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My religion of life is always to be cheerful
—GEORGE MEREDITH.

Views and Opinions.

Rev. A. J. Waldron, who continues to prove himself an excellent self-advertiser, is evidently interested in the question "Should the Woman Tell?" He has written a one-act play with that title, and apparently in considerable haste, for he boasts that he wrote it in two days, and according to his preliminary puff in the *Daily Chronicle* it takes nearly half an hour in the representation.

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We hope Mr. Waldron's play is better written than his contribution to the shilling "shocker" *Is There a Hell?* just published by Cassell & Co. It passes our comprehension how such slovenly stuff is allowed to appear under that respected imprimatur. Look, first of all, at the reverend gentleman's quotations. He cannot quote even the Bible accurately. "Shall not the judge of the whole earth do right?" he asks in inverted commas. Now the Authorised Version, which is the only one appointed to be read in the Church to which Mr. Waldron belongs, reads thus in Genesis xviii. 25—"Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" This is a famous text—and a fine text from the point of view of composition. Yet see what Mr. Waldron makes of it! "All the earth" is musical. "The whole earth" is cacophonous. Where are Mr. Waldron's ears? They were fairly well developed the last time we saw his photograph.

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If a clergyman cannot quote the Bible correctly, one need not wonder at his treating Tennyson in the same fashion. Mr. Waldron represents Tennyson as saying that "God will be the final goal of every ill." Where, we ask again, are this gentleman's ears? And what right has he to treat his betters in this unceremonious manner? And why do Cassell and Co.'s readers let such slipshod work pass their hands unchecked? Whatever else Tennyson was or was not, he was an exquisite artist. He would have been horrified to find himself accused of writing such a line as Mr. Waldron ascribes to him. He was a big, powerful man, and he might have tried the reverend gentleman's boasted pugilism. Anyhow, he could have proved that he had been libelled. What he really wrote was this—in the opening stanza of the fifty-fourth section of *In Memoriam* :—

"Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood."

The word "God" does not occur in this passage. Mr. Waldron drags it in—professionally. What is he without his "God"? And, for that matter, what is he without "Hell"? A man of his mental and

moral size would not find it easy to make a good living in any other than the clerical profession.

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Mr. Waldron winds up by declaring that "Of course there is a hell." We could almost hope so—for his own sake. We should be sorry to see him disappointed. Meanwhile we may express a wish that, wherever he goes, he will not meet Robert Browning, whom he quotes as saying: "God! Thou are love." The most learned of poets would want the wretched sciolist's blood. "Thou are!"

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Let us turn to another good Christian—Mr. Keir Hardie. We do not propose to follow him in his "Queenie Gerald" crusade. It is an unsavory subject, and we fail to see how publishing the secrets of a brothel can be any aid to virtue—though we can easily understand its gratifying political partisanship. Our object is far different. We want to correct Mr. Hardie's statement that "the late Queen Victoria told us 'the Bible is the secret of England's greatness.'" This is more slipshod work. Christians seem to be almost constitutionally inaccurate in these matters. Mr. Keir Hardie should really know better. Queen Victoria never made that declaration about the Bible being the secret of England's greatness. She knew better herself, and she was a truthful woman. Her private secretary contradicted the story on her behalf. The whole thing was a pious effort at "edification" on the part of a goody-goody paper called the *British Workman*. A picture was printed in that journal, representing Queen Victoria as presenting a Bible to a black chieftain, who knelt at her feet to receive it; and the letterpress below contained that legendary royal utterance to which Mr. Hardie gives fresh currency. The incident never occurred, Queen Victoria never presented that Bible to that black chieftain, and she was not responsible for the nonsense that was put into her mouth. We do not for a moment suppose that Mr. Keir Hardie will express regret for giving a new lease of life to this silly story, but we hope he will never attempt to promote its longevity again.

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Another good Christian is the editor of the *Walsall Observer*. This gentleman "highly compliments" the Chief Constable for attempting (vainly, however) to "put down blasphemous oratory" and "wicked talk." But why should the Chief Constable take such a gratuitous interest in the religion of the town? Would he not be better employed in looking after criminals and disturbers of the public peace? That is what he is paid for. To go beyond it is mere impudence. And why does the *Observer* talk about the Atheistic orator's "wicked purposes"? It is high time that the Lord Chancellor issued a notice that Atheism has the same legal right of propagation as Christianity.

G. W. FOOTE.

Christianity and Morals.

A MARKED tendency of contemporary religion is to emphasise—usually to over-emphasise—the importance of morals. I do not mean by this that too much importance can be attached to morality, but that an over-emphasis of morality often leads to an ignoring of numerous other factors, upon some of which morality depends for its sanity and serviceableness, and is apt to result in an aimless and fruitless form of moral aspiration. So far as many preachers are concerned, one might conclude from their sermons that doctrines are of no importance whatever, right beliefs of small consequence, and that what the older theologians contemptuously called "mere morality" is all-in-all. Matthew Arnold said that conduct was three-fourths of life; an attractive but not very helpful pronouncement, since the real problem is what kind of conduct is of importance. But to attend to many preachers one would conclude that there is nothing else in life but conduct.

A noticeable thing is that this continuous striking of the ethical note in preaching does not lead to an understanding of ethical theory, nor does it result in any marked improvement in conduct. It is a striking fact that during the period in which doctrines in the pulpit have been subordinated to moral exhortation, no contribution of value to the philosophy of ethics has come from any of the mouthpieces of the various Churches. The last contribution of value from a clergyman in this country came from Bishop Butler. But, apart from Butler, ethical philosophy and ethical science have been built up by laymen, and often enough, by Free-thinkers. Mill's *Utilitarianism*, Stephen's *Science of Ethics*, and Spencer's *Principles of Ethics* will teach an inquirer more of the nature of morality than all the sermons of all the parsons in Great Britain could accomplish in a lifetime. And this result has been accomplished by a total surrender of the theological spirit and method. Morality has been treated as something organically connected with life as a whole. It has been studied just as any other series of natural facts are studied. The supernatural has been eliminated—even in the fashionable form of transcendentalism; and the consequence has been light instead of darkness, mental clarity in place of verbal fog.

Mr. R. J. Campbell is one of the modern ethico-religious preachers who usually succeeds in leaving an ethical subject a little more confused than he found it. His habit of using philosophical terms, and of seizing some well-recognised aspect of life as though it were quite an original or new discovery, doubtless persuades his City Temple hearers that they have been receiving enlightenment, but better-informed listeners will only smile. A man who dwells on a given fact or a certain state of mind, only to end by attributing it to some principle in man apart from his animal nature or earthly habits, is losing himself in a cloud of words, and leaving his hearers in that dangerous frame of mind which mistakes a phrase for an explanation. A fact is explained only when it is merged in some wider group of facts. To say that it is quite unlike any other fact is to abandon all hopes of understanding it.

In a recent sermon, Mr. Campbell treated his hearers to an account of what he calls the "naturalistic origin" of moral feelings, but with a curious shortsighted view of what that process really is and what it involves. This is mainly due to his desire to find a religious basis for sacrifice, which, owing to Christian bias, he regards as a good in itself. Self-preservation, he says, lies at the root of our morality—that is, so far as the naturalistic conception of morality is concerned. It creates the family, the tribe, the nation; it forces man into modes of combination. But suddenly—the "suddenly" is Mr. Campbell's—there arises something that strikes right across our instinct of self-preserva-

tion. This is "the impulse to give ourselves, destroy ourselves, crush our own personal interests at the bidding of something that we feel to be higher, and to have the right to compel the sacrifice." Where does this impulse come from? "It is impossible," says Mr. Campbell, "to explain it on any merely naturalistic hypothesis.....The instinct of self-preservation is still the leading motive from this point of view, and yet we see this instinct utterly repudiated when the higher call.....takes possession of the soul."

Now, all this mystery and confusion and would-be profundity is quite unnecessary. And if Mr. Campbell properly appreciated, not merely the naturalistic theory of morals, but the bearings of his own observations, his bewilderment would disappear. Granted that the desire for self-preservation drove men to combination—this is Mr. Campbell's very crude way of putting the case, not mine—combination or co-operation implies the play of other factors, not the least of which is some concern for others quite apart from the direct perception of immediate personal gain. As a matter of fact, however, the desire for self-preservation does not drive man to combination with his fellows. Man is a gregarious animal under all stages of human culture. He is born one of a family, and the family is a unit in a larger cluster—the tribe. And being a gregarious animal, his feelings are from the outset inextricably bound up with the feelings of others. He admires what the tribe admires, he hates what the tribe hates, his code of conduct is that furnished by the tribe, his individual conscience a reflection of the social conscience that antedates his birth and survives his death.

One need only properly appreciate the nature of this process to understand the meaning of "the impulse to give ourselves," etc.; or, in other words, to prefer the welfare of the whole to the apparent interest of self. For it is not the direct or immediate outcome of the instinct of self-preservation, but the product of social selection which in turn makes in the surest manner for individual preservation. The process is two sided. On the one side society itself sets a selective value on the type of individual that harmonises with the canons of social right. And selection in this direction is much more rigorous in primitive societies than it is at a later date. On the other hand, the societies in which the units are more closely welded together, are inspired by the same ideals and animated by the same motives, have a survival value greater than that possessed by communities more loosely knit. And because this is so, individual preservation is the more surely accomplished. In other words, regard for the welfare of others is not something that conflicts with our "instinct of self-preservation and self-advancement," it is a development of the primary impulse under the pressure of social evolution or social selection. Regard for others is, indeed, not a phase of self-sacrifice at all; it is rather one of self-realisation. It is just part of the hopelessness of all Christian morality that it nearly always treats regard for others as involving a deliberate sacrifice, just as it regards morality as a series of restraints upon our natural impulses. A saner view treats all impulses as equally natural, and equally explainable in terms of man's social evolution.

Mr. Campbell's conception of man's moral evolution appears to be that, at certain stages of his development, certain new factors begin to operate. But this is quite unlike what really occurs. In nature the great thing is not a new creation, but a transformation. Thus, the sexual impulse is operative in both man and the lower animals. But while in one direction the crude animal impulse is there without any disguise, in man it undergoes a substantial transformation through the accretion of numerous factors, ethical, æsthetic, and social, which ultimately determines the mode in which it is to find expression. There is, consequently, no need to assume, with Mr. Campbell, that at a certain stage of human history a spiritual principle—whatever that may mean—makes its appearance and tames the

more animal impulses. There is no more in the problem than the play of these impulses throughout, but becoming more and more complicated in their mode of expression as social life and institutions become more complex. Loyalty to the family becomes loyalty to the group, thence to the nation, and finally to the ideal of humanity. The difficulty is almost entirely one of analysis, but the analysis is not impossible to those capable of sane and serious thinking.

Mr. Campbell's exhortations on morality are fundamentally as worthless as those of Christian preachers in general. There is, indeed, no wilder fallacy than that of assuming that improvement is to be effected by a mere preaching of right and wrong. Two thousand years of Christian history ought to have been enough to make this clear to the dullest understanding. For the Churches have never ceased preaching morality. The Catholic Church gave its followers little else; and if all these centuries of moral preaching has not resulted in the elimination of moral evil, it is obviously time that the method was dismissed as useless. The truth is, that in spite of all the preaching, there is no other body of educated people that have shown so small an appreciation of the real nature of morals as have the clergy. They were the last to realise—the majority do not realise it even now—that conduct has a purely physiological basis, and that good food, pure air, and healthy social environment are potent forces in the moulding of character. You can much more certainly lessen a man's resistance to evil impulses by lowering the tone of his nervous system, than by any possible preaching of evil; and the converse holds with equal truth. Of late, it is true, some preachers have begun to dwell upon this aspect of ethics. They have seen the absurdity of preaching purity in thought and deed to families living in a single room, or of preaching "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's goods" to a man when his wife and family are starving around him. But this is proof only that even Christians cannot remain quite uninfluenced by the spirit of the age. Unfortunately, the mass of preachers keep in the old ruts, even when a slightly different terminology is used. If man is no longer presented as wholly vile and incapable, apart from grace, of decent conduct, he is presented as made up of a material body and a "spiritual principle" in a constant state of conflict. At the City Temple, as at Spurgeon's Tabernacle, mere natural man is still represented as incapable of the highest forms of conduct. There is only a difference in the way the teaching is expressed. And that difference of expression is quite immaterial beside the substantial fact that in depicting human nature as destitute of the essentials of the highest morality, these preachers are not only reducing man to the level of the beasts, but are unconsciously preventing his transcending their condition.

C. COHEN.

The Art of Misrepresentation.

"J. B.," of the *Christian World*, is a dogmatist whose delight is to denounce dogmatism. He abhors the scholasticism of the Middle Ages, and the dogmas of the orthodox Church are an abomination in his sight. He has his own conception of Christianity, and in his statement and defence of this he is as dogmatic as any schoolman. There is not the remotest possibility of his being in error on the subject of religion. He writes about God, Christ, and the human soul as if they were self-evident realities. He champions what he calls the spiritual interpretation of the Universe, and characterises every other interpretation of it as utterly untenable and false. In the issue of the *Christian World* for August 14, his article is entitled, "Of Deep-rooted Souls," and his contention is that Materialism cannot produce such souls. It never occurs to him that the existence of souls is a pure assumption which never has been and never can be verified. To say that "mind is as old as matter" is to betray the grossest ignorance of the

evolutionary process. According to the teaching of science, matter had been in existence for countless millions of years when life first appeared; and mind came long after life. When "J. B." adds that "there could never have been matter without a mind to know it as matter" he dogmatizes without a single scrap of knowledge wherewith to bless himself. The majority of physicists believe in the eternity of matter, but we do not know of one accredited biologist who maintains that mind is eternal. The assertion that the Universe begins with mind and rests on love is absolutely incapable of being proved or demonstrated, and nothing is gained by making it.

Now, why cannot Materialism produce "deep-rooted souls," or the best men and the best women? As a matter of fact, neither Idealism nor Materialism can accurately be represented as the soil in which the right kind of character is grown, because people of equally good characters are to be found under both. How can the belief in "a creative intelligence," or in a "Divine purpose in the world," help or hinder the cultivation of the right affections or of high and noble ideals? Why should a mechanistic or materialistic interpretation of the Universe exert a degrading and cheapening influence upon character? Idealism and Materialism are only theories the truth of which is open to question. Whether we swear by the one or by the other the fact that love is the greatest thing in the world remains unaffected. And yet one would infer from "J. B.'s" misrepresentation of it that Materialism is such a deadly poison that justice, truth, and virtue cannot possibly thrive under its shadow. We admit that there is no room, no nourishment in it for "the spiritual life of man," if by that is meant the religious or supernatural life; but we declare there is ample room and rich nourishment in it for man's "highest exercises; for reverence, for love, for purity, for self-sacrifice." On the materialistic assumption, according to the reverend gentleman, the world has nothing in it but "soulless atoms, with chance as their governor, and nothing in front of it but blank annihilation." We challenge him to give his authority for such a statement, to name a single so-called Materialist who holds that the Universe is governed by chance and has nothing but blank annihilation in front of it. No scientist has ever been guilty of promulgating such a silly heresy, and no Atheist has ever been so foolish as to ignore the invariable laws by which the mechanism of Nature is controlled.

"J. B.'s" defence of the design argument is comical in the extreme. Admitting that the Universe is imperfect, he says:—

"So we are to believe that because the thing may be bettered, there is no design. It is curious reasoning. Would any man conclude of a watch, because it was possible to produce a better, that there was no design in it? Would a Helmholtz hold that because the watch was imperfect, it was the work, not of an optician, but of the mindless operation of a nebulous mist? If he did say that, would it suggest to us anything beyond the enormous faith of philosophers in search of an Atheistic conclusion? Has it occurred to these philosophers that in creating an imperfect world, the mind behind it—supposing a mind—may have reasons of its own for a temporary imperfection?"

"It is curious reasoning." Fancy, if you can, a perfect being producing imperfection. If a watch is defective it argues defective skill in the maker. So, likewise, an imperfect Universe implies an imperfect Creator. The mind behind the world, "J. B." tells us, "may have reasons of its own for a temporary imperfection." Alluding to the Atheistic philosophers, he asks:—

"Has it occurred to them that if this mind was one which contemplated as a final end the development of human spirits, in strength and happiness, that the end would be better secured by putting us in a world where there was something for us to do, rather than in one where everything was done, and ourselves placed there, with our hands in our pockets, simply as idle lookers on?"

That is very plausibly put, but it is not a correct statement of the case, if the Bible is to be relied

upon. The inference of this writer is that if we had been placed in a perfect world there would have been nothing for us to do but play the part of interested spectators. The world was made a scene of imperfection that we might be kept busy improving it, and improving ourselves at the same time. But there is no trace of this strange view in the Bible or in the teaching of the orthodox Church. God is represented as describing all his creative works as very good: "And God saw everything that he had made [including Adam and Eve], and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. i. 31). Himself a perfect creature, in the image and after the likeness of God, man was put in command of a perfect world; but from the perfect state in which he originally stood he miserably fell, and became the just object of God's wrath. It was this fall that made the advent and work of Christ a necessity before he could be restored to the Divine favor. In point of fact, however, neither the world nor man possessed at any time anything like perfection. Indeed, so glaring and so gigantic has always been the imperfection of both that we can only look upon it as a terrible tragedy; and we cannot conceive it to be the designed work of a good and loving deity. This is what Helmholtz said of the human eye: "If an optician sent it to me as an instrument, I should send it back with reproaches for the carelessness of his work, and demand the return of my money." So, mentally, as well as physically, man is anything but a credit to his alleged Creator. Surely he could not have been designed by an all perfect and almighty being. Darwin says that "where one would most expect design, viz., in the structure of a sentient being, the more I think on the subject, the less I can see proof of design" (*Life*, p. 62). Writing to Mr. W. Graham, in 1881, the great man said that he could not see that "the existence of natural laws implies purpose," though Mr. Graham seemed to endorse such a view in a book he had just published.

"J. B." says that there is no blunder in evolution." True; but it is a blunder to imagine that evolution is an exclusively upward and forward movement. During portions of the Middle Ages it was decidedly a backward and downward movement. Under Christianity there was a long period of arrest in the progress of knowledge, and of moral decadence. "J. B." asserts that it was not an arrest of humanity, but "a stay in the development of one side of faculty, that another, backward side might catch up." This again is an exceedingly plausible argument; but it is as fallacious as it can be. The idea that one side of humanity paused in its advancement in order that another backward side might overtake it, is altogether too ridiculous. The truth is that for some centuries, after Christianity became the established religion of the Roman Empire, there was a serious arrest, not only in the progress of knowledge, but in the evolution of morals also. Humanity not only stopped growing, but lost a considerable quantity of the intellectual and moral stature to which it had previously attained. Instead of going forwards, it went backwards until about the middle of the eleventh century. Need we remind our reverend friend of that dark chapter in the annals of the Church which has been stigmatised as "the Pornocracy"? Was that only a slight pause in the development of one side of faculty, that another, backward side might have a chance of catching up?

The conclusion to which "J. B." comes is this:—

"Assuredly, we shall find one thing, that Materialism has never provided a soil deep enough and rich enough for high natures to reach their strength and stature."

We could hardly expect a Christian minister to come to any other conclusion. It is a conclusion eminently fitted to encourage and develop his sense of superiority. All high natures are said to be deeply religious, which is equivalent to affirming that the non-religious cannot attain to real greatness. With what pride our critic refers to Tennyson, Browning, Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot as mighty giants, with whom none of our "modern chatteringers"

can compare. What gave these their towering strength and stature? The fact that they were all "deeply religious spirits." Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, Tyndall, and Bradlaugh, not having been "deeply religious spirits," are not ranked with the great of the mid-Victorian age. Of course, "J. B.'s" *Christian World* public will heartily endorse his dogmatic utterances; but there is a larger, science-fed public which is finding out that religious people are not the great, superior folk they represent themselves to be, and that the mechanistic conception of Nature is now firmly held by thousands upon thousands of people of the highest and noblest character on earth.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Gospel History a Fabrication.

EXORCISM AND MIRACLES.

"THE primitive Christians," says the historian Gibbon, "had their minds exercised by the habits of believing the most extraordinary events. They fancied that on every side they were incessantly assaulted by demons, comforted by visions, instructed by prophecy, and delivered from danger, sickness, and sometimes even death, by the supplications of the Church." This is true; but long before a Christian Society or "church" came into existence, and for several centuries after that event, both Jews and Gentiles had a firm belief in the existence of demons and demoniacal possession. This belief was common to the peoples of Palestine, Egypt, Greece, and Rome, and can be traced in the literature of those countries. Demoniacal possession is mentioned as an undoubted and well-known fact by the Jewish historian Josephus (*Antiq.* 8, 2, 5; *Wars* 7, 6, 3), and is found in the Talmud and other Jewish literature.

Such a wide-spread belief naturally brought into existence a class of healers who professed to be able to cure those possessed by expelling the demons—the latter being supposed to be invisible. Amongst the Jews, these exorcists were recognised as legitimate practitioners, and their power to eject the evil spirits was not disputed. If the disease grew worse or the convulsions were repeated, a plea was always at hand—the demon had returned. The case was then one for prayer and fasting (Mark ix. 29). This being the settled belief of the times, it is not surprising that Jesus was represented as going about expelling these imaginary demons, which beings were in some cases believed to be the cause of insanity, epilepsy, blindness, dumbness, and other infirmities; upon the ejection of which the disease or infirmity departed. The following are examples from the Gospels:—

Mark v. 2—13.—"And there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit.....and no man could any more bind him, no, not with a chain.....and no man had strength to tame him," etc.

This maniac Jesus is stated to have cured by the command, "Come forth, thou unclean spirit, out of the man." In this case, however, it was a "legion" that came out.

Matt. ix. 32, 33.—"And as he went forth, behold, there was brought to him, a *dumb* man possessed with a demon. And when the demon was cast out, the dumb man *spoke*."

Matt. xii. 22.—"Then was brought unto him one possessed with a demon, *blind* and *dumb*; and he healed him, insomuch that the dumb man *spoke* and *saw*."

Mark ix. 17—29.—"And one of the multitude answered him, Master, I brought unto thee my son, which had a dumb spirit; and whensoever it taketh him, it dasheth him down; and he foameth, and grindeth his teeth [etc.].....Jesus rebuketh the unclean spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I command thee, come out of him, and *enter no more into him*. And having cried out, and torn him much, he came out."

Here the command to "enter no more into him" indicates the plea of the exorcists when taxed with

failure. In some of the Gospel cases the demon is represented as recognising Jesus and his divine power (Mark i. 23—26; v. 7; etc.); also, when upon one occasion Jesus is accused of expelling demons by the agency of Satan, he retorts by referring to the professional Jewish exorcists: "If I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do *your sons* cast them out?" Here, no doubt is expressed as to the expulsion of the evil spirit, the question being only as to the agency. It is unnecessary to cite further examples. The Gospel accounts of the casting out of evil spirits prove incontestably that both the primitive writer and the later editors shared the common superstition of the times. But these accounts prove more: they prove that the Gospel narratives which record the expelling of demons are deliberate fabrications. Demoniacal possession, as we know, was a delusion born of the crass ignorance and great credulity of the times—the so-called "apostolic age" being one of far greater mental darkness than that which gave birth to the belief in witchcraft. It is almost needless to say that no such events as those narrated in the Gospels ever actually occurred. The writers simply concocted the stories in accordance with the ideas prevalent in their days. If Jesus went about attempting to expel evil spirits, he was just as ignorant and credulous as the Gospel writers themselves, and he certainly never caused a dumb demoniac to speak, or a blind one to see: these fabrications were written for the credulous people of the Gospel times who believed in demoniacal possession.

I turn now to the other miracles ascribed to "Jesus the Nazarene." The upholders and defenders of these alleged miraculous works tell us that Jesus performed them by the power of God, and that "with God all things are possible"—which is the usual apologetic way of begging the whole question. Science knows nothing of the existence of God, or of the omnipotence with which he is credited. As Hume justly says:—

"Though the Being to whom the miracle is ascribed be in this case Almighty, it does not upon that account become a whit more probable; since it is impossible for us to know the attributes or actions of such a Being, otherwise than from experience which we have of his productions in the usual course of nature. This still reduces us to past observation, and obliges us to compare the instances of the violation of truth in the testimony of men with those of the violation of the laws of nature by miracles, in order to judge which of them is most likely and probable."

The soundness of this reasoning is proved by the fact that in every case in which a Bible miracle can be tested by history, the alleged miracle is found to be a fabrication. Of this fact the following are notable examples: the Three men in a furnace—the Writing on the wall—Daniel saved from the lions—the Destruction of the army of Sennacherib (Dan. iii. v. vi.; 2 Kings xix. 35). In the latter case we have also irrefutable evidence, which proves that the Hebrew deity was powerless to protect his servant Hezekiah from Sennacherib.

Hence, the question of the actual occurrence of miracles must, in the last resort, be decided by evidence. With respect to the miracles ascribed to Jesus Christ, we are first asked to believe that all the superstitious ideas held by the people of the apostolic age were rational and correct. How, otherwise, could Jesus cast out demons, if demoniacal possession had not been an actual fact? We are next asked to believe that an ignorant and credulous man in that age possessed the power to cure any disease or infirmity by merely touching the person afflicted and commanding the distemper to depart. To ask any rational person of the present day to believe such crudities is simply preposterous.

Coming, now, to the Gospel miracles, what evidence do we possess for the actual occurrence of the following? Peter's mother-in-law cured of a fever—a leper cleansed—a ruler's daughter raised from the dead—a paralytic cured—a man's withered hand restored to health—two blind men made to see—a

centurion's palsied servant cured—five thousand persons fed with five loaves—Jesus walking on the sea—Jesus stilling a tempest by saying "Peace, be still"—Jesus blasting a fig-tree by his word—and several other miraculous performances. What evidence have we that all or any of these alleged miracles really occurred? We have none whatever. All we know is that Matthew, Mark, and Luke—who did not live in apostolic times—found them recorded in an old primitive Gospel, and took the liberty of copying them, besides making sundry additions and improving the composition—that is all. Who the primitive writer was, or whence he obtained his accounts, nobody knows. The probability is, that he belonged to the sect of the Nazarenes, and merely committed to writing all the hear-say stories in circulation in his day.

What, again, are we to say of the twelve other miracles recorded by the Synoptists—one being the raising a widow's son from the dead (Luke vii.)—which were not taken from the primitive Gospel? These were obviously unknown to the writer of the primitive account, and must, therefore, have been concocted after his time. They were probably found amongst some apocryphal writings that have not come down to our day. To the foregoing may be added seven other miracles recorded only in the "Gospel of John"; but in the latter case there is no mystery—the writer piously fabricated these himself.

The Essenes and Nazarenes, as we know, spent much of their time reading the Old Testament scriptures, and must have noticed the following passage (Isaiah xxxv. 4—6):—

"Behold your God will come with vengeance.....he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing."

The foregoing is figurative language; but the Nazarenes understood it literally, and ascribed such works to a deceased member of the sect who was esteemed a prophet—an exorcist named "Jesus the Nazarene," whom they called the "Anointed One" or "Christ," because the spirit of God *was said* to have descended upon him at his baptism.

Readers who think it unlikely that the foregoing passage in Isaiah suggested the stories of Jesus working miracles of healing are, of course, at liberty to reject the theory; but, whether this be so or not, there can be no doubt whatever as to the character of the Gospel miracles. They are, one and all, silly Christian fabrications. Moreover, when no evidence is forthcoming to corroborate a number of alleged miraculous occurrences, we are obliged to fall back on reason, common sense, and experience; and these tell us in the plainest language that—whether believed to have occurred or not—no such supernatural events ever really happened. The Gospel miracles were piously fabricated by different persons, and at different times, between A.D. 70 and 140; but were all concocted for one and the same purpose—to gain converts to the new Christian religion, or, as the forger of the Fourth Gospel puts it "that ye may believe that Jesus is the Anointed One, the Son of God" (John xx. 31). And that the early Christians *did* fabricate stories for this purpose is proved by the number of lying apocryphal Gospels that were in circulation before the canonical Gospels were written. Christian apologists, of course, assert that these were all the work of heretics; but no proof of such authorship has ever been produced. The only case in which one of these ancient fabricators is mentioned is that of the writer of "The Acts of Paul and Thekla," respecting whom Tertullian says (Of Baptism 17): "Know that, in Asia, the presbyter who composed that writing.....after being convicted, and confessing that he had done it from love of Paul, was removed from his office." This presbyter was not a heretic; but he had the misfortune to live a little too late, and he had no friends in his church to declare at the end of his narrative "and we know that his witness is true" (John xxi. 24). Further—

more, those who concocted the stories of the Virgin Birth, and of the infancy and boyhood of Jesus, believed in the divinity of that Savior; they were, therefore, orthodox Gentile believers. The Nazarenes and other so-called heretics, who believed Jesus to be only a man, could not have fabricated such narratives.

The historian, Mosheim, in his *Christianity before the time of Constantine*, says of the author of the *Shepherd* :—

"He knowingly and wilfully was guilty of a fraud. At the time when he wrote, it was an established maxim with many of the Christians that it was pardonable in an advocate of religion to avail himself of fraud and deception, if it were likely that they might conduce toward the attainment of any considerable good."

The fact here referred to is historically true. And that this "established maxim" has been actually carried out, and fraud and deception stretched to their fullest extent, the existence of our four canonical Gospels is a conclusive and a standing proof.

ABRACADABRA.

"Our English Peacock."

1785-1866.

"A strain too learned for a shallow age,
Too wise for selfish bigots."—SHELLEY.

IN a letter written when the nineteenth century was young, Shelley tells his friend, Thomas Love Peacock :—

"Your 'Melincourt' is exceedingly admired, and I think much more so than any of your other writings. In this respect the world judges rightly. There is more of the true spirit, and an object less indefinite, than in either 'Headlong Hall' or 'Scythrop.'"

Since that time three generations have passed away. To most readers "Headlong Hall" and "Melincourt" are names that awaken no associations. If they know Peacock at all, they know him as the friend of Shelley, who published his version of the separation of the poet from his wife. But of his own work they know nothing, unless, indeed, some Shelley enthusiast has hunted out "Scythrop," in order to gain an idea of the poet from the caricature. Yet Peacock was a scholar and a wit, and his tales are like those delightful stories of Voltaire in French, but like nothing but themselves in English. The humor is Aristophanic, Rabelaisian. He was, like Mr. Bernard Shaw, a profound anti-romantic, whose every sentence was filled with romance. A Free-thinker with Tory prejudices, he lived through the days of the Oxford Movement, and died with an invocation to the gods of Greece upon his lips. Consider, too, his place in the world. Older than his friend Shelley, he was, with Byron, an executor of the drowned poet's will. He knew Lamb, Leigh Hunt, and Keats. He worked in the same office as James Mill, and dined once a week with Jeremy Bentham. As an old man, he greeted the fame of Dickens, and Thackeray owed much to his inspiration. He was the father-in-law of George Meredith, who dedicated his poems of 1851 to the old Pagan, and he lived long enough for people now among us to point at him as one who saw Shelley plain. Peacock may be a satellite of the great stars of literature, yet how his radiance brightens the heavens.

Common sense was the prime characteristic of Peacock. He loved a life of independence, and he would not sacrifice his freedom for profit or prospects. When it became necessary for him to settle down in life, he obtained a clerkship in the East India Company's office, and proved an excellent man of business. To his mother he was the best of sons; to Shelley a staunch friend. When he proposed to the lady who became his wife, he had not seen her for eight years. He would not ask her to share poverty with him; but when he had a home he at

once gave her a place in it. Writing to Shelley at the time of his marriage, he casually mentioned the fact, without enlarging in any way upon it, so that Shelley was in doubt whether he was married or not. Not long after his marriage, his wife became a confirmed invalid. When his mother died, he was left in the charge of a family too young to help themselves, and requiring constant attention. Other domestic bereavements followed; but his serenity never gave way. To the end of his life he remained cheerful, witty, and agreeable, loving to see all around him bright and happy. No man ever lived who was more convinced that life was worth living for those who will accept the delight of reasonable desires and sober pleasures.

Peacock was often asked to write the life of Shelley; but he refused steadily. He wished that Shelley might be allowed to remain a voice and a mystery; but as this was not to be, he corrected the errors in what others published. With this view he wrote three papers in *Fraser's Magazine* between 1858 and 1862, and in these he stated that Shelley's separation from his wife was not the result of coldness or misunderstanding, but sudden and unexpected.

Peacock's literary activity extended over half a century, beginning with two small volumes of verse. His first novel was *Headlong Hall*, and his latest *Gryll Grange*, all packed with wit and satire. The novels are not smooth love stories, or analyses of vicious characters. They present us with a number of persons, each of whom is the exponent of some theory or other—a phrenologist, or an economist, or, maybe, a hypochondriac, or a fop. Parsons nearly always appear, and are subjected to much ridicule. We begin with "Gaster" and "Grovelgrub," and end with "Dr. Opimian." Peacock always looked on the clergy as maintaining, not wholly from disinterested motives, an order of society destructive of freedom and progress. They were beneficiaries who slumbered and ate, and resisted every sort of innovation in the cause of humanity. This was no novel view of the Church, nor was it untrue; but Peacock brought a Voltairian wit to bear on the subject. He had a quaint love of fanciful names, such as Dickens used with great effect; and the creator of "Sir Oran Haut-ton," in this respect, was as successful as the historian of "Dotheboys Hall."

It would be easy to write a book on Peacock and his circle, but space allows only a thumbnail sketch. Many deeply interesting and well-known personalities were numbered among his acquaintances. He lived a pleasant, bookish life, through two great periods of English literature, and he was liked and esteemed by some of the very greatest of his contemporaries. Maybe, his own writings will be always "caviare to the general," for a liking for his witty stories is evidence of a choice literary palate, but his association with the immortals will always ensure a recognition of Peacock, the friend of Shelley and Meredith.

MIMNERMUS.

TRANSMUTATION.

A Jew turned Catholic, and the priest, sprinkling him with holy water, told him that would seal the transaction. Shortly after, the newly transmuted Jew gave a supper-party to some Catholics, including the priest. In the centre of the board stood a great, brown, juicy turkey. The priest lifted up his hands in horror at sight of it.

"My friend," he expostulated, "to-day is Friday, and we can eat no meat, only fish."

"We'll fix that," replied the Jew, giving a whispered order to the servant. The man shortly returned, bearing a basin of water. The Jew sprinkled a few drops over the turkey; then he turned to the priest.

"You can eat that turkey now, your reverence."

"But—"

"Never mind, interrupted the convert. "That basin contained holy water. If your holy water can make a Catholic out of a Jew, surely it can make a fish out of a turkey. Gentlemen, have some fish."

Acid Drops.

Mr. A. E. Ashmead-Bartlett's letter from Constantinople, published in the *Daily Telegraph* of August 15, is another frightful impeachment of the Bulgarians. Listen to this:—

"Of the Allies the Bulgarians have proved themselves utterly unworthy to pose either as champions of Christianity or of civilisation. They have acted with a cruelty and a barbarity even towards the subjects of their late allies which has shocked and disgusted a world long since accustomed to the horrors of the Balkans, and if you multiply a hundredfold the crimes committed against the Servians and Greeks it will only give a very temperate picture of the atrocities they have committed in Thrace since the Treaty of London was signed.

"They have embarked on a vast campaign of extermination against the Mohammedan population which rashly chose to remain in Europe, they have destroyed every Mohammedan village they have visited, they have murdered the men and have murdered and outraged the women and children; in fact, the full tale of their crimes which I shall send you in a few days constitutes one of the most wicked and appalling records of barbarity in the history of the world."

Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett points out that the Turks, according to all rules of warfare, are entitled to keep Adrianople if they can, now that they have taken repossession of it. We all remember Mr. Asquith's phrase in the House of Commons in the early days of the war when the Christian Allies were carrying everything before them. He said that they should not be robbed of the fruits of their victories. Will he explain now why the Turks should be robbed of the fruits of their victories? The Bulgarians captured Adrianople with some help from Servia and Montenegro. Owing to circumstances, chiefly of their own creation, they could not hold it; and the Turks marched into the city again, almost without striking a blow, the Bulgarians evacuating the place in a formal manner. For our part, we hope the Turks will hold it, not only against the Balkan Christians, but also against the "advice" of the European Christian Powers. Their advice to the Turks has always been to make peaceful concessions to Christian robbers. Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett tells us that Adrianople is now held by 200,000 picked Turkish troops, who will fight to the last gasp before "handing back Adrianople and Thrace to the tender mercies of the Bulgarians."

Systematic butchery of civil inhabitants—the women being outraged first, and the children gashed with bayonets—and the destruction of villages; this has been the Bulgarian policy from beginning to end. Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett asks why Moslems and Christians are not judged by one rule of morality? Why should every Turkish misdemeanor be denounced throughout the Christian world "when nothing is said when whole Mohammedan villages are razed to the ground, when men are slaughtered, and the women and children killed after being outraged." Sir Edward Grey's policy in the House of Commons is to give no reply to questions about "atrocities." He knows that an honest answer would damn the Balkan "liberators" to everlasting infamy—and he does not want to see fellow Christians damned in the sight of "infidels." The withering power of Christian bigotry is such that the outrage and murder of Mohammedan women makes next to no impression on the minds and hearts of the ladies and gentlemen who sing "Onward Christian Soldiers!" But it makes a great impression on Mohammedans throughout the East, and especially in India, whence money is being sent in a copious stream for the help of distressed co-religionists. Adrianople is now occupied by men who are burning to avenge the sufferings and indignities inflicted upon the women of their race. They mean business. They have their backs to the wall. They are mostly young men. And to capture Adrianople again would mean a deluge of blood. This is what Mr. Ashmead-Bartlett tells the readers of an important London newspaper. And it deserves consideration.

We are all for peace against war. But there is something higher than peace and something worse than war. Better die bravely than live like cowards. It may be worthy of a Christian not to resent, and, if possible, avenge, the rape of one's women-folk and the butchery of one's children. But it is unworthy of a man. And the Turk's worst enemies never called him a craven. At least they never found him so.

Once, if a man absented himself from church, he was fined, but nowadays the clergy are very anxious to get any male members to balance the number of females, who are the last support of the fast-emptying churches. A pathetic note to that effect appears in the last issue of the "St.

George's Church Messenger" (Southend-on-Sea), where seat-holders are asked to be kind to "the small boy who comes in twos or threes" to the church. How are the mighty fallen! The bodyguard of Christ, which used to be composed of stalwart warriors, is now sunk to a handful of women and children.

Mr. Lloyd George with Celtic impetuosity has declared that the Insurance Act was doing the work of the Man of Nazareth. We were not aware that the Act insured against hell.

At the Medical Congress a story was told of an alleged Irish corpse which complained at the wake that he did not get a fair share of the insurance money. The tale has been told with greater point of the Bible character, Lazarus, who had two funerals.

The *Guardian* naturally seeks to "improve" the occasion of the recent International Medical Congress. It says that the "close connection" between Christianity and medicine is shown by two papers read at the Congress. One was a paper by Miss Stowell discussing whether St. Paul was a Roman, the other by Dr. Caparoni on the "Sepulchral Inscriptions of the Christian Doctors in the Catacombs." The connection seems to us as close as that between Macedon and Monmouth. Christian medicine is plainly enough particularised in the New Testament, and for practising it—and depending upon it—many a simple-minded person has been sent to Christian gaols. The prayer of faith shall save the sick—that is Christian medicine in a nutshell. It is the only medicine ever blessed by the Church, and many a doctor has been punished and imprisoned for defending secular scientific methods of cure. The early anatomists worked with the ban of the Church upon them. The greatest of them, Vesalius, came to an untimely end owing to Church persecution. Scientific medicine, like every other form of science, grew up in defiance of Christian prejudice, and the old maxim, out of three doctors two Atheists, gave a very good indication of the general position.

Dr. Caparoni came to the conclusion that many of the doctors of Rome were Christian slaves, basing this conclusion upon the inscriptions on the graves in the catacombs. It is doubtless true that many of the Roman doctors were slaves. This because the slave of Rome was nothing like the degraded slave of more recent Christian times. He was often enough an educated man, and enjoyed much that was taboo to the slave under Christian ownership. But Dr. Caparoni is on very delicate ground when he bases his conclusion on the catacomb inscriptions. For these inscriptions are not peculiar to Christianity. They were in common use among non-Christian religious sects. But, owing to Christian ignorance and cupidity, it has been the fashion to claim every grave bearing a symbol or an inscription such as were afterwards used by Christians as proof that the grave held a Christian occupant. It is in this way that thousands of martyrs have been manufactured to bolster up Christian pretensions. The best of Christian scholars are now chary of adopting this line of proof, and we are surprised that Dr. Caparoni was not more cautious.

"What the present position of medicine would be had Christianity never come to the world, may be a curious speculation," says the *Guardian*. It may be a curious speculation, it certainly is not an uninteresting one. Medical science was well on its way when Christianity came. The savage theory of possession, revived in full force by Christianity, had been abandoned by the doctors of Greece, Rome, and Alexandria. The causes and cure of disease had been studied and written upon. Had Christianity not come to the world, medical science would have pursued an unbroken career of development, and many discoveries of which we are still in search might have been ours. But Christianity came. Cures by faith, by miracle, and by relics became the rule. The priest took the place of the physician; the hospitals of antiquity were closed, and the sanitary and hygienic science of old was forgotten, and for cities reeking with filth and disease, the Church gave its universal cure of faith and miracles. For over a thousand years, medical and surgical science lay under a ban, and they who would estimate what medical science might have been had Christianity never appeared, must add to the knowledge of antiquity at least the thousand years lost by the triumph of the Cross.

At last even Spain has insulted the Catholic Church, and her priests are, in consequence, in a towering rage. The Royal Decree of May 5 this year provides "for the inspec-

tion of the schools and the instruction imparted therein, but in no way mentions the share of the ecclesiastics in the matter." Cardinal Aguirre has issued a circular urging the bishops to do their utmost to render the Decree practically null and void. How well these ecclesiastics know that the secularisation of the schools would result in the extinction of the Church! But the secularising process cannot be stopped even in Spain. It is in the air and must go on until every shred of superstition has disappeared.

Rev. George Atkinson, United Methodist minister, at Barrow, is a lucky person. Being found guilty of stealing stockings and gloves from a hosiery stall in the marketplace, he was bound over in £10, with one surety of £10, to be of good behavior for twelve months. This lenity was in consideration of its being his first offence. Probably, also, because of his profession and the number of Free Church ministers who attended the court "to help Mr. Atkinson to bear the strain of the charge"—as the *Daily Sketch* so kindly puts it.

Rev. Cecil Frederick Blyth, aged sixty-one, came up to the great modern Babylon from his rural home at Recking, Suffolk. He took a lady to a West-end restaurant to dinner, and afterwards went to her flat, where he died suddenly of heart failure. There is no moral. There would have been a big one if he had been a Freethinker.

We have been giving the poor clergy a rest lately. Here are a few of them who turned up in one day's "Latest Wills." Rev. Dr. Francis William Tremlett, of St. Peter's, Belsize Park, London, N.W., left £7,689. Rev. James Barlow, Rahemy, Co. Dublin, £19,971. Rev. T. H. Austin, Queniborough, Leicester, left £2,595. This is not a big average—something under £10,000—but that is a fair-sized hump to go through the needle's eye.

Another brace of them! Rev. George Dowker Armitage, West Ayton, Yorkshire, left £26,347. Rev. Dr. Samuel Allen Shore left £8,434.

The Rev. C. Silvester Horne says that "sin never goes unpunished." If by sin is meant wrong-doing, the statement is entirely false. It would be much more accurate sorrowfully to admit that most sins escape punishment. Clever financial swindlers are seldom brought to book. There are hundreds of men whose one pleasure is to ruin girls under age; but not one in a hundred gets convicted and imprisoned. The sweaters of the poor are counted by the thousand, and they are clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day. Yes, alas, the great majority of sins go unpunished. This is not complimentary to God; but it is terribly true.

Pagans and Protestants go to hell-fire when they die, however strong their faith in Christ may be, unless they are in invincible ignorance of the Catholic Church. God may admit them to heaven, in that case, if they "carefully observe the natural law and the commands engraved by himself in the hearts of all." So teaches "Alfonsus" in the *Catholic Herald* for August 16. And this is his warning to all:—

"The way of salvation in the Catholic Church is sure and certain for those who follow it; we cannot be sure and certain about any other way."

"Alfonsus" goes further, and holds that outside the Catholic Church salvation is impossible; but he makes the charitable admission that you may be in the soul of the Church without belonging to its body, which is surely a distinction where there is no difference. It follows from this, of course, that for Freethinkers there is no hope whatever, because they believe neither in the Catholic Church nor in any other. For us, poor things, not even God's "uncovenanted mercies" can be of any use.

Professor Bury's little book, *A History of Freedom of Thought*, seems to have got on the nerves of some Christian reviewers. "J. B.," of the *Christian World*—he is only one among others—is sorely disappointed with the book because "from beginning to end it is frankly materialistic." This, being interpreted, means that Professor Bury points out that during the last eighteen hundred years the great enemy to freedom of thought has been Christianity. The broad toleration of Greece and Rome was replaced by the narrow intolerance of the Christian Church. We do not see what else Professor Bury could have done. As Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, and editor of Gibbon, he went straight to the facts; and the facts are too patent,

when honestly stated, to bear more than one interpretation. Every historian worth mention has been compelled to record the same story, although it has not always been stated in so many words. And, free from all ambiguity, that story is that the greatest disaster that ever befel the principle of human liberty was the conquest of the civilised world by the Christian religion. Ancient Rome gave liberty to all religions. Christianity gave freedom to none. Professor Bury's book is far from exhaustive—it could not well be so, seeing its small size; but it is at least impartial, and tells the truth in a plain way. If it has a weakness, it is that it fails to do complete justice to the influence on the public mind of the propaganda of popular Freethought carried on by brave men and women whose names are unknown to the ordinary historian, but whose labors have borne fruit in our larger measure of intellectual freedom.

We are shocked! Rev. C. Benson Perkins points out in the *Methodist Times* that in the east end of Sheffield there is church and chapel accommodation for only about 1 in 40 of the population. This is very serious, but we have not heard of the churches and chapels there that are overcrowded. Mr. Perkins does not say that they are. He simply says that there ought to be more. But why? If the churches there already are not filled, why build more? Of course, every new church or chapel means a new post for someone, and that, so far as we can see, is the only reason for building them. And in the annual reports there is, perhaps, the additional reason that growth can be reckoned by the increased number of seats provided, without troubling whether people are sitting in them or not.

The British and Foreign Bible Society boasts of having circulated 936,346 Bibles; 1,266,919 New Testaments; and 5,696,297 Portions of Scripture during the year 1912-1913. These publications are reported to be in 450 different languages,—some of which, we suspect, must be rather lingoes than languages. This is, of course, a great achievement in its way. But it ceases to be wonderful when we recollect that the Society had command of an income of £171,947 last year, besides the income derived from sales of £95,271. Any book in the world might be pushed round by such an expenditure. The volume of Shakespeare's writings pushes itself round the world, without any adventitious aids in any shape whatever. It is translated into nearly all languages worth talking about. Nobody is tempted to buy it, nobody has it pressed upon him as a free gift. It takes its place amongst general literature, and makes its own way. Consequently its diffusion over all parts of the globe is more wonderful than that of the Bible.

The Vicar of Wellingborough, Northants, has been preaching against bazaars, whist drives, charity dinners, dances, and teas, as means of raising the wind for Church purposes. He felt it necessary to extend his condemnation even to Punch and Judy. But what is wrong with that entertainment? Is it more fantastic than many a New Testament miracle? Say, for instance, Jesus Christ's pedestrian performance on the rolling deep?

The clergy of Swanage would never allow Jesus to give a show within the three-mile limit in front of their town: certainly not on the Lord's Day. They are up in arms against the visit of an excursion steamer which brings people from Poole and other places on Sunday; and they have succeeded in getting the Town Council to protest against, and if possible put an end to, this diabolical invasion.

How the Christian clergy obey their own Scriptures! "Owe no man anything," the Bible says. Well, it transpires in the bankruptcy proceedings against the Rev. Arthur Henley Sharpley, vicar of Mangotsfield, Bristol, that he had borrowed £1,053 of no less than sixteen moneylenders, and was still indebted to every one of them.

The paper of the Actors' Church Union suggests that a certain charming musical comedy actress should act as churchwarden. If the lady will wear her theatrical war-paint and etceteras, the unregenerate outsiders might be persuaded to attend that place of worship.

LOST FAITH.

"Aren't you going to say your prayers, Willie?"

"No, I'm not. I'm tired of praying for this family without getting any results."

Mr. Foote's Engagements

(Lectures suspended till the Autumn.)

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1918.—Previously acknowledged, £162 14s. 5d. Received since:—*Per Miss Vance*: W. Milroy, 5s.; John Milroy, 5s.; F. J. King, 10s. Mrs. Clarkson, £3 3s.

R. KENNEDY.—Missing number forwarded. Every precaution is taken at our publishing office, but things will go astray in the post. We are always ready to send another copy in place of the one that was lost, if subscribers will advise us of the miscarriage.

E. B.—Many thanks for cuttings.

TRADE UNIONIST (S. Africa).—The reverend gentleman's sermon is of the flunkey order. He serves the powers that be, in conformity (by the way) with New Testament teaching. Your letter is exactly to the point. It would hardly get into any newspaper in the old country; so you are not as badly off as you imagine. We are glad to hear that Freethought is spreading amongst the "wage earning" classes in the Transvaal and other parts of South Africa.

R. IRVING.—Pleased that you so highly appreciate "the splendid way" in which we have spoken for the "downtrodden Turks and Moslems when the British Christian press was gloating over their death agony." Thanks for the paper.

E. STARLING.—Very much pleased to see the Walsall prosecution defeated.

T. W. STEWART.—See paragraphs. Our shop manager is communicating with you respecting the "specimen copies."

J. B.—Thanks for the cuttings. There is nothing, in the report of the Walsall case, alleged against the defendant, that would be considered outrageous on any topic but religion. We have always contended that this subject should be treated like any other. We pressed that view upon the jury in 1883. We uphold it now. And we have always been ready to help any man prosecuted for doing no more. We draw the line at reckless speech that ought not to be tolerated on any subject—at least in places of public resort. Equal freedom of speech on all subjects is our principle. Not absolute freedom,—that is impossible—but equal freedom.

F. M.—We had already written on the matter. Thanks, all the same.

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

J. JOHNSON.—We have dealt with it, as you will see.

F. J. ROSE (Johannesburg).—Mr. E. B. Rose was never "connected" with this journal, we have not seen him for many years, and we know not his present address.

R. H. VICKERS.—Thanks for your good wishes.

MARK MELFORD.—We hope the medical prophecy in your case will not be fulfilled; but we note the serenity with which you face the apparent prospect. Your compliments on our own work since you saw us released from Holloway Prison are appreciated.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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. Foote will have an announcement to make next week with regard to his platform work during the approaching winter season.

Mr. Cohen is back from his holiday and all the better for three weeks' rest and change. Miss Vance is enjoying the stimulating air of Yarmouth. Mr. Lloyd is off for a brief holiday on the South Coast.

Mr. Frederic W. Walsh, of Leamington, whose pathetic case is known to our readers, has written a well-informed,

able, and interesting essay on "Auguste Comte and the Religion of Humanity." This is being printed in pamphlet form, with a Criticism by the Rev. L. G. Berrington and a Rejoinder by Mr. Walsh. It is for private circulation only. But "saints" who would like to have a copy can obtain one by applying to Mr. J. Breese, 270 Ladypool-road, Birmingham. It would be a graceful act if applicants enclosed a penny for the postage. This is not essential; but we venture to make the suggestion.

Two summonses against Mr. Thomas William Stewart for using "profane language" at open-air meetings at Walsall have been dismissed by the magistrates. Mr. Stewart appears to have made a spirited defence. He argued that a summons for "profane language" at a Freethought meeting was simply a "blasphemy" prosecution in "disguise."

There were two really funny points in this Walsall case. When Mr. Stewart began his defence the presiding magistrate (Mr. Jupp) told him that "the Bench could not allow any argument." That is really worthy of Dogberry himself. The other point is this. Joseph James Betteridge, a tobaccoist, said that the defendant's lectures had been a great source of annoyance to him—"He named Crippen and many other notorious criminals as examples of what Christians were, and generally spoke in contempt of sacred things"—including Crippen, we suppose. The funniest fools are generally solemn—and usually religious.

We understand that our *Bible Handbook* figured pretty largely in the course of this Walsall prosecution. The police seemed to think it a very dangerous publication—which in one sense it is, as it was intended to be. It was designed to be dangerous to Christianity.

The foolish action of the Walsall police has had the opposite effect to what they expected. For one thing it brought a crowd of people on Sunday night to hear a debate between Mr. Stewart and Mr. H. C. Orchard, one of the police court probation officers. An opposition religious meeting caused trouble, and the likelihood of violence induced the police to escort "the Athiest" to a place of safety.

On Mr. Foote's suggestion the Committee for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws has sent a copy of Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner's little book, *Penalties Upon Opinion*, to every member of the House of Commons. This should be a great help to the Bill which we printed in these pages some two months ago.

We congratulate the *Dewsbury Reporter* on its courage in quoting (and mentioning) the *Freethinker*. It refers to our recent paragraph on the Charlotte Bronte letters published in the *Times*. She stated in one of them that her writings had received the approbation of Shelley and Coleridge; yet Shelley died when she was six years old and Coleridge died before she was eighteen. This seemed to require elucidation. The *Reporter* says that the explanation is perfectly simple. "Shelley" was a misprint for "Southey," and by "Coleridge" probably meant "Hartley Coleridge." We are afraid that the latter explanation is unsatisfactory. There never was but one "Coleridge."

Herr Bebel, the great Social Democratic leader, directed in his will that his body should be cremated. Bebel was an Atheist.

The *New Age* corrects the Chestertons, who have been blowing the trumpet too loudly over the *New Witness*, which they propose to turn into a Company, with an anticipated profit of £1,006, on a sale of 7,000 copies and 20 per cent. returns, and £30 worth of advertisements weekly; on the expenditure being £210 for directors' fees and £1,664 for editor's salary and contributions. The *New Age* remarks that £30 weekly is a big sum for advertisements, especially as the paper is to continue to indulge in "unfettered criticism"; in fact, one would imagine that the *New Witness* was the only paper in England devoted to its principles—which the *New Age* reminds it is not true. There are not many papers thus devoted, but "there are others." Moreover, 20 per cent. returns, the *New Age* says, is a "marvel of economic publishing"; indeed, it allows 30 per cent. in its own statement of accounts—of which more presently.

On this point of "returns" we have a word to say ourselves. The *Freethinker* is a wonderful paper in many ways, and in *this* way amongst them. Our "returns" are

probably the least of any periodical that was ever published. They do not amount to more than about 7 per cent. on the average; which shows what a steady body of readers we possess. If it were not for that fact we must have succumbed long ago.

But to return to the *New Age*. Our contemporary prints its own statement of accounts, for the benefit of "posterity," if it should take an interest in such things. Here is the statement:—

ACTUAL REVENUE.		£
4,500 Copies, less 30 per cent. Returns	...	1,200
Advertisements at 5s. per week	...	13
		1,213
ACTUAL COST.		
Printing and Paper and Stationery	...	1,500
Editor's Salary	...	200
Staff, Literary, Secretarial, Publishing, Accountancy	...	350
Rent, Office Expenses, Legal Charges, Postage	...	200
		2,250
Actual Annual Loss	...	£1,037.

The editor's salary in this statement is a very modest amount. The *Freethinker* editor's salary is more modest still. During a few years after 1899 it was £3 per week. During all the rest of the time, before and since, it has been nothing at all; and for a good many years he paid contributors their modest salaries out of his own pocket in addition,—the money coming mainly out of his Honorarium Fund or the Summer Holiday Fund which preceded it.

It is not our intention to follow the example of the *New Age* any further. We do not see what good could come of it. Besides, the *Freethinker* is printed and published under special conditions, in consequence of its insecurity until the Blasphemy Laws are entirely abolished. What we want to draw our readers' attention to is the fact that all honest "advanced" papers have a struggle for existence. We have maintained the *Freethinker* year after year for a whole generation. It has not been subventioned; on the contrary it has subventioned other enterprises. Only to take one instance, neither the National Secular Society nor the Secular Society, Ltd., is charged a single penny for editorial or commercial advertisements in our pages; nor has a single penny been charged for expenses against any Fund that we have raised in our columns.

We are not *boasting*. Far from it. We are simply stating facts that ought to be known. Those who do know them, and bear them in mind, will not wonder why appeals have to be made for the President's Honorarium Fund. We must live on *something*. We could earn enough to live on by outside literary work, but we should be obliged to devote less and less time to the *Freethinker*, which would never do—and none at all to the general interests of the movement.

What know'st thou, man, of Life? And yet, for ever 'twixt the womb, the grave,
Thou pratest of the Coming Life, of Heav'n and Hell thou fain must rave.

While Reason sternly bids us die, Love longs for life beyond the grave;
Our hearts, affections, hopes, and fears, for Life-to-be shall ever crave.
Hence came the despot's darling dream, a Church to rule and sway the State;
Hence sprang the train of countless griefs, in priestly sway and rule innate.
For Future Life who dares reply? No witness at the Bar have we,
Save what the brother Potsherd tells—old tales and novel jugglery.

—SIR RICHARD BURTON, *The Kasidah of Hajee Abdu Al Yasdi.*

God by God flits past in thunder, till his glories turn to shades;
God to God bears wondering witness how his gospel flames and fades.
More was each of these, while yet they were, than man their servant seemed;
Dead are all of these, and man survives who made them while he dreamed.

—A. C. SWINBURNE, *The Altar of Righteousness.*

Christian Beasts in China.

[Judging from the English newspapers, during the recent war in the Balkans, one would think that only Turks committed atrocities, or Christian armies unhappily corrupted by Turkish example. Students of history know how far this is from being true. The greatest atrocities in human history have been committed by the soldiers of the Cross. And we need not go back many years to find a striking example of the horrible and disgusting behavior of Christian soldiers. In 1900 a punitive expedition was sent out by the European Powers to China, to avenge the death of a few missionaries, who were sent to heaven a little prematurely by the Boxer rebels. Christian soldiers, from all Christian nations, were ordered to teach the Chinese better morals and better manners. The lesson was taught with rifles and bayonets,—and it was done in the way described in the following article, which we wrote at the time, and which is reprinted from the *Freethinker* of January 20, 1901. We feel like dedicating this reprint to the *Daily News*.—EDITOR.]

SIR ROBERT HART ended his first article on China, in the November number of the *Fortnightly Review*, with a sentence that was very significant to those who had enough information to be able to read between the lines. "Meanwhile," he wrote, "the once crowded Peking is a desert, and the first few days of foreign occupation have seen much that need not have occurred and will certainly be regretted."

Since then all the i's in this passage have been dotted with a vengeance. The whole truth has not been told—for, as one correspondent said, the English papers would not dare to print it; but enough has leaked out to damn the Christian Powers (who are pretending to school and punish China) as the vilest malefactors in the sight of civilisation and humanity.

In the first place, the armies of the Christian Powers in China have proved themselves well-practised thieves. They are not even at war with China, for war has not been declared. Ostensibly they are there to enforce certain laws of international morality, which they allege that the Chinese have violated. Yet the first thing they do, after shooting down the Chinese who stand in their way, is to indulge in unlimited looting. It is agreed on all hands by correspondents at Peking and elsewhere that temples, palaces, and private dwellings have been rifled with Christian completeness; and that what could not be carried away has too frequently been wantonly destroyed. And the cream of the joke, as far as it is a joke, is the fact that the Christian missionaries have had a good share in the plunder. Mr. Thomas F. Millard, the *Daily Mail* correspondent, says that, "In all the loot phases the missionaries have had their share. The day after the Legations in Peking were relieved a prominent missionary, accompanied by a large number of Christian Chinese, invaded the residence of a prince and made a big haul. Incidents like this were numerous. When the purchasing period came, missionaries not only attended the sales, but opened loot marts themselves, sending their Chinese converts out to provide the stock." Dr. E. J. Dillon, in the January *Contemporary Review*, says that, under the pretence that civilised rules of war do not apply to barbarians, the looting was continued until "there was nothing left worth carrying off." The Japs left off looting first, but they had got most of the gold. After them came the Russians. The "civilisers," as Dr. Dillon facetiously calls them, burst into the imperial apartments of the Forbidden City, and took away what they called *souvenirs*. "Coolies carrying coals," he says, "to steamers in Hong Kong could not be more expeditious than was this respectable gathering of military and civil officials in stowing away the most unwieldy vessels, images, and ornaments between their coats and their skins." The looting, in fact, was so profitable that it became quite a fashion. Not satisfied with pillaging the Chinese quarters of the city they entered, the allied troops sometimes looted the houses of European residents, carrying every portable article away, and destroying what they could not carry. "Pianos," Dr. Dillon says, "were demolished with bayonets, mirrors shivered in a hundred fragments, paintings

cut into strips. This," he adds, "was done by Europeans in the houses of the people whom they had been sent to protect." Some netted hundreds and some thousands of pounds. Common soldiers, of course, did not get as much, but they had their proportion of the spoil of the Heathen Chinese, who did not know the bill he was running up when he shot a German Minister and sent a few missionaries to the kingdom of heaven.

It will not surprise any student of history, or of human nature, to learn that looting and destruction of property are by no means the worst inflictions upon the Chinese by the allied army of the Christian Powers. Sir Robert Hart only suggests the wholesale slaughter that has been going on. Dr. Dillon, however, does not shrink from telling the story. Mr. George Lynch, the special correspondent of the *Express*, had to some extent anticipated him. "The cry of 'Sha, sha!' (Kill, kill!)" he wrote, "which the Boxer mob shouted outside the Legations, has been answered from Europe by the German Emperor's speeches for 'Vengeance, vengeance,' and in paying a visit to the house of the prefect of the German section yesterday afternoon, the effects of his speeches were everywhere apparent." "Woe to the vanquished men, women, and children," Mr. Lynch added, "during the next six months." Dr. Dillon is far more precise. He gives details which are enough to freeze the blood or make it boil, according to the reader's temperament. Here is his most general statement:—

"During the war which was waged, but not formally declared, no quarter was given to Chinese regular soldiers; in battles and skirmishes no prisoners were taken, and after easily gained victories wounded enemies, instead of being cared for, were put to death like venomous reptiles; nay, thousands of defenceless and well-meaning Chinamen were slaughtered in cold blood, and not always, it is said, with the swiftness or the minimum of physical pain with which the man of average humanity would snuff out the life of a wild beast. In Tungtschau and Peking, Chinese girls and women of all ages were raped first and bayoneted afterwards by men whose governments were wrapping themselves up in the soft wool of Mary's little lamb."

On leaving Tientsin, Dr. Dillon passed through what had been a happy, smiling, and prosperous district, until the "civilisers" from Christian Europe fell upon it. The result is best told in Dr. Dillon's own words:—

"In the twinkling of an eye it had all been transformed, and fathers, sons, daughters, and mothers now lay hidden in the mould, covered with matting, buried in the rubbish or floating down the river. A wave of death and desolation had swept over the land, washing away the vestiges of Chinese culture. Men, women, boys, girls, and babes in arms had been shot, stabbed, and hewn to bits in this labyrinth of streets."

After relating a number of particular instances of wanton cruelty, Dr. Dillon tells us what he saw of the terrible massacre at Tungtschau:—

"I speak as an eye-witness when I say that over and over again the gutters of the city of Tungtschau ran red with blood, and I sometimes found it impossible to go my way without getting my boots bespattered with human gore. There were few shops, private houses, and courtyards without dead bodies and pools of dark blood.....No native's life or property was safe for an hour. Men I had been speaking to before lunch were in their graves by sundown, and no mortal will ever know the reason why. The thirst of blood had made men mad. The pettiest and most despicable whippersnapper who happened to have seen the light of day in Europe or Japan had uncontrolled power over the life and limbs, the body and soul, of the most highly cultivated Chinaman in the city."

The Japanese generals were the first to repress these bloody outrages. "In worldly wisdom," Dr. Dillon says, "as in their commissariat and hospital organisation, the Japs were considerably ahead of the best of the Christian allies." The Russians seem to have been the worst, as might have been expected, and next to them the French. No quarter was given by them to the Chinese, whom they shot down like dogs irrespective of age or sex. "The

British forces," Dr. Dillon says, and one is glad to hear it, "took prisoners when possible and looked after the wounded." But down to the end of October none of the other European troops "approved the principle or imitated the practice."

Up in far Manchuria, over which the grim paw of the Russian bear has been laid heavily, the Chinese have been massacred in myriads. "An Eye-Witness," writing to the *Westminster Gazette* from Blagovestschensk, told a tale of horror that could scarcely be eclipsed by the worst records of the past. Whole towns were wiped out of existence. A district inhabited by at least 100 000 Chinese had been turned into a desert. Steaming down the Amour the ship's paddles were obstructed every minute by festering corpses of Chinese men, women, and children. "We shall never be able," this writer said, "to ascertain the exact number of those who perished by fire, by the sword, or by drowning; but we know now that nothing is left of those villages so animated a few days ago, and that a pall of deadly silence hangs over the whole countryside, which henceforth seems accursed for ever."

Students of Milton will recollect his terrible phrase of "Lust hard by Hate." The murderer and the violator are brothers, or at least first cousins. Where the Christian "civilisers" have gone they have paid no respect whatever to the Chinese women, whom they have too often treated like Jack the Rippers, violating them first and stabbing and slashing them to death afterwards. Let us hear Dr. Dillon:—

"Females of all ages have been abused to death..... Wives and daughters hanged themselves on trees or drowned themselves in garden-wells in order to escape a much worse lot. Chinese women honestly believed that no more terrible fate could overtake them than to fall alive into the hands of Europeans and Christians. And it is to be feared that they were right. Buddhism and Confucianism have their martyrs to chastity, whose heroic feats no martyrology will ever record. Some of those obscure, but right-minded girls and women hurled themselves into the river, and, finding only three feet of water there, kept their heads under the surface until death had set his seal on the sacrifice of their life..... But a large number of ill-starred women fell alive into the hands of the allied troops. I saw some of them in Peking and Tungtschau, but already dead, with frightful gashes in the breast, or skulls smashed in, and one with a horribly mutilated body."

But the infamy of this treatment of Chinese women, guilty of no offence whatever against their outragers, is best seen in a specific instance. We quote from Dr. Dillon again:—

"What in heaven's name is this?' I exclaimed, one day, thumping with my knuckles a very big black box in the house of a rich man, who may then have been in Abraham's bosom or in Dives' company. The house was in Tungtschau, the sombre receptacle in one of the largest rooms, and a torturing stench proceeded from it. 'It is the girls, sir; three girls,' answered my attendant, who was a European. 'Their corpses are lying in the box there,' he explained. 'Who put them there?' 'Some officers.' 'Are you quite sure of it?' 'Yes, sir; I was here when it was being done.' 'Did you see the young women yourself?' 'I did. They were the daughters of the man who owns the house. The officers raped them, and then had them stabbed with bayonets. When they were dead they were put into this box, and it was covered up, as you see.' 'Good God, what a dismal state of things we are coming to.' 'That sort of thing happened before, sir. Very often, too, I can tell you. There were worse cases than this. These here were raped and stabbed; others have been raped to death, and got no stabbing.'"

Even in the month of September, Dr. Dillon says, three French soldiers entered a house in a respectable part of Peking which was then under Russian "protection." The father, mother, and daughter were all at home. Seeing the maiden, the scoundrels resolved to deflower her. First they shot the parents dead, to prevent their interference; but the victim's screams were heard by Chinamen next door, and they induced a European to go with them and see what was going on, and on the arrival of these unexpected visitors the three scoundrels decamped.

Mr. George Lynch says that when the French general was remonstrated with about the frequent occurrence of disgraceful outrages by his troops, he replied: "It is impossible to restrain the gallantry of the French soldier." Gallantry, forsooth! Was there ever a worse prostitution of the word than applying it to the deeds of men more brutal than wild beasts in a state of rut? For even those beasts practise a measure of courtship with their females.

Dr. Dillon exonerates English and German officers from blame in this respect. On the whole, however, he says that "To compare nationalities in respect of the guilt of their representatives would be at once misleading to the historian and prejudicial to the cause of humanity." Outrages on women were frequent and heinous, and continued to be perpetrated long after looting and massacre were checked by the generals.

"The policy of the Powers," Dr. Dillon says, "is a sowing of the wind, and the harvest reaped will surely be the whirlwind." Chinese men prize the honor of their women as much as we do, and Chinese women are as chaste as our own. The exploits of these Christian beasts in China will, therefore, dwell like a consuming fire of vengeance in the hearts of thousands of Chinese husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers. They will long for the day of retribution. And it may come a good deal sooner than many imagine. It is impossible to keep China from arming and drilling. Her population is too great, her territory is too vast, her resources are too prodigious. Christian Europe is driving her into militarism in mere self-defence. She has always desired peace, but she is being hounded into war. And when she realises Sir Robert Hart's prediction, and has twenty million soldiers, all equipped with the most scientific weapons of offence, let the Christian Powers look to themselves! For their own orgy of blood and lust may be repeated at their own expense.

Why is it, we have to ask in conclusion, that so little protest has been raised over here against the conduct of these Christian beasts in China? The first answer is that they are Christians. That fact seems to make all the difference in the world. It is only the sins of the "heathen" that stink in the nostrils of the devotees of the meek and lowly Jesus. The second answer is that the Chinese question is not being taken up by any great political party here for the sake of political capital. So slender is the real disinterested love of "righteousness" bred in the average Christian after nearly two thousand years of the "only true religion." This truth should be realised by Freethinkers, and it should make them more zealous than ever in attacking the Christian superstition. If we must have a religion, let us discard the Religion of Christ and try the Religion of Humanity.

G. W. FOOTE.

Christianity and the Chinese.—XV.

(Continued from p. 525.)

"The simple fact is, that there do not exist any reasons for the Christianisation of China, except from the standpoint of the missionaries themselves. Their superstitions, if ridiculous in European eyes, are, surely, perfectly harmless. Wherein lies the moral harm of Fêng Shui? or in that curious, widespread belief in the duality of nature? The errors they fall into as to the meaning of natural phenomena are not such as Christianity can dispel. The Bible itself has been shown to be full of similar errors. A deeper and wider scientific knowledge alone can cure them."—T. C. HAYLLAR, *Nineteenth Century*, November, 1895.

"For the most part the 'religious world' is so occupied in hating and despising the beliefs of the heathen, whose vast regions of the globe are painted black on the missionary maps, that they have little time or capacity left to understand them."—Dr. E. B. TYLOR, *Primitive Culture* (1873), vol. i., p. 420.

It is hardly possible to understand the working of Christian missions in China without dealing in some degree with the character of the Chinese. Many high authorities assure us that it is impossible for a

European to thoroughly understand the Chinese character in all its ramifications. This may be true—the Chinese experience the same difficulty in understanding ours—but still there are points of their character we can understand and appreciate. Generally speaking, with a few exceptions, the missionaries exaggerate the faults and peculiarities; deny, or belittle the virtues, and ridicule the religion of the Chinese.

The officials of the societies who send missionaries out expect them to write for the edification of the supporters of missionary work, upon whose subscriptions they depend. Therefore, the blacker the character of the Chinese, and the more ridiculous their beliefs are painted, the more need for the administrations of the missionary.

To deal with this mass of misrepresentation would require another series of articles, at the risk of wearying our readers. However, let those who are interested in the subject take the works of the Rev. J. Macgowan (of the London Missionary Society), *Sidelights on Chinese Life and How England Saved China*, and, after reading the character of the Chinese as portrayed there, let him, as an antidote, read the fine work of Mr. R. F. Johnston, *Lion and Dragon in Northern China* (Murray: 1910). Mr. Johnston, as District Officer and Magistrate of Wei-hai-wei, has an intimate knowledge of the Chinese. So, also, had the late Sir Robert Hart, the famous Inspector-General of Chinese Customs, who knew and greatly admired the Chinese character, and whose book, *These from the Land of Sinim* (Chapman and Hall: 1901), shows how things appear looked at from the Chinese point of view. Professor H. A. Giles—Professor of Chinese at Cambridge University, and formerly one of our Consuls in China—is another authority whose works, *Chinese Sketches* and *The Civilisation of China* (Home University Library: 1s), form a corrective to missionary animadversions. Sir Hiram Maxim has also done great service by compiling, from many of the best books written on China, a damning indictment of missionaries and their methods, in his *Li Hung Chang's Scrap Book* (Watts: 7s. 6d), which should adorn the shelves of every Freethinker. We ourselves are indebted to this work for our acquaintance with M. Eugene Simon's valuable work on China (now out of print), which should be read. Dr. Morrison's book, *An Australian in China*, is another eye-opener.

Another cause of the missionaries' bad opinion of the Chinese is, no doubt, because they are only acquainted with the dregs of the population. A foreigner in England who was only acquainted with the slum-dwellers of London, Liverpool, and Manchester, or of any of our great cities, and compiled a book dealing with our manners, customs, and religion, from the experiences so acquired, would not give a very faithful account of our character as a whole. Probably we should not recognise the portrait. Yet this is the position, generally speaking, of the missionary in China. As Mr. Arthur Diosy, in his fine work, *The New Far East*, has pointed out:—

"The modern Missionaries devote themselves, almost invariably, to the conversion of the lower classes. To appreciate the futility of this proceeding, we have only to imagine Britain governed absolutely by an administration composed of Newdigate Prizemen, men who had graduated high in Classical Honors, and Senior Wranglers. What would we think of the wisdom of Buddhists who, wishing to convert the whole of the British Empire to their faith, commenced operations with a mission to the costermongers in Golden-lane and Newport Market, and to the inmates of the Salvation Army's 'Shelters'? That is, broadly indicated, the position of Missionary enterprise in the Far East..... Unfortunately for the progress of Christianity in China, the very fact that it is there more than anywhere else, the religion of the lowly and oppressed, attracts to the Chapel a crowd of wastrels and social wrecks, who requiring, as they do, the consolations of the faith more urgently than their more prosperous brethren—yet do great harm to the Missionary cause. If dishonest, and they are often sad impostors, making a trade of their conversion, they bring discredit on the Missionaries and make them ridiculous in the eyes of the Chinese; if

honest, their sad plight and the low social scale to which they have fallen, make their better-situated countrymen hesitate to join the same congregation. The Chinese authorities are continually complaining that every Mission-house becomes a veritable Alsatia for all the vagrom men and shiftless fellows of the neighborhood. This complaint is exaggerated, no doubt, but there is a substratum of truth. In short, Christianity in China is not 'fashionable'; it is not even considered 'respectable,' and that is a great drawback to its success with a nation that prizes respectability—'face,' as it calls it—above all things.*

Mr. Diosy adds that the imperfect command of language leads to absurd and irreverent expressions where solemn words were intended. The insufficient acquaintance of novices with Chinese manners, customs, and thoughts, and the dictatorial interference of missionary societies and boards at home, totally ignorant of Chinese conditions, "have caused millions of Chinese to look upon Christianity and Western civilisation with scorn and loathing."

Mr. Archibald Little declared that "no respectable Chinaman would ever admit a missionary into his home." †

Sir Henry Norman tells us that:—

"the ordinary foreigner carefully avoids the employment of the native Christian in any subordinate capacity, having found by experience that in many cases he has only lost his native virtues to acquire foreign vices in their place. Conversion to Christianity is looked upon by many natives merely as a means of an easier livelihood. A friend of mine asked a Chinese servant, whom he had previously known, what he was engaged in doing. He replied: 'My have got that Jesus pidgin.' He was no more intentionally irreverent in saying this than I am in quoting it; he merely meant that the profession of Christianity, with its comfortable concomitants, was his new occupation." ‡

The Chinese have two great failings which have contributed a great deal to the siege of troubles they have endured of late years—their conservatism and their pride.

Unlike the Japanese—who foresaw the inevitable conflict with the Western Powers, and casting aside their antique weapons, borrowed the arms and the science of the West to repel the West—China made no effort to meet or to parry the approaching onslaught, made no effort even to understand the "barbarians" or "foreign devils," as she terms, and always has termed, the inhabitants of other countries. In her ignorance she did not know of the power or resources, or even the existence of the other nations adjoining and over the sea. Her pride would not allow her to acknowledge that any of the outer barbarians could rival her ancient civilisation or threaten her imperial majesty. Then, again, the inbred conservatism of the Chinese is against innovation or reform of any kind. No Chinaman would ever dream of doing anything differing from what his father and grandfather did before him; it would be in the highest degree disloyal, setting himself up to know better than his ancestors. The Chinese exist now, in inland China, exactly as they existed more than three thousand years ago. What China really wants is not religion—the Western nations are discarding it themselves—but science; a knowledge of geography, history, engineering, and the technical knowledge to place her upon an equal footing with her neighbors.

As Mr. Eames, the historian of the English in China, observes:—

"The conception that the Emperor is divinely appointed has affected Chinese ideas of geography. These are based on the supposition that China is situated in the middle of the earth, while all the other nations, grouped around in a respectful circle, make obeisances in a manner not unlike that in which Joseph's sheaf was worshiped by those of his brethren. The name by which the Chinese prefer to designate their country is the Middle Kingdom. Sometimes they improve upon this by adding the word 'flowery.'

They seek to impress upon the outer barbarian the fact that their land is peculiarly favored by Heaven by being bright and sunny, while all the rest of mankind have to dwell in the dark and desolate regions of the earth. In their opinion, the sovereigns of other countries, ruling over lands that have been wont to bask in the sunshine of Heaven's favor, are but vassals of the Son of Heaven, towards whom he exercises a benignant toleration. To this is partly due that feeling of contempt which every Chinese feels towards all foreigners.**

Until quite recently, says the same writer, the Chinese believed that they were superior in power to all the nations of Europe combined; and—

"to this day the Chinese comfort themselves with the belief that they only have to develop their national wealth and they will be able to defy the world. When it comes to morality, the merest Chinese coolie shows by his look of conscious superiority, as he passes us in the street, that to his mind the best of us are but outer barbarians" (p. 228).

Another competent writer, who knows the Chinese intimately, says:—

"The Chinese, whose education is confined to a study of their own classics and the acquiring of a good literary style, are often quite unaware that there are other nations in the world besides themselves. It is not that they think they are the finest nation, as we all do, every one of us, if we tell the hidden secrets of our hearts, but that they believe there are no others; only border tribes, sometimes turbulent, with wild sort of chieftains over them, who come to China either because they have no land and are weary of living always on the sea, or because theirs are such poverty-stricken districts that there is tea, no silk, no sunshine to ripen anything. Therefore, we come as suppliants to China, begging of them to trade with us and let us have some of their good things; and then, in a turbulent fashion, force them to take our opium or the like in exchange." †

It may be thought the Chinese must admire our mechanical inventions, but, as Mr. Arthur Smith observes, these things do not make the impression we should expect or desire. "They recognise the fact that we are their superiors in mechanical contrivances; but many of these contrivances are regarded in the light in which we should look upon feats of sleight-of-hand, curious, inexplicable, and useless." ‡ The Rev. J. E. Hardy says the inventiveness of the white man, in the eyes of the Chinese is "no more worthy of respect than is the cunning of the fox or the strength of an elephant." § Mr. Arthur Smith also observes that—

"From a variety of causes the typical Chinese scholar regards all foreign ideals as inferior to those of the Chinese, and the effort to introduce them into China with the same mixture of amusement, contempt, and indignation which we should instinctively feel toward an organised attempt to import into a Christian land the religious system of Mohammed, to the displacement of Christianity. This is his most moderate and temperate view. When he becomes at all excited and intolerant, he views the advent of Western ways and moral teachings precisely as well-educated Westerners would the propagation of Anarchistic tenets and the inculcation of Nihilistic practises among the people of our own land." ¶

Nor can we be surprised at this when we remember the series of terrible calamities the Chinese have experienced, due to missionary aggression. As Sir Robert Hart has remarked, the very presence of the missionaries—

"has been felt to be a standing insult, for does it not tell the Chinese their conduct is bad and requires changes, their cult inadequate and wants addition, their gods despicable and to be cast into the gutter, their forefathers lost, and themselves only to be saved by accepting the missionary's teaching?" ¶¶

(To be continued.) W. MANN.

* J. B. Eames, *The English in China*, p. 105.

† Mrs. Archibald Little, *Life of Li Hung Chang*, p. 47.

‡ Arthur Smith, *Chinese Characteristics*, p. 103.

§ J. E. Hardy, *John Chinaman at Home*, p. 330.

¶ Arthur Smith, *China in Convulsion*, p. 77.

¶¶ Sir Robert Hart, *These from the Land of Sinim*, p. 136.

* Arthur Diosy, *The New Far East*, pp. 221-2.

† A. Little, *Through the Yang-tse Gorges*, p. 236.

‡ Sir Henry Norman, *Peoples and Politics of the Far East*, p. 307.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15 and 6, C. Cohen, Lectures.

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EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, E. Burke, a Lecture.

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