

# THE Freethinker

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*A wise and honest man has other guides than superstition to direct his conduct.*—MACAULAY.

## Principles and Persons.

"VANOC" of the *Referee* is a facile writer, but a man who undertakes to write on anything and everything must write a good deal of nonsense in the course of a year. There was a fine specimen of such nonsense in "Vanoc's" last week's article. The subject of the article was "Cranks"—of which there are three species,—the useful cranks, with whom "Vanoc" agrees; the mischievous cranks, with whom he disagrees; and the indifferent cranks, in whom he takes no interest at all. This classification is purely personal; that is to say, an active and earnest promoter of any principle whatever is a crank in the first, second, or third category, just as he happens to please, displease, or fail to affect "Vanoc." Such a criterion may be a good working one at the *Referee* office; from the nature of the case, however, it cannot be of the least use anywhere else.

"Vanoc's" signs of crankyism, by the way, are abundantly displayed in the Gospel life of Jesus Christ. One of the charges against that personage was that he was a public upsetter. He was so much so, in fact, that his own disciples forsook him and fled when he was arrested by the public authorities, and the very mob that acclaimed him with "Hosannahs!" when he rode into Jerusalem turned against him only a few days after and clamored for his blood. He became "this fellow" at the last. One can imagine the contempt with which the "Vanocs" of that day uttered the withering expression.

But that is not the special point to which we desire to draw attention in "Vanoc's" article. The point is this. It will be remembered that Christian apologists have always made much use of the "great man" argument. They run off a list of great men, in various branches of human knowledge and activity, who were or are Christians, at least by profession; they then ask the "infidel" how he can have the impudence to set up his own judgment against that grand army of authorities? Were all those mighty geniuses, of all European countries and centuries, in the wrong? And is he, the puny opponent of all of them, in the right? People who are Christians themselves regard this as an unanswerable argument. They overlook the fact that the same argument, in different conditions of time and place, could be employed to prove the truth of every religion in the world. It would justify Mohammedanism at Constantinople, Brahmanism at Calcutta or Bombay, Buddhism in Ceylon or Tibet, and Judaism in all parts of the civilised world where the spirit of commerce prevails. The truth is that this so-called argument against the "infidel" is a sheer fallacy. Neither the size nor the number of the supporters of any opinion gives it an iota of validity. An opinion rests entirely on its evidence,—which is the same whether its adherents are counted by units or by millions. Could anyone conceive a medical congress, for instance, taking a vote to decide whether any biological or physiological theory is true or false? It is only in theology that such

ridiculous practices obtain. Voting what shall be done is proper and necessary; voting what shall be believed is simple fatuity. The whole world may be right against one man; but, also, one man may be right against the whole world. Such a case happened when the great and noble Giordano Bruno was burnt alive at Rome. He was one of the "cranks," and his name is immortal. And where are his persecutors now? Nothing but his fate and personality saves them from absolute oblivion.

"Vanoc" makes his own use of this foolish "great man" argument. He employs it in behalf of what he calls Research Defence; which is a very pretty euphemism for cutting up animals alive. We are not going to discuss vivisection just now, but we always like things to be called by their proper names. It is beside our purpose even to question the statement that "a great saving of human and animal life and health is already due to the Research people." We wish to deal with "Vanoc's" method of avoiding personal responsibility in this matter. "I have always found it a safe plan," he says, "to weigh personalities when facts are in dispute. The Chairman of the Committee of the Research Defence Society, Mr. Sydney Holland, is also Chairman of the London Hospital and the Poplar Hospital. The fact that Mr. Holland, who has devoted his life to the saving of human health, takes a responsible part in the Research Society's labors is good enough for me, because I know, on the best of evidence—experience, that there could be no inhumanity in any campaign in which he is a leader."

Now what does this contention amount to? It amounts to this—that no good man can be in the wrong, that no generous man can be mistaken, that no disinterested man can do any injury to his fellow men.

But this is flatly contradicted by personal experience and universal history. We all know honest people in private life who are a constant source of trouble and annoyance to those around them,—and even to others who are *not* around them. And is it not a commonplace of historical criticism that well-meaning men have been the authors of a very large part of all the mischief and misery in the world? Victor Hugo wrote almost a plea for Torquemada. The great poet made the great Inquisitor human by explaining his point of view. Lecky did a similar thing, in a more abstract way, in his *Rationalism*; and George Eliot (a woman of genius and a thorough-going Freethinker), in reviewing Lecky's work, dwelt on the wisdom of recognising and avowing that persecution was not due to "man's inhumanity to man" but to the damnable doctrine of salvation by faith.

Is it not obvious that "Vanoc's" trust in Mr. Holland would apply equally well to Torquemada? Suppose the question were, should the Inquisition and its work be countenanced? The "Vanoc" of that day might argue in this manner: "I know that cruel sufferings are inflicted on heretics in the dungeons and torture-chambers of this institution; I know that heretics' wives and families are deprived of their property and thrown into destitution—for no apparent fault of their own; I know that the ordinary laws of evidence are flouted and defied in the examination of these poor prisoners. I know all this, and in ordinary circumstances I should condemn and denounce it. But there is that good man Torque-

mada. How can I mistrust him? He tells me that all these cruelties and other outrages—for such they are on the face of them—are necessary to the spiritual "health" of the community. I cannot overlook that great consideration. Christianity is the religion of sacrifice. True, the victims in this instance do not sacrifice *themselves*; but what does it matter, after all, as long as they *are* sacrificed? The act itself depends neither upon the motive nor the means. Anyhow, I put my trust in the honor and humanity of the great and good Torquemada. I am satisfied from experience that there can be no *real* inhumanity in any campaign in which he is a leader."

"Vanoc's" fine gospel ends with "Three cheers for Torquemada."

We decline to join in that acclamation. We beg all the readers we have the honor to address not to join in any such chorus. Think for yourselves. Put your conscience in no man's keeping. Accept your own intellectual and moral responsibilities. You have moral, as well as legal, duties to perform. If you cannot do your fellow men, or the lower animals, any particular good—which is generally a rash assumption—you can at least refrain from doing them any injury, or letting others do them injury in your name. Remember the sublime exclamation of Macbeth under the agony of his wife's temptation to the murder of his king, his friend, his benefactor:—

"Prithee, peace:  
I dare do all that may become a man;  
Who dares do more is none."

G. W. FOOTE.

## Science and God.—II.

(Concluded from p. 499.)

THE copy of Drummond's lectures to which I referred in my previous article, has been, if not exactly enriched with notes by some reader, at least annotated. And to the passage in which Drummond says the doctrine of Evolution has in itself been a contribution to religion, an anonymous passage has been appended. I think the passage is taken from one of Mr. Balfour's writings, but its origin is immaterial. The substance of the note is that Evolution has provided two arguments: one in favor of religion in general, the other in favor of Christianity in particular. The first is, that if Evolution be true we should expect the principle of growth to express itself in religion as it does in other directions. The second, that by the fact of its survival, Christianity has demonstrated its fitness to survive, and so must answer to some real need of the human spirit. Either we must grant this or we must surrender the principle of the survival of the fittest, since, in the case of Christianity, the fittest has not survived.

Let us consider first of all the analogy of growth. In ordinary instances growth implies three things. Either there is growth in stature—a mere increase in size—or there is an enlargement in function, or there is an increase of knowledge. Government may be said to grow when its powers are extended over a wider area. Knowledge grows when our information concerning a subject becomes more precise. So long as we keep to these plain meanings of growth there is no confusion; and if by religious growth was intended either of these meanings, or all of them, all would be clear likewise. The truth is, however, that none of these meanings fit the case of religion. It has not grown to be a larger part in life; on the contrary, it has become more and more negligible. One need not go back to the earliest period of human history or culture for proof of this. Three or four centuries ago religion was still counted of sufficient importance to mark a boundary between nations, and within its scope secular affairs could still be subordinated to right religious belief. To-day a Christian "Jihad" is no longer possible; not because there are no fanatical Christians left, but because in all civilised countries there exists a large body of opinion that definitely relegates religion to a subordinate position.

Neither has there been growth in the functions exercised by religion. Its function as lawgiver in the physical world is definitely abandoned, and all it asks now is for science to let it alone. In ethics and sociology it still maintains a precarious kind of an existence, but even here it no longer claims supreme position. It is content to urge its utility as a source of inspiration, to rank as one among a number of other forces that are frankly secular and utilitarian. Finally, there has been no growth in the shape of an extension of knowledge. Even the religious man is now amused at the precise character of the information earlier believers had about God. The affairs of God, his aims and intentions, were discussed with the same degree of confidence that one might now discuss the proceedings of the House of Commons. The modern believer is far more anxious to impress upon the world how little we know about God, or how little we can ever know. There is nothing surprising about this; the surprising thing is that he should call this process of realisation growth in religion. A process that removes the operation of deity from one department of the universe after another, which deprives religion of any peculiar or exclusive function in the social structure, and, finally, which brings home to people the conviction that all their assumed knowledge of God is a delusion, is characterised as growth, and as being on all fours with the growth exemplified in the process of Evolution! If this be growth, one wonders what decay would be like. The truth is, that religion quite lacks the quality of growth. Its whole history is one of decline. The only growth connected with it is that which leads the instructed mind to realise the utter futility of claims made on its behalf.

Much of the strength of the argument that Christianity has survived because of its "fitness" is derived from an unexpressed identification of "fitness" with an ethical significance with which it has no necessary connection. It is a truism that survival shows fitness to survive, but whether that which survives is ethically admirable is quite another question. In a thieves' kitchen honesty and truthfulness are not qualities that would lead to survival. In an environment of an opposite kind greed and cunning would lead to suppression. It is indisputable that Christianity survived, but it is very disputable that its survival was either a good thing for the race, or that it survived because of ethical or intellectual superiority over forms of belief or modes of life that were suppressed. The triumph of early Christianity over Paganism was not due to its inherent ethical or intellectual superiority, but precisely because it strengthened and utilised some of the worst elements in the life of the ancient civilisation. The truth of this is demonstrated in the fact that the decay of Roman civilisation proceeded with increasing speed as Christianity gained more complete control.

Further, when we come to Christian times, we see that the survival of Christianity was not a question of demonstrating its fitness to survive, but one of preventing any kind of competition. And there can be no question of the survival of the fittest when competition is not allowed to exist. In the world of science there is a survival of the fittest, because there all opinions are permitted, and the ones that live have to prove their worth. In religion, for many hundreds of years, no opposing opinions were permitted, and the survival of one opinion was proof only of a forced and artificial culture. The Church carefully weeded out all undesirable variations, and at the same time maintained an environment that placed a heavy premium upon the Christian type. Under such circumstances the survival of Christianity was no more proof of its ethical or social value than the existence of a heavily subsidised business house would be proof of its commercial soundness. How little genuine survival value Christianity possessed was shown by the fact that so soon as changes in the environment were effected—first, by the influence of the civilised Mohammedan world

from the ninth to the thirteenth century; then, by the revival of the classical culture; and, later, by the rebirth of the scientific spirit, Christianity was faced by the choice of modification or disappearance.

The same lesson is seen in contemporary life. Christianity is so little able to live in open and fair competition with other forms that the energies of its professional advocates are mainly expended in the maintenance of an artificial environment. We have a special literature created to ward off attack, there is a careful shielding of believers from Freethought teachings, social influences are maintained that place a premium upon faith and attach a penalty to unbelief, anti-Christian literature is banned or boycotted, thousands of Christians—the majority, probably—pass through life without finding their beliefs ever brought into healthy antagonism with opposite opinions, and thousands confess openly that they avoid such encounters for fear it will unsettle their faith. The whole of the quarrel over education is an illustration of the same truth. The child must be surrounded with an artificially sustained religious atmosphere, because the normal play of social life will leave them void of inclination towards religious belief. The whole of the special paraphernalia attached to religion—the special form of language, dress, mental attitude, etc.—are all so many admissions that once Christianity is placed on the same level as other opinions, subject to the same free criticism and open competition, it would hardly survive a single generation of civilised life.

In what has been said it has been taken for granted that Christianity has survived. But this is really conceding too much—for more than is warranted by the facts. As a matter of fact, in spite of the wholesale elimination of non-Christians, in spite also of the maintenance of an environment favorable to Christianity, hostile influences have been too strong to be permanently denied. In what part of the world has Christianity really and honestly survived? Something near the original thing may be met with in Abyssinia and parts of the South-East of Europe—notably among people who have made little progress—but where else? Christianity is in other places in name, but in teaching and in doctrines the modification has been so great and so profound that it is really a different faith altogether. There has been a continuity of possession, even of formula; but to point to the Christianity existing in England, or America, or Germany, as proof that Christianity has survived, is absurd. Every one of the orthodox doctrines of Christianity has been successfully challenged in its own pulpits. Preachers have made reputations by voicing the heresies for which better men suffered. A religion that becomes so modified cannot really be said to survive. One might as well talk of the Eohippus surviving because its descendant, the horse, is still with us. An organism or an institution that can only survive by a complete change of character has really demonstrated that in its original state it could not have survived at all.

Finally, neither Christianity nor religion in general meets a deep and indestructible need of human nature. The best men and women are always more or less uneasy under religion, not because it imposes restraints, but because these restraints are of the wrong order. Men are comfortable enough under all sorts of social or ethical restrictions, but they are in more or less continuous revolt against religion. And this is because religion, in spite of the enormous conservative power behind it, is continuously coming into conflict with the more progressive and humanising tendencies of contemporary life. In civilised countries it is not man that seeks religion; it is religion, in the shape of many organisations, that seeks man. Man can get along well enough without his gods, but his gods cannot get on at all without him. For, apart from all metaphor, it was man's belief that first gave the gods their being; their life continues only so long as that belief remains, and its cessation puts a period to their existence.

C. COHEN.

## "An Average Man" Caught Napping.

WE have no intention of reviewing, in the present article, Professor Bury's eminently sane little book, entitled *A History of Freedom of Thought*, which is one of the most recent volumes in the Home University Library; but we wish to call special attention to certain errors into which "An Average Man" has fallen in his references to this work in a breezy article in the *Manchester City News* for August 2. Usually this popular writer is delightfully sensible and fresh; but every now and then he gives us reasons to suspect either that he has not been fully emancipated himself from the traditions of the past, or else that he yields to the temptation of pandering, more or less, to the prejudices of his readers. Yet, while there are statements in the article under consideration upon which we feel bound to animadvert, we rejoice to say that we greatly admire the wholesome tone and broadening tendency of his writings in general.

Early in his review of Professor Bury's book, "An Average Man" says: "It will be a bad and sad day for the nation if it ceases to believe." Ceases to believe *what*? During the last three hundred years, and particularly during the last fifty, the nation has ceased to believe in a vast variety of things. Three hundred years ago the nation believed in witchcraft and in burning witches. During the seventeenth century trials for witchcraft in this country were frightfully numerous. In 1634 seventeen Lancashire witches were condemned on the evidence of one boy. From 1645 to 1647 some three hundred were indicted in Suffolk and Essex alone, of whom nearly two-thirds were convicted. Who can ever forget the famous trial of the Suffolk witches at Bury St. Edmunds, when Sir Matthew Hale acted as judge and Sir Thomas Browne as medical expert witness? And is it not on record that in 1712 some Hertfordshire clergymen prosecuted a poor woman named Jane Wenham for the same alleged crime? The judge did not believe in witchcraft, and charged the jury strongly in favor of the accused; but the rector of the parish testified, "on his faith as a clergyman," that he believed her to be a witch, and the jury, composed of men tyrannised over by the parsonry, returned a verdict of guilty. John Wesley was a firm believer in witchcraft, and, writing in 1768, he maintained that those who disbelieved in it did so "in direct opposition, not only to the Bible, but to the suffrage of the wisest and best of men in all ages and nations"; and he went to the length of holding "that the giving up witchcraft is in effect giving up the Bible." To-day that belief is extinct, though the Bible fully justifies it. Does "An Average Man" mean to say that it was "a bad and sad day for the nation" when it threw that foolish superstition overboard? Certainly not.

Fifty years ago the doctrine of the verbal inspiration and infallibility of the Bible was held by the nation as an essential article of the Christian faith. Again and again have we heard preachers declare that every word—every punctuation mark even—in the Sacred Book was God's. But you can count on the fingers of your two hands all the prominent people who cherish that view now. Ten years ago we did hear a preacher declare from his pulpit that he believed every word between the two covers of Holy Writ; but the same preacher admitted, in conversation with the present writer a few months ago, that such a belief is no longer tenable. Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden have vanished from history; and in a book recently published we are informed that hell has lost all its Dantesque terrors. Even the Devil has been dropped by the majority of the people. Is the nation any the poorer for the disappearance of all these beliefs?

The startling fact is that for the last two hundred years the theology of the Church has been undergoing a process of impoverishment. How much less in quantity it is now than it was then. And the process is still going on. "It will be a bad and sad

day for the nation if it ceases to believe," says "An Average Man"; and again we ask, ceases to believe what? If "An Average Man" admits, as we know he does, that the loss of the beliefs just mentioned has done the nation no harm, will he kindly tell us which of the beliefs that still remain are essential to its wellbeing? On what grounds does he indulge in such a dogmatic assertion? Take, for example, the belief in God and a future life, or even the belief in Christ as the Savior of the world, and inform us of what benefit it has been to this nation. Why, according to a report in the *Daily News and Leader* for August 7, the Rev. S. J. Whitmee told a meeting at Chipperfield that "Heathenism is as dense in the villages of Hertfordshire as in the South Sea Islands"; and in an interview with a representative of the same newspaper the reverend gentleman explained that by "Heathenism" he meant a growing disregard of God and religion. This man of God is doubtless pessimistic, and exaggerates, in consequence of the scanty support given to his motor-car mission up and down the country; and yet there is a great deal of truth in what he says. Everywhere religious belief is decidedly on the decline, and has been so for the last fifty years; but we must point "An Average Man" to the fact that during the last sixty years, whilst the population of England and Wales has more than doubled, crime has decreased by almost one-half. This fact cannot serve as a firm basis for our friend's lugubrious prophecy; and we are confident he cannot enlist any other fact in his service.

We take it for granted that by "belief" "An Average Man" means belief in the supernatural, for no one ever ceases to believe in the natural. He advocates universal toleration, because, in the long run, scepticism, even unbelief itself, tends to cleanse and refine faith. "The age of reason," he says further, "need not be the age of unbelief, but it must be the age of 'intelligent' faith"; but, surely, there can be no "intelligent" faith in the supernatural, because the supernatural is not an object of intelligence. If it be, as Shakespeare so subtly defines it, "the undiscovered country, from whose bourne no traveller returns," it follows, of necessity, that faith in it must be blind. It is a realm from which not a scrap of intelligence has ever reached our shores, and both logically and ethically we are forced to the conclusion that faith in it can never be intelligent.

What does "An Average Man" mean by "religion" and "Christian principles"? Are Confucianism and Buddhism religions, and if they are, do they embody "Christian principles"? If they do, then Christian principles do not stand for anything that is unique and distinctive, but for something that is common to all periods and countries. In other words, religion and Christian principles confine their attention to this world and life alone, and do not embrace supernaturalism in any shape or form. But we are afraid, after all, that "An Average Man" employs the terms "religion" and "Christian principles" in the same sense as the theologians. In some vague, undefined sense he evidently believes in God and immortality, and that in some way freedom of thought is bound to strengthen and refine such a belief. Freedom of thought, of course, is only another word for toleration. Well, we Atheists are zealous believers in and advocates of toleration; and, in fact, we are its only genuine champions in practice. Even "An Average Man" is not really tolerant towards Freethinkers. He either does not know us, or regards us as a negligible quantity, when he says that "it will be a bad and sad day for the nation when it ceases to believe." Be that as it may, the fact remains that, in the estimation of this clever journalist, doubters, heretics, unbelievers, scientists prove, ultimately, invaluable servants of religion. Whatever discoveries scientists and philosophers may make are destined to redound to the glory of religion. He says:—

"I am concerned with the fact that heresy, so called, has always existed, and that the heretics have been the men of new ideas, the advanced thinkers, the scholars,

and the scientists. But I have found also that when the truths were established they have been incorporated in religion, though it must be admitted, only tardily. Yet their final acceptance is the best vindication of freedom of thought that we can have, and the one great fact to regret is that this freedom was so often denied or rigorously penalised."

What "An Average Man" fails to realise is that the incorporation of natural knowledge in religion results in its gradual disintegration. Take an example. The sciences of astronomy and geology have robbed the first three chapters of Genesis of their historicity. This is now admitted by practically all Christian critics. But the loss of the first three chapters of Genesis carries with it the loss of the foundation upon which the Christian conception of redemption has always rested. If the third of Genesis is not historical, the fifth of Romans is a house built upon the sand; and if the fifth of Romans is not true the Christian Church in all ages has borne witness to a lie, and is itself the supreme lie. Instead of strengthening religion science has fatally emasculated it. All the heretics of the past were the precursors and heralds of modern science; and modern science and religion are absolutely irreconcilable. They attempt to interpret the Universe on opposite principles. Now, Rationalism is only another word for science. Rationalism, according to "An Average Man," is doubtless an excellent thing, but it has its limitations. It fails because it does not "confirm us in any idea of existence after death." But what right has anybody to expect Rationalism to do anything of the kind? Science recognises no hereafter at all, and this is the reason why it throws no light upon it. It is not accurate to say that it "abolishes hell with costs," because not recognising a hereafter it knows nothing about either heaven or hell. "An Average Man" says: "Does it provide us with a higher morality, a truer idea of goodness and virtue, a nobler gospel? I think not." From this we totally differ. Morality is a sphere in which reason is the sole umpire; and religion has degraded morality by supplying it with false motives and sanctions. What, then, is wrong with modern unbelief? Nothing, except its rarity; nothing, except its being misunderstood and misrepresented by those who attack it. We have a great admiration for "An Average Man," and we tolerate him gladly; but we do wish he would take pains to acquire a more accurate and reliable knowledge of the principles of Rationalism.

J. T. LLOYD.

### Cockney Christianity.

"Of all the dull, stagnant, unedifying *entourages*, that of middle-class Dissent seems to me the stupidest."

—MATTHEW ARNOLD.

To the superficial observer, not skilled to penetrate beneath the surface of things, there is probably but one thing in the world more solemn than a funeral; and that is religion. Short of death itself, nothing seems more awful than the Christian Scheme of Salvation. Only think of it! To Mr. John Smith, simply the most stupendous thought that can engage the attention of the watery custard which he is pleased to consider as representing the human mind. For it is not alone the weal or woe of all living human beings, including Mrs. Smith and the children, but also of generations of Smiths unborn, that may be involved in the awful issue.

The very perpetuity of the Scheme, in a vanishing world, where all things are passing away even as a dream, seems to impart a quality of awe to the dwarfed perception of the average believer. To a superficial observer all this must seem most solemn and impressive. But appearances are deceptive, and it is foolish to look at any question with only one eye, as is said to be the habit of birds. The unfeathered biped, man, should know better. A more philosophic view of the matter would lead to another conclusion. So far from religion being a serious affair, it is simply a joke. An expensive and ela-

borate jest it may be, but none the less a jest. You cannot tell what the religious circus is like by looking at the highly-colored posters on the walls. For in all nations it has been customary from time immemorial to invest religion with an air of gloom. So it was "in the beginning," is now, and must be, even in the byeways of the great Metropolis.

The mere circumstance of that respectable rate-payer, Mr. John Smith, "finding Jesus" in his fiftieth year is enough to set his numerous friends and acquaintances on the alert. They know that when he goes psalm-smiting his countenance will exhibit the tragic expression of a tired cab-horse, and that his every word, look, and action will eclipse the gaiety of the spectators.

Mr. John Smith, junior, is compelled to check the tide of his laughter with a sigh. Miss Henrietta Smith, his sister, finds that pa's condition clouds the delights of sweetheating. Like Banquo's ghost at the feast, the blear-eyed picture of melancholy imbecility overawes the flow of soul. But if "finding Jesus" is but a laughing matter, how dire are the after-effects. Resplendent in his best clothes, Mr. John Smith conveys his family to the nearest jerry-built church or tin tabernacle. If he has the disease badly, this will become the rule every Sunday. He is under the spell of religiosity, and as proud of it as a corpse with two tombstones. Master Johnny can hardly contain himself for speechless transport as he finds that his Sunday fishing excursions are no longer to be tolerated. He turns green with envy when he passes the splendid pageant of the green-grocer's boy and the postman's son with rods and bait-cans, on their way to the still waters of the nearest pond. Miss Henrietta, who is neither so blind as a bat nor so deaf as an adder, may easily envy 'Arry and 'Arriet treading the primrose path of dalliance. What would she not give for the chance of starting the stitching in 'Arry's heart herself? As for Mrs. Smith, she is firmly convinced that all this piety springs from the idea of her lord and master to be considered "respectable," and, incidentally, to extend his business. In one of her confidential chats over the tea-table with Mrs. Jones, she expresses her private opinion with a powerful metaphor: "Find Jesus, my dear! I had as soon go to sea in a ship afire."

What does Mr. John Smith himself gain by this finding of the "Blessed Savior"? The Bible? He reads it daily, and his verbal knowledge is nearly perfect; but what he apprehends is but a purblind parson's conception of what is written. The literature of Israel is intensely local. There are passages where the perfumes of Sharon and Lebanon, the glory of the hills about Jerusalem, the beauty of the daughters of Judæa, are so caught and rendered that in a distant age, an alien speech, a remote land, they affect the reader. Under what restrictions, and with what explanations, the pictures of the Orient are adapted to the requirements of uneducated Londoners. Mr. Smith cannot usefully adopt Oriental thought with his ordinary business avocation. He cannot, with any success, apply Eastern ethics to everyday life. Hence his admiration for the sleek parson who shepherds the flock at the church he attends. The minister instructs poor Mr. Smith as if the Bible were of yesterday and the legends but the facts of fifth-edition journalism. Hence the delight of the professional soul-saver and the limitations of poor Mr. Smith, who rapidly becomes the perfect expression of the self-opinionated Englishman, a figure at which all educated foreigners raise their eyebrows and politely smile.

MIMNERMUS.

Where art Thou, God?  
Reckless of thunderbolts, my soul sends up the cry—  
Where are the threads of Justice that should be  
The warp of Thy Creation? Show it me!  
Thy Plan is wondrous long and universes wide.  
I, but a mortal crying in the night,  
Where art Thou, God? —FRANCES WILSON.

## Mr. Salt's "Shelley."—II.

(Concluded from p. 492.)

THERE is one point of Shelley criticism which I think has been overdone, and overdone by Mr. Salt himself (if he will allow me to say so) in his admirable opening chapter on "Rival Views of Shelley." From the "fiend" of the early criticism of 1821 to Matthew Arnold's "ineffectual angel," from damning Shelley to smothering him with pity, is a long way; and Mr. Salt is rightly humorous in relation to both extremes. We are with him, and always have been with him, in holding that Shelley has to be taken seriously as the herald of a new age and a new state of society. The notion that "materialists" aim at destroying the "ideal" is the very acme of ridiculousness. They have feeling and imagination like other men, and need both to be fed and stimulated. Mr. Salt remarks that it is, of course, as Poet that Shelley "holds the surest claim to immortality." Those who accept his evangel love him with a double love, and to them "one single spirit-song from the tumultuous harmonies of his lyrical masterpiece is more precious than all the 'systems' that the mind of democrat can devise." We endorse this, and we add that the "systems" that anybody can devise are of very little importance, and that so far from being delightful they are only too apt to taste like sawdust. For my part, as a lifelong lover of Shelley, I protest that I cannot imagine his caring to sing one single note for a Bellamy paradise. He sings the ideas and sentiments that are necessary to man's happiness; without which "the paragon of animals" may be as ill off as any lower animal,—may be well-drilled, and decorous, and outwardly altruistic—yet all the time essentially undignified and miserable. Mr. Salt knows all this at least as well as we do, and his passionate love for Shelley led him, as we think, into overdoing his denunciation of the mostly insignificant critics who wielded their pens against Shelley, both as a man and as a poet. They only acted after their kind. Why not let them drop into their natural oblivion? What, after all, does it matter, that the geese hissed at Shelley, and the asses brayed against him? Too much attention to these creatures spoils the critical perspective. Shelley was never without admirers amongst capable judges. Byron knew that Shelley was a great poet; so did Keats—and Landor, and Browning, and Tennyson—and Meredith, and Swinburne, whose longevity tended to conceal the fact that they belonged to a much earlier age than that in which they died. I have been astonished of late years at recognising what a long list of eminent writers one could compile—such as John Mill, Alexander Bain, Macaulay, and George Eliot—who gave Shelley their deep if discriminating admiration. Moreover, original critics are nearly as scarce as original poets. The ordinary journalist is simply a man with a pen—though he may write in a way that overawes the ordinary reader. How many critics, if Shakespeare himself came along again, would "feel the touch of his electric hand"? Is it not true, as Wordsworth said, that a great poet has to create the taste by which he is appreciated? A great poet is always an original poet. He simply *must* wait for adequate recognition. Shelley was a great original poet, and he had to wait, and what more is there to be said? That he was assailed with hatred and abuse only means that Christianity was rampant when he offered the world a philosophy which, if it is to be called a religion, was the religion of humanity.

In answer to the better sort of Christians—some of whom fancy that Shelley was a Christian without knowing it, and others that he would have become a Christian if he had lived longer—Mr. Salt writes as follows:—

"It may be said that the gospel preached by Shelley was, like that of Christianity, a gospel of love. But here again the distinction between the teaching of Christ and the teaching of his followers is a vital one. And it must be noted that the love which Shelley incul-

cates is represented by him as resulting from the innate goodness, the natural benevolence of mankind, and not from any sense of religious obligation. Freethought and liberty are the very basis of Shelleyan morality, it being Shelley's contention that virtue results from the intuitive desire to promote the happiness of others, and that morality must languish in proportion as freedom of thought and action is withdrawn. This code of morals can scarcely be held to be compatible with the doctrines of Christianity."

One is pleased also, to read Mr. Salt's plea for *Queen Mab* :—

"I cannot follow Mr. Forman's example of relegating *Queen Mab* to the *juvenilia*, as if it were unworthy of the serious attention of Shelley students. It is in many ways a crude and ill-considered performance, but its defects lie more in the style than in the conception—to repeat what Shelley said of it in later years 'the matter is good, but the treatment is not equal.' The views expressed in *Queen Mab* on religious and social topics are practically the same as those held by Shelley to the last day of his life, and, as Mr. Forman himself tells us, 'the poem and its notes played a considerable part in the growth of Freethought in England and America, especially among the working classes.' For both of these reasons it seems to me that *Queen Mab* will always maintain an honorable place in the records of its author's achievements."

This is extremely well said. I agree with every word of it. I would even go further. What on earth do some critics expect from young poets who have only just passed boyhood? Shelley's *Queen Mab* is faulty in one way just as Keats's *Endymion* is faulty in another way. Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* showed youth and inexperience. But a sagacious eye might see the beginnings of a great poet in each of them.

This last quotation from Mr. Salt's book is a long one, but it could not well be broken.

"However justifiable our dread of mere sentimental eulogy, we may surely venture to speak generously and unreservedly in our praise of a man whose great primary qualities of unworldliness and sincerity drew unstinted tributes of admiration from those who knew him personally, even when they chanced to be cynical lawyers, satirical novelists, bluff sailors, retired cavalry officers, or misanthropic poets.

"Such homage paid to such a character does not imply that we are blind to the many foibles, eccentricities, and minor blemishes by which even the noblest nature may be crossed and chequered, and from which Shelley was certainly not exempt. We are well aware that his life, except in its one dominant feature, was a strange mixture of contrary tendencies and varying moods. He was hopeful and despondent, strong and weak, graceful and awkward, frugal and lavish, serious and playful, wise and whimsical, forbearing and charitable to a single degree in his intercourse with friend or foe, yet on rare occasions hasty and unjust in his judgments; by habit candid and trustworthy, yet sometimes led on by a predilection for mystery, and by an extreme dislike of causing pain or disappointment, to be evasive and circuitous in his dealings. But while he was thus, to some extent, the creature of conflicting moods and circumstances—'chased by the spirit of his destiny,' as he himself expressed it, 'from purpose to purpose, like clouds by the wind'—it is important to remember that these contradictions and weaknesses lay on the surface of his nature, and not at its core; for his character in all vital and essential points was strikingly firm and consistent, his innate and solid virtues standing him in good stead at all the great and fateful crises of his mature life."

I call that beautifully written, and I believe it is true. It is justified by all that Shelley said and did during the last twelve years of his life. But words fail to describe what he had grown into when blind fate cut short his career in the Bay of Spezzia, and English literature suffered an immeasurable loss.

"There was the very Best of men, and he was treated as the very Worst," said Trelawny to Swinburne, fifty years after that dramatic cremation on the Italian seashore, fifty years after Trelawny snatched that "heart of hearts" from the funeral flames. A similar tribute was wrung from the better nature of Byron. "I never knew another man," he said, "who was not a beast in comparison with him."

G. W. FOOTE.

## The Warfare of Truth.

THEIR *image* of Truth—the dead form, the mere shell  
Whence the spirit escapes them—men worship too well;  
But the goddess herself, all unknown to their gaze,  
They shrink from with horror, they dread all their days:  
And if vision grew not with renewal of youth,  
The world would ne'er witness the triumph of Truth.

In their systems on earth, in their dreams of the sky,  
Men love the delusion, they cherish the lie;  
Who dares undeceive them they hang and they burn,  
And only of martyrs will man ever learn.  
Dead sea apes still enchanted, with nail and with tooth  
Men rend the rash brother who brings them new truth.

Fair Science arose and she read the dim past,  
The ascent of our species through periods vast;  
She taught us new lessons of thought and of act—  
Not guesswork of fiction, but guidance of fact.  
From Protestant Oxford, from Popish Maynooth,  
Came the howl against Science, the shriek against Truth.

Who sees the sad city where, weary and worn,  
The victims of want wish they never were born,  
Let him delve to the root and proclaim the true cause  
And the means of controlling stern Nature's grim laws:  
Him they stone as of old, they revile without ruth,  
For seeking strange knowledge and speaking new truth.

The poor are too many, competing to death;  
Yet tell them, with ever so earnest a breath,  
To limit their children, to limit their dead,  
To limit their horrible struggle for bread,  
And straight you're a fiend, a foul monster uncouth,  
To dare be so vile as to teach precious truth.

All truth must be pleasant—the edict so runs—  
And never must point to a path that man shuns  
Or else 'tis a madness, a crime, a disgrace,  
A heresy hell-born that flaunts in our face:  
For the world never welcomes such wisdom, forsooth,  
As shows the strait way of salvation by truth.

Men talk of their Savior, hung high by the priest,  
Of Socrates martyr'd for teaching the Beast—  
That beast the great Public that crushes true friends  
And crouches to flatterers seeking their ends;  
But this only they see: In the world's cruel youth  
The wisest and bravest were martyr'd for Truth.

How many have died but for seeing too well,  
Have swooned on the rack and have sighed in their cell!  
Men honor such brave ones, such heroes of old;  
They can worship the past with devotion untold:  
But they see not that *now*, in *this* age, forsooth,  
Victims still suffer for speaking new truth.

So age after age is Truth's triumph begun;  
So battle by battle the war must be won.  
Pioneers must push forward ahead of the host,  
And the foremost and bravest must suffer the most.  
Must it always be so? Must the Fetish, forsooth,  
For ever take toll of the vanguard of Truth?

Not if manhood survive, not if wisdom endure,  
To teach life's true lessons to rich and to poor.  
For the dawn is upon us, the daybreak is near,  
The evil deciphered, the problem grown clear.  
Even now men are learning the wisdom that smooths  
The pathway of brothers who bring them new truths.

W. P. BALL.

## AN ACTOR'S PHILOSOPHY.

Is it not possible that the peoples of the earth will arise in the might of a new-born religion and will knock at the gates of the world's conscience, singing in unison the hymn of humanity, and crying "Thou shalt do no murder—even for the divine right of kings"; when frontiers shall be swept away and there shall be one brotherhood of man, one flag, one language, and one religion, the religion of Humanity; when the people shall be generalised by the dreamers, the poets, the philosophers, the seers and singers, the artists of the world?—*Sir Herbert Tree*, "*Thoughts and After Thoughts*."

## Acid Drops.

Dean Inge, preaching on Sunday at St. Paul's Cathedral, made the ignominious confession that doctors were supplanting the clergy, even in moral and spiritual matters. Dr. Ryle said the same thing in the evening sermon. He affirmed that the doctor was going to be "a more effective teacher than the clergyman," and he was "already the first person confided in." This must be pleasant news for Dissenting clergy, who subsist but partially on endowments, and have already to collect their salaries from doubt-smitten congregations.

The International Medical Congress could not break up without discussing what the newspapers call the Social Evil. One speaker declared that the very existence of the English nation was threatened. Another declared that there were half a million fresh infections each year. Compared with this, the subjects discussed in Parliament, and written about in the newspapers, are of trivial importance. Christian nations are all syphilitised. Piety and filth run together, as they always did, and always will; and the filth is all the worse for being internal. Christianity poisons the mind while syphilis poisons the blood. And what is the remedy? The destruction of Christianity. That is the universal remedy. And we are engaged in applying it.

While this "social evil" is ravaging England, and imperilling its very existence, the clergy are discussing "Where is Hell?" We wish they could speak from experience. If they all cleared out of this world the rest of us would be able to do something with it.

Many who have taken part in the "Where is Hell?" correspondence are certain there is a hell and equally certain that all sinners and unbelievers (don't forget the unbelievers) will be cast into it. But hell isn't for *them*. Oh, dear no. They are booked for the other place. They admit, however, that they *ought* to be damned. Their next step should be plain enough. Carlyle urged that the duty of a man who *felt* that he *ought* to be damned was to go and *be* damned. We agree with him.

Our old friend Mr. J. W. de Caux, of Yarmouth, whose pen is known to our own readers, took it into his head (in a moment of aberration) that the *Daily News* was an honest paper and that its recent correspondence on "Where is Hell?" was an honest correspondence; so he took the trouble to send in a letter from a newer point of view than any disclosed in the nicely selected budget already printed. It ran as follows:—

"The opinions of the Men of God respecting Hell that you have published are both amusing and instructive. Amusing—because of their puerile contradictions. And instructive—because they innocently prove that these wiseacres are simply living by false pretences. According to the Gospels, Christ taught explicitly that there is a Hell, and that in its 'everlasting fires' the great bulk of mankind will be tortured throughout eternity. If Christ did not tell the truth in this instance what becomes of his teaching? One *fact* is beyond all doubt, and that is, as Thomas Carlyle has written, that at the two extremities of human life there are two impenetrable curtains behind which no one has ever seen."

That letter never appeared. Mr. de Caux ought to have known it wouldn't. We fear he is getting too optimistic in his old age—looking for journalistic virtue in an old literary prostitute.

He was a Christian clergyman. His name was George Shackleton Boys. He had been curate of St. Peter's, Oldham. He made violent love to Mrs. Travis, wife of Mr. J. M. Travis, of Suddlesworth, Yorks. She yielded to his blandishments. The upshot is that the husband has lost his wife, and the wife her husband, while the man of God is off "to begin a new life in some dark corner of the earth"—which will probably be light enough for him to play the same old game again.

Benjamin Jewell, a Stroud Green builder, has lost his little girl, seven years of age, after Christian Science treatment for diphtheria. But he still holds that "illness is a false belief." You are not really ill—you only believe you are ill. We suppose that little Norah Annie Jewell is not really dead; they only believe she is dead. Perhaps they only believe she is buried.

There is a sect called "the Old Believers" in Russia, and we fancy the vicar of Cheshunt must be well qualified for its membership. Officiating at the funeral of the four men

killed in the motor-bus disaster near Hoddesdon, Herts, he told a congregation, which included several bandaged survivors of the accident, that God was speaking to them through the catastrophe. There was too much swearing, too much drinking, too much blasphemy, too much dishonesty, too much of everything that was bad in the district. "God is speaking to us," the reverend gentleman said, "bidding us turn from our evil ways. This is the meaning of this, and it has all been done in love." We do not contradict the Rev. C. B. Law, but we do not believe that his testimony would be listened to in any coroner's court. Morally speaking, his Deity is nothing but a criminal lunatic. Killing one lot of people in order to make another lot of people buck up is as foolish as it is wicked, though we admit that it is worthy of the religion of the Atonement.

The city of Hull has been having an up-to-date inquisition, and has decided to enter upon a campaign against evil. The Watch Committee have adopted thirty-two suggestions, which should, if enforced, make the town the dullest in England. In their anxiety to prevent Hull becoming Hell they have censored everything that gives life a taste of the other place.

What quaint ideas of human happiness Christians possess? At Southend-on-Sea, which is at present crowded with holiday folk, religious persons are industriously circulating a booklet, entitled "The Southend Monthly Messenger," with the text, "Prepare to meet thy God," boldly printed on the cover. What an attractive advertisement of the town!

Divine Benevolence keeps one holy eye on the fall of the sparrows; but the other optic takes no notice of the many mishaps to holiday folk. As the newspapers sagely remark, the drowning season has commenced.

The *Truthseeker* (New York) prints the following letter from a correspondent at New Mexico:—

"One of my friends in the South-west has recently had a stirring experience. He sought the hand of an eminently respectable woman, and was accepted. The prospective husband was a 'good Catholic,' although he had not attended church for fifteen years. He desired that a priest should perform the marriage ceremony. The reverend father would have to consult with the bishop. That eminent functionary refused a dispensation unless the woman would agree in writing to become a Catholic, which she refused to do. The priest then said: 'If you marry this woman you will be excommunicated; if you marry her out of the Church and have children by her they will be bastards. Do you want to bring up a brood of bastards?'

"You take your d—d church and go to hell with it!" was the prompt and correct response of the future husband. The couple were united in marriage by a Protestant minister.

"Really, the thing is admirable. For cold-blooded insolvency, calculated malice, and impudent bravado, the religious machine for graft, of graft, and by graft, has the rest of the world left at the quarter pole. Meanwhile, the bull-necked 'fathers' and the 'sisters' continue to thrive on Protestant money whenever they can lay their greedy hands upon it."

This is strong language, but unfortunately it is true. The New Mexico policy is pursued by the priests in England—as far as possible. They have to be a little more cautious over here. That is all.

The Rev. Dr. Orchard is still issuing his "Modern Tracts on Religion." The seventh is entitled "Why Pray?" and having carefully read it we are still at a loss to know why anybody should pray. The reverend gentleman says "it is astounding how few people pray, even among those who desire to be reckoned religious," but to our mind the most astounding fact is that a single person has the audacity to pray, even on the assumption that the Christian God exists. Prayer is certainly the worst possible form of blasphemy. A God who needs to be instructed, besought, and cajoled, as is always the case in public prayer, is but the merest travesty of a deity. Dr. Orchard thinks that "the fact of prayer is a proof of God." All we know is, that if there be a God who hears all the millions of conflicting prayers that are daily addressed to him from all parts of the globe, he is of all beings the greatest to be pitied.

In this tract Dr. Orchard rants and raves a good deal. After all, it is very childish and silly to begin and not to finish such a sentence as this: "Personally, I would sooner be reckoned among the babes who pray that God may make pussy's tail straight, or with poasants who bother the Virgin Mary about every blessed —." That is a feeble echo from one of Wordsworth's sonnets, but it is none the less

nonsensical for all that. All little children's prayers are excusable, because they are natural expressions of what they have been taught by their seniors concerning God's power. Of course, Dr. Orchard will never ask his God to straighten his cat's tail; but why not? Simply because he knows that his God neither does nor can do such things.

Dr. Orchard says: "Why don't men pray? Because they don't want to." That is perfectly true; and men don't want to pray simply because they have discovered how utterly futile all prayer is. They are not quite certain that there is anyone who hears; but they are absolutely convinced that there is none who answers. A young man of twenty-nine is on a visit to London. He is conscious that he has a failing, and that, in consequence, he may go utterly astray. Being a firm believer in the efficacy of prayer, he earnestly beseeches the Almighty, for Christ's sake, to keep him from falling. No one ever prayed more sincerely and passionately; and yet when the great temptation assailed him, he eventually yielded to it and was covered with confusion and shame. Had he been strong enough to resist, he would have concluded that God had graciously answered his prayer; but his fall was interpreted as a sign that, for some mysterious reason of his own, God had withheld from him the requisite power to stand. Is it any wonder that, in the long run, that young man became an Atheist, and instead of relying on supernatural strength which never came, learned to develop and discipline his own?

The late Mr. Gladstone affirmed good breeding to be the result of Christian civilisation. One would suppose he had never read Plato and Marcus Aurelius. If the Grand Old Man were alive now we might ask him to preach a sermon on courtesy from the text of the new "Bulgarian Horrors."

How the "Liberal" newspapers, and especially the dear *Daily News*, began working up "Turkish atrocities" again when the Turk took advantage (as he was entitled to) of the mess in which his Christian conquerors had got themselves into by their mutual hatreds and jealousies. But it is too late in the day to play that old game successfully again. The civilised world knows now that the Balkan States can massacre just as well as Turkey; on the whole, indeed, rather better, and with no sort of excuse. The *Daily News* was quickly on the job. First of all, it printed bad news of the wicked Turk from Mr. Noel Buxton—of all men. Two days later our pious contemporary confirmed the news "from a source which places its authenticity beyond question." And what was this infallible "source"? It was the Assistant Bishop of the Metropolitan of Rodosto. This Christian gentleman had four other Christian assistants. The five of them went out "investigating" and their report is, of course, beyond question! Yes, by a Christian newspaper. But who else believes what the Balkan Christians say about the Turk? These soldiers of Christ have proved themselves the biggest liars in the world.

Now and then the *Daily News* lets truth get the better of its partisanship. In a leaderette on the "Peace" which Rumania forced upon the Balkan Allies (heaven save the mark!) our contemporary let the cat out of the bag, tail and all:—

"The result of the new arrangement, according to calculations at Bukharest, is that Rumania will have 7,600,000 inhabitants, Bulgaria 5,000,000, Greece 4,500,000, Servia 4,000,000. Rumania will be the greatest of the States, which is what she desired; and the other States, having made the sacrifices from which she profits, will be sufficiently near equality to hold out a prospect of permanent rivalry and unrest, which is what Russia and Austria want. Speculation is venturesome, but it can hardly exclude as the outcome of such an arrangement an ultimate division of the Balkan Peninsula between Austria and Russia. There is here no triumph of peace or of nationalism, and for that the folly of the ex-Allies in allowing their bitter jealousies to be fomented to the point of war must bear the fatal responsibility."

Rumania, Bulgaria, Greece, Servia, Montenegro, Austria, and Russia, are all Christian Powers. How they love one another! And how the Turk must admire them!

A religious contemporary has an article on "Seaside Complexions." That is an ephemeral matter; but the complexion that won't come off should be found in the establishment that contains no water.

In the course of a sermonette in *Lloyd's Weekly News*, the clerical writer quotes some Latin tags. It is appropriate

that a dead religion should be bolstered up by a dead language.

The following sample of religious superstition is taken from the *Daily Chronicle* of August 9:—

Paris, August 8.

"Religious fanaticism caused a terrible tragedy at a farm at Pommieux, near Avignon, yesterday.

"The farmer Julien, his wife, their three children, Marius, Rose, and Julie, aged 25, 19, and 29 respectively, and the grandmother, of 80, lived there. The family was well-off and the farm in a prosperous condition.

"One day the eldest daughter, Julie, declared that she was possessed by Satan. Every day she had another tale to tell about the demon in whose power she believed herself to be.

"The other members of the family, with the exception of the grandmother, seemed to have been so worked upon by her statements that at last they believed her.

"Yesterday she lay on the floor and began crying out, 'Go away, Satan, go away!' Suddenly her brother, sister, and parents joined in the performance, and all began to cry out for the 'demon' to go away. The grandmother tried to comfort them, but they bound her to an armchair.

"Then they returned to the daughter with chairs and sticks, shouted to the demon to go away, and beat the poor girl's head till it was an unrecognisable mass of broken bones, brains, and blood.

"When the girl was dead the brother and sister called at the house of the local abbe to tell him they had succeeded in driving Satan away. The priest informed the police, who arrested the family."

Comment is unnecessary.

The clergy do not read the Bible so much as they ought to. Writing in *Lloyd's Weekly News*, the Rev. A. W. Robinson says that Christ "chose to live long years of his earthly life in the sequestered retirement of a Galilean village." The reverend gentleman is mixing his Master with Methuselah, for we have the idea that Christ died whilst still a young man.

In an article headed "The Peril of Thought," a contributor to the *Daily Chronicle* writes: "The only Atheism is denial of the truth." There is no peril of thought to the man who wrote that.

The clergy are considerably disappointed with the religious results of the Brotherhood Movement, which they fondly hoped would "rope in" the working man to the Christian fold. They will have to offer better inducements than loquacious lay-preachers and sentimental cornet solos.

It appears that the sale of the Revised Version of the Bible and the New Testament during 1912 was 28,000 copies. No less than 1,200,000 copies of the Authorised Version of the Bible and New Testament were sold. Evidently the Christian world doesn't care for accuracy. It wants "the old, old Book." Or, as it is often put more pathetically, the book that was read at mother's knee.

There are considerable differences between the Authorised Bible and the Revised Bible. Everybody knows the hymn "Almost persuaded." It is founded on Acts xxvi. 28, where King Agrippa says to Paul "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." That is how the text stands in the Authorised Version. In the Revised Version the admission is made that Agrippa really says the very opposite. It is not a compliment, but a sneer. In the English of the man of the street, Agrippa asks Paul if he thinks he is going to make him a Christian with such rotten stuff as that.

Highgate Police Court has furnished a contemptuous comment on the old declaration that England is a Christian country. The Benjamin Jewell referred to in a previous "Acid Drop" has been arrested on a charge of manslaughter. This will bring Christian Science into the law courts. It will now have to be decided whether Christian Science or Medical Science is obligatory on parents in case of their children's sickness.

#### SELF-CONGRATULATIONS.

An Irishman, in order to celebrate the advent of a new era, went out on a lark. He didn't get home till 3 o'clock in the morning, and was barely in the house before a nurse rushed up, and, uncovering a bunch of soft goods, showed him triplets. The Irishman looked up at the clock, which said three, then at the three of a kind in the nurse's arms, and said:—

"Oi'm not superstitious, but thank hivins that Oi didn't come home at 12!"



## Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

### To Correspondents.

**PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1913.**—Previously acknowledged, £161 2s. 11d. Received since:—Margaret Robinson, 2s.; E. V. G. (third sub.), 10s.; Henry Holt, 5s. C. E. Bouchier, 9s. 6d.; R. C. P., 2s. 6d.; W. A. Yates 2s. 6d.

**E. W. COOPER.**—Your remittance, £3., passed over to shop manager. We note your sorrow that you were not introduced to the *Freethinker* long ago, and the fact that you owe your recent introduction to an occasional reader. No doubt more copies would be sold at one penny than at twopence, but not so many as some people fancy. Besides, we should have to sell not twice but thrice, as many to leave the present financial position unchanged.

**W. J. RAMSEY.**—Clotted bosh, indeed. The clergy's letters on hell in the *Daily News* correspondence are not even worth Old Nick's supervision. He is reputed to be clever, but no ability could revise their letters into sense or consistency. One professional soul-saver cries "Let God be true and every man a liar"—including the professional soul-saver himself, we presume.

**MARGARET ROBINSON.**—We have done our measure of justice to the Turk in our own way. We cannot take part in political meetings, which are bound to trench on matters with which, as editor of the *Freethinker*, we have nothing whatever to do.

**C. E. BOURCHIER.**—Glad to have the high appreciation of one who has read this journal for so many years. We also remember the grand old fighting days that you refer to. We were young then, for a young man's work; and that particular work does not need to be done again.

**HARRY HOLT.**—Pleased to hear that you look forward eagerly for the *Freethinker* every week; also that you have learnt "lessons in composition" from it as well as lessons in thinking.

**H. GEORGE FARMER.**—Thanks. Shall appear. Will you send us your address for proofs? You move about a great deal, and the last proofs failed to overtake you.

**E. M. BRITTEN.**—See paragraph. Thanks.

**W. DAVIDSON.**—Glad to see you on the track of the C. E. S. "scholars."

**ESPÉRIT FORT.**—We cannot refer you to such a French paper. We used to receive *La Raison* from Paris, but we have not seen it lately and do not know whether it still exists. We could not supply it, anyhow.

**W. A. YATES.**—Glad to hear you appreciate "Abracadabra's" new series of articles so highly.

**W. P. BALL.**—Your cuttings are well-selected, therefore useful, and therefore welcome.

**J. PARTRIDGE.**—The note you refer to did not reach us.

**E. B.**—Many thanks.

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

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

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

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded direct from the publishing office to any part of the world, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 10s. 6d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months, 2s. 8d.

### Sugar Plums.

Mr. Edward Clodd was the only critic of the Meredith Letters, as far as we remember, who mentioned Mr. Foote as a recipient of some of them. Mr. Clodd also mentioned that Meredith's letters to Mr. Foote were letters of "encouragement." We are not surprised, therefore, at Mr. Clodd's speaking out plainly in his *Daily Chronicle* review of the English edition of M. Constantin Photiades' volume on Meredith, written originally in French and translated (apparently well) by Mr. Arthur Price. Mr. Clodd quotes a saying of Meredith's only a fortnight before his death—"Nature is my God, and I trust in her." "We may not name him pagan," Mr. Clodd adds, "because the epithet carries a

reproach which, oddly enough, still clings round 'free-thinkers,' surely a name to stand to a man's credit." Mr. Clodd thinks so, because he is a good Freethinker himself, as Meredith was; but we are sorry to inform him that the bulk of his countrymen still regard "Freethinker" as meaning what "Infidel" used to signify.

The principal article in the August number of the *English Review* is by Anatole France. It is entitled "Pour la Paix" and is written in his own beautiful French. It is a fine plea for European peace, and a confident prophecy of its coming; but one smiles at some of the references to Rudyard Kipling towards the end. It is certainly odd to find the author of "Pay, pay, pay!" amongst the members of the peace party. This appears to be the result of a compliment of his to the French nation. Another article from a foreign pen is a translation of a description by Turguenev (with reflections) of the execution of the famous murderer Troppman in 1870. It is a very powerful piece of writing. We have not seen the original, but Mary Gough's translation into English seems extremely well done. Mr. Cunninghame Graham follows with one of his fascinating, if exotic, short stories. There is a longer story, even still more exotic, though not without power of a sort, by Sir Hugh Clifford, called "The Further Side of Silence." Tragic, of course. Mr. Harrison, the editor, writes—too severely, we think—on "The Poetry of Francis Thompson." The article is strongly written, and some of the criticism is sound enough, but occasionally it forgets that the poet's genius is precedent to the poet's opinions; that genius, after all, is genius; and that all genius is of the blood royal. It appears to us, for instance, that what Thompson says of Byron (see p. 115) is quite intelligible, and quite just from the religious point of view, and that the image in which it is conveyed is of admirable force and illumination. The same thing, but not with the same power, has been said of Byron by other Christian critics; notably—and in this case *with* power—by Coventry Patmore. One need not agree with a writer in order to appreciate his intrinsic merits, and Thompson should have the benefit of this canon of criticism. We agree with Mr. Harrison, however, that Thompson has been immensely overpraised by certain pious and sentimental critics. He lived too much in the crypts of Catholicism. He is out of the direct line of English poetry. He is, if we may speak so bluntly, a side-show in the great exhibition. Poets like Crashaw and Vaughan have their place in the original plan. Thompson wrote some things that are likely to live long. But is there one of them that quite equals the very best of Vaughan's or even the second best of Crashaw's, in the highest qualities of imagination, logic, music, and workmanship? Time, that discovers all things, will tell.

The highest price paid for a picture during the recent art sale season was £39,400 guineas for Romney's "Lady de la Polc." Romney was a great portrait painter. He was also a Progressive after the manner of Thomas Paine. He painted Paine's portrait, but what has become of it is unknown. It lives in Sharpe's fine engraving, of which there is a good reproduction on the cover of the *Twentieth Century Age of Reason*, edited by Mr. Foote, and issued by the Secular Society, Ltd. This publication has been for some years out of print, but thousands of copies were put into circulation, and many of them must be still extant.

The Birmingham Branch has lost a good working member in Mrs. Bolt, who left England on Saturday, the 9th inst., for South Africa. A large gathering of members and friends assembled at the station on Friday to see her off and wish her good-speed. The week previous Mrs. Bolt was the recipient of a present from the members of the Branch of a travelling trunk. On returning thanks for it and the good wishes of present and absent friends, she expressed her intention of carrying on the work of our cause in her new home.—J. P.

### HIS REVENGE.

James, four years old, had been naughty to the point of evoking a whipping from his long-suffering mother, and all day long a desire for revenge rankled in his little bosom.

At length bedtime came, and, kneeling beside her, he implored a blessing for each member of the family individually, she alone being conspicuous by her absence. Then, rising from his devout posture, the little suppliant fixed a keenly triumphant look upon her face, saying, as he turned to climb into bed:

"I s'pose you noticed you wasn't in it."

## The Gospel History a Fabrication.

### THE PUBLIC MINISTRY OF JESUS.

ACCORDING to the first three Gospels, the whole of the public ministry of Jesus, with the exception of a few days preceding his arrest and trial, was carried on in Galilee. And here the primitive writer's ignorance of the topography of the northern province is manifest. If we attempt to follow the alleged wanderings of Jesus through Galilee, we soon come to an *impasse*. Thus, taking Matthew's account, Jesus, after visiting Nazareth and Capernaum, and walking by "the sea of Galilee," went up into a mountain; after which he "entered into Capernaum" (viii. 5) and afterwards departed "unto the other side" (viii. 13) and came into "the country of the Gergesenes" (viii. 28)—which district is in some MSS. called "the country of the Gadarenes"; in others, that of "the Gerasenes"—after which he came by boat to "his own city" (ix. i). Next, he "passed from thence" to some unnamed place (ix. 9), and again "passed by from thence" to another unnamed place (ix. 27; after which he "went about all the cities and villages" (ix. 35). After this, "he departed thence to teach and preach in their cities" (xi. 1), and "at that season" he went through the cornfields (xii. 1), after which he "departed thence and went into their synagogue" (xii. 9), and afterwards "withdrew from thence" (xii. 15), and "on that day" he "sat by the sea side" (xiii. 1). Next, after discoursing at some unnamed place, he "departed thence" and came to "his own country" (xiii. 53, 54); but soon "he withdrew from thence in a boat to a desert place" (xiv. 13), then he "went up into a mountain apart" (xiv. 23), and, after walking on "the sea," came to "the land of Gennesareth" (xiv. 34). After this, he "withdrew into the parts of Tyre and Sidon" (xv. 21); but he soon "departed thence" towards "the sea of Galilee" and "went up into a mountain" (xv. 29). Next, he "came into the borders of Magadan" (xv. 39)—which Mark calls "the parts of Dalmanutha"—and, after eating, "he left them and departed" (xvi. 4). After this, he "came into the parts of Cæsarea Philippi" (xvi. 13) and "after six days" ascended "a high mountain," shortly after which he entered Capernaum (xvii. 1, 24), and finally "departed from Galilee, and came into the borders of Judæa" (xix. 1)—which completes the ministry in Galilee.

The accounts of Mark and Luke follow the same plan, and are of the same indefinite character. Now, after reading the foregoing, it at once becomes apparent that we have merely a number of unconnected, undated, and unlocated hearsay stories, more or less clumsily pieced together, which were certainly not taken from a biography written by an eyewitness. It is also clearly evident that the stories contained no other names of places visited by Jesus. The foregoing sketch contains all the cities or villages named in Matthew's Gospel. Of these, the words "his own country" refer to Nazareth; "his own city," to Capernaum. It is not stated that Jesus entered Tyre, Sidon, or Cæsarea Philippi—which were beyond the limits of Galilee—but only that he went into the neighborhood of those cities. Again, "the country of the Gergesenes" and "the borders of Magadan" have reference only to districts. Hence, the primitive writer knew of but two "cities" which had been visited by Jesus—Nazareth and Capernaum. The writer, it is true, says that "Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues" (Matt. iv. 23; x. 35; etc.); but this could be stated by anyone who had no knowledge of any cities in the northern province. Yet Galilee, in the reputed time of Jesus, had a large number of towns and villages, as may be seen by the following list, mentioned by Josephus:—

CITIES.—Sepphoris (largest and strongest); Tiberias (next in importance); Taricheæ, Jotapata, Zebulon (strong); Garis, Scythopolis (large); Gischala, Arbela, Bethmaus, Asochis, Magdala, Besara, Garisme, Gabara,

Kadesh, Gaba, Salamis, Jamnith, Julias, Bersabe, Sennabris, Sigo, Seph, etc.

VILLAGES.—Japhia (largest), Gabaroth, Dabaritta, Baca, Jamnia, Meroth, Achabare, Saab, Cana, Simonias, Emmaus, Meloth, Caphar-echo, Caphar-naum, Chabolo, Ruma, etc.

IN PEREA (east of Sea of Galilee), which Jesus is stated to have often visited, were: Gamala, Gadara, Gerasa, Julias, Solyma, Bethenabris, Bezemoth, Ginnibris, Arpha, Selucia, Sogana, Golar, etc.—the last six being villages.

How many of the foregoing places did Jesus visit during his public ministry? Well, according to Matthew, he entered one—the village of Capernaum.

### THE CITY OF NAZARETH.

According to the first three Gospels, Jesus Christ passed his childhood and early manhood in "a city of Galilee named Nazareth," where, it is said, he and other members of his family were well known. Now, as a matter of history, so far as can be ascertained, there was no city in Galilee named Nazareth, either in the reputed time of Jesus or at any other. No such city is named in the Old Testament, in the apocryphal books, or in the Talmud, nor in any Jewish literature known. The historian Josephus, in his *War in Galilee* and in his *Life*, goes again and again over the ground where this city is supposed to be located, without ever once coming across it; hence, the only rational conclusion possible is that the city is purely imaginary, and was so named by the primitive Gospel writer through ignorance of the country and misapprehension.

The province of Galilee, as everyone knows, has for its eastern boundary the Jordan and Lake Gennesareth, the latter being called in the Gospels "the sea of Galilee." Speaking of the western side of this lake, Josephus says: "Now the lake of Gennesareth is so called from the country adjoining it..... The length of this country extends itself along the banks of this lake that bears the same name, for thirty furlongs, and is in breadth twenty" (*Wars*, 3, 10, 7 and 8). Thus, on the Galilee side of the lake, the land for nearly four miles along its banks was called Gennesareth. This fact the writer of the primitive Gospel appears to have known (Matt. xiv. 34; Mark vi. 53), but not that "Gennesareth" was also the name of the lake; for the latter he calls "the sea" or "the sea of Galilee" (Matt. iv. 18; xv. 29; Mark vii. 31, etc.). Luke, however, had ascertained the correct name (v. 1); but he wrote later, and had consulted Josephus. The land was named "Gen-nesareth" on account of its great fertility and of the large number of fruit trees it contained: its appellation in Hebrew signified "garden of the prince"—the prefix *gen* or *gan* denoting a garden, and *nasi* and *sar* a prince.

The primitive writer, however, would seem to have imagined that the land of "Gen-nesareth" took its name from some city in the neighborhood called Nesareth—that it was the garden or fertile land surrounding the city—so after making Jesus a native of that place, he represented him as visiting it several times during his public ministry, and as going into the synagogue there, and astonishing his relatives by reading from the Book of Isaiah.

### CAPERNAUM.

From the way in which this "city of Galilee" is spoken of in the Gospels, it is generally supposed to have been one of the largest and most important of the cities in that province. Here Jesus is stated to have expelled a demon from a man in the synagogue, and also to have cured a man "sick of the palsy" (Mark i. 23; ii. 3; Luke iv. 33; v. 18). Now, as a matter of history, there certainly was a place in Galilee called Capernaum; but it was a mere village, noted only for having "a most fertile fountain" which watered the three or four miles of garden ground of Gennesareth in which it was located. Josephus states that when upon one occasion he was thrown from his horse, he was carried "into a village named Caphar-naum" (*Life*, par. 72). The name signifies in Hebrew "the village of Nahum," *Kaphar*

or *Capbar* denoting a village. As to whether every village in Galilee possessed a synagogue I am unable to say, but I think it more than probable that they did not, more especially since nearly all the towns and villages in that province contained a large proportion of Gentile inhabitants. In any case, the going into an insignificant village, and holding forth to the few rustics found loafing about there, was not the way to make the new gospel known to the people of Galilee—and this appears to have been the only place that Jesus ever actually entered. The reiterated statement that he went through all the cities and villages, preaching and healing the sick, is merely an editorial addition, and goes for nothing. It would thus appear that there was really no public ministry at all, and that all the primitive narratives from which the first three canonical editors took their accounts were simply pious fabrications.

#### CHORAZIN AND BETHSAIDA.

In the First and Third Gospels, Jesus Christ is represented as upbraiding "the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not." He is described as saying:—

"Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes" (Matt. xi. 21; Luke x. 13).

In the same category of unrepentant cities Jesus also places Capernaum. Now, as to Chorazin, there is no mention of Jesus having ever visited that city in any of the Gospels: indeed, its existence as a city of Galilee appears to be more than doubtful.

With regard to Bethsaida, the case is different. There really was, at one time, a village of that name near the sea of Galilee; but it had been rebuilt, enlarged, and "raised to the dignity of a city" by Philip the tetrarch, at the beginning of his reign, and its name had been changed to "Julias" in honor of the emperor Augustus's daughter (*Antiq.* 18, 2, 1). Hence, many years before the appearance of Jesus as a teacher, the stately city of Julias had taken the place of the little fishing village of Bethsaida, and everyone living in Galilee in the reputed time of Jesus would know that there was no place in that province then called Bethsaida: nor is there any evidence that there ever were two places named Bethsaida near the sea of Galilee.

Bearing these circumstances in mind, we find it stated in Mark (viii. 22, 23):—

"And they come into Bethsaida. And they bring to Jesus a blind man, and beseech him to touch him. And he took hold of the blind man by the hand, and brought him out of the village," etc.

This miracle is not recorded by any of the other evangelists: several other blind men are said to have been healed, but not at Bethsaida. Again, in the same Gospel, after the feeding of 5,000, it is stated that the disciples "entered into a boat to go unto the other side to *Bethsaida*" (Mark vi. 45). In the parallel account in the First Gospel, the disciples merely go "unto the other side" (Matt. xiv. 22). But Luke, in his account of the miracle of the loaves, says that Jesus and his disciples "withdrew apart to a city called *Bethsaida*," and that "the multitude perceiving it followed him" (ix. 10), from which it would appear that the miraculous feeding took place within that city: but two verses further on it is said, "for we are here in a desert place," as stated in the parallel accounts of Matthew and Mark. Moreover, the writer of the Fourth Gospel tells us "on his own" that the three disciples Philip, Andrew, and Peter were natives of Bethsaida (John i. 44; xii. 21). It thus seems evident that stories were related of Jesus performing miracles at Bethsaida in some of the primitive Christian writings in existence in the time of the four canonical evangelists, and that Mark has recorded one of them. It should also be stated that Christian reconcilers, as might be expected, have placed another Bethsaida near the sea of Galilee in maps of Palestine of the so-called apostolic times.

ABRACADABRA.

## Christianity and the Chinese.—XIV.

(Continued from p. 502.)

"The presence of the foreign missionary element acts as an irritant to the whole body politic in China, and produces such terrible maladies as the Boxer movement of 1900. The reasons for this are somewhat intricate, but when it is remembered that the same treaties which record the humiliation of China, the payment of compensation for the surrendered opium, and the free admission of the drug into the 'Flowery Land,' are also the basis of what the missionaries regard as their 'rights,' it will be seen how different is the aspect of this question to the Chinese mind from that which presents itself to the conventional Englishman. Opium, Missionaries, Men-of-War are the agencies of European civilisation that have most impressed themselves on the Chinese imagination."—J. B. EAMES, *The English in China* (1909), p. 581.

"The Chinese think that Europeans have neither religion nor morals nor manners, and only worship force as represented by big armies and navies. They say that, while we profess Christianity, its spirit influences our actions far less than do economic considerations; that Christianity is even less to us than is Confucianism to them; and that it is like our impertinence to send missionaries to China."—REV. E. J. HARRY, "As the Chinese See Us," *Chambers' Journal*, April, 1912.

THEN, again, there are the innumerable points upon which the missionaries offend against the complicated code of Chinese etiquette, morality, and good manners. As Mr. Lynch has remarked: "Chinese civilisation is such a mass of complicated and intricate manners, customs, and prejudices, that the average man is really like a bull in an intellectual china shop with regard to them."\* And yet, says Professor Giles,—

"Correct behavior is regarded as of such extreme importance—and breaches of propriety in this sense are always so severely frowned upon—that it behoves the foreigner who would live comfortably and at peace with his Chinese neighbors, to pick up at least a casual knowledge of an etiquette which, in outward form, is so different from his own, and yet in spirit is so identically the same." †

For instance, the Chinese are very strict as to the separation of the sexes before marriage. Even after marriage, a Chinese gentleman is never seen in public in company with his wife. We remember reading of a foreigner, travelling in inland China, who wished to hire a sedan-chair to convey his wife and himself to another town, but found that no bribe was sufficient to induce the coolies to be a party to what they considered such a breach of decorum; they declared they would be mobbed. As Lord Curzon well says:—

"The spectacle of unmarried persons of both sexes residing and working together, both in public and in private, and of girls making long journeys without a responsible escort, are sources of a misunderstanding at which the pure-minded scoff, but which in many cases has more to do with anti-missionary feeling in China than any amount of national hostility or doctrinal antagonism. In 1893, at the remote inland town of Kuei-hwa-cheng, a friend of mine encountered a missionary community consisting of one male and of twenty Swedish girls. The propaganda of the latter consisted in parading the streets and singing hymns to the strumming of tamborines and guitars. The society that had committed the outrage of sending out these innocent girls allowed them \$200 (£27 10s.) a year apiece, for board, lodging, and clothing. As a consequence, they were destitute of the smallest comforts of life, and could not even perform their toilette without the impertinent eyes of Chinamen being directed upon them through the paper screens. Can anything more futile than such an enterprise be conceived, or more culpable? The popular feeling against female missionaries was illustrated in the recent massacre at Kutien [August, 1895], where out of ten persons that perished, eight were women." ‡

The same writer says that a steamer rarely sails from America for China and Japan without a bevy of young girls fresh from the schoolroom, to say nothing of the stream which flows in from the United

\* G. Lynch, *The War of the Civilisations*, p. 259.

† H. A. Giles, *The Civilisation of China*, p. 222.

‡ Lord Curzon, *Problems of the Far East* (1896), p. 301.

Kingdom and the Colonies. Of course, they do not know that in China an unmarried girl who leaves her father's house without being married is looked upon as a concubine.

The Rev. E. J. Hardy, at one time Chaplain to our forces at Hong Kong, says plainly that these unmarried girls shock Chinese notions of morality, and to them "can have but one meaning." He also throws some light on the quality of the teachers thus imported, and says:—

"Before leaving Hong Kong, I saw an annual consignment of female missionaries land in order to be distributed throughout China. Their physical appearance did not impress me. What waste of money to send out people whom a fever or two may sour and depress and necessitate their becoming returned empties! True, those who select female missionaries are on the horns of a dilemma. Well-favored girls marry and leave the business. Anæmic, unladylike, partially deformed ones, who have no chance either at home or abroad in the matrimonial line, do not physically adorn the Gospel or make its message attractive to the heathen. If the beauty of holiness were always underneath an ugly exterior, we would not have made the above remark."\*

It would take too long to go into all the points where foreigners offend against the manners and customs of the Chinese. All writers upon the subject are agreed as to the courtesy practised by the Chinese in their social life, and which is so conspicuously absent in the foreigner, with his direct, brusque, and off-handed manner. And it has been remarked that the manners of the lower classes are much better in the inland parts of China, where foreigners have not penetrated, than in the treaty ports, where they are well known.

Lord Rosebery has been making an appeal for more courtesy and better manners.† After remarking that the English and Scotch have never been famous for good manners, and that there has been a tendency to despise them, he observes:—

"That was a false view. Good manners were the sign of charity towards their fellow-men, a part of their duty to their neighbors, and also a sign of self-respect. A man who respected himself was always well-mannered to others."

Courtesy is the oil that makes the wheels of life run smoothly, and in this respect the Chinese and Japanese are far ahead of us. Nor is this confined to the upper classes, for if a man of the lower orders becomes wealthy, he takes up his new position with natural ease and dignity, as if to the manner born, and does not make himself the laughing-stock of his newly made acquaintances like our own newly made rich, who try to assume a dignity and manners to which they are unaccustomed.

This national gift is well brought out in a Chinese tale given by Mr. Arthur Smith in his *Chinese Characteristics*, which he says "not inaptly" illustrates the characteristic:—

"A visitor is represented as calling clad in his best robes, and seated in the reception-room awaiting the arrival of his host. A rat which had been disporting itself upon the beams above, insinuating its nose into a jar of oil which was put there for safe-keeping, frightened at the sudden intrusion of the caller, ran away, and in so doing upset the oil jar, which fell directly on the caller, striking him a severe blow, and ruining his elegant garments with the saturation of the oil. Just as the face of the guest was purple with rage at the disaster, the host entered, when the proper salutations were performed, after which the guest proceeded to explain the situation. 'As I entered your honorable apartment and seated myself under your honorable beam, I inadvertently terrified your honorable rat, which fled and upset your honorable oil jar upon my mean and insignificant clothing, which is the reason of my contemptible appearance in your honorable presence.'"

And, as Mr. Arthur Smith observes:—

"Inability to conform to Chinese ideas and ideals in ceremony, as well as in what we consider more important matters, causes the Chinese to feel a thinly

disguised contempt for a race whom they think will not and cannot be made to understand propriety.....the foreigner, even in his own eyes, makes but a poor figure in comparison with a ceremonious Chinese. Compare the dress, flowing robes, and his graceful motions with the awkward genuflections of his foreign visitor. It requires all the native politeness of the Chinese to prevent them laughing outright at the contrast."\*

Says Professor Giles:—

"We can easily see from pictures, not intended to be caricatures, what were the chief features of the foreigner as viewed by the Chinaman. Red hair and blue eyes, almost without exception; short and extremely tight clothes; a quick walk and a mobility of body, involving ungraceful positions either sitting or standing; and with an additional feature which the artist could not portray—an unintelligible language resembling the twittering of birds. Small wonder that little children are terrified at these strange beings, and rush shrieking into their cottages as the foreigner passes by."†

Black hair and eyes are universal throughout China. Devils and bogeys are always depicted with red beards in the picture books. This accounts for the fact that, at Tientsin, a little Chinese girl went into "convulsions and literally died of dread when a German soldier harmlessly, as he thought, chucked her under the chin."‡

The clothes of foreigners are thought by the Chinese, says the Rev. E. J. Hardy, "to be melancholy, undignified, and generally absurd." And "For a woman to show her shape is considered in China most immodest. Even upon a man tight clothes can only be explained if the poor fellow have not enough cloth to cover himself properly."§

The same writer observes:—

"But, indeed, we have to consider not only how the Chinese see us, but how they smell us, for what they call our European odor is quite as nauseous to them as their yellow smell is to us. Think of that, ye well-tubbed Britishers! A missionary friend, who is a very clean man, told me that he has often been pained by seeing Chinese hold their noses when talking to him. They say we smell rank because we eat beef."||

Even the animals in China dread the foreigner. Says Professor Giles:—

"The Mongolian pony has such a dread of the foreigner, and usually takes time to get accustomed to the presence of a barbarian; some ponies, indeed, will never allow themselves to be mounted unless blind-folded."

The same writer speaks of the unfailing attack of the dogs, so familiar to every foreigner who has rambled through country villages in China,—

"who rush out and bark, apparently without rhyme or reason, at every passing foreigner.....The solution of this puzzle was extracted with difficulty from an amiable Chinaman, who explained that what the animals, and indeed his fellow-countrymen as well, could not help noticing, was the frowsy and very objectionable smell of all foreigners, which, strangely enough, is the very accusation which foreigners unanimously bring against the Chinese themselves."¶

Considering all these things, is it any cause for wonder that foreigners in China are known as "barbarians" and "foreign devils"? And what must have been the feelings of the Chinese when they learned that (in March, 1899), under compulsion, the Emperor of China signed a decree conferring official rank on missionaries, by which a bishop ranks with the governor of a province.\*\* As Sir Robert Hart remarks:—

"The arrangement by which missionaries were to ride in green chairs and be recognised as the equals of Governors and Viceroys had its special significance and underlined missionary aspiration, telling people and officials in every province what they had to expect from it."††

\* *Chinese Characteristics*, pp. 102-3.

† H. A. Giles, *The Civilisation of China*, pp. 214-5.

‡ E. J. Hardy, *John Chinaman at Home*, 323.

§ *Ibid.*, 324.

|| *Ibid.*, p. 235.

¶ Giles, *Civilisation in China*, pp. 215-6.

\*\* J. B. Eames, *The English in China*, p. 581.

†† Hart, *These from the Land of Sinim*, p. 5.

\* E. J. Hardy, *John Chinaman at Home*, p. 309.

† Speech at prize distribution, Guilford Grammar School, July 28, 1913.

M. Eugene Simon tells us how the missionaries enforced their claim to these new dignities. He says:—

"M. Delamarre [the French priest] himself told me that on one occasion, not being received by the Viceroy with all the honors reserved for mandarins of high rank, he entered in a rage, struck the usher whose business it was to see that the countersign was respected, and, violently crossing the courts and apartments, presented himself before the Viceroy with threats in his mouth."\*

(To be continued.) W. MANN.

## Correspondence.

### "RECAT OR RESIGN."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I beg to ask the favor of space to draw the attention of Freethinkers and Rationalists to the latest example of the old cry of the bigot, "Recant or Resign."

There will no doubt be some readers of "ours" who will recall meeting Professor Bickerton some thirteen or fourteen years ago, when he paid a visit to his native land.

He is back again in England, as keen and full of fight as ever—in spite of his old saying that he never fights—and with more warrant than ever, for the fight he has been carrying on so long.

I have just lately had the opportunity of a day or two with him, discussing men, women, places, and things, and feel impelled to bring the matter before the notice of Freethinkers, for they to-day, as ever, should be keen to take up the cause of any man or woman who is forced to stand alone against all the forces of bigotry and prejudice.

As to the variety and deviousness of these forces, I have just been reminded by a re-read of Dr. William Lawrence's *Lectures on Comparative Anatomy, Physiology, Zoology, and the Natural History of Man* (1844), which in several ways matches our latest case, but more particularly the deviousness and far-reaching methods of the orthodox.

The Lawrence I have is the ninth edition, 1844. Chap. i., the "Introduction to the Course Delivered in 1817," is devoted to "A Reply to the Charges of Mr. Abernethy; Modern History and Progress of Comparative Anatomy."

Abernethy's charges of Materialism had been made in lectures delivered before the Royal College of Surgeons, and published as *Physiological Lectures, Exhibiting a General View of Mr. Hunter's Physiology and of his Researches in Comparative Anatomy*.

Lawrence here takes the gloves off for the benefit of his old master Abernethy and his idol Hunter. In clear and frank terms he states his position, and claims that, speaking as a scientist, a physiologist, he has nothing to do with religion or soul—that mind depends on matter. He does not build on the "unsafe grounds of abstruse metaphysical researches."

It was an interesting re-reading; and now for the "deviousness" of method.

Thinking to refresh my mind on some further details of the old controversy, I took down Thompson Cooper's *Biographical Dictionary* (Bell, 1883), and was then reminded of another of the ways in which orthodoxy works.

Lawrence, when he died, was a Baronet and Sergeant-Surgeon to Queen Victoria, having long been Surgeon-Extraordinary. He was for years F.R.S. and Member of the Institute of France, and of almost all the principal scientific societies of the world. But there is no mention of him in Thompson Cooper—though the less useful General Lawrence or the portrait painter can have several columns.

Some years ago, after much handling of this book, I made a note opposite the title page, after studying the passages dealing with Hume, Voltaire, and others of that ilk, "This Thompson Cooper is a man to beware of."

Then I turned to another Dictionary of Biography, and another, and presently arrived at another item in *Men of the Reign* (Routledge, 1885), an item, however, which seems to err by something like misstatement—perhaps even a lie.

In this notice it is stated that *The Physiology, Zoology, and the Natural History of Man* gave rise to very severe criticism, especially from Abernethy, who denounced his pupil as a Materialist, and accused him of misusing his office of lecturer to the Royal College of Surgeons to promulgate false and pernicious doctrines. The Governors of the Royal Hospitals called upon Lawrence to resign his opinions or his appointment, and he accordingly withdrew the papers complained of, and did not again touch on similar subjects.

\* Eng. Simon, *China—Its Social, Political, and Religious Life*, p. 164.

I have no means at hand at the moment to test that statement, but I feel rather confident that the last part of that passage is not correct.

He was repeatedly elected to high positions in connection with the faculty, and always held in high regard. The edition I have is dated 1844, and I presume is authorised; and in the valuable but too brief *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*, by our J. M. Wheeler, there is no mention of any recantation. Lawrence died July 5, 1867.

I am hoping to extend my exact knowledge of Lawrence later on in connection with the "Recant or Resign cry," and in the meantime perhaps some other reader may be able to give us some new details.

It is rather pitiful to think how, in spite of the forty years of active scientific work done since Draper wrote his *Conflict*, that even to-day scientists should have to waste so much time as is done in side issues and demands for a fair hearing.

But worse still is the seriousness of the idea that, inspired by religion, there are men who can be moved to use their scientific knowledge to bolster up a faith which they know quite well all their scientific knowledge is in conflict with.

Who to-day pays a moment's regard to Professor Sir G. G. Stokes, Bart., and his dreary word-spinning on "Natural Theology," and who, twenty years from now, will pay any regard to the pages of wearying drivel spun out by Sir Oliver Lodge on similar subjects, or to the other titled or highly placed semi-religious, semi-scientific fatuities of to-day, who, flagrantly trading on social status and invertebrate science, foist on the public views which they know they would not defend on scientific grounds.

The Infallibility of the Pope has gone; the infallibility of religion has gone; but recent events and law cases suggest a new danger, a popedom of science—the infallibility of science.

There are scientific men, doctors, and others, who seem dominated by the idea "When I ope my mouth let no dog bark," and it is emphatically the duty of Freethinkers, as it has ever been, to doubt, and to claim for all the same right to doubt, to inquire, to criticise.

And so, at last, I get back to Professor Bickerton.

Forty years ago, after some brilliant work in London, he was elected to the Professorship of Chemistry of Christchurch, New Zealand, where he taught with success, with such success, in fact, that he seems to have aroused a spirit of keen jealousy.

He was not a professional astronomer, but chemist, engineer, and physicist, and so when, in 1877, he made some discoveries in astronomy, some opposition was aroused, and a fight began which has gone on without ceasing until to-day.

In 1894 an attempt was made to oust him from his Chair, but his record of successful work stood the strain, and the attack failed; but a renewed attack in 1902 succeeded. The old cry, "Recant opinions or resign your living," proved effectual. He was not built on resignation lines; he was deprived of his Chair, at sixty years of age, after twenty-eight years of splendid work for the colony, without redress, pension, or consideration.

After some years of struggle, a new turn was given to the film, for eight years later, Earl Dudley, Governor-General of Australia, became interested in the matter, and started with £100 a fund to which the Government of New Zealand added £300; a further £300 was raised by the scientific societies, college offices, and colleges of the Dominion, to which fund the Board of the University which had ejected him also subscribed.

By this fund he was enabled once again to visit England, to put before the scientific men of the Old World a full statement of his views and claims.

It is to be hoped that there will be found in our ranks some, if only one or two, adequately equipped with the special knowledge demanded, who may be able and willing to take a part in what must be, to all Freethinkers, for many reasons, an important event in the scientific record of the century.

Although we have lost our Symes, there may be yet one or two, such as Mr. Coppock, who might be able to take some hand in this latest development of the old, evil game of "Recant or Resign," and I feel very sure that the editor will give attention to any views which may be submitted to him.

T. SMORE.

### A SURE THING.

"Well, I see old man Moneybags gave Lord de Noodles a cheque for \$500,000 the day he married Minnie Moneybags," said Dubbs.

"Yes," said Dumpkins. "And I suppose the lord loved the cheerful giver, as usual."

## 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. Darby, a Lecture; 6, Miss Kough, a Lecture.

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

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, J. W. Marshall, a Lecture.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, J. W. Marshall, "What and Where is God?" 7.30, F. Schaller, "Atheism and Christianity."

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

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

WOOD GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Spouters' Corner): 7.30, J. Hecht, a Lecture.

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