarkable coincidence that the history of organic evolution which has been preserved in the rocks completely corroborates the picture of life's development which embryological science presents to all who care to ponder the marvels which that fascinating branch of natural study has brought to light.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

What do savage tribes at present accept first of all from Europeans? Brandy and Christianity, the European narcotics. And by what means are they fastest ruined? By the European narcotics.—Nietzsche.

* *Life of Haeckel*, pp. 104, 105.

Division of Labor in Reform Work.

OUR idea of a Freethought society is a society of Freethinkers, with a meeting-place and a platform upon which, by means of lectures and discussions, Freethought may be voiced in harmony with its advocacy in a Freethought paper. We once had an opportunity to name a weekly paper, and we called it *Freethought*, and if we were to name another we should choose the same title. For a society what better word can be selected? It is good English, being the term applied to the rise of scepticism in England in the seventeenth century. The original Freethinkers were Deists, as some are to-day, but there was agreement among them, as the dictionary puts it, in rejecting the "authority of inspiration in religion, especially that of the Bible." After three hundred years of accepted use, it is too late now to begin analysing the word and raising the objection that thought is not and cannot be free, since one must think as circumstances compel. It is admitted there is not absolute freedom in thought more than in action, but we do not boggle over the word "free" in that other respect. Refining on the ultimate meaning of a word is a waste of time, and there is no point in the sarcasm about a free platform and free speech when these are denied to the invader of a meeting held for a specific purpose. One who does not know the historic significance of Freethought may learn it from a dictionary. He will find there no justification for the idea that it means the rejection of all things established by law and custom. A Freethought society demands no qualification of a member except that he shall be a Freethinker in the dictionary sense, and a member should be equally generous in asking only that the society shall in the same sense be true to its name.

There are occasions when, in vindication of the principles of free speech, which are vital to Freethought, a society must offer hospitality to advocates of unpopular reforms, as occurred when Abner Kneeland, founder of the Boston *Investigator*, invited William Lloyd Garrison to his platform because all others were closed to the Abolitionist. It was so in the early days of the New York Liberal Club, when there was hardly another place in the city where a Socialist could be heard, or where any other form of Radicalism could find an audience. The multiplication of Liberal platforms, the parentage of which the late Dr. Foote traced to the old Liberal Club, has provided the economic reformers with plenty of stage room, and they have their own audiences. It is the same with other radicalisms, so that the duty of setting aside their own advocacy to listen to that of Socialism, Suffragism, Eugenics, with solvents of the social question, does not now devolve upon the Freethought society or its speakers and supporters as such.

For the first time in a number of years the Freethinkers of New York have this winter had a society of their own, projected, according to our understanding, with a view to doing exclusively Freethought work. From the lectures printed in the *Truthseeker*, readers will judge how closely this program has been followed. While notices of meetings held for other and allied purposes have been read at the hall, the distribution of circulars has not been encouraged, and only Freethought literature has been offered for sale. The character of the society has, in this way, been clearly defined—it has aimed to be nothing else than a Freethought society; and yet we may note here, as a curious illustration of the difficulty of making people understand, that when on a recent Sunday steps were taken toward a permanent organization, and a committee chosen to name it and outline its purposes, there was an inquiry from an auditor as to whether the society proposed to extend its discussions over the various problems engaging the attention of the community, and two or three names, with Freethought left out, were suggested. As though the first thing to do in the advocacy of Freethought were to call it something else!

It is pretty near the universal experience of our societies that they have been most injured by the speakers' forgetting or ignoring the object of the organisation and what the audiences had come for. In our years of attendance at the Manhattan Liberal Club, we saw scores who went away dissatisfied and not to return because, having come to hear one sort of a lecture and discussion, they were obliged to listen to another kind. They ask what that has to do with Liberalism? and there is no answer. A divisive issue, or an issue in which no interest is felt by many, must be as productive of dissatisfaction and indifference among Freethinkers as elsewhere. Varieties of viewpoint are undoubtedly diverting, but can a society any more than an individual make diversion the main business of existence and continue to live? A man must have a pursuit and follow it in order to subsist, and the more steadily he adheres to his purpose the better his chances to succeed. If the same is not true of an organisation, we can only express our regret at not seeing why.

We have been told that a semi-literary society cannot get along nowadays unless it takes up the "sex" and "economic" questions. We wish sex and economics success in all their worthy undertakings, but to succeed with them would not be exactly to succeed with the Freethought question, which is our purpose.

There may not be everything in a name, but there is a great deal in the meaning of it. For what may be accomplished in the spread of Freethought ideas, Freethought should have the credit by name.

It is assumed that all secular reforms are moving in the same direction, or toward the same far-off event that will never happen—that is, the complete happiness of the race. In making the journey it is a reasonable supposition that the way will be pleasanter and progress accelerated if there is not too much straggling from road to road by the travellers, and too much strength wasted by some in trying to convince the rest that after all there is only one way to approach the goal, or by others in trying to travel all the roads at once. Freethinkers have been the starters of about all the reform movements we see. We can think of none with any promise in it that was not cranked at the outset by some religious heretic. They have since acquired motive power of their own. When Freethought holds a campfire it will welcome them as intelligent and appreciative auditors, and as contributors when the hat goes round, and will return their visits. If they are not always invited to address the gathering, and to elucidate their views at large, they must not regard the circumstance as unfriendly, but lay it to the adage that there is a place for everything, and accept the principle of division of labor.

—*Truthseeker* (New York). GEORGE MACDONALD.

Freethought in Latin America.

THE South American Republic of Chili is, perhaps, little known to the readers of this journal, and has not figured largely in the Freethought movement. Bordered on the one side by the Pacific, and on the other by the Andes, Chili has been called the last corner of the world. Nevertheless, the seed of Freethought finds here a virgin soil, and for this reason a few words may not be out of place, the immediate motive being that at the time of writing a vigorous Freethought campaign is being carried on by that powerful and passionate speaker, yet withal tender and winsome daughter of Spain, Senora Belen de Sárraga.

Those who took part in the Freethought Conference at Rome may remember the delirious manifestation made at the close of one of her imposing speeches, and she was amongst those who carried an offering of flowers to lay at the foot of Giordano Bruno's statue. Later, she attended the Freethought Conference at Buenos Aires; and it

was while there that she saw the need of her propaganda in the Republics of South America.

The present campaign has not been confined to Chili, but has extended to the Argentine, Uruguay, Brazil, Venezuela, Mexico, Columbia, Ecuador, and Peru.

At Valparaiso, huge crowds flocked to hear her, and waited on her words with expectancy to drink in the New Evangel. All seats were taken up days beforehand, and at the close of each lecture huge crowds accompanied her to the hotel, with shouts of "Long live Freethought," and she was obliged to speak again from the balcony before the crowd went away. For a wonder, the press has been fair, though the ostensibly Catholic organs, when not violently attacking her, have kept a profound silence. The characteristic of her meetings was the large number of well-dressed ladies and young men, and one feels that the rising generation can be easily won to Freethought when it is lucidly placed before them. Said the distinguished lecturer to an interviewer:—

"My mission is to preach the Gospel of Freethought to Latin America, and the only enemy of Freethought is religion, with its mysterious doctrines, inscrutable to human reason. Seeing the need of our propaganda in America, I have undertaken this mission, which I intend to repeat as long as my physical condition will permit. I come to preach the truth; to emancipate the woman, the worker, and the student; to make possible the ideal of Freethought."

Such, in brief, are the sentiments which are finding a ready echo in the hearts of the Chilean people, and one can only hope that this outburst of enthusiasm will be wisely organised and directed, so that it may become a potent fighting force in this intensely Catholic country.

PERCY S. BOWEN.

Effect of Christianity on the Incas of Peru, South America.

BEFORE the year 1532 the natives of Peru lived under an ideal government. The laws by which they were governed—thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not lie, thou shalt not be idle—and which were rigidly enforced, resulted in a condition of social purity never equalled in history. "The land was divided among the people, all were provided for, and their State-provided land sown and harvested for them by the community, the result being that while none of the common people could become rich, neither could they descend to poverty and want." In 1532, Pizarro, the Christian conqueror, and his men, descended on this wonderful land, with a message from the Pope to Atahualpa, the Inca king. Peru was doomed. Her delicate system of government, her architectural monuments, whose ruins are still the wonder of the world, were ruthlessly destroyed by the "ignorant bigotry of fanatical priests." The nameless horrors perpetrated upon these people in the name of Christ form one of the many bloody monuments which, standing in silent array in the pathway of history, testify to the truth of the text, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword" (Matt. x. 34). At a meeting arranged by Pizarro between the Inca king and himself, the Christian conqueror laid an ambush for the Indians, and made Atahualpa prisoner. After promising to release the monarch on paying several millions of money, and while that money was being brought, the Inca king was butchered. Why? Because he would not accept Christianity. To-day, as a result of the introduction of that religion, the social life of Peru is as debased and degraded as it was lofty and pure in the absence of Christianity.

R. N. MCNAIRN.

A hair on the back of my hand as great as any miracle.—
Walt Whitman.

A Letter to Sir Hiram Maxim

From Mr. George Roberts, a Celebrated American Lawyer on Patent Cases.

MY DEAR SIR HIRAM,—

I have read your work, *Li Hung Chang's Scrap Book*, through from cover to cover, and have thoroughly enjoyed it all. It is very concentrated food, owing to the fact that you have extracted the meat out of the authoritative sources quoted without requiring the reader to digest the less nutritious parts with which they were originally accompanied. On that account your work is much more forceful than any one author, however learned and widely travelled, could have made it. Think of the progress that the civilised world has made in a century since those who sold or circulated Paine's relatively mild treatise were punished so barbarously! I shall look, however, for a great row in certain sections of the Christian community over your blasphemies; but the bulk of the conventional crowd will boycott the whole thing with studied silence, as is done in the case of most of the anti-Christian literature.

The Churchmen of all sects go on repeating their old mummeries without paying the slightest attention to the fact that the most advanced scholars, even of their own denominations, have become satisfied that more or less of the fundamentals on which their professional predecessors insisted has sunk into the bottomless morass on which they originally rested. What can you expect? The libraries and booksellers will not handle the publications of the R. P. A. or other similarly liberal publishers, and the people at large have no chance for becoming enlightened upon subjects which all should be familiar with. Huxley expressed himself despairingly of the prospect of enlightenment in the near future, and his pessimistic attitude would seem to be justified. There is one subject that ought to be treated in a more rational way by thinkers and writers who are competent to deal with it; and that is the incompatibility of the morality taught by the New Testament (not to speak of the Old Testament) with the obvious and generally accepted principles of secular morals. Most of the critics who destroy the credibility of the mythical and miraculous parts of the narrative, end by paying tribute to what they are pleased to style "the noble and lofty moral character of the teachings of Jesus." That is mere pious cant! The morality of the New Testament is at the best of an inferior sort, and much of it wholly impracticable and vicious. I have seen it urged many times that Jesus was the great originator of the doctrines of the fatherhood of God and of the brotherhood of man. No doubt, certain general phraseology can be quoted in support of this proposition; but when it is brought down to concrete examples the assertion fails.

Take, for instance Luke xvii. 7-10. The word "servant" which there appears is the Greek *doulos*, defined by Liddell and Scott's lexicon as "a slave, bondman, strictly, one born so." Now, Jesus is represented as accepting the view that such a person is one who has no rights which his master is bound to respect, and who is not entitled even to sympathetic consideration. He is merely a "nigger"! The brotherhood of man, indeed! And as for the relation of God to man, the latter is simply the same sort of slave—God's nigger. That is the alleged fatherhood. The glamor remains even after the reason is convinced that there are no facts upon which to base it. The training received in youth is very hard to overcome, in spite of its having been wholly outgrown. I confess to you that your characterisation of the ark of the tabernacle as "a very fine god-box" gave me a little shiver, although I laughed. The shock was of long outgrown inculcations; but the remnants of the old emotion still manifested their traces involuntarily. We can then well understand how hard it must be for the majority of our Christian fellow citizens to be reformed by the utterances of the Freethinkers.—Cordially and sincerely yours,

(Signed) G. L. ROBERTS.

THE RABBI'S REPLY.

A good story is told of a Jewish rabbi. He was riding in a street car, and rose to offer his seat to a lady. Before she could take it a young man plumped himself down in the vacated seat. The rabbi said nothing, but gazed at him in disgusted silence.

"What's the matter?" suddenly demanded the young man in a gruff voice. "What are you glaring at me for like that? You look as if you would like to eat me."

"I am forbidden to eat you," answered the rabbi. "I am a Jew."

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, Mr. Davidson, a Lecture; 6.15, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 3.30, a Lecture.

CROYDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Katharine street, near Town Hall): 6.30, Mr. Gallagher, a Lecture.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): J. W. Marshall, 11.30, "Who Were the First Christians?" 7.30, "My lie unto His glory."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill Fields): 3.15, Miss H. Pankhurst, a Lecture. Finsbury Park: 6.30, C. E. Ratcliffe, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, J. Rowney, a Lecture.

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Jolly Butchers Hill, opposite Public Library): 7.30, W. Davidson, a Lecture.

COUNTRY.

OUTDOOR.

BOLTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Town Hall Square): Gilbert Manion, 11, "The Uselessness of Christianity"; 3, "Reason versus Emotion"; 7.30, "Christian Socialism Exposed."

BLACKBURN BRANCH N. S. S. (Market Square): 3, Arthur Thompson, "Bible Beauties"; 6.30, Matt Phair, "Socialism and Christianity."

BURNLEY BRANCH N. S. S. (Market Ground): Joe McLellan, 3, "Bible Stories"; 6.30, "More Bible Stories."

FARNWORTH (Market Ground): Monday, June 16, at 7.30, Gilbert Manion, "Faith: A Relic of a Barbarous Age."

LEIGH (Market Square): R. Mearns, 3, "Historic Christianity"; 6.30, "Why I am an Atheist." Tuesday, June 17, Gilbert Manion, at 7.30, "Is God Conscious?"

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