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When a man has the talent to attack with effect falsehood, prejudice, and imposture, it is his duty, if there are any social duties, to do it.—PROF. J. B. BURY.

Religion and Morality.

THE Bible is sown with atrocious or unreasonable prescriptions. For Jehovah, the inexpiable crimes are idolatry and blasphemy. The Jews were always to stone whoever incited them to idolatry, whether son, daughter, brother, or wife. They were to exterminate the inhabitants and the animals, and destroy the belongings, of idolatrous cities where Hebrews had been attracted and converted.

The blasphemer was to be stoned, and so was the sorcerer. Death was decreed against those who resorted to wizards. This is justice after the fashion of the negroes of Central Africa. Jehovah was also like certain idols on the banks of the Niger in his pronounced taste for the odor of burning fat. To eat of that holy fat was to the Jew a capital crime. The same punishment was awarded to those who should eat of the blood.

Against the enemy Jehovah commanded a savage cruelty. All the males of cities carried by assault were to be put to the edge of the sword. In other cities, which Jehovah gave as a heritage to his people, the whole population was to be massacred.

Elsewhere it is said that every girl who marries without being a virgin should be stoned. The wife is also an impure being. To touch her, or any object which has been in contact with her during her menstrual period, is to become impure until the evening. She is further impure during seven days, if she gives birth to a son; and during fourteen days after the birth of a daughter.

The most singular prescriptions are solemnly formulated. It is forbidden to shave or cut the hair round. Quadrupeds may be eaten if they ruminant and are cloven-footed, but no one must eat the hare nor the cony, *which of course ruminant*, but do not divide the hoof. It is also necessary to abstain carefully from certain fantastic animals, having at the same time four feet and wings, etc., etc.

If the commandments of Jehovah are sometimes singular, the methods of appeasing him, and of effacing sins, are not more rational. The almighty Lord is, above all, hungry for victims. Formerly, as we have seen, he devoured the first-born children; later he is contented with animals. He pardons, for a calf, a sin committed in ignorance; a broken oath for a lamb or a goat; a fraud or a falsehood for a ram without spot. For an emissary he-goat the sins of all Israel are remitted.

The Koran, which was born of the Bible, is not more sensible. It orders abstinence from the blood and flesh of the pig, and of animals suffocated, stunned, killed by a fall, or slain by a wild beast. For Allah, as for Jehovah, the greatest virtue is belief. No infidel must be loved, be it a father, a son, a brother, or an ally. The believer is rewarded in this life by rich booty from the infidels, and in paradise by dwelling in delicious gardens, peopled with black-eyed houris, etc. Reprobates, on the

other hand, will drink boiling water like molten lead, and liquid feculence.

Essentially all anthropomorphic religions resemble each other, whether monotheistic, like Judaism and Islamism, or polytheistic, like the religions of Greece and Rome. From the theological point of view the great moral question is how to please the supernatural being or beings who are feared and adored, and above all how not to displease them.

Yet the gods of Greece and Rome cared less for the current morality than those of Persia, India, and Judæa. They were not the authors of the moral law; they were its guardians. Certain crimes were chiefly regarded as direct offences against the deities, and it was in that light they were expiated. Mommsen affirms that, at least in the primitive ages of antiquity, capital sentences were regarded as the effect of the malediction of offended gods. Stealing fruit by night, for example, was to commit a theft on Ceres, etc.

The great reward after death consisted in conserving an interest in the life of posterity, in being able to protect and assist them. It was this terrestrial life, above all, about which the practical good sense of the ancients was solicitous. In the belief of the Hesiod the shades of the men of the Golden Age had become good genii, wandering over the earth, and dispensing riches and repressing injustice; while the spirits of the wicked were tormented, and tormented men, in the form of spectres and lemures. These beliefs were generally prevalent, but there were no obligatory dogmas, nor was there any official preaching.

There was no theocratic code; nothing analogous to the amazing and often ferocious despotism of the great Asiatic religions; above all, no asceticism, and no doctrine of renunciation, except that which was preached by the Stoics, and which Christianity assimilated with such alacrity.

In sum, the morality of Greece and Rome, with its qualities and its defects, was laic and, above all, civil. Christianity came, and completely changed the direction of ethics. From that time this earthly life was considered as a pilgrimage, an exile; the heavenly Jerusalem was the destination. To arrive thither it was necessary to obey the orders that were reputed divine, whatever might be the result in this world. The great duty was to love and obey God; the great rock of danger was sin; and this, according to St. Augustine, could only be avoided, if it pleased the divinity, by the assistance of grace.

For the old philosophers death was a hard necessity, the effect of a law; for the Catholics it became a consequence of sin and an object of terror; for, after it, the soul had a thousand chances of being engulfed in the billows of infernal fire. Reprobates would burn there eternally, and, according to St. Gregory, the spectacle of their tortures would rejoice the elect.

This terror of infernal torment was, as we know, the great means by which Christianity inculcated its morality. None is more efficacious with believers, but it is certainly not the noblest.

It has been observed with reason that the antique virtues were masculine; they were courage, magnanimity, and, above all, patriotism. The whole influence of Christianity tended, on the contrary, to effeminate the character in addressing itself no longer

to reason, but to emotion, in glorifying humility, meekness, love of God, continence, and faith. Faith above all; blind faith became the first of duties; *Credo quia absurdum.*

The ancient ideal was chiefly civil and patriotic; the Christian ideal was ascetic. For the sectary of Jesus the earthly country was little, and the Christian conscripts sometimes refused military service, even at the cost of martyrdom.

Abstinence, renunciation, and maceration were *par excellence* the means of attaining to sanctity. One should if possible be a monk; at the very least, conform his life to the monastic ideal, lead a mechanical existence, and not think.....The body was profoundly despised and neglected, and dirtiness became agreeable to God. St. Anthony never washed his feet; St. Ammon never saw himself naked; Sylvia, a beautiful virgin of sixteen, never washed more than her fingers; Paula and Melania, whose consciences were directed by St. Jerome, believed that "baths were defiling."

The ascetic detachment of the Hindoos was imitated, and far surpassed. St. Melania, having lost her husband and her two sons, knelt down and thanked the Lord that she could henceforth serve him more fully. It was good to forget one's mother, and abandon one's children in order to consecrate one's self to the ascetic life. Evagrius burnt the letters of his parents from whom he had been long absent. St. Gregory relates that a young monk, being unable to express his filial affection, went secretly by night to visit his parents, and God punished him with sudden death.

But the death of virtue was chastity. All that related to the union of the sexes was regarded as horrible. Woman was the great enemy; she should blush for her sex, for her beauty, and for her apparel. Marriage was only tolerated. "It is better to marry than to burn," said St. Paul. St. Jerome, for his part, saw but one good thing in marriage; it produced virgins.....By the unanimous testimony of Fathers and Councils all sexual intercourse outside marriage was criminal. From the moment Christianity triumphed under Constantine, the Mosaic penalties against sexual offences were adopted and aggravated; adultery became a capital crime, and sodomists were drowned, decapitated, or ingeniously tortured.

The Christian desire for the extinction of the human species should have maintained suicide in honor, as it had been in antiquity. But in the eyes of the Christians it was murder. It killed the soul. Yet one form of suicide was ardently sought by the fanatics—namely, martyrdom.....Nevertheless, with respect to suicide, Christianity wrought a kind of revolution, both moral and, indeed, beneficent. It was the same with respect to abortion and infanticide, to which antiquity attached no great importance. Christianity, on the contrary, condemned and repressed them, not through humanity, but because the death of the unbaptised foetus or child entailed the terrible consequence of eternal damnation.

Christianity did some good also in relation to slavery. Not that its doctrine condemned slavery in itself. On the contrary, St. Paul advised Christian slaves to be most docile; he even declared that the slave was the only property the Christians might keep, and taxed with vanity and stupidity those who thought otherwise. Indeed, in Europe the ecclesiastics were the last possessors of slaves. In the Christian doctrine equality was not for this world, and the servile virtues were glorified; yet the clergy carried on an active propaganda in favor of slaves.Charity was also enjoyed as producing, above all, if displayed to monks, abundant spiritual benefits.Christianity also opposed the bloody sports of the amphitheatre. In 329, after the Council of Nice, an edict of Constantine condemned the games of the circus, and the last combat of gladiators took place at Rome in 404.

—From Letourneau's *L'Evolution de la Morale*, translated by

(To be concluded.) G. W. FOOTE.

Materialism: Its Meaning and Value.—III.

(Continued from p. 675.)

IN order that a question may be properly dealt with, it must first of all be correctly stated. This is a rule that holds good of all questions, and is especially applicable to a discussion on the subject of Materialism. If, for instance, instead of plunging at once into a discussion as to whether matter was ultimate or not, or whether matter and force were the sole forms of existence, the disputants first of all decided what could properly be meant by these terms, the controversy would certainly be more illuminating than it usually is, and a great deal of it would never exist. As it is, it has suited the Spiritualist to tie the Materialist down to a definition of matter that no Materialist was logically bound to accept, and on the other hand, many a Materialist has been only too ready to accept that definition, and so play into his enemy's hands. The result has often been, not merely a quarrel over mere words, but about words that could not have any real value.

I have already given an illustration of this in protesting against the attempt to tie the Materialist down to a given conception of "matter," instead of its being recognised that the word is never more than a term useful as describing a particular group of phenomena. Another instance of the same kind is found in the assumption that because "matter" is found adequate to describe certain groups of experiences, the Materialist is bound to prove that such a "reality" exists outside of all relations to a human brain. If this cannot be done, the Spiritualist holds that Materialism breaks down. We cannot, he says, prove that matter exists; how, then, can Materialism be scientifically sound?

Sometimes this kind of attack takes another form. Religious writers, and even teachers of science—who are not always scientific teachers—after discussing such things as gravitation and electricity, will conclude by saying, as though it were beyond dispute, "Of course, we do not know what gravitation and electricity are in themselves." And quite a deal of the now fashionable Agnosticism rests upon our assumed inability to know what "things are in themselves." Now, instead of spending one's time following people who talk and write in this fashion, wherever they choose to lead, a far more profitable method is to define the terms of the initial proposition. Is the problem correctly stated, or otherwise? What do we mean by a knowledge of things in themselves? Does science really ask us to first of all believe in, say, gravitation and electricity, and then to further believe in the existence of something else of which gravitation and electricity are, so to speak, merely shadows?

Now, I have no hesitation in saying that science makes no such demand upon us. When we are asked to believe in gravitation or electricity, science tells us what these things are, and we are enabled to know them in the most complete manner. What, for example, is gravitation? It is not something the effects of which are seen in the mutual attractions of matter. In a loose and convenient way we speak of a stone falling to the ground as the effect of gravitation, or in consequence of gravitation, but, strictly speaking, the stone falling *is* gravitation, and when we have determined the rate at which it falls, there is nothing else to know about it. Gravitation is a name given to the observed fact that masses of matter everywhere bear a certain quantitative relation to each other. When we have stated this in precise terms we have said all there is to say about gravitation. When we understand this we know all there is to know about gravitation. We do know gravitation in itself, because the law of gravitation, in itself, is nothing more than the mutual attraction of matter reduced to an exact descriptive formula. The proof of this is, that if we take away the "attractions" of matter all gravitation disappears. There is nothing left to know.

What is true of gravitation, is true of electricity, of life, of mind, of all laws and generalisations framed to describe natural phenomena. They are all group names. Phenomena are classified as physical, chemical, biological, or psychological, because they exhibit certain characteristics. The laws of chemistry are generalisations descriptive of the behavior of one group. The laws of biology are descriptive of the behavior of another group; and so on, throughout. And "life" is not something apart from the motions of living beings, any more than heat is something distinct from things that are hot. The "thing in itself"—that is, the thing covered by the term used—is the thing we know, since that is all that is properly indicated by the name. Indeed, if the electricity, gravitation, life, mind, etc., that we know are not, "in themselves," like these things, all one can say is that in that case they are not these things at all, but different things altogether. The larger part of metaphysical controversy originates in the discussion of problems that are self-created, and are perpetuated because so few will take the trouble to think the whole out afresh for themselves.

All that the Materialist is really concerned with is that his conception of matter, or life, or mind, shall be broad enough to cover the facts. Some, however, are not slow to assert that this is exactly where Materialism breaks down. According to a recent writer on the subject:—

"Materialism.....is the most uncritical of philosophies, but it is in one respect often like a true theory of existence as a whole, that is, it tends to be of an analytic character, though stopping short of a full analysis. As opposed to metaphysics, which has at least attempted to take account of all types of existence.....Materialism takes as its basis one of these three types of existence.....and practically it omits the other two."*

That is, Materialism is uncritical because it sticks exclusively to solid atoms, and ignores ether—which is presumably non-solid—and mind. If this were true Materialism would be not only uncritical, it would be sheer insanity. Writers who deal with the subject in this fashion might at least pause and ask themselves whether Materialists could be really such fools as to ignore so plain a fact as mind, and the inquiry might suggest to them the necessity of further examination as to what the Materialist actually meant. Materialism no more ignores psychological facts than it ignores material facts. It has a place and a meaning for both.

The same kind of delusion lay at the foundation of much that Sir Oliver Lodge had to say at the British Association. He said that if Materialism were to be accepted, physics and chemistry should explain everything. And he added that while they might explain a sunset, could they explain our sense of joy or perception of beauty at beholding it? To this a writer—replying in the interests of Materialism—asks, "Why not?" For my own part, I should meet both Sir Oliver Lodge and his critic with the single query, Why? Both appear to be floundering in the same sea of confusion. Why should physics and chemistry explain everything? Why should the Materialist be called on to explain an emotion in terms of chemistry? Let anyone seriously try to describe or explain an emotion in terms of chemistry or physics, and he will soon realise what a hopeless task he has set himself. It simply cannot be done. So far Sir Oliver Lodge is correct in saying that Materialism, as he conceives it, cannot deal with these things. And in asking "Why not?" his critic also misconceives the real nature of the problem before him.

To explain is to make intelligible. And in science all explanation consists in the establishment of equivalents. When it is shown that A B C are the factors of D, we have shown that D is the equivalent of A B C—plus, of course, all that results from the combination of the factors. When we say

that we have explained water by showing it to be the product of H₂O, we have only demonstrated that whether we say water, or use the chemical formula, the two statements are identical. If we are working out a problem in dynamics, we meet with precisely the same principle. We must prove that the resultant accounts for all the forces proved to be operating at the time. So, then, it is open to the Materialist to claim, and he does claim, that this principle will also apply to the phenomenon of life and intelligence. That is, life and intelligence will ultimately be found to be due to the composition of natural forces, and that the principle ruling elsewhere in nature rules here also. So far, all is easy sailing, and in a general way—sometimes in more than general outlines—this has already been done. Neural changes as the equivalents of psychic states is an established fact, and experimental psychology has brought many detailed proofs of a quantitative equivalent of a qualitative state.

Now, the confusion into which Mr. Arnold, Sir Oliver Lodge, and scores of others fall, is this: they assume that because the Materialist asserts the possibility of establishing between psychic states and nervous conditions, and between nervous conditions and chemical combinations, some form of equivalence, the identities of the different phenomena are destroyed. If chemical combinations give rise to living matter, and living matter gives rise to mind, then, they say, everything is reduced to chemistry, and chemistry explains everything. The assumption is quite false. The identity of each phenomenon remains, no matter how produced, and each phenomenon can only be properly explained—that is, made completely intelligible—in terms of its own class. Psychology, Biology, Chemistry, Physics are group names used to distinguish certain clusters of phenomena having certain fundamental features in common. If chemistry could explain everything, there would be no need for any other science, and science would ultimately become a study of chemical actions and reactions. But no one imagines for a moment that this could ever be the case. It is admitted that at one time the earth was destitute of life, and it is also admitted that life was once without any trace of what we know as mind. And, however introduced or originated, once here as distinct groups of phenomena, life and mind must be described in terms of their own group, without any prejudice as to their mode of origin. Psychological facts must be described in terms of psychology, biological facts must be described in terms of biology, chemical facts in terms of chemistry, and physical facts in terms of physics. You can give the physical and chemical explanation of a sunset. You can also give the psychological explanation of the feelings we experience on beholding it. But you cannot give the psychological explanation in terms of chemistry and physics, because the fact belongs to a group of another order. A psychological fact is ultimate, as such; so are chemical and biological facts, as such. If by analysis you reduce the psychological fact to its biological and chemical equivalents, its character, as a psychological fact, is destroyed. To seek in analysis for what is the product of synthesis is surely the most stupid of pursuits.

I have dwelt at considerable length upon this point, but I trust that my readers will consider this quite justifiable. Materialism is so seldom rightly understood by its enemies, and often so sadly misunderstood by its friends, that its surely worth while making the position clear, even at the risk of being counted wearisome. And here, as in many other instances, the supernaturalist enjoys a certain advantage from his position. He can appeal to established prejudice in familiar language, and assent requires but little mental effort. But disproof of his position requires a consideration of scientific and philosophic principles such as only the minority are inclined to give.

C. COHEN.

(To be concluded.)

* *Scientific Fact and Metaphysical Reality*, by R. B. Arnold, p. 27.

Authority.

THE Rev. R. J. Campbell was one of the preachers at the recent Southend meeting of the Congregational Union, and the subject he discussed was "Christ as Authority." We are told that "the sermon, finely conceived and delivered with arresting power, was all too short for its absorbed hearers." It is a well-known fact that the Gospel Jesus is represented as speaking, not in his own name, but in that of his Father. In the wonderful prayer recorded in John xvii., he says to the Father, "The words which thou gavest me I have given unto them; and they received them, and knew of a truth that I came forth from thee." In the same Gospel we also read: "I spake not from myself; but the Father which sent me, he hath given me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak." Ignoring these and other similar sayings, Mr. Campbell declares that—

"What astonished these Galileans most was that Jesus made no appeal to any authority but his own, cited no great names, rested his case upon no venerable tradition, no written word. His own word was enough—fresh, bold, assured, imperative. 'He taught them as one having authority, and not as the Scribes.'"

In answer to the question, "What intrinsically was this authority which men discerned in Jesus?" he says that it was not the authority of a commanding personality, or of an unusual positiveness and earnestness of speech, and, further, that it was not even what he said. Then he adds: "It was not so much what Jesus said as what he was, that constituted his revelation to mankind." Surely this is only another way of saying that the authority of Jesus inhered in his commanding personality. Mr. Campbell admits that none of his utterances can be regarded as original, and asserts that his authority "was something in himself that everybody felt when coming in contact with him." This is not true. Thousands came in contact with Jesus without finding anything in him that put him in a position of authority. Those of his own people who believed in him never numbered more than a couple of hundreds, possibly not nearly so many. In his own day he was "despised and rejected of men," which, speaking generally, is as true of him to-day.

Let us examine this point a little more carefully. Mr. Campbell alludes to "the sublime figure of the Lord himself, the unique phenomenon of the relationship in which he stood, and knew he stood, to the transcendental world of timeless values"; but to call a God-man "a sublime figure" is a culpable misuse of terms. A God-man is simply a chimerical, mythical being, and anything but sublime. "The transcendental world of timeless values" is equally unreal, existing only in the minds of those who believe in it. If Jesus was merely a man, Mr. Campbell's description of him is perfectly grotesque. To assert that the authority which Jesus exercises over the human conscience is infinitely greater than that ever exercised by anybody else is to ignore undeniable facts. Upwards of five hundred millions bow to the authority of the Buddha, and, taking them upon the average, they are morally equal, if not superior, to the followers of Jesus. Now, if Jesus really were all that this preacher asserts concerning him, it would be absurd to speak of "a strong craving evidenced on every hand for a truly authoritative Divine word to our age and to the individual soul." If the Gospel is true, that word exists, Jesus himself being the Word of God to the whole world. Yet Mr. Campbell is of opinion that "a new age demands a new word, and recognises its own insufficiency to utter it." If this is so, it follows that the prophecy of the Gospel Jesus concerning the future of his Church is not fulfilled. He said that if he went away he would send the Holy Ghost, and that when the Comforter came he would convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment, and guide his people into all the truth. That must have been a false prediction if

Mr. Campbell's message is true. If a new age demands a new word, is in fact vainly craving for it, where is the Holy Ghost? He has failed to fill and guide the Church according to promise, and the world is still unconvicted. In addition to this lamentable failure of the Church, we are confronted by the bankruptcy of science and the breakdown of the reason, and here we are, with upturned faces, ardently craving for "a truly authoritative Divine word." This is eminently amusing.

After all, the new word, the truly authoritative Divine word, turns out to be an objective fact, which is the historical Jesus. Listen to this:—

"The authoritative fact is Christ—Christ himself, not theories about Christ, not speculations concerning him, but Christ—Christ as he broke upon an astonished world nearly two millenniums ago, and is breaking upon it afresh to-day—Christ in the Church, in the Bible, in the reason, but detected there, as in all that has been thought and said about him in past and present, because at a definite point in time he appeared, and lived, and wrought, and suffered, as a man among men."

There was a time when Mr. Campbell distinguished between Jesus and Christ, but now he seems to treat them as identical. "Christ is a break with the natural order, an invasion from the supernatural," he tells us to-day. "His advent in the world," he continues, "is not an event that can be fitted into our ordinary human categories; it is a supersession of them." Fancy a sane man averring that such a conception of Christ is not a theory or speculation. It is absolutely nothing else. Such a being never existed except in the fancy of theologians. If asked, "Did Mr. Campbell's Christ ever live?" we would return the emphatic answer, No, never. He is fully as mythical as Osiris, Adonis, Attis, or Mithra, after whom he was originally modelled. There is no higher law in existence whose mission it is to set lower ones aside. The law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which is described as freeing a man from the law of sin and death, is an invention of the theological mind, and to believe in it is an act of high treason against Nature. No being from a higher realm has ever allied himself by a stupendous miracle with our race. The fact that Mr. Campbell is what he is, is a conclusive evidence that the Christ he preaches never was at all.

Mr. Campbell has made a valuable discovery, and we shall allow him to tell us what it is in his own words:—

"More than any other single influence whatsoever, or all other influences put together, he [Christ] has convicted the world of sin. The sense of sin is largely Christ-created, and he is the only remedy for the need he has thus awakened."

We have been saying the same thing about sin ourselves for years. Sin is a theological creation, just like Christ; and the remedy for sin is just as imaginary as sin itself. Nobody has a sense of sin who is not a believer in God. The priest-created sense of sin has driven many human beings into hopeless insanity. We once knew a man who, under a deep conviction of sin, was beside himself with baseless fear for the space of nine months.

Mr. Campbell has made another discovery of immense import. He says:—

"If Christ could be accounted for in terms of human evolution, or in terms of the sequence of time and sense in any way, we should have no Gospel to preach. It is just because he cannot be thus accounted for that he is the light of the world. All our Christian institutions, creeds, and doctrines, are but the broken rays of that eternal light."

Nothing could be truer. The Gospel is as fantastic as the Christ who is its centre, and as impotent. It is called the Gospel of God, though he will not or cannot administer it himself. It is also named after Christ, but he is no more able to preach it than his Father. It is perfectly true, however, that without a supernatural Christ there could be no Gospel. Now, as Christ is said to be an invasion from the supernatural, so his Gospel is supposed to cause the supersession of natural law for all believers. The law of sin and death is God's, and so is the law of

the spirit of life in Christ Jesus; but the latter is said to be a higher law which bends down and rescues a penitent and believing sinner from the cruel clutches of a natural law from which otherwise there could be no escape. Thus the Gospel is fundamentally immoral, and its influence upon those who verily believe it is bound to be demoralising.

Having abandoned the belief in an infallible Church and an infallible book, Protestants are without any genuine authority to fall back upon. That is why they have split up into six or seven hundred conflicting sects. It is the most difficult thing in the world to realise the presence of an invisible Christ; and if he still wears our humanity he cannot be everywhere present at one and the same time. Catholics are much better off in that they have a visible and Divinely appointed representative of him on earth, who is officially authoritative in all ecclesiastical and theological deliberations. Consequently, the Catholic Church has preserved its unity throughout its history. Blessed are they who are neither Catholics nor Protestants, but who have found in reason the only authority to which it is always safe to defer.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Catholic Bigot in China.

SIR HIRAM MAXIM'S drastic exposure of missionary methods in China, in his book entitled *Li Hung Chang's Scrap Book*, has been well received by all advanced journals in this country. Even the conservative *Times*, which has never dissembled any love for advanced views on religion, gave a short, but fair and accurate description of its contents, without comment, in its columns, of books received, which was as much as could be expected from such a quarter. And, as the *Times Literary Supplement* is undoubtedly the best literary review published in this country, and gives the cue to many lesser literary lights, this was a matter for congratulation. If there had been anything immoral or indecent in the book, we may be sure that its reviewers and critics would not have been backward in pointing it out. No such charge has been made in any of the notices we have seen of Sir Hiram's book in this country; and, as a matter of fact, nothing of the kind can be found within the covers of the book. This should be borne in mind in order to appreciate what follows.

A copy of the book was, in due course, sent to the editor of the *Shanghai Times*, a follower of Jesus named John O'Shea, who, from his name, would seem to be a Roman Catholic Irishman.

It should be stated that Sir Hiram Maxim had sent a letter to the *Republican Advocate* (which is also published at Shanghai), in which he points out the absurdity of sending missionaries to China to teach morality, seeing that the Chinese have the high moral philosophy of Confucius and Buddha; and citing the testimony of Legge, Edkins, Le Comte, and Eugene Simon to the teaching and practice of Chinese morality. This letter appeared on May 24 last. On May 26, O'Shea, the editor of the *Shanghai Times*, published in that paper an editorial, entitled, "A Monstrous Maxim," of which we give the commencement:—

"A maxim more wicked and misleading we have never seen in print than that to which our esteemed contemporary, the *Republican Advocate*, had the bad judgment to devote no fewer than five of the pages of its issue of the 24th inst. The same Maxim (we regret to say we are obliged to personify the word—his Christian name and title being Sir Hiram S., Knight, inventor, man of science, and of world-wide renown in fields of usefulness and enterprise in which his astonishing achievements would have unquestionably conferred lasting fame upon him had he only had the wisdom to restrain his manifest hatred for all religions and their teachings within the bounds of ordinary decency) lately endeavored to gain the attention of the reading public in the Far East through the medium of the columns of

the *Shanghai Times*. Some days ago he sent us a book which he has had published, for the purpose of having us review it, but its character is so utterly execrable that we had quite made up our minds to take no notice of it whatever, and should unquestionably have acted upon this determination had it not been that in the *Republican Advocate* on Saturday evening we discovered the long letter over his name to which we are now referring, and which epitomises the monstrous piece of literature with which he has favored ourselves."

The blind passion of the writer prevents him seeing the obvious falseness of his charge of "hatred for all religions," for Sir Hiram's letter praises the high morality taught by the religions of Confucius and Buddha—a strange way of showing hatred, truly!

Note, also, the good old Christian method of dealing with the enemies of the faith. When the work cannot be suppressed—and, as we shall see, the writer suggests its suppression in China—then the next best thing to do is to take no notice of it, ignore it, boycott it, so that no one will know of its existence (this is still the policy of the press in our own country toward militant Freethought). If, unfortunately, it should reach the public through others being so ill-advised as to notice it, then there is nothing left but to pour mud and filth upon it; to charge it with immorality, indecency, obscenity, and blasphemy; in a word, to frighten people from reading it. History attests that this has been the method of Christianity from the earliest ages down to the present day, and the editor of the *Shanghai Times* provides a shining example of the malignity of Christian charity, which thinketh no evil; and the venom of Christian benevolence, which loveth its enemies.

With pen spluttering with holy rage, this defamer declares that Sir Hiram's book is a "compilation which would fairly put the Hunan Tracts, of infamous memory, and the pictorial abominations of the late Chou Han to the blush." To those who have not heard of these tracts, we may state that they were native productions, published to counteract the missionary propaganda, some of which were parodies of Christian dogmas, rites, and ceremonies; we have only seen one, and this represented Christians worshipping a crucified pig. Others were undoubtedly indecent and obscene, and to say that Sir Hiram's book puts them "to the blush" is really a criminal libel for which the writer would have to pay by a long term of imprisonment if tried before an unprejudiced jury, but Sir Hiram knows better than to trust the vindication of his honor to the justice of twelve Christian jurymen.

As a matter of fact, most of the illustrations in Sir Hiram's book are reproductions from Dante's illustrations of the Bible, and not the faintest shadow of indecency can, even by the most morbid Nonconformist conscience, be attached to any illustration in the book.

The editor of the *Shanghai Times* would have made a glorious officer of the Holy Inquisition. This is how he gleefully describes the end of Chou Han, the opponent of Christian teaching in China. He says:—

"The Diplomatic Body in Peking were moved to take action with regard to the matter, in a way which secured the speedy relegation of the ingenious author and artist to a place where it was not in his power to do any further mischief. He languished for a long time in obscure imprisonment in Changsha, and died there, if we remember aright, only a few years ago."

No doubt he would like to condemn the distinguished author, whose character he so vilely assails, to a similar fate.

He goes on to observe that he does not know what action is likely to be taken with regard to the book, but it "should certainly never be allowed to circulate, or be translated, in China."

We reproduce here a few of the flowers of speech this good Christian, in the plenitude of his Christian charity, bestows upon the author and his book. It disseminates "poisonous slanders," "false and foetid attacks" upon religion, "false and infamous slan-

ders"; describes the world-famous author as "a renegade and a rascal," and concludes:—

"The book is a monstrous, false, and thoroughly blackguard publication, and the author is unfit to wear the Cross of the Legion of Honor—of which, we perceive, he is a member, or any other foreign order (most of which are religious in their origin) or distinction whatever."

Such is the snarling fury into which this meek and humble follower of Jesus works himself over *Li Hung Chang's Scrap Book*. If half, or a quarter of the charges he makes against the book be true, why did not some of the numerous reviews of the work in this country mention it? The *Times*, which is so particular in such matters, never hinted that the work was indecent or blackguardly. And we challenge anyone to point out anything of the kind in the work.

Sir Hiram Maxim's career is honorably known to all the world, but who is this self-constituted champion of public morality and religion? Will his career stand investigation? What was his life and occupation before he became connected with the *Shanghai Times*? We have heard strange tales, which, if true, would show this pious editor in the character of "Satan rebuking sin."

It is the fate of every advocate of Freethought to be stung by these obscure reptiles of the Christian press—when they think they can operate with safety to themselves—and those who advocate advanced views are prepared beforehand to take the risk.

This scurrilous outbreak will not harm the distinguished author of this book. Already the leading missionary societies are lamenting a falling-off in their donations, and this book will help to still further curtail the financial supplies. We can rest assured that Sir Hiram Maxim's name will be honored generations after his Christian traducer is dead and forgotten.

W. MANN.

Up for Judgment.

St. Peter stood guard at the golden gate,
With solemn mien and an air sodate,
When up to the top of the golden stair
A man and a woman, ascending there,
Applied for admission. They came and stood
Before St. Peter, so great and good,
In hope the City of Peace to win,
And asked St. Peter to let them in.
The woman was tall, and lank, and thin,
With a scraggy beardlet upon her chin.
The man was short, and thick, and stout;
His stomach was built so it rounded out.
His face was pleasant, and all the while
He wore a kind and genial smile.
The choirs in the distance the echoes woke,
And the man kept still while the woman spoke.
"Oh, thou who guardest the gate," said she,
"We come hither, beseeching thee
To let us enter the Heavenly Land,
And play our harps with the Angel Band.
Of me, St. Peter, there is no doubt;
There's nothing from Heaven to bar me out.
I've been to the meeting three times a week,
And almost always I'd rise to speak.
I've told the sinners about the day
When they'd repent of their evil way;
I've told my neighbors—I've told them all—
'Bout Adam and Eve, and the Primal Fall.
I've shown 'em what they'd have to do
If they pass in with the chosen few.
I've marked their path of duty clear—
Laid out the plan of their whole career.
I've talked and talked to 'em loud and long,
For my lungs are good, and my voice is strong;
So, good St. Peter, you'll clearly see
The gate of Heaven is open for me.
But my old man, I regret to say,
Hasn't walked in exactly the narrow way;
He smokes and he swears, and grave faults he's got,
And I don't know whether he'll pass or not.
He would never pray with an earnest vim,
Or go to revival, or join in a hymn;

So I had to leave him in sorrow there,
While I, with the chosen, united in prayer.
He ate what the pantry chose to afford,
While I, in my purity, sang to the Lord.
And if cucumbers were all he got,
It's a chance whether he merited them or not.
But oh, St. Peter, I love him so;
To the pleasures of Heaven please let him go!
I've done enough—a saint I've been.
Won't that atone? Can't you let him in?
By my grim Gospel, I know 'tis so,
That the unrepentant must fry below.
But isn't there some way you can see
That he may enter who's dear to me?
It's a narrow Gospel by which I pray,
But the chosen expect to find some way
Of coaxing, or fooling, or bribing you
So that their relations can amble through.
And say, St. Peter, it seems to me
This gate isn't kept as it ought to be.
You ought to stand right by the opening there,
And never sit down in that easy chair.
And say, St. Peter, my sight is dimmed,
But I don't like the way your whiskers are trimmed:
They're cut too wide, and outward toss;
They'd look better narrow, cut straight across.
Well, we must be going, our crown to win;
So open, St. Peter, and we'll pass in."
St. Peter sat quiet, and stroked his staff,
But, in spite of his office, he had to laugh;
Then said, with a fiery gleam in his eye:
"Who's tending this gateway—you or I?"
And then he arose in his stature tall,
And pressed a button upon the wall,
And said to the imp who answered the bell,
"Escort this female around to Hell!"
The man stood still as a piece of stone—
Stood sadly, gloomily, there alone.
A long-life settled idea he had
That his wife was good and he was bad.
He thought if the woman went down below,
That he would certainly have to go;
That if she went to the regions dim,
There wasn't a ghost of a show for him.
Slowly he turned, by habit bent,
To follow wherever the woman went.
St. Peter, standing on duty there,
Observed that the top of his head was bare.
He called the gentleman back, and said:
"Friend, how long have you been wed?"
"Thirty years" (with a weary sigh);
And then he thoughtfully added, "Why?"
St. Peter was silent, with head bent down;
He raised his hand and scratched his crown;
Then, seeming a different thought to take,
Slowly, half to himself he spake:
"Thirty years with that woman there?
No wonder the man hasn't any hair!
Swearing is wicked, smoke's not good;
He smoked and swore: I should think he would!
Thirty years! with that tongue so sharp!
Oh, Angel Gabriel, give him a harp!
A jewelled harp with a golden string.
Good sir, pass in where the angels sing.
Gabriel, give him a seat alone—
One with a cushion—up near the throne.
Call up some angels to play their best;
Let him enjoy the music—and rest!
See that on finest Ambrosia he feeds;
He's had about all the hell he needs:
It isn't just hardly the thing to do
To roast him on earth and the future too."
They gave him a harp with golden strings,
A glittering robe and a pair of wings;
And he said, as he entered the realms of day,
"Well, this beats cucumbers, any way."
And so the old Scripture text stands fast:
The last shall be first, and the first shall be last.

A. Scallywag.

Mr. Foote's being called on to speak at the Bradlaugh Dinner was a pure accident. He was undecided whether he would be able to attend or not. He was only certain at the last minute. He arrived, in fact, just a little late for the function, the chairman being already seated. That is why his name was not on the program. "Simply this, and nothing more"—as the owner of Poe's "raven" says.

Shaw described himself as a "mystic." He might have said a "comio mystic."

Acid Drops.

Apropos of our note last week of the influence of Christianity in contracting the meaning of ethical terms, a striking instance of the truth of what was then said was furnished by "Citizen Sunday." It was decided that all the churches and chapels should devote their sermons to a consideration of "the moral question." All religious people were to range themselves on the side of righteousness. They were to see that "bad houses" (not bad homes), suggestive prints, and objectionable pictures were destroyed, and that the "wild oats" theory with regard to young men was abandoned. This, according to the wisdom of these people, is the scope of "the moral question." It is sex, sex, and nothing but sex. What of the rack-renting landlord, the sweating employer, the slanderous speaker, the false friend, the hypocrite, and the thousand and one other forms of knavery? Evidently these do not come within the scope of "the moral question." There is nothing connected therewith over which parsons may lick their lips. And yet, we venture to think, that a genuine crusade against many of these evils, or all of them, might do more to bring about cleaner sexual relations than all the sermons preached last Sunday. It is true that you cannot be healthy without being clean; but there is also truth in the statement that you cannot be clean without being healthy. It is not very wise to clean a pig and then put him back in a filthy sty.

What is the principle that ought to underlie infliction of judicial punishment? According to Judge Avory, the principle is, mainly, to deter other people. The man punished is not of very great consequence. In sentencing driver Caudle, for the Aisgill disaster, Judge Avory said, "I have to bear in mind that I sit here for the purpose, not so much of punishing a particular offender, as deterring others from offending in a like manner." Driver Caudle might have replied, "If that is the case, why not select someone else and punish him?" If judges only sit to illustrate to the public at large what will happen if they commit certain actions, the end would be achieved by selecting a certain number of people, say, by ballot, and giving them certain terms of imprisonment corresponding to the offences against the committal of which all are warned. If that is the idea under which our judges and legislators labor, we are not surprised at the ineffectiveness of our criminal law. We venture to suggest that Judge Avory ought to sit where he does sit not primarily to provide warnings to possible offenders, but to deal with the offender actually before him, and to deal with him in terms of a rational understanding of human character and its environment. As a matter of fact, punishment, however severe, does not deter others, and never has deterred others. This was conclusively proved by the abolition of hanging in public. Certainty of detection is essential, but more important than that even, is to deal with each offender in a way that will correct whatever in his nature is capable of correction. Judge Avory may be capable enough, so far as a knowledge of the law and of legal procedure is concerned. He obviously has still much to learn concerning the philosophy of wrong doing and its proper treatment. As a matter of fact, the most important person in any case is the wrong doer. Everyone else is a mere incidental.

Six thousand pounds is to be spent for a house for the new Bishop of Sheffield. His "Master" frequently slept out of doors for want of better accommodation. "Blessed be ye poor! Woe unto you rich." But the Bishop chances it.

"Secularism is waning," says the *Christian Commonwealth*, "and the anti-religious element in the Socialist propaganda is disappearing." Socialists can look after themselves; but we know that far more Freethought literature is circulated to-day than ever before in the history of the movement. We know more about it than the editor of the *Christian Commonwealth*.

The editor of the British and Foreign Bible Society's Report has some curious ideas regarding Freethought, which he mixes up with Socialism. He says that in Germany "it is the universal experience of our colporteurs that Social Democrats are their most violent opponents, surpassing all others in hatred of the Bible and contempt for its teaching." Although the Society boasts of issuing the Scriptures in 450 languages, apart from the Socialists, only two Freethinkers appear to have come in contact with the Society's agents. One was in Timbuctoo, and the other in North Africa. The supporters of the Society must be as innocent as bull-pups if they swallow this soothing syrup for intellectual infants.

"French in a Week" is the alluring headline in an advertisement in a religious contemporary. It won't do, however, for all Christians know that the Holy Ghost can teach foreign languages in half a minute.

A writer in the *Christian Commonwealth* says: "The daisy copies not only the yellow orb of the sun, but greatly daring, the darting rays of light. The sunlight is the very life of the vegetable world, which in glad return, devotes its energy to unfolding an image of its God." If this sort of thing is acceptable to his readers, the editor had better call his paper "The Sun Worshiper."

The editor of the *Christian Commonwealth* suggests in a leader that the Churches should keep "young and simple and supple." They do not require the advice. Their suppleness would make an insurance agent turn green with envy.

Taking things on the whole, there seems to be about as much nonsense talked in the City Temple as in any place of worship in London. And, in a way, the nonsense there seems more offensive. For it is vented with an air of superiority, and as though its production had only been secured either by the possession of abnormal capacity or at the cost of many brain-racking nights. Here is a sample. Mr. Campbell told his congregation the other evening that those who see in "nature's catastrophes an unanswerable challenge to the gospel of Christ," should take note that it is to that very gospel "that they owe their capacity for perceiving that fact at all," and this is "in itself a presumption in favor of the view that behind all this clash and conflict of the inner and the outer in our total experience there remains a reconciling factor yet to be disclosed."

For downright nonsense this would be hard to beat. It never required very much capacity to recognise the challenge of evil in the world to Theistic beliefs, and it has been one of the commonplaces of controversy from the days of the Greeks onward. It is one of the stupidities—or knaveries—of Christian preachers to assume that human nature after Christianity was something different from what it was before Christianity appeared. People were just as capable of seeing, and feeling, "nature's catastrophes" before Christianity as afterwards. They were just as capable of seeing the possibility of recognising how impossible it was to harmonise them with the belief in a wise and good Providence, and that remains as impossible to-day. Mr. Campbell is as helpless before the problem as is any other preacher. His conclusion that there "remains a reconciling factor yet to be disclosed" is sheer fatuity. There was more sense in the old cry to trust in God. How does Mr. Campbell know there is a factor to be disclosed? And if it is not disclosed, how does he know what it is like? When stuff of this kind passes for *thinking*, and the men who voice it are hailed as great spiritual forces, what further proof is needed of the mental, and even moral, bankruptcy of Christianity?

The *Christian Commonwealth*, in a way, caps Mr. Campbell's absurdities by one of its own on the same topic. It says, referring to the brave attempts at rescue made at sea and in the pit, "While men and women are capable of these heroic sacrifices and reveal themselves the possessors of the unconquerable spirit in the face of such appalling terrors, we cannot believe that a malignant chance rules the affairs of mankind." "Malignant chance" is malignant nonsense. No one but a parson or a religious journalist would be capable of using the phrase. If there is a God, *he* may be either malignant or benevolent. But if there is nothing but natural forces, kindness or cruelty simply has no place in natural operations. Again, one feels impelled to ask whether knavery or stupidity is responsible for such language? And note it is the men and women who risk their lives to save, while God does nothing, save control the conditions that brush a few hundred out of existence in a few minutes. It is hopeless appealing either to Mr. Campbell or to the editor of the *Christian Commonwealth*, but some others will certainly see that malignancy rests with the God who animates nature, not with the natural forces that Theists believe express his will. Natural catastrophes in themselves are bad enough, but to have in addition the belief in a God who is responsible for their occurrence, is enough to drive mad those who seriously think out their position. Luckily for themselves most religious writers nowadays have a congenital protection against such a calamity.

Smith and the Church is the title of a book by Dr. H. H. Beattys, which asks the question whether Smith should

attend a place of worship. If all the members of that numerous and respectable family should accept the invitation, the churches will have to put out the notices, "Standing Room Only."

"Science Conquers Rheumatism" runs a puff in a pious paper. That compliment to science was paid for at the usual rates.

A writer in the *Southend Telegraph* says "we must move our eyes from the Sea of Galilee and look for Jesus by the sea at Southend." When the tide is out there will be a chance for the police—and the longshore men. We look forward to the inquest.

The British and Foreign Bible Society's report states that their 1,200 native colporteurs sold 3,750,000 copies of the Scriptures during 1912, which is an average of 3,125 for each native. As many sales are by barter, which includes food, fish, fruit, eggs, pine chips, nuts, swords, and such articles, the Society's agents must be excellent tallymen.

The priests have kept remarkably quiet over the labor troubles in Dublin. But at last they have made a move. It was proposed to transport a number of children from their homes in Christian Dublin to friends in England who would maintain them until the labor war was over. Arrangements were made and a number of children ready for departure. Then the priests took alarm. The children would be freed from the direct influence of the Roman Catholic Church; and, while that Church does not mind their being reared in a state of semi-starvation, it does object to their spiritual welfare being threatened. So they have practically forbidden the parents to allow the children to leave, and the best part of them have withdrawn their consent. Mr. Larkin now finds himself in opposition to the Church, and, for the benefit of those who lay so much stress on the predominance of economics, we venture to predict that he will find this a much more powerful enemy than even the combined forces of capital. Perhaps it will drive him to the recognition of the fact that so long as superstition sits enthroned, stable social reform will remain more or less of an aspiration. Other reformers have been driven to that conclusion, against their inclinations. The consequences of this new development should at least prove instructive.

It was not to be expected that the Catholic priests would quietly allow Dublin children to be drafted over to English homes during the strike. Securing (and keeping) the young is all in all to the Catholic Church. Dr. Walsh knows what he is about, whether Mr. Larkin does or not. Of course we are not dealing with the ethics, but with the tactics, in the matter.

James Larkin now understands what it is to upset the Dublin priests. They quickly settled his hash. He has obtained seven months' leisure to reflect upon the value of religion as a social influence. We hope the lesson will not be lost upon the Trade Unionists of Great Britain. They dropped Secular Education out of their Annual Congress discussions just to please the Catholics. They ought to take it up again after this—lest a worse thing befall them.

There ought to be common sense enough in Dublin to get this strike settled with benefit to both sides. One is entirely against the employers if their real object is Trade-Union smashing. But they can surely give way on that point, as other employers have done, without loss of dignity; for there can be no dignity in seeking to oppress and degrade one's fellow men. Less passion and more cool intelligence should find a reasonable solution soon. Meanwhile the poor women and children are suffering from sheer want of food and clothing—and the wind is beginning to blow keener across the Irish Sea. We gladly give publicity to the appeal of A. Evans, Member of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress—220 Blackfriars-road, London, S.E. Warm clothing, boots, etc., are specially requested, and will be sent over by the weekly food-ship. Necessary repairs will be done at this address.

Rev. Benjamin Thomas Winterborn, of Beau Site, Crowborough, left £30,068. What a big fortune that would have seemed to the "Savior" and the twelve apostles! But things have altered since then.

More poor Christites! Rev. Stephen Greathead, Chiselhurst, Kent, left £19,720. Rev. Anthony Laurie, Cheltenham, left £2,161. Rev. Henry Thomas Fletcher, of Bicken, Lincolnshire, left £54,464. "Blessed be ye poor!"

Judge Malouin, at Quebec, has decided that no one Jew or number of Jews could bring an action because their religion had been libelled. The Christian religion, however, is protected in that way in England, under the law of Blasphemous Libel. Circumstances *do* alter cases.

The Dean of St. Paul's (Dr. Inge) has been trying to comfort his fellow-clergymen. He says that "there is no ground for anxiety," and that "the Church is a spiritual society" under the constant care of God. A *spiritual* society! What about the endowments? Of which, by the way, Dean Inge enjoys a liberal share.

Bishop March, Roman Catholic, Harbor Grace, Newfoundland, was shot by a madman while conducting divine service. One shot went wide, but another struck him on the head, only wounding him slightly. We suppose the Bishop's escape was "providential." But wouldn't "Providence" have been better occupied in keeping the madman out of the church altogether? All that is gained is a demonstration of the shot-resisting power of the Bishop's cranium.

Mr. Lloyd George is accused of "blasphemy" for quoting the sixty-fifth Psalm in the peroration of his Bedford speech. His accuser is a Church of England man. Of course! Everybody knows whom the Bible belongs to.

Sir Rufus Isaacs is the first Jew to hold the position of Lord Chief Justice of England. The Liberal press says he will adorn it. The Tory press shouts "Marconis!" Our view is that Sir Rufus Isaacs, like the late Lord Chief Coleridge, will find it awkward if he has to try a "blasphemy" case.

James Berry, ex-hangman, is dead. He jerked many a pious murderer to Jesus. We suppose he has followed them there himself. The meeting, however, must be rather embarrassing, one would think. The question of *ropes* will have to be *tabu* if the peace of heaven is not to be broken.

Rev. Dr. Felix, Rector of Llanhilleth, has been pointing the lesson of the Senghenydd explosion. The 422 miners who were "hurled out of the world" are only a part of a much larger number of "human souls" who emigrated the same day. "There are about 5,140 men, women, and children dying every hour," this reverend gentleman says, "and judging from their lives a very large majority of them are going to hell." The bereaved women know where their men have gone. No doubt they are grateful for the information. We should imagine that Dr. Felix is the most popular man in the district.

It is odd to see Dr. Stanton Coit's daughter married in a Christian church—that of St. Ethelburga, in Bishopsgate. Being a suffragette, however, she secured certain concessions in the marriage service. Dr. Cobb, indeed, was very obliging; though it is doubtful if he had any legal right to depart from the Prayer Book formulas. She did not promise to "obey" her husband. Nor did the knot-tier pray that she might be "faithful and obedient to her husband," but only that she might be "loyal to her husband." We see very little profit in these alterations. It is as absurd for a woman to promise to be "loyal" to her husband as to promise to "obey" him. How can "loyalty" figure in a contract? And does it not, in these circumstances, include some idea of obedience?

We can see, of course, that Dr. Cobb is displaying a business tact in his part of this accommodating arrangement. He recognises the fact that more and more people get married at registry offices every year. He thinks that they are driven away from the Church by the old-fashioned wedding ceremony. He fancies that if this ceremony be "rewritten" (his own word) brides and bridegrooms will all patronise the church again. We believe, however, that he is mistaken on this point. He may not like to admit it, but it is a fact nevertheless, that the great majority of brides and bridegrooms who patronise civil marriage don't want religious marriage at any price. Christians seem to think that playing the ostrich is both useful and dignified. It is neither. It is of no use, and it is marked by an utter want of dignity.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

December 7 and 14, Queen's (Minor) Hall, London.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1918.—Previously acknowledged, £220 6s. 5d. Received since:—W. B. Snell (S. A.), £1 1s.; W. H. B., 2s.; A. Goodwin, 2s. 6d.; P. G. Peabody, £20.

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

GLASGOW CUTTINGS SENDER.—Should be glad if you would send earlier. Tuesday is too late for use.

J. BOND.—Last week's motto was taken from one of Prof. Frazer's lectures. The Shelley quotation was the reviewer's.

W. H. B.—Thanks for "sincere good wishes."

E. B.—Many thanks for welcome cuttings.

A. GOODWIN.—Glad to have your pleasant letter.

A good deal of correspondence stands over unavoidably till next week.

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 had a capital audience at the Stratford Town Hall on Sunday evening—a really wonderful audience considering the detestable weather, which was the theme of endless lamentation in Monday's newspaper. Mr. Foote had two awkward journeys to the Hall and back again, but he was well repaid by the way in which his lecture was received by the numerous and enthusiastic meeting. It was on "Shakespeare's Humanism in the *Merchant of Venice*." No lecture of the kind could ever have been followed with intenser interest, and there was quite an ovation when the lecturer resumed his seat. Mr. Rosetti made an excellent chairman.

Mr. Foote's next public appearance will be at Queen's (Minor) Hall on Sunday evenings, December 7 and 14. The subjects of his lectures will be announced next week.

Mr. C. E. Ratcliffe delivered the last of the series of four Sunday evening lectures given at Foresters' Hall, North London. In spite of the rain, there was a very fair audience, and several questions were asked after the lecture.

Mr. Lloyd lectures this evening (Nov. 2) at the King's Hall, Corporation-street, Birmingham. Local "saints" will please note. With decent weather there should be a crowded audience.

Our review of Professor Bury's *History of Freedom of Thought* is postponed for another week while we get rid of an unpleasant though not a dangerous cold. We are rather glad in one way of the further postponement, as we are seeking to obtain a book to which we desire to make accurate reference on a rather important point.

The Bradlaugh Dinner this year was a good deal of a Bernard Shaw dinner. Mr. Shaw did his best to explain Bradlaugh in terms of Shavism. The great "Iconoclast" was really a Shavian without knowing it. He was really not an Atheist, but a remarkably religious man—if not a "mystic," which Shaw claims to be himself. But what is a "religious" man, if Bradlaugh is to be included in the fraternity? Shaw is very shy of answering that question; and we, for our part, cannot discover that he means anything more than a man of principle, who devotes his energies to the promotion of his convictions. Shaw is just like the Christians in wanting to include heroes like Bradlaugh within the category of the Shavian religion. It is a common trick of

religionists, but it didn't work at the Bradlaugh Dinner. Shaw's speech was brilliant, witty, and entertaining, but it was sadly lacking in intellectual texture. Moreover, his chief object was obviously to set his own program, rather than Bradlaugh's, before the meeting. At some points he was not even decently careful. When he explained that he (Shaw) was still an Atheist, in the sense that he was when he saw Bradlaugh smashing the idols, he forgot that many persons listening had heard Bradlaugh, while others had read him, and knew that Bradlaugh's *Plea for Atheism* was critically hostile to every form of Theism—even to the most refined and metaphysical. Bradlaugh was not an Atheist for any of the secondary reasons suggested by Mr. Shaw. His Atheism was grounded on philosophy. He would have been an Atheist if orthodox Christianity, with all its idolatries, had never existed,—and if he had never been persecuted himself by its professors. Bradlaugh's Atheism, in short, was not personal, but philosophical. And if Mr. Shaw doesn't know this he is not qualified to talk about Bradlaugh's Atheism at all. If he does know it he was taking liberties with that Bradlaugh dinner-party at the Holborn Restaurant.

Mr. Cohen's letter, which appears on another page, deals with Mr. Shaw's curious argument about "the line of least resistance." We had our own opinion of it as we listened to it. We let it pass here, however, and turn our attention to Shaw's still more curious argument that Bradlaugh, being a miracle of men, estopped all objections to miracles in general. This is Shaw all over. One wonders at times whether he indulges in these confusions consciously, or whether he is a victim of his own humor. "A miracle of men" is a metaphor; it is permissible in poetry, but not in logic. Bradlaugh was not a "miracle" in the primary and strict meaning of the word. Calling him (and other great men) so only shows that in the puzzle of heredity the great law of variation in nature has been overlooked. Macaulay's memory and the mental arithmetic of a "Dadas" are not "miracles." They are extraordinary developments of common human faculties. And all great men are explicable in the same way. Every faculty that Bradlaugh possessed in large measure was possessed in smaller measure by his less gifted fellow men—or they could not have appreciated and applauded him. In the same way, Shakespeare's admirers possess all the qualities that are displayed in his writings,—at least all that they admire; but these are in them comparatively weak and passive, while in him they are powerful and creative. And there is no miracle in a question of degree. A miracle is a difference in kind.

Mr. Philip G. Peabody, of Boston, who made up the full sum (£300) of the President's Honorarium Fund last Christmas, has just sent us his cheque for £20 as his present year's subscription. He takes the opportunity of writing us a very encouraging (one might say flattering) letter,—from which we make the following extracts as likely to interest our readers:—

"As I grow older (I am in my 57th year) I am more and more impressed with the conviction that the Freethought movement is at the bottom of all reform: religion is the sum and substance of all that is bad, wicked, selfish, and cruel; every meanness, every stupidity is aided and encouraged by it. That Christianity dies so slowly, and still has the power it has, is, to me, a never ending source of amazement—an almost miraculous tribute to the stupidity and heartlessness of the human race. It is sometimes hard for me to believe that such a race *deserves* salvation; and were the human race the whole question, I confess my attitude might be different. But whole races of sentient animals have their destiny to work out: they, at least, are entitled to live free from the cruelty that religion causes.....I am inclined to think that, at the present moment, there is no life in the world of as much value to the cause of Justice as yours."

With regard to the *Freethinker* itself Mr. Peabody writes:—

"You are weekly producing, in my opinion, a volume of literary matter that constitutes a most wonderful monument to your devotion and ability. Omitting the cream of the whole paper—your own writings—you would even then be editing a paper of the highest literary and intellectual merit. For merely surrounding yourself with your staff of writers, you would be entitled to the highest praise. Long may you, they, and the *Freethinker* live and prosper!"

The last sentences touch us on a sensitive spot. Our old friend, the late Joseph Symes, once said to us, in a letter from Melbourne, where he fought so brave a battle: "I envy you your contributors." He had very good reason for it. But we smiled a little as we reflected that we might remind him that they did not fall from the sky. One has to find the right sort of contributors, and, having found them, to keep them—especially in the financial conditions of the case. That we have found and kept the contributors our readers have known is creditable to us—and no less creditable to them. It may be the top of our achievement.

Mr. Chesterton's Challenge.

[We have received the following fresh letter from Mr. Chesterton, and we print it together with Mr. Lloyd's reply—at which point the controversy must end in our pages.—EDITOR.]

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—May I refresh your "unfortunate memory" as to the actual terms of your original "Acid Drop" upon which I venture to comment. You were criticising a writer in the *Catholic Herald* who appears to have explained accurately enough the orthodox Catholic view as to the character and limitations of the Pope's infallibility. After saying that "in his *private* capacity the Pope is as fallible as ordinary mortals," he remarked that when *he* "is speaking as Head of the Church, etc.," *he* is infallible. Upon this your comment ran "but how does 'M. C. L.' account for the fact that *different Popes* have promulgated contrary dogmas?" In illustration of this you then referred to the "numerous Papal schisms" of the fourteenth century,—a period, by the way, during which, so far as I remember, no dogmas of any kind were promulgated. Then you went straight to the sentence which I ventured to query: "Has he forgotten that for ages there was a bitter conflict between Augustinianism and Arianism, now the one and now the other being *ex cathedra* pronounced orthodox?" Finally, lest there should be any doubt whatever about your meaning, you say: "Or can he tell us which, if either, of the two rival Popes was infallible?"

Now I put it to any fair-minded man whether your argument had any meaning whatever if it was not directed to proving that the Pope was not infallible. I am willing to waive the point that the phrase *ex cathedra* is an abbreviation of "*ex cathedra Petris*," and therefore applies exclusively to the Pope. But if the Pope was not concerned in the matter, how does your description of the "bitter conflict between Augustinianism and Arianism" bear upon the statement made by "M. C. L.?"

The instances you bring forward in support of your revised case are, from the point of view of a Catholic, wholly irrelevant—or, rather, they tell in favor of the Papal claim. It is, of course, perfectly true that the *State* sometimes supported orthodoxy and sometimes Arianism. But nobody ever contended that the Roman Emperors were infallible, *ex cathedra* or otherwise. It is also true, no doubt, that when the orthodox had been banished or silenced by the civil power, the Arians held Councils which prescribed orthodoxy. But these Councils have no more authority for Catholics than the Wesleyan Conference or any other assembly of heretics. What you have succeeded in proving is that a Council is authoritative only when ratified by the Holy See. Which is our case.

Of course, I quite agree with you that "there is no essential difference" between "the tenets advocated by Athanasius and those championed later by Augustin." In fact there is no difference at all; for both held the Catholic Faith, the dogmas of which, when once promulgated, never have been, and never can be, reversed or altered in any way. That, again, is our case. But I thought the expression "Augustinianism" odd, as I should think it odd if someone said that Germany, in the sixteenth century, was divided between Popery and Wesleyanism, though Wesley undoubtedly held Luther's doctrine of justification by faith alone. And I pointed out the oddity because, taken together with the rest of your remarks, it seemed to suggest that your contributor did not know what he was talking about. I trust I shall not be thought discourteous if I add that I remain of that opinion.

As to what you say about the violence of Catholics and others during the early centuries of Christianity, it leaves me quite untouched. It merely shows that the "Faith once delivered to the Saints" was not that of Mr. Cadbury or of the quaint seventeenth century Protestant sect which first professed to discover the insanities of Pacifism in the Bible. Which once more is our case.—Yours faithfully,
CECIL CHESTERTON.

IN reply to the above letter I wish to say, in the first place, that I did not challenge the *accuracy* of "M. C. L.'s" definition of Papal infallibility in the *Catholic Herald*. What I called in question was the *fact* of that infallibility. I am surprised that Mr. Chesterton, in taking up the cudgels for "M. C. L.," does not even attempt to "account for the fact that different Popes have promulgated contrary dogmas,"

though this was the real issue raised in the "Acid Drop" under consideration. He neither denies the fact, nor explains it. Again, he neither denies nor explains "the numerous papal schisms," mentioned by me. He merely states that "no dogmas of any kind were promulgated" in the fourteenth century. My reference to that century was in connection with papal schisms, not the promulgation of dogmas. I beg to remind my critic of the stormy scenes amid which Urban VI. was elected to the Holy See in the year 1378; how, a few months later, the same Cardinals, with one exception, elected a rival Pope, in the person of Robert of Geneva, who took the name of Clement VII., and how for many years these two vicars of Christ, or "two worthless priests," as Macaulay calls them, vilified each other in the filthiest language, each being Antichrist to the other. By this schism Western Christendom was divided for thirty-eight years, and not a little bloodshed caused. I asked "M. C. L." which of these rival Popes is to be regarded as infallible? but his champion has not favored me with an answer. As there have been at least thirty similar schisms the ignoring of such a question is highly significant.

Mr. Chesterton is quite right in stating that my argument had no "meaning whatever if it was not directed to proving that the Pope was not infallible." I have never seen the slightest reason for believing in his infallibility, and certainly my critic has adduced no proof of it. Most assuredly he cannot be ignorant of the fact that many zealous Catholics have expressed the strongest opposition to such a claim, among whom was the distinguished scholar, Döllinger. It is a total mistake to say that I have "succeeded in proving that a Council is authoritative only when ratified by the Holy See." I have done nothing of the kind. Besides, "authoritative" is by no means synonymous with "infallible."

Mr. Chesterton applies infallibility exclusively to the Pope. According to him, every successor of St. Peter has been above doctrinal error. But what about Liberius, who won his popularity by becoming a semi-Arian? What about Felix II., who was a complete Arian? Liberius went to the length of subscribing the third Sirmian formula, giving up the "homocousion," an act which has ever since caused considerable embarrassment to the maintainers of the indefectibility of the Roman See. Surely, when promulgated by two occupiers of St. Peter's Chair, Arianism and semi-Arianism must have been successively pronounced orthodox by the highest authority on earth. Mr. Chesterton conveniently overlooks that important chapter in the history of the Church.

The closing sentences in the above letter are fine samples of Chestertonian irrelevancies, and need no further comment. The curious thing about the whole letter is that it admits all my facts, but denies their relevancy. I maintain, however, that nothing could be more relevant to my argument than the fact that a Pope subscribed a semi-Arian creed, or that the Church, in several councils and synods assembled, declared Arianism to be the orthodox Faith.

J. T. L.

Free-Will and Necessity.

"Others apart sat on a hill retired,
In thoughts more elevate, and reason'd high
Of providence, foreknowledge, will, and fate;
Fix'd fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute,
And found no end, in wandering mazes lost."

—MILTON.

WHATEVER Freethinker ventures to express views such as this paper sets forth is sure to meet with sneers and ridicule from the orthodox, who will also, most assuredly, try to turn his principles against himself. What then? Truth is truth; and its weakest friend ought never to feel ashamed of it. Besides, Christians of every denomination are shut up, by the logic of their position, to believe that absolute necessity prevails throughout the physical and moral world. The Calvinist avows this belief

in his creed, though he endeavors to escape its logical conclusions when contending with the Arminian. There can be no doubt that Calvinists are necessitarians; for if all things are foreseen and foreordained, then nothing could, nothing ever can, happen otherwise than it does. If it is foreseen, it must happen; if it does not happen, it was not foreseen. But the Arminian, or freewill, though on one point more logical than the Calvinist, is equally at sea upon another point not less vital. For an Almighty God must have all power; his creatures are mere marionettes, engines made and worked by the Creator, merely exhibiting his power in the semblance of personal and spontaneous actions. God's power is the *only* power, if he is all-mighty; and therefore all that is done is done by himself. This view—and it cannot be controverted without repudiating Christianity—tells with equal force against Calvinist and Arminian, as does also the foreknowledge of God. Given a being of infinite knowledge—he knows everything, every act, every motion from eternity to eternity, as the pulpits phrase it—and that which he foresees must, in its own time and place, occur. Prophecy lands those who believe in it on the same necessitarian shore; for the God who predicts knows all the circumstances beforehand, and his own power, physical and moral, is the only force concerned in the event.

I mention these points just to ward off unjust blows and to silence dishonest or unfair criticism; to show that whoever has the right to complain of my views, the Christians have no such right, either on physical or moral grounds.

As this paper follows up principles advanced in two former articles, viz., "Personal Identity" and "Ethics and Personal Identity," the reader is asked not to complain too severely if he finds here a repetition of some ideas previously expressed. The nature of the case renders such repetition unavoidable, though I hope it has been kept fairly within bounds.

Most people, whatever their creed, practically assume that the human Will is free. Even fatalists, Calvinists, and necessitarians generally praise and blame, reward and punish, human actions, just as if people could do as they pleased, and were absolutely free in their desires and deeds. There may be less inconsistency and absurdity in that than at first sight seems possible. Truth does not show itself all at once, and popular conceptions are generally incorrect, especially those relating to moral questions. It is not my intention to defend any absurdity which I recognise; nor can I reasonably hope for perfect success where great and wise men have so seriously and repeatedly missed their way. Still, I am of opinion that necessity constitutes no bar to morality, and that people may be as rationally rewarded or punished under its reign as under that of free-will. Indeed, I am not sure that necessity may not be consistent with freedom, though many would scout the supposition as insane. Be it so. Necessity certainly does not destroy or prevent the Will: does it destroy or prevent its freedom? A careful and honest investigation may enable us to return, at least, a dispassionate answer, if not an adequate one.

What is necessity? The word is French (*nécessité*), derived from the Latin (*necessitas*), unavoidableness, inevitableness, fate, destiny. Dr. Ogilvie thus defines the English word:—"That which cannot be put offthat which must be, and cannot be otherwise; or the cause of that which cannot be otherwise; irresistible power; compulsive force, physical or moral." We need a fuller explanation of the term; and the correctness or incorrectness of our explanation must depend upon the views we hold respecting nature or the universe. If we regard all material things and forces as creatures of an infinite God, then necessity resolves itself into nothing but the divine will, or into God himself. With this as our starting point, the universe is necessary, that is, could not have been otherwise, but must be precisely thus, only because God willed and made it such. If we consider the universe as consisting of indefinite quantities of matter and force (whatever these names

mean), which are inseparable, and have always existed, and have always acted and reacted as at present, then we must conclude that the phenomena of nature could not have been otherwise than they are, solely because their eternal elements are just what they are. To be sure, when the subject is fully examined, the Theistic and Pantheistic position equally lose themselves in the same conclusion; for an eternal God must be a necessary being equally with an eternal atom, and could not have been in any particular different from what he is. And thus we find that philosophy, whether it travels by the theological or the scientific route, arrives ultimately at the same goal, the goal of absolute necessity, a necessity co-extensive with the universe itself, that never for one moment, in any spot, relaxes its reign.

Matter and force are eternal. What their real nature may be I know not. They are first principles; and first principles admit of no possible explanation. Though we cannot explain their nature, though both matter and force may possibly be one thing, it seems impossible to doubt that chemistry and physics have demonstrated that neither matter nor force can be created or destroyed; and the conclusion seems inevitable that that which cannot be created cannot be destroyed, cannot be increased or diminished in quantity, must be eternal, and, as to its elements or primal nature, unalterable. If this be not true, then we seem still to have no real science or philosophy. Groups of facts united by empiric bonds or extemporised principles do not constitute a science. The groups of facts are no doubt united by some *natural* principle; when we are sure we have found that, we have a science. If matter and force be not eternal and unalterable in their qualities, then philosophy has no foundation, and science is, at best, but a record of observation and experience.

But if matter and force are eternal, so must their qualities be. For a thing cannot exist, would not be the thing it is, unless its qualities were present; and there seems no occasion yet for the inquiry as to whether matter or force may ever have changed in their qualities. If matter and force and all their qualities be eternal and unchangeable, their every phenomenon must be necessary, and could not have been otherwise. The phenomenon is, in fact, no more than a particular exhibition of those two: it has no separate, no independent existence; it comes and goes, but its elements remain essentially the same, no matter what appearances they may from time to time assume.

As far as the physical world is concerned, the doctrine of necessity seems so clearly established that even religious people no longer resist it. The time is practically gone by when God "held the winds in his fist and the waters in the hollow of his hand"; when "clouds arose and tempests blew by order from his throne." The departments of physical nature were formerly under the absolute control of supernatural powers and agents; now no part is thus controlled. The lightning is no longer left in the hands of any deity, for the very clergy run up lightning-rods to protect God's own temples from the stroke of his own thunderbolt. We need no better proof that theology is dying, that science and art are supplanting it, that necessity is now conceded to those departments of nature which in former days were specially subservient to the whims or exigencies of deity. For even the popular mind finds order, that is, necessity, in precisely those fields where divine caprice held its most unlimited sway. Men have now lost the power to pray for or against astronomical events. Who, with an almanac before him, could entreat his Heavenly Father not to send an eclipse or a conjunction of planets? Who could pray against the return of a periodic comet, or even invoke the aid of deity against the influence of an unexpected one? Can the mathematician pray about his figures and numbers; the chemist about his weights and measures, his mixtures, elements, and compounds; the musician about his notes; the builder about his materials? The truth has been mastered that no power can make $2 \times 2 = 5$, nor

cause a triangle and a circle to coincide; that no power can produce water out of anything else than oxygen or hydrogen; that no brick or stone can be converted into wood; that the notes of the diatonic scale cannot change their essential qualities. Even the weather and disease have almost escaped from the grasp of the priesthood, and their total emancipation cannot be long delayed.

The emancipation of the physical world from the clutches of superstition may be regarded as an earnest that the moral world must soon follow it into liberty; for the moral, at best, is but another phase of the physical. We ourselves are necessary phenomena, and could not, with the antecedents we had, have been otherwise. We are effects of causes, which in turn were effects of certain prior causes, and so on till we are led by the chain of phenomena back to the solid substratum of matter and force. Had the materials of our bodies been different, we should have differed physically and morally; had our ancestry been otherwise, so should we; had our age or nation, our creed or government, been different, so must we have differed; had we been born in Mercury or in Saturn, how unlike life had been from the present reality! I presume no one questions this. Everything in our physics reappears in our moral character. Take an extreme case: suppose human beings had not constituted a race, and had never been propagated as they are. How strange life would have been without love, courtship, or marriage! Can anyone estimate the difference in which lack of those would have resulted? I trow not. Love, courtship, and marriage constitute the greatest events in the life of our race; round these cluster government, police, and religion; and round those the moral character of the individual is formed and developed. And here we see the necessities of human nature, themselves the natural product of prior necessities, resulting in equally necessary moral actions. The study of food, clothes, shelter, health, and disease will lead to similar results, viz., that the physical lead by necessary and inevitable processes to moral states and actions. One might enlarge indefinitely upon this subject, and illustrations might be culled from life by scores to evidence the truth that moral actions are as much necessitated as the fall of an unsupported stone, or the revolution of the seasons. It is not requisite, however, to proceed further in this direction, except only to remark, what everybody knows and admits, that the moral character depends much, and necessarily depends much, upon the education we receive in early life. Both a man's personal merits and demerits shrink into insignificance when seen in the light of truth—even if they do not vanish altogether.

Had we been able freely to choose our own nation, ancestry, constitution, sex, and all else that goes to make our life what it is, there might have been some excuse for the fiction of free-will, as it is generally understood. But unless the choice is made at the very beginning of the series, there is no place for it afterwards. A man may be able to refuse, under given conditions, to jump over a high cliff, but when he takes the fatal leap, unless he is in some way caught and supported by a force not his own, he must go to the bottom, no matter what tremendous issues may be involved. And so he must if he be thrown over by others. In the moral region this holds: one event, one incident, leads to another. Every effect is the product of a cause or causes; every effect in turn becomes the cause of something else. Cause and effect, in physics and in ethics equally, know no beginning, no end—they constitute an endless chain, the links of which are infinite in number, and all in their due order. We are the product of an infinite series of phenomena, every one of which has planted its elements in us, has left its mark upon us, in physics and morals. Whoever reflects upon it will readily perceive that our physical constitution, and every part of it, must have their effects in our thoughts, hopes, fears, desires, and wishes, motives and actions.

JOSEPH SYMES.

(To be concluded)

In Honor of Bradlaugh.

THE atmosphere was electric at the tenth annual dinner of the Bradlaugh Fellowship, held at the Holborn Restaurant on October 23. Not only was there an excellent attendance, but the announcement that Mr. Bernard Shaw would occupy the chair had attracted people from all parts.

At the outset, Mr. Shaw put everyone in a good humor by saying "grace," and he quoted some effective lines of Shakespeare with the happiest effect. Indeed, Mr. Shaw was in rare form, and his witty speech, in proposing the toast of the memory of Charles Bradlaugh, was much to the taste of the large and appreciative gathering, who frequently applauded the display of intellectual fireworks which Mr. Shaw had prepared for their benefit. A ripple of laughter followed the opening description of Bradlaugh "as a great religious force," which Mr. Shaw explained by saying that Bradlaugh found the world in such a state that it was necessary to emphasise the negative rather than the positive side of his creed. He called himself an Atheist, and Mr. Shaw said that he (Shaw) proclaimed himself an Atheist at this time, and he was an Atheist still.

Bradlaugh was expelled by that highly religious assembly, the House of Commons, which went out of its way to repudiate a greater honor than it deserved. Bradlaugh used the highly religious name of "Iconoclast," the eternal task of all the ages. In the days of Mohammed the idols were of wood and stone, but now they had about fifty for one they had then, but unfortunately, they were of flesh and blood. They had idols which they put into seven uniforms daily, and called them kings; idols which they dressed up in wigs and robes and called "justice," idols in blue uniforms and helmets, which they spoke of as "law and order;" and idols with collars buttoned at the back, instead of at the front, which stood for religion. Idols were very cheap nowadays.

Bradlaugh was not impressed by the idols, nor was he afraid of them. He was an irrational Rationalist, for he never followed the line of least resistance, which ought to have consisted of taking off his hat to the idols and of filling his pockets. That was what a large number of pastoral people did, who reviled Bradlaugh for his lack of religion; but Bradlaugh hit the idols as hard as he could. The speech closed with a graceful compliment to "my friend Mr. Foote, who is carrying on Bradlaugh's work," and a warning to Freethinkers to disbelieve the priesthood of science as much as they did the priesthood of religion.

Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, in responding to the toast, recalled the days when Shaw and her father were "friendly enemies," and spoke of the glowing tribute to her father presented in unaccustomed views. She also pointed out that Mr. Lloyd George's land law reform scheme was one long since advocated by her father, and she also gave a lengthy account of her visit to the recent Freethought Congress at Lisbon.

To Mr. Arthur B. Moss was entrusted the toast of "The Fellowship," and he emphasised the Freethought side of Bradlaugh's career.

A lively speech followed from Mr. George Standring, who responded to the toast of "The Fellowship," which he said originated with some obscure and contemptible people. During its ten years of existence it had numbered two Members of Parliament, one clergyman, and the President of the N. S. S. among its chairmen. It had progressed from the abysmal depths of G. S. (George Standring) to the altitude of G. B. S. (George Bernard Shaw). It also numbered among its regular attendants, he humorously added, certain grey-bearded and bald-headed men and women who had known Bradlaugh.

Mr. E. H. Haywood proposed the toast of "Freethought at Home and Abroad," and spoke of the veneration felt for Bradlaugh by the younger generation of Freethinkers.

At the conclusion of this speech there were loud calls for "Foote," and the Chairman asked Mr. G. W. Foote to gratify the wishes of the company.

Mr. Foote, who was received with loud applause, said the last meeting he attended at which Mr. Shaw was present led to his going home for two months, and if this occurred again he should avoid Mr. Shaw in future. The average Englishman suffered from sleeping sickness. There was something in being a standing challenge in a country in which the inhabitants tend to lie down as near as possible to a pig's trough. John Bull wanted his head knocked, and Bradlaugh did that.

Bradlaugh was not a politician, he was a statesman. His Titanic strength was expended outside Parliament, and when he took his seat after his unexampled conflict he was a broken man. The work he did was seminal work. He was a herald, not a member of the rear guard. Lloyd George to-day is but following Bradlaugh. The credit of founding the first Republican Society in England since the Chartist times belongs to Bradlaugh, and he (Mr. Foote) was always

proud of being the secretary to that body. The virtues of the clergy were sometimes more dangerous than their vices. We have the Rev. Mr. Campbell stealing Freethought thunder, and Mr. Shaw completing the education of the congregation and preacher. If Mr. Shaw should ever succeed Mr. Campbell, he would either burst himself or burst the Church. Bradlaugh refused to use the word "religion," and was not a member of any Church. He was born too big for that.

Mr. Heaford concluded the speeches by replying to the toast of "Freethought at Home and Abroad," and a unanimous vote of thanks to the Chairman concluded the meeting, which broke up after the singing of "Auld Lang Syne."

Between the speeches songs were rendered by Miss Nell Gwynne.

C. E. S.

Correspondence.

"G. B. S." ON BRADLAUGH.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—It is a pity that one cannot be always accurate and striking; but, if a sacrifice must be made, by all means let it be in favor of accuracy. Particularly when not doing this involves the encouragement of modes of thinking that are fundamentally vicious. At the Bradlaugh Dinner, the other evening, Mr. Bernard Shaw is reported as saying that—

"Though Charles Bradlaugh preached the gospel of Rationalism, he acted throughout his life in the most irrational manner. Instead of choosing the line of least resistance.....he chose the line of greatest resistance. When he met one of these idols, instead of taking off his hat and filling his pockets—which was the sensible rationalistic thing to do—he hit the idol as hard as he could, and very often he knocked it down."

The contradiction is quite fanciful, and does not exist in fact. Popular it may be to sacrifice all other considerations to financial gain, but why rational? It is really because people are not rationalistic that this course is followed in so many instances. Mr. Shaw surely has sufficient command of language to find terms that will correctly describe this kind of behavior, and when Bradlaugh is the subject, his speech need suffer no decrease in brilliancy as a consequence.

Nor did Bradlaugh, in his most heroic endeavors, ever cease to follow the line of least resistance. Great as Bradlaugh was, he was incapable of achieving the impossible, and too wise even to attempt it. The line of least social resistance was then, as it is still, to bow to popular idols instead of smashing them. But he who sets himself up as the teacher of a scientific sociology should recognise that the peculiarity of the human animal is that *psychological* impulsion is the determining factor in human conduct. Bradlaugh would, indeed, have encountered far less social resistance had he been an idol-worshiper instead of an idol-breaker. But had he followed that line he would have accomplished the remarkable feat of working along the lines of greatest psychological resistance, and that would have quite equalled the miracle of the Gadarene swine. Bradlaugh's real greatness lay in the simple fact that his line of greatest psychological impulse was one not common with the mass of the people. His line of least resistance was to do easily that which most people find so very difficult. Great men do not contradict human nature; they only illustrate its capacities and many-sidedness.

There does not seem very much to criticise in Mr. Shaw's confession that he had never been a Materialist, but always a Mystic. If "Mystic" is used as an equivalent for Idealist, the opposition to "Materialist" is most unfortunate. There are no greater Idealists in the social world than philosophic or scientific Materialists. If Mystic is not the equivalent of Idealist, the statement reads very much like pure cant—perhaps the result of too great familiarity with the pulpit.

Perhaps one ought to compliment Mr. Shaw on having crowded so much confusion in so small a space.

C. COHEN.

Some Little-Known Freethinkers.

II.—MAJOR EVANS BELL.

MAJOR THOMAS EVANS BELL was chiefly known by his works on Indian affairs. He entered the army in 1842, and was employed in the suppression of Thugee. He served his country well in India, and probably in nothing better than in his continued advocacy in books and pamphlets of the just claims of the natives. But this independent attitude did not commend him to the authorities, and stood in the

way of justly earned promotion. As a Freethinker, he is to be remembered by his concise little book, entitled *The Task of To-day*, in which, taking up Carlyle's injunction to do the duty nearest hand, he examines the religion in which he had been reared. During the early days of the *Reasoner*, Major Bell supported that paper with both purse and pen, writing many Freethought articles under the signature of "Undecimus." He, indeed, contemplated selling his commission to devote himself to Freethought, but, by the advice of friends, was deterred. He returned to India at the outbreak of the mutiny, and became Deputy Commissioner of Police at Madras. He probably had some share in leading Judge Strange on the road to Freethought.

The influence of Carlyle is notable in *The Task of To-day*, which was published by James Watson in 1852, and is dedicated to G. J. Holyoake. He says in his preface:—

"Life is a very serious thing; every gleam of truth reveals to us more of the laws of absolute fact, inexorable and eternal, which make up the inscrutable Future and Invisible, as they do the visible and mysterious Present. Shall we raise our puny hands or voices and fight against those laws? Shall we lie against eternal truth, or shut our eyes and ears against it? I dare do none of these things deliberately. My share in the work of the world is doubtless of the minutest consequence, but to me it is of infinite consequence. To me it is of infinite consequence whether I live a traitor and a coward, or a true man. Good or bad, this is my work; I found I had it to do, and I have done it. May I ever do so."

The *Task* examines the Christian evidences with the result of showing that they were accepted in days of gross credulity, and have been largely maintained by pious frauds. Thus he says:—

"There was exactly the same evidence, and no more, in the third and fourth centuries that there is now—namely, certain narratives, the earliest of which was certainly not written sooner than thirty years after the death of Christ; but the superstition and ignorance of those times were such that accounts of supernatural events met with easy credit, and were attributed by some to divine, and by others to diabolical agency, according as they approved or disliked the character of the miracle-worker, or the tendency of his doctrines.

"Hardly two centuries ago a man in England was considered, even by the educated, as little better than an Atheist if he doubted that many old women were endowed by the Devil with the power of working miracles without number."

The frauds, he shows, were not confined to Catholics:—

"Although modern Protestantism has never pretended to miraculous powers, yet Protestant pious frauds have always abounded, and abound in the present day. It is a gross fraud to gloss over and conceal the infamous characters and obviously interested motives of many of the principal actors in the Reformation, in England particularly, as Protestant writers have done. Awful interpositions of Providence, exaggerated and fictitious accounts of deathbed scenes, both of believers and infidels, the lying reports of missionaries, and, in particular, the long evangelical speeches they are so fond of putting into the mouths of their converts, are instances of Protestant pious frauds."

The alleged evidences of prophecy are equally examined, and paralleled by the evidence for Mohammedanism. The Bible is shown to bear many traces of superstition and savagery, and he proceeds to examine the evidence for an alleged Great First Cause. He concludes this section with the words:—

"To act this life well it is not necessary to know the secrets of the Invisible, the destinies of worlds and systems, or the life beyond the grave, if a life there be. That is the department of speculation and poetry, and not of knowledge or of action. We owe no service to the Invisible and Unknown; our work is here before us."

The little book concludes with the contention that morality must be independent of speculation, and an exhortation to mutual help and frankness in proclaiming unbelief in dogmas which have only cursed mankind:—

"How long [he asks] could the present social ostracism be pursued against avowed unbelievers if the words, 'I am not a Christian,' were calmly and gently, but firmly, pronounced, not obtrusively paraded, in the drawing-room, the court of justice, and the senate, whenever passing event called for such an expression of opinion from a candid and honest man? How long could the Christian superstition enjoy its galvanic life in England if every man whose heart and intellect revolted from it wore henceforward to raise his voice and pen to denounce and to abolish it? And in the speedy destruction and abolition of its influence lies our hope of peaceable and harmonious progress."

Major Bell retired from India in 1865, but continued to largely interest himself in Indian affairs. He died September 12, 1887. The *Illustrated London News* shortly afterwards gave his portrait, which is that of a remarkably fine-looking man.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

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INDOOR.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (Mr. Wright's, 237 Essex-road, Islington, N): 7.30, Business Meeting—Election of Secretary and Treasurer, also Auditor's Report.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, J. Rowney, "The Sermon on the Mount."

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, E. Burke, "Sir Oliver Lodge and his Bubbles."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, J. T. Lloyd, "The Lying Gospel."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (North Saloon, City Hall): Joseph McCabe, 12 noon, "Sir O. Lodge and Materialism"; 6.30, "The Religion of G. B. Shaw."

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Rev. R. Roberts, "The Use and Abuse of the Bible."

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