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Half measures are always dangerous.—NAPOLEON.

The Revival of Faith.

WHEN Artemus Ward was asked to address a gathering of young men on "Science," he readily agreed, because, he said, he knew nothing whatever about the subject. And knowing nothing, he could "expatiate" with the utmost freedom. He knew of no facts that could get in his way, and so limit his oratorical flights; all he had to do was to talk, and talking was part of his professional duty. Next to talking on a subject of which one knows nothing, the next easiest thing is to talk about the future—not the immediate future, but a future that is a good convenient distance ahead. If it is far enough away, no one can contradict with authority; and if anyone does so, there are always plenty who will be in agreement with the "Futurist." Nature has thoughtfully provided fools enough, for there always appears to be enough on hand to provide a comfortable community. And if the future talked about has to do with another life and another world, the game is easier still. You may rest quite assured that you are as well informed on the topic as anyone; and with knowledge at a minimum, credulity always soars sky-high.

Almost, but not quite, of the same character is the current cant about the revival of faith. Here some few facts are available, but they are of the slenderest possible character. Every time a professional revivalist visits a neighborhood, and ropes in all revivalistic debauchees in the neighborhood, a great revival of faith is reported. If a clerical congress is held, the parsons present—drunk with their own eloquence, and bored with that of their fellow-speakers—report a great awakening of religion. Professional evangelists of the Gipsy Smith type send to the papers accounts of the number of souls saved—much like a Red Indian "brave" exhibiting the scalps of his victims; and once again religion is on the boom. Like a petrol engine, religion seems wholly dependent upon a series of explosions, although it differs from the machine in not getting any "forrader." When the explosion is done, religion is, at best, where it was, and at worst has progressed backward.

"J. B.," of the *Christian World,* discovers indications of a revival of religion in the fact that William Watson, in a recent sonnet, expresses his profound gratitude that he has recovered his faith in God. Not having read the sonnet, I can't say how far this description is justified; but if Mr. Watson is grateful for the recovery of his faith, no one need complain. We hope God—if there be one—is equally appreciative of William Watson. At any rate, if a ledger account is being kept by the recording angel, precious little profit will be shown. At best, it is only one strayed sheep recovered. And if one has returned, many others have gone astray. Mr. Watson has returned to God; but meanwhile a score have gone to the Devil. And the success of a business is determined, not by the profit on a single transaction, but by the profit or loss on the whole of the trading.

Of course, the address of Sir Oliver Lodge at the British Association comes in as another significant indication of the revival of religion. Until something new comes along, that address is a standing dish with the Churches. Sir Oliver Lodge knows better than this. He knows that he stands practically alone in the scientific world. He has, substantially, said as much. Moreover, he is not a convert. He has not, like William Watson, been wandering outside, and now returned to the fold. He was always within—in a sense; and even now one may seriously question whether his attachment to religion is at all greater than it was years ago. But the mass of scientific men are not with him. In public they listen decorously; in private they smile. And if few of them speak out, one has to just put their silence to the general timidity of English intellectual life.

Having discovered a non-existent revival, "J. B." next discusses the cause of its being. He says:—

> "We may first note the breakdown of all substitutes for religious faith. We have lived now through a tolerably long era of attacks on Christianity. England, the beginner of so many things, was the beginner here. It was from Bolingbroke and the English Deists of the eighteenth century that Voltaire got the lessons which he carried into France. Diderot and the Encyclopædists pushed from Deism to Atheism, and set the tone to generations of Continental thinking."

All except the last sentence is false, and that winds up with a piece of characteristic Christian dissimulation. On the Continent, Deism was pushed to Atheism. Of course, it would never do to point out that the same process of development took place in this country. At all costs the delusion that there are no Atheists in England must be maintained. As a matter of fact, Deism always holds within itself the possibility of Atheism, and the course of events in England offers no exception to the general rule. The struggle of eighteenth century Christianity against Deism was only an incident in the history of Freethought. Christians saw the weakness of the Deistic position clearly enough—none more so than Bishop Butler, one of the most acute minds on the Christian side. His attack helped materially to drive home the logic of the Deistic position. And, thanks largely to the attack on Deism, Freethought, which entered into it as Deistic, emerged purified, as Atheistic. True, it has never been as generally outspoken here as on the Continent, but reticence does not alter facts. Instead of Atheists we have crowds of Agnostics, and wherein lies the difference between the two, "no man knoweth unto this day."

It is easy enough to talk of Christianity having lived through a long era of attacks, but how far is this true? In what sense has Christianity lived through the storm? If anyone will contrast Christian doctrines now with what they were a century or so ago, he will realise that Christianity has really only saved itself in name. In essentials it has surrendered to the enemy. What has become of the orthodox Christian cosmology, of witchcraft, of miracles, of hell-fire, of Biblical inspiration, and of numerous other teachings? Suppose the current Christianity of Paine's day had been that of some of the "advanced" Christians of our own, would he have ever written the *Age of Reason?* It is hardly likely. Assuming Paine to be alive to-day, with his opinions unchanged, how much fault would he find with the teachings of some preachers? Very little, I fancy. But does this mean, or would it mean, that Paine had become converted to Christianity? Not a bit of it. It would only mean that Christianity had become converted to Paine. In its most advanced form to-day, Christianity is little more than the eighteenth century Deism it so bitterly opposed, with a liberal dash of the word "Christ." Amongst the bulk of liberal thinkers, even in this country, far from Christianity having lived through an era of attacks, the Christianity that was alive at the commencement of those attacks is now completely destroyed. Without the spoils of office it is questionable if even the name would have survived; but these have been weighty enough to secure the continuity of name if nothing else.

There is no revival of religious faith in any genuine sense of the term. There is only a continuous endeavor to state a number of beliefs in a way that will not offend advanced thought, and which may pass for Christianity. The use of even such an expression as "religious faith" is a proof of this. What is really meant is *Christian* faith. But this would be too precise, too definite, and would have roused uncomfortable reflections. So it is *religious* faith that survives—a vague, indefinite, comprehensive something or other, with a comforting dash of respectability about it. Once upon a time, the important question was, "Are you a member of *the* Church?" Then it was, "Are you a member of *any* Church?" Later, "Are you a Christian, even though of no Church at all?" And now it is a fearsome "Well, are you religious; do you believe in anything?" with a "For God's sake say you believe in a kind-of-a-sort-of-a-something somewhere or other." Anything will do so long as you can use the word "religion." One could really respect a Church that stood to its doctrine against the hosts of advanced thought. Even though destruction were certain, it would be honorable. But Christians who swallow defeat after defeat, and whose only concern appears to be that of exhibiting the excellence of their digestions, can arouse little else than contempt.

It is, indeed, one of the curiosities of the present position that the Freethinker who attacks Christianity is, as often as not, met with the defence that no one believes in it. If he argues that the affairs of the world do not exhibit the care of a benevolent Providence, he is told that this is an old-fashioned notion, and that Christians no longer believe in a particular Providence. If he asks for proofs of the power of prayer, he is told that these are not objective, but subjective—they exist only in the minds of believers. If he attacks the inspiration of the Bible, he is told that all books are inspired, and that the Bible has naturally the same faults that mark other writings. He denounces hell, and is laughed at for being old-fashioned. He criticises the orthodox conception of God, and is told that he is caricaturing Deity. The Bible is the same, the creeds are the same, and yet they mean something entirely different to what they have always been taken to mean. It is a convenient discovery—particularly as these new interpretations happen to represent the minimum of concessions to attacks that can no longer be warded off.

A genuine revival of religion is to-day next door to an impossibility. Certain backward sections of the community may be galvanised into activity, but the bulk of opinion is against them. The mass of people cannot escape the contagion of widespread knowledge and of progressive ideas. For knowledge is no longer the property of a few. General education and cheap publications give all who care to have it the rudiments of a genuine knowledge of nature and of life. And in the last resort these are the only safeguards against superstition. A civilisation may remain in the era of the stone age, but it does not advance to a knowledge of metals and then go backward. The Churches, however powerful they may be, cannot take away from us what we know; they can only strive to prevent our knowing more. But their main task is not even this. Their chief work is to strive by all sorts of fanciful and dishonest interpretations, by confusions of thought, and looseness of speech, to give an air of culture to a mass of superstitions that had their origin in the fear-haunted brain of the primitive savage.

C. Cohen.

Secularism Justified of Her Children.

As a proof that religion is natural and necessary to man we are confidently assured that no sooner is he in trouble than he falls upon his knees in prayer. In health and prosperity his constant temptation is to forget God and eternity, and live as if the present were his all in all; but at the approach of sickness, failure, poverty, or some great calamity, he turns his eyes heavenwards and implores God to come to his aid. This may be perfectly true of many people, who, while neglecting religious practices, have not entirely lost their religious beliefs. When misfortune overtakes them those beliefs become active, and they experience a religious revival. We have no desire to throw any suspicion upon the statement that the cultivation of religion, especially in times of trial and sorrow, yields a certain amount of gladness and joy. There have been saints whose supposed communion with God in Christ filled their hearts, at times, with ineffable bliss. It was their lot, occasionally, to enjoy delicious foretastes of the blessedness of heaven. But the peace and rest which religion affords are painfully spasmodic; they come and go in the most tantalising fashion imaginable. Indeed, even at their best there is something uncanny and weird about them. What people call the consolations of the Gospel seem to be playing hide-and-seek with the most fervent believers; and in reality they are not *consolations* at all. We read: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble"; but the sense of his helpful presence is the least dependable thing on earth. In another place we find this impassioned but hopeless cry, "Why standest thou afar off, O Lord; why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?" Here is a more desperate outburst still: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou answerest not; and in the night season, but find no rest." This is the commonest complaint made against the loving Heavenly Father in the Bible. Jesus is reported to have made it in his dying agony on the cross.

Thus the consolations of religion are most unreliable, being whimsically administered. Besides, the habit of depending upon them produces an extremely abnormal state of mind. The true disciple of the Galilean despises human comfort, in the belief that he has that which is Divine. Thomas à Kempis tells us that the "holy martyr Laurence with his priest overcame the world, because whatsoever seemed delightsome in the world he despised." Consolation is represented as a gift which God imparts or withholds just as he pleases. In the *Imitation of Christ* the believer is addressed thus:—

> "When therefore spiritual comfort is given thee from God, receive it with thankfulness; but understand that it is the gift of God, not any desert of thine......When consolation is taken from thee, do not immediately despair; but with humility and patience wait for the heavenly visitation; for God is able to give thee back again more ample consolation."

Were we to examine the lives of some of the great saints of history we would learn that the consolations of religion failed them when most needed. St. Bernard, of Clairvaux, was one of the saddest of men. His anxieties were overwhelming, and to peace of mind he was a stranger. This world was the valley of desolation, and he passed through it suffering grief and pain, and longing for the rest that remaineth to the people of God beyond the tomb. During his last illness the sorrowing monks prayed earnestly for his recovery, and it was supposed that their prayers were partially answered in the prolonging of his life; but he remonstrated with them, saying, "Why do you thus detain a miserable man? Spare me. Spare me, and let me depart." Take another less known but more admirable character, Madame Desbordes Valmore, the pre-eminently pious French poetess. She was an exceptionally Godly woman; but the so-called consolations of religion availed her nothing. Bitter trial, poverty, and bereavement were her lot in life. She was alone, without brothers or sisters, alone and severed from all whom she had loved; and this is her sad plaint:—

> "What can one say in the presence of these decrees of Providence? If one has deserved them, the case is more sad. I often search my heart and try to find out what may have caused me to be so heavily smitten by our dear Creator; for it is impossible for his justice to punish thus without a cause, and that thought very often suffices to overwhelm me."

It is incontrovertible that the consolations of religion are purely imaginary. The things which God is believed to have prepared for them that love him are not bestowed upon them in this world. What he gives them here is tribulation, to qualify them for the better life hereafter. They assemble in their churches and chapels and sing—

"Brief life is here our portion:
Brief sorrow, short-lived care;
The life that knows no ending,
The tearless life is there.
O happy retribution!
Short toil, eternal rest,
For mortals and for sinners
A mansion with the blest."

This life, therefore, is to be endured as a much-needed discipline, not enjoyed as Nature's gift. It is of necessity a life of suffering and sorrow and disappointment, and we are to go through it as prisoners of hope. Now, a falser and more demoralising doctrine than this was never promulgated, and if people really believed it, which they do not, their existence would be infinitely more miserable than it is. We have just had the honor of an hour's interview with a great hero who manfully renounced such wretched teaching many years ago. We refer to Mr. Frederic William Walsh, of the Royal Midland Counties Home for Incurables, Leamington Spa, with whose history readers of this journal have been familiar for the last few years. It will be remembered that some seventeen years ago Mr. Walsh, working as a mechanic in Birmingham, met with an accident which resulted in serious spinal injuries. Paralysis ensued, depriving him of his speech and the use of all his limbs, and necessitating his lying flat on his back ever since. The head is the only part of the body over which he has the least control. For two or three years he had no means of communicating with those around him. One day a pencil was accidentally left on his bed, and he caught hold of it in his mouth. After long and laborious practice he learned to write, holding the pencil between his teeth. At the time of the accident he was an ardent believer, and the dogma he cherished most gratefully was that of immortality. He wrote an essay on "The Philosophy of Salvation," which was published. In this he expatiated on the Fatherhood of God, on love as the essence of his nature, and on humanity as the peculiar object of his boundless affection. But in proportion as he faced the facts of life, particularly the facts of his own history, the belief in a God of justice and love weakened within him, and finally became an utter impossibility to him. He studied science, philosophy, and history, with the result that he became a firmly convinced Freethinker. He is an honored member of the National Secular Society, and does his utmost to spread the principles of Secularism. He has no need of the consolations offered by supernatural religion, because he finds ample solace in the intellectual contemplation of Nature and her activities. He has periods of unconsciousness, when for a week or a fortnight he is dead to the world, and sometimes he suffers excruciating pain; but he remains bright and cheerful through it all. It does one good to see the sweet smile on his expressive countenance, and to read his intelligent and interesting contributions to the conversation. He is profoundly interested in all the political, social, literary, and religious movements of the day. Last April a Paper composed by him, on "Auguste Comte and the Religion of Humanity," was read before the Leamington Literary and Philosophical Society, and is now published as a pamphlet of thirty-four pages (Lyceum Press, 37 Hanover-street, Liverpool, price 3d.). As a sample ot his style, which reveals his noble character, we quote the following extract. Having described the Positive religion, he says:—

> "Her priests are men of science, poets, artists, historians, teachers, and writers, guarding their sincerity as they guard their honor, each bringing his little to the Treasure House of Humanity; all gladly working for Humanity; all loving that for which they labor and offer themselves up as a daily sacrifice; and all helping the development of Altruism. I see politics being purified of self-interest and duly subordinated to morals; the social origin of wealth recognised and being socially applied to the amelioration of society; men working with heart and will at their daily avocations, with more leisure, a larger, richer, and fuller life. I see woman as man's true providence, consecrating the home with a larger love and deeper sympathy. I see the Religion of Humanity as a unifying force inspiring and enlarging unselfish affection, lifting man above himself into a communion with Humanity, through whom he lives and for whom he gladly works."

Here is a glowing optimist in a Home for Incurables, the whole of whose body is useless and an impediment, save the head, for whom Supernaturalism is non-existent, and who regards his life of intercourse with the great and noble of all ages well worth living.

J. T. Lloyd.

Freedom of Thought.—II.

A History of Freedom of Thought. By Prof. J. B. Bury, Litt.D., LL.D. (Home University Library, 74.) London: Williams & Norgate. 1s. net.

Professor Bury argues that reason was free in Greece and Rome. There were serious drawbacks, however, in the case of Greece. All the world remembers the martyrdom of Socrates. Several other distinguished Greeks met with a somewhat similar fate. With regard to the popular sentiment on such matters, it was pointed out by Leigh Hunt that most of the great poets, who were generally sceptical in relation to the orthodox religion, were reported to have come to a bad end. But persecution was not organised in the Greek states, neither was there any interference with literature. The latter is also true of Rome, and is worthy of special notice. For as soon as the Christians got into power they burnt pagan and heretical books, and in this they were wise with a sinister wisdom. To kill unbelievers, and to leave their writings to work mischief, was a policy that Christians never tolerated, even in their hours of greatest weakness.

"The general rule of Roman policy," Professor Bury says, "was to tolerate throughout the Empire all religions and all opinions. Blasphemy was not punished. The principle was expressed in the maxim of the Emperor Tiberius: 'If the gods are insulted, let them see to it themselves.'" Rome, indeed, in the matter of religion, was like England in India. The empire was bound to be neutral in the presence of a multitude of faiths, all of them right individually and all of them wrong collectively. One result, in the case of India, is that there is no Blasphemy Law protecting any particular religion; and another result is that Secular Education prevails throughout India, although it is not yet adopted in England, Scotland, Wales, or Ireland.

Christian historians, even in the earliest ages, were such frightful liars that it is unsafe to believe anything they say without corroborative evidence. They lied, in fact, on principle; and in some instances they not only confessed it but boasted of it. Eusebius himself owned to having related less what was true than what was edifying. Professor Bury, of course, knows this as well as we do; but we do not think he has made sufficient allowance for it. George Long, the classic translator of Marcus Aurelius, and historian of the Roman Republic, has dealt in his footnotes to the great Emperor's *Meditations* with the allegation that he punished the Christians. The allegation is left but just credible. Yet it was seized upon by John Stuart Mill to show how even the wisest and best of men may be led into evil policies which meaner and baser men escape. Renan knew what he was saying when he challenged anyone to produce a single law against freedom of thought in the whole of Roman jurisprudence before the days of Constantine,—who, it will be remembered, was the first Christian emperor. This challenge of Renan's is, or ought to be, well known. It should have made Professor Bury hesitate to speak in the following peremptory manner:—

> "Under Trajan we find that the principle had been laid down that to be a Christian is an offence punishable by death. Henceforward Christianity remained an illegal religion. But in practice the law was not applied rigorously or logically. The Emperors desired, if possible, to extirpate Christianity without shedding blood. Trajan laid down that Christians were not to be sought out, that no anonymous charges were to be noticed, and than an informer who failed to make good his charge should be liable to be punished under the laws against calumny. The Christians themselves recognised that this edict practically protected them."

We presume that Professor Bury is aware that the authenticity of this part of Pliny's correspondence has been challenged. It is certain that the Christians stuck at nothing in the way of forgery, and to forge this particular passage was not a very difficult accomplishment. Even if it be a genuine portion of the original text, it does not follow that the word "Christians" applies absolutely and exclusively to the worshipers of Jesus of Nazareth. In any case, the Christians were not punished for their religious beliefs, but for their religious practices, and for running amok, as it were, amongst other religionists in the Empire. This is conceded, it is indeed emphasised, by Professor Bury. The Roman tradition of toleration was broken, if it *was* broken, to check the intolerant; for the Christians boasted that, when they gained the upper hand, they would make their fellow citizens worship as *they* did. There would be no toleration of false gods when Christ's kingdom came on earth.

We are delighted to note that Professor Bury refers to the Christians as having "invented a whole mythology of martyrdoms." "Many cruelties," he adds, "were imputed to Emperors under whom we know that the Church enjoyed perfect peace."

The first thing the Christians did when they came into power, under Constantine and his successors, was to destroy the literature of their Pagan adversaries. The wily Paley blandly observed that "the writings of Celsus are lost." He did not tell his readers *how* they were lost. He could not afford to disclose the fact that they were destroyed by imperial edicts issued at the instigation of the Christian Church. The writings of Porphyry were destroyed in the same way. Not a single copy was allowed to survive. Far more than Strafford the Christian Church might have claimed the motto of "Thorough." Nothing of the kind had been attempted by the Pagan authorities. "It is particularly to be observed," Professor Bury says, "that no effort had been made to suppress Christian literature." Rome was not fighting against opinions; she was fighting against what she regarded as dangerous anti-social fanatics, who threatened the peace and prosperity of the Empire. And subsequent events showed that the Emperors were not far out in their calculation.

To the Dark and Middle Ages a brief chapter is devoted by Professor Bury. He heads it "Reason in Prison." It was during "the period in which the Church exercised its greatest influence" that "reason was enchained in the prison which Christianity had built around the human mind." The next chapter deals with the Renaissance and the Reformation. Let us take the latter first. We quoted last week a strong passage from Professor Bury's denunciation of the intolerance of the Protestant Churches. He adds that "Luther was quite opposed to liberty of conscience and worship, a doctrine which was inconsistent with the Scriptures as he read it." Calvin's "fame for intolerance" was still blacker. He established a theocracy at Geneva, where "liberty was completely crushed, and false doctrines were put down by imprisonment, exile, and death." One wishes that room had been found for Gibbon's noble passage on Calvin's hunting down of Servetus.

The vital movement of that age was not the Reformation but the Renaissance. Professor Bury writes eloquently on this topic—giving all honor to the science represented by Galileo, and the burning zeal of propaganda as represented by the martyr Giordano Bruno. Humanism had in it a principle of growth:—

> "We shall see how reason and the growth of knowledge undermined the bases of theological authority. At each step in this process, in which philosophical speculation, historical criticism, natural science, have all taken part, the opposition between reason and faith deepened; doubt, clear or vague, increased; and secularism, derived from the Humanists, whether latent or conscious, substituted an interest in the fortunes of the human race upon earth for the interest in a future world."

Professor Bury rightly mentions Montaigne, the first of the Humanists; and even Milton, for his splendid plea for unlicensed printing; but he omits one name—the greatest of all—that of Shakespeare; against whom he seems to have contracted a prejudice, if one may judge by a recent article of his in the *Positivist Review*, to which attention has already been called in our pages.

Passages in favor of freedom of thought abound in Shakespeare. He chose the beautiful lips of Portia to condemn the folly as well as the wickedness of torture, which was then common in the jurisprudence of Christendom. Where else may we find a similar protest in contemporary literature? In the really greatest of Hamlet's soliloquies, which therefore is never heard upon the stage, occurs the grand passage which made so deep an impression on the mind of Shelley:—

> "Sure, he that made us with such large discourse,
> Looking before and after, gave us not
> That capability and godlike reason
> To fust in us unused."

What reply had the priests and dogmatists to that challenge? Or what to the following challenge, written in language that only the Master could wield?—

> "What custom wills, in all things should we do't,
> The dust on antique time would lie unswept,
> And mountainous error be too highly heaped
> For truth to o'er-peer. —"Coriolanus," ii., 3.

Listen, finally, to this consummate utterance:—

> "For truth can never be confirmed enough,
> Though doubts did ever sleep. —"Pericles," v. 1.

It is impossible to go beyond that. And no one but Shakespeare ever reached it—in spite of certain pages in Mill's *Liberty*, echoed from Milton's *Areopagitica*.

G. W. Foote.

(To be concluded.)

Some Emotions and a Moral.

> "It is a lie—their priests, their pope,
> Their saints, their —— all they fear or hope
> Are lies, and lies." —Browning.

Low burned the nursery lights. The little motherless girl had been tucked up cosily, and the kiss of good night was still moist upon her father's cheek. The father lingered near the child's bedstead, and stood looking out upon the star-lit sky. The tie between them was strangely close, and it had been drawn closer still by the death of the child's mother. He, a silent, reticent man, had been content to leave the child to the care of his wife, who was now no more. A convinced Freethinker, he had allowed perfect freedom in his home, and had not interfered. Now, "the poppied sleep, the end of all" had come to his wife, and he would have to look more closely to the little one.

As he stood gazing out upon the glories of the night, he was startled to hear sounds of partly repressed sobbing from the child's bed. The surprised man quickly and silently approached the child. There was something wrong, for the girl's head was feverish, and the large tears rolled down her cheeks.

The strong man stooped over the little girl, placing the small arms around his own neck, and clasped the terror-stricken child to his heart. There had never been any secrets between them. For a minute or two the frightened child sobbed in his arms, and then in whispering tones the father asked what was the trouble.

"Daddy, I don't want to go to hell."

The man was taken unawares, between the points of his armor. He had expected many things at the hands of Fate, but never this. Between the soothing caresses he said, "Girlie, who has been talking to you about hell?"

The answer came in a broken, confiding whisper, "The rector told me last Friday, and—he said you were a wicked man because you were an infidel, and you would go to hell, too."

To the man the issue was clear. The priest and the father were to battle for supremacy in the mind of the young child.

"Listen, girlie! the rector does not know any more of death than other people, and he has no right to frighten you. There is no hell, dear. It is all a mistake. Who would burn a little girl?"

As he spoke, the sobs ceased at the words. The child was listening, and soon the young thoughts forsook the nightmare inventions of the priests. Talking tenderly, almost like a mother, her father soon had her in conversation on other subjects, until sleep came and found her holding her father's hand. The man was driven back on his own thoughts. For the moment the victory was for Freethought, but what of the future. The shadow of Priestcraft had fallen upon his hearthstone. Would it return?

Leaving a kiss upon the lips of the sensitive, sleeping child, the father again took his silent post at the window. The sunset flared like a huge torch upon the far horizon. One could easily imagine the glare to be that of the fires of the Inquisition, lighting up the blackened limbs of heretics, who were being burned for the good of their souls. The mere thought made his heart thrill with a strange awe. As he watched the silent vanishing of the noiseless sunlight, the place became a sanctuary of dreams. What visions were those that floated before his eyes? What faces defiant of death! The pale face of Giordano Bruno, the mournful countenance of Lucilio Vanini, the sad features of Joan of Arc. He saw the flames licking round Michael Servetus; Galileo in his dungeon; and the erect figure of Francisco Ferrer fronting the rifles of the soldiers.

Dark Ages! Was not any age dark in which shadows of Priestcraft could fall, lessening, eclipsing, the little sum of human happiness, so hardly won for the race by centuries of striving.

The sun had now set and disappeared. Would that superstition had gone with it.

The next day the child was withdrawn from religious instruction in the school, and Priestcraft claimed one victim the less.

Mimnermus.

Many mediocre authors, exercising the most complete sincerity, find ample appreciation in the vast mediocrity of the public, and are never troubled by any problems.—*Arnold Bennett.*

Some Little-Known Freethinkers.

III.—Evan Powell Meredith.

I never met the author of *The Prophet of Nazareth*, though I had the honor of eliciting some articles from him contributed to the *National Reformer*, on the subject of the early Christian love feasts and immorality. They were signed "Lucianus," a signature which, like those of "Julian" and "Celsus," has been taken by more than one writer in the Freethought ranks.

Evan Powell Meredith was born in Wales in 1811. He was educated for the ministry at Pontypool College, became a pastor in the Baptist connexion, and an eloquent preacher in the Welsh tongue. He made a translation of the Bible into Welsh. Study of the Scriptures led him to see through their pretensions, and about 1844, as he states in the preface to his largest work, he quietly withdrew from Christianity "whose doctrine, after considerable examination and research, he had ceased to believe, and, therefore, could no longer conscientiously preach." He adds that he had, ever since his secedure, almost daily pursued his researches after the real origin of the Christian religion. These studies he pursued to the last, and he had, I believe, prepared a work on the Gospels, which never appeared. What became of it on his death at Monmouth, July 23, 1889, I cannot say. Mr. Meredith lived a very secluded life. Probably he could have done much had he taken to Freethought advocacy in Wales; but he remained a Deist all his days, and possibly did not care to co-operate with Secularists. Mr. Meredith's *Prophet of Nazareth* was evoked by the offer by Mr. George Baillie, of Glasgow, of a prize for the best essay on the question whether Jesus predicted the last day of judgment, and the destruction of the world, as events inevitable during the then existent generation of men. The prize was only ten guineas, a sum which could never have compensated Mr. Meredith for a tithe of the labor he put into his performance. But his motive was not gain. As he states in his preface,—

> "He thought that thus to write on a given subject was an inoffensive and a favorable manner of making some of his theological views known to Christians generally, and particularly to those who had studied in the same college with him, and had taken so much pains to brand him as an infidel."

The Prophet of Nazareth is one of the most convincing works ever written. It thoroughly exhausts its subject, and the upholder of the supernatural character of Christianity is left without a leg to stand upon. Nor is it wanting in eloquence, as the following passage may testify:—

> "There is no man, however depraved, who is not more or less strongly prompted by his own feelings to be just, from a love of justice,—to be benevolent from a spontaneously kind emotion,—and to do good, in general, from a love of virtue. The threats of hell and the promises of heaven, as incentives to virtue, together with the whole tenor of the superstitious creeds prevalent in the world, have made man believe that he is much more immoral, and more helpless, than he really is. Free him from the trammels of book-revelations—let him study nature alone—and man will make rapid strides towards happiness. He has already discovered that his degree of enjoyment is in proportion to his moral and intellectual progress. He has learned that all his miseries arise from a violation of the natural laws—either by him, or by members of the community in which he lives—and that all his happiness is the result of obedience to these laws, in discovering which, and learning to obey them, he daily progresses, gathering a thousand facts from his own experience, as well as from that of others. When mankind. universally, will learn to obey these laws, each individual will feel intense pleasure in promoting the happiness of others, which cannot fail to secure the happiness of the whole race. Then will knowledge and benevolence be inseparably connected in each individual, and vice and misery accidents in human life—rarely witnessed. The progress in knowledge and happiness which man has already made, by *studying nature*, warrants this conclusion, and forbids us to prescribe limits either to the high degree of knowledge he is capable of acquiring, or the intensity of happiness he is capable of enjoying."

In 1865 Mr. Meredith entered into some correspondence with the Bishop of Llandaff, in consequence of his hearing that dignity deliver a sermon in which he advocated the utility and advantages of wealth. Our Freethinker strongly contrasted the preaching of the bishop with the doctrines of Jesus, as found in Matthew vi. 25-34, xix. 16; Mark x. 17; Luke xviii. 18; and John v. 27. At first his lordship fenced in his reply, stating that he had been misrepresented, and had not inculcated the pursuit of riches. Mr. Meredith produced a shorthand report bearing out his representations, and persisted in asking an explanation. The bishop now changed his tack, and said he had no time for correspondence. About the same time the Rev. J. F. Francklin, vicar of Whaplode, Spalding, having perused "some extracts from your horrible and blasphemous production, entitled *The Prophet of Nazareth*," addressed him an arrogant epistle against employing his "ungodly pen in the service of Satan." He was answered at length, and the letters to the bishop and the vicar were published under the title of *Amphilogia*.

To those who enjoy the sight of Christians squirming and wriggling in the grasp of a hard-fisted Freethinker, *Amphilogia* affords excellent reading. But, of course, Mr. Meredith's chief service to the cause was his great work on *The Prophet of Nazareth*. The world of letters was then giving much attention to Bishop Colenso's work on *The Pentateuch and the Book of Joshua*. But Mr. Meredith struck a blow, not at any outwork, but at the very citadel of Christianity; and, in dealing with the prophecies of the gospel, he hit the Christian superstition in its weakest part. As long as that superstition endures his work will retain its value, though in these days, when great books are felt to be more than ever great evils, it is to be wished that someone may condense its six hundred pages to sixty.

IV.—Myles McSweeney.

was but a lad when I first heard the rich brogue of this Irish advocate at the Brill, Somer's Town, adjacent to the spot now crossed by the Midland Arches. The humorous way in which he referred to the myths of "Jasus and the Vargin" was irresistibly funny. His pet subject was the non-historical character of these legendary personages, and he brought to bear on his topic intimacy with the rites and doctrines of the Roman Church, in which he was educated, and a wide acquaintance with mythological lore. Born at Enniskillen in 1814, he early migrated to London, and, hearing the Rev. Robert Taylor at the Rotunda in 1830, adopted the views of the "Devil's Chaplain." When I knew him he was a peripatetic stationer and book dealer, living in a very humble cottage down Westminster way. Yet his room was filled with books explaining "all the mythologies." Many of them were rare and valuable. There were the works of Drummond, Bryant, Maurice, Holwell, Pluché, Savory, Asiatic Researches, etc., mostly picked up secondhand during his peregrinations. Nor were later books wanting, such as those of Dr. Inman, presented by the author, whom McSweeney supplied with many books, as he did also Bishop Colenso.

He sold me some books, said to be "worth their weight in gold," and lent me others, from some of which I enlarged drawings for his lectures. Every Sunday he went from place to place discoursing on some phase of his constant theme. On one occasion I recollect that he took the chair for Mr. Bradlaugh at the Hall of Science, when our leader was lecturing on some similar topic to his own. I once accompanied McSweeney to a meeting of the old Anthropological Society to hear a paper by the Rev. Dunbar Heath. Myles opposed, and afforded much amusement by his rich brogue, and the Irish humor with which he satirised the lecture. At this meeting William Simpson—"Crimean Simpson," of the *Illustrated London News*, who was as good an antiquary as he was an artist—was present and spoke. Some years afterwards, under the pen-name of Phandye, Simpson contributed to the *Secularist*, when under the conduct of Mr. Foote, an amusing skit, entitled "Is Myles McSweeney a Man, a God, or a Myth?" applying his own principles to resolve the living man into a solar hero. Myles was a good-humored man, and took the skit well. For his plainness of language about "Jasus and Mary," and what he considered the remnants of phallic worship in Christianity, he was regarded as coarse. Essentially he was not so. I well remember the fatherly way in which he advised me, while in my teens, to abstain from all indulgences and adopt the Stoic philosophy, which he not only held, but acted up to. For drawing my attention to the noble counsels of Antoninus and Epictetus I owe a debt of gratitude to this self-taught Irishman.

"Larn absthinince," he said, "afore ye thry motheration." His information was good and extensive, and it was at his tongue's tip. But two things he lacked that were essential to his studies—a sound knowledge of languages and philological evolution, and a knowledge of "primitive culture" and evolution. His mind was formed in the pre-Darwinian era. His writings in the *National Reformer* and *Secular Chronicle* are only valuable for their out-of-way information, which some other might shape to better purpose. The same criticism may be passed on a pamphlet on *Moses and Bacchus*, which he published, and which he intended to follow by *Biblical and Mythical Parallels*, which he compiled. An American, Mr. T. W. Doane, has since carried out this project in a way which reminds me of McSweeney's idea, which never received sufficient encouragement to obtain book form.

(The late) J. M. Wheeler.

Acid Drops.

Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace's death was bound to be the occasion of an orgy of hypocrisy in the English newspapers. First of all, they praised him beyond his merits as a biologist, in order to set him up as a "spiritual" rival of the "Agnostic" Darwin. The idea of his equality with Darwin never occurred to Dr. Wallace himself; first, because he was a very modest man,—secondly, because he knew better. He recognised and confessed that, although he had conceived the idea of the struggle for existence, natural selection, and the survival of the fittest, at the same time that Darwin did, he had not the qualities which Darwin displayed in working out that great idea of evolution and establishing it to the satisfaction of the scientific world, We do not hesitate to say, either, that Dr. Wallace could never have written—no other man could have written—that magnificent chapter in the *Descent of Man* in which Darwin presented with masterly power, and astonishing brevity—the whole case for the natural development of man from a lower form of life, and his natural development from the moment when he might be called man up to the highest intellectual, moral, and æsthetic culture of modern civilisation.

Wallace was a great and good man, but he was not a Darwin, and it is no use pretending that he was. He was always under the dominion of preconceptions. He wanted to find that the truth corresponded with his religious beliefs, and he repelled it when it presented itself in opposition to his prejudices. In the early stages he refused to accept Darwin's view of the origin of man. He gave way at last, but it was when he would have been almost a laughing-stock if he had held out any longer. When he wrote *Darwinism*, which is a most admirable statement of the evolution theory, he had to give his adherence to what he had resisted in the interest of his religious faith. "I fully accept Mr. Darwin's conclusions," he wrote, "as to the essential identity of man's bodily structure with that of the higher mammalia, and his descent from some ancestral form common to man and the anthropoid apes. The evidence of such descent appears to me to be overwhelming and conclusive." This was clear enough, but Dr. Wallace's opposition to Darwinism did not cease. He carried it on on other grounds.

It was admitted by Dr. Wallace that the tendency of Darwinism was to "the conclusion that man's entire nature and all his faculties, whether moral, intellectual, or spiritual, have been derived from their rudiments in the lower animals, in the same manner and by the action of the same general laws as his physical structure has been derived." But this was sheer Materialism; so Dr. Wallace set about searching for something to support his spiritualistic philosophy. He had to bring "the spirit world" in somewhere, and he had gone wrong before. His new theory was that it intervened at three stages; first, when life appeared; second, when consciousness began; third, when man became possessed of "a number of his most characteristic and noblest faculties." It was all very ingenious, but also very fantastic. Moreover, the "spirit world" was an arbitrary assumption. It was not what the scientists call a *vera causa*—a true or real cause. Natural Selection, on the other hand, *is a vera causa*. Darwin did not invent it; he pointed to it as a recognised power which was plainly seen in operation; what he did was to extend it over the whole range of organic existence,—including, if we may say so, man's head as well as his feet, and his loves and hatreds as well as his mouth and stomach.

From the nature of the case there could be no *disproofs* of Dr. Wallace's moonshine theories of human evolution; but also, from the nature of the case, there could be no *proofs*. He was simply gratifying his own religious emotions. And he went on doing that to the end of the chapter. His arguments about this world being the centre of the visible universe, and the only one that could be inhabited, etc., did not convince the experts in astronomy or any other science; although they mightily pleased the champions of all forms of Christianity, which, whatever they differ about, agree at least in this, that man ("proud man" "most ignorant of what he's most assured") is the end and crown of creation.

Dr. Wallace was a god-send to the Christian theologians. They made the most of him; indeed, they made too much of him. For he was not with them, after all. He rejected all their doctrines, and, as far as we can see, their God.

Dr. Wallace's funeral was another outrage added to the long list of body-snatching performances by Christian

Churches. The Bishop of Salisbury officiated at the service. But that was not enough. Rev. James Marchant (of all men!) was brought in to speak "the final words at the interment." We suggest that both these men of God should read the passage in Dr. Wallace's *Autobiography* in which he refers to the good that might have been done if the pulpits of England had, for the past hundred years, been devoted to useful secular subjects instead of to endless sermons on one monotonous topic. Besides, we repeat, Dr. Wallace was not a Christian, nor even a Theist, in the ordinary sense of the word.

We wish to pay a tribute to Dr. Wallace's simple and beautiful character. He always had the welfare of humanity at heart. His later sociological writings were sometimes self-contradictory, but they were animated by a high and noble spirit. It was elevating to come into contact with such a nature.

"God's Word has been translated into 500 languages and dialects," said the ex-Bishop of Tinnevelu, speaking at Southend-on-Sea. South Sea Islanders and Esquimaux must have quaint notions of the European "God" after reading of Ezekiel's celebrated banquet in the vernacular.

"God has so made the British Empire that it cannot be destroyed except by ourselves," says Mr. Norman Angell. Is John Bull to be the next deity?

The Bishop of Ripon has been presented with a pastoral staff which cost over £200. The "sheep" subscribed the amount.

"There is much less preaching of 'hell-fire' than there was," admits the Rev. John Collins, of Edgware, to a *Christian Globe* interviewer. An unsolicited testimonial to the work of the *Freethinker*.

When a Church of England candidate presents himself for ordination as deacon he must declare his "unfeigned belief in all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments." This formula has been altered in the case of priests, and in the Lower House of Convocation an attempt was made to alter this also. The motion was defeated, so that the deacons will have to go on making false declarations, or the office will be limited to such as are silly enough to be telling the truth. The *Guardian* thinks that some way should be found by which the burden of conscience would be removed, and at the same time "the supremacy of Holy Scripture as the revelation of God and the final test of Christian truth" maintained. To one who isn't a theologian this looks very much like finding a plan whereby a man may swear to a lie while persuading himself it's the solemn truth.

We agree with Bishop Boyd Carpenter that the best protection against "evil publications" is a widespread, healthy public opinion. But we do not agree that this is being created, or is likely to be created, by the various religious bodies that exist for that purpose, or by the sermons of more or less prurient-minded parsons. We need not bother about the very obvious advertising of certain books given by these agitators, nor the equally obvious fact that ninety-nine per cent. of these self-constituted censors are totally unfitted by nature and education to tell a good book from a bad one. Their notion of literature is the Sunday-school tract, with a dash of Marie Corelli or Hall Caine. A greater evil of these societies for the suppression of undesirable books is that they do not suppress. Very largely they pander to the notion of obscenity, much as as a lecture on "Sex" to "men only" does. This disguised pruriency forms half the attraction of the propaganda. And they certainly do nothing to create a taste for healthy literature. You can't preach a healthy public opinion into existence, and you can't preach an unhealthy one out of existence. That is the long and the short of the whole matter. An unhealthy public opinion is not the result of bad literature being in existence, it is to a much greater extent its cause.

One of the speakers at the meeting deplored the sale of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, and said that it should only be permitted circulation in the original. How a book that is bad in English can become good in Italian is rather more than we can understand. This speaker said he quite agreed with a writer in the *Times* who said that the *Decameron* was "a thoroughly immoral book, and Boccaccio well knew it was immoral when he wrote it." The *Times* ought to have known better than to have printed such rubbish. The *Decameron* is one of the masterpieces of Renaissance literature, and is, as a matter of fact, a vast improvement in moral tone on much of the literature that preceded it and surrounded it. The licence it reflects is the licence of its day, and that belonged to a society that had been Christian for centuries, and in which the Christian Church was all-powerful. Anyway, we heartily pity the poor devil who can't read the *Decameron* without getting his morals corrupted. We should hesitate in leaving him alone with any female for whom we had regard.

In a religious contemporary we notice bold advertisements informing the readers how to make their fortunes from oil shares; how to avoid baldness; many patent medicine puffs, and several columns of fiction. That editor knows his public.

The *Daily Chronicle* tells us that Irish priests receive many gifts in kind from their people. So do the gentlemen in the same line of business on the Gold Coast.

Winds of God is the title of a new novel. A chilly subject.

The Bishop of London is convinced that "there is nothing like personal service among the poor to break down a man's disbelief and to lead him to adopt the Christian faith." If his Lordship turned the handle of a mangle for a year it would not prove that the whale swallowed Jonah—nor even that Jeshua of Nazareth rose from the dead.

Dr. Clifford has been helping a united mission in Paddington, and reports the results in the usual high-flown evangelistic style. The mission achieved the remarkable result of getting Christians of various denominations to work together—really a remarkable result considering all we hear about Christian love and brotherhood All the preachers had a good time, but when one looks for the important thing, a different note is struck. How many non-Christians were converted? None are reported, so we may safely assume none were caught. Dr. Clifford says that the outsider "has not been brought within our ecclesiastical edifices to the extent we had hoped. The hoary prejudice against the Churches is still operative." This is only Dr. Clifford's "slim" way of stating an unpleasant (to him) truth. Nearly every house in the district was visited, and the result has been—nothing. It is not a prejudice against the Churches that Dr. Clifford has to fight, it is unbelief in Christianity.

We are getting on. A candidate in the Manchester municipal election received, and published, a letter from Mr. Harry Lauder, strongly commending his candidature. The candidate was successful, too. Some time ago one of our daily papers consulted Mr. Lauder on the question of the number of battleships we ought to have. Now he issues commendatory letters to candidates for public office. The democracy should be grateful to Mr. Lauder. So far as we know, his sole qualifications are that he sings Scotch songs and draws more than a Scotch salary.

Dean Ring (Roman Catholic) has been complaining that in several Protestant wills lately it has been stipulated that any of the beneficiaries who embrace Roman Catholicism shall forfeit their legacies. Dean Ring regards this as an unjustifiable interference with liberty of conscience, and we agree with him that it is so. Only wills of a similar character are made on the Catholic side, and then it is left for Protestants to complain. The truth of the matter is that no Christian—Catholic or Protestant—really believes in a genuine liberty of conscience. He will place unfair obstacles to mental freedom while he is alive, and, if possible, after he is dead. Dean Ring asks whether Protestantism is so bankrupt in logic and reason as to require the support of penal enactments? We have often asked the same question; but so far as Dean Ring is concerned, we would remind him to look at Catholic Spain, and see what occurs there. And we have not heard of any vigorous protests against the Blasphemy Laws that exist in England. As a matter of fact, Christianity has always been propped up by the law, and with the full consent of all classes of Christians.

When one comes to look at the matter closely, making a legacy depend upon a certain profession is a superb piece of irony. It is putting a cash value on religious conviction. The dying man says, in effect, "Being Christians, my family are not likely to change their opinions if it means a loss of money." And events prove that he is usually right. Henri IV. said that Paris was well worth the price of a mass. The modern Christian says, in the same way, a good legacy is well worth a profession of religion.

Mr. Bernard Shaw says that his plays are performed in Germany "with the assistance of the Emperor, and the Imperial City, in a magnificent theatre, which is free of rent, and magnificently subsidised." This is quite a striking testimonial to the revolutionary character of Mr. Shaw's work.

"The entire social order of England as we have it at present is anti-Christian." This was one of the remarks made by Mr. Bernard Shaw at the City Temple, before an audience—to quote the *Christian Commonwealth*—"better prepared than any other audience in England to understand his message." This was one of the remarks that attracted great attention, and one would like to ask "When was there any social order genuinely Christian?" Let Mr. Shaw and his City Temple audience read their New Testament carefully and see if they can detect there even the framework of a social order that would be likely to endure for a single twelvemonth. As a matter of fact, the establishment of a social order of any kind was the last thing the New Testament writers had in their minds. They had rules for a select company of believers, but none for a general body of citizens of all tastes and capacities and opinions. How little they had the establishment of a social order in mind is shown by their striking neglect of family life. The need of a social order is not really Christianity's message. This has been forced upon Christian preachers by the march of events—much as Mr. Shaw himself has been forced upon a City Temple audience.

"If I had a neurotic daughter," Mr. Bernard Shaw writes to the *Times*, "I would rather risk taking her to the Palace Theatre than to a revival meeting." This will not sound strange to many of our readers who recollect some of Mr. Cohen's articles on sex and religion. "Nobody," Mr. Shaw adds, "has yet counted the homes and characters wrecked by intemperance in religious emotion." If such statistics were kept the chapel might find its attitude of moral superiority to the theatre "and even to the public-house" difficult to maintain.

That fatuous person, the Bishop of London, volunteers to "accept Mr. Shaw's challenge." Three hundred years ago he would have got Mr. Shaw sent out of the world with a solution of continuity between his shoulders and his ears, or dangling at the end of a rope. But the challenge cannot be accepted in that way nowadays. "I summon the Christian forces of London to my aid," he cries, "and I gladly take up the glove which is thrown down." Yes, but *how* does he take it up? Is he going to trust to his own natural faculties in an intellectual duel with "G. B. S."? We pity him if he is. We fancy, however, that he knows a game worth two (or twenty) of that. He boasts of having put down the living statue business some twenty years ago. Did he? We doubt it. Fashions in the "nude" change as in everything else. Besides, if it comes to that, one might ask the Bishop how much of the anatomy of "the Savior" is left to imagination as he hangs upon the cross.

Reynolds' published a snapshot of "Gaby Deslys off to America." We did not see Waldron in the group. What was the matter?

M. Pierre Loti bears a dignified attitude towards the Bulgarian bully who announced that he was coming to France to challenge the great French writer for stating the truth about the horrors of the war waged against the Turks by the Balkan (Christian) Allies. M. Loti kept silence until so many of his friends offered to accept the challenge for him—he himself being retired from the French naval service and over sixty years of age. He feels bound to speak publicly now. He begs his friends to let the Bulgarian challenger alone. "I am conscious," he says, "of having fulfilled a sacred duty in availing myself of the notoriety of my name to establish the true role during the war of the calumniated Turks and the so-called Christian allies. I confined myself to saying without hatred what I had seen, and especially to reproducing, after verification, more overwhelming testimony, which has since acquired the value of historic documents." M. Loti says that he did justice to the indisputable courage of Bulgarian officers. But it is necessary to discriminate. "Military courage," he continues, "is only truly sublime in the case of civilised men whose pity, whose very nerves, revolt against the necessity of wounds and blood; but in the case of the sanguinary soldiers, delighting afterwards in mutilating their prisoners, in having their hands red with blood, courage loses its value, and approximates closely to that of the mad bull in the ring."

Mr. J. M. Robertson, as President of the Rationalist Peace Society, delivered an address at Caxton Hall on Monday evening. The suffragettes paid him a visit there in order to show how little they cared for peace, reason, or anything else except their own object. They insisted on being ejected, and Peace and Rationalism were left in possession of the field.

Another mere man has tried the hunger-strike. It was Mr. James Byrne, of the Irish Transport Workers' Union. He was awaiting trial on a charge connected with the Dublin strike. He had a handsome public funeral. But he had better have kept alive. It is sometimes harder to live and fight for a cause than to die for it. His act was ill-advised—but he had the courage of his own convictions, and we take off our hat to his memory.

Annie Winifred Holman, of Bournemouth, three years of age, daughter of a licensed victualler, said her prayers one night and then slipped off the bed on the back of her head, and died soon afterwards. The jury returned a verdict of Accidental Death. But what was "Providence" doing?

In the recently published book, *Shelley, Godwin, and their Circle*, by Mr. H. N. Brailsford, the author refers to "Tom" Paine, but he never once makes the mistake of writing "Bill" Godwin.

"To grow to full stature we must imitate Christ," says a writer in a pious contemporary. Recruiting sergeants will find this recipe useful in dealing with undersized clients.

"Materialism is the danger of the age," says the Earl of Selborne. Yet the dear clergy are always informing us that Materialism is dead—though nobody ever heard of its funeral.

Undertakers' men have threatened to strike at Liverpool, and coffin-makers have promised to join them. We foresee a risk of the dead "speaking."

The Rt. Hon. H. H. Asquith, speaking at the Queen's Hall, London, last week, at a meeting in connection with the Cavendish Association, said "there was no evidence to show that Christian ideals had grown less powerful or more dim." Maybe! But they are not as fashionable as they used to be.

The Dean of Rochester has been advising girls to "never read novels in the morning." Does he include the Bible?

Bishop Boyd Carpenter, presiding at a conference of publishers, editors, newsagents, and librarians, at the Guildhall, London, recently, said a Government measure was in preparation regarding objectionable publications. Will the Old Testament be included?

In the latest report of the British and Foreign Bible Society, just issued, there is no mention of the success of the version of "God's Word" in the cannibal dialect, which was advertised some years ago. Have the cannibals eaten each other? Or have they eaten the missionaries?

Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Adams, of Newton Longville, Bletchley, celebrated their diamond wedding on Nov. 6. The old gentleman has twenty-nine grandchildren, and he presented them with Bibles in honor of the event. Their religious education must have been very much neglected to make such a present desirable. For you can't realise on a Bible if you get hard up.

Father Bernard Vaughan deplores the apathy of Catholics in the matter of charity. There were only about a hundred present at the Catholic United Charities' sale of work which he opened in London recently. Yet there were from seven to eight million people living in Greater London. It was shameful. Father Vaughan said he felt his heart bleeding. He could go away in tears. But why on earth doesn't he think a little instead of jawing so much? Giving to the poor, as the Bible says, is lending to the Lord. Why then don't the rich Catholics shell out? Why do they neglect such a good investment? Is it (we ask with fear and trembling) that they mistrust the security?

Father Vaughan looks very like a failure. He has been trying to raise the birth-rate in England for years—and still it goes down. He should turn his attention to something else.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

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

To Correspondents.

President's Honorarium Fund, 1913.—Previously acknowledged, £244 11s. 1d. Received since:—H. Good, 6s.; C. Heaton, 5s.; Dovre, £2 2s.; H. Boll, 5s.; Pretoria Freethinker, 10s.; Robert Stirton and Friends, Dundee (quarterly), £1 4s.

C. Heaton.—Glad you still find the *Freethinker* both instructive and entertaining. The circular you refer to *is* "all right."

J. T. Lloyd.—You will see it was lucky that you wrote. We wish you first-rate audiences at Glasgow and freedom from the colds that are oftener caught in trains than got rid of there.

M. Clark.—Pleased to hear from a twenty years' reader.

G. Brady.—Thanks for your kind reply; also for the *Freethinker* volumes on the way.

J. B. Irvine.—You have a legal right to withdraw your child from religious instruction in any elementary public school. In regard to private schools you have no legal right, but an arrangement is generally possible nowadays between parents and principals.

F. H. Copland.—Passed over to shop manager. Sorry the paper has not reached you lately. It has been sent regularly from our office. Will you make inquiries at your own end?

H. Boll.—Thanks for good wishes with subscription.

R. Stirton.—Glad your list is "on the up grade again." Accept our thanks for your generous service in the matter.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

The National Secular Society's office is at 2 Newcastle-street, Farringdon-street, E.C.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote lectures in London for the first time since his illness on the first Sunday in December at the Queen's (Minor) Hall. He will occupy the same platform on the following Sunday. He is devoting his time mainly to literary work at present, of which his friends will hear more in due course.

Mr. Lloyd lectures at Glasgow to-day (Nov. 16). Particulars of time and place will be found among "Lecture Notices." We do not know the subjects, as we have received no notice from Glasgow this week, but on any subjects Mr. Lloyd will be interesting and informing.

We beg to call our readers' attention again to the old pamphlet by Charles Bradlaugh on Compulsory Cultivation of the Land. It shows how far Mr. Lloyd George was anticipated by the wicked "Iconoclast." Admirers of Bradlaugh should order a copy of this pamphlet. They will find it very interesting from the personal point of view. Order of the Pioneer Press and send threepence-halfpenny.

We are trying to do the Rev. Joseph Hocking a good turn by supplying him with a little information, which he needs very badly. He told a London audience last week that Bradlaugh was dead, and Atheism was dead, and "There was not a man to stand up and proclaim a Godless life to-day." We beg pardon for correcting so great a man, but there are scores of Atheist speakers to-day. He might also find that a paper called the *Freethinker* publishes Atheism for thousands of readers every week. The *Clarion* publishes the same sort of thing, and only kicks at the *word* Atheism.

Ingersoll on Oratory.

"What advice would you give to a young man who was ambitious to become a successful public speaker or orator?"

"In the first place," said Colonel Ingersoll, "I would advise him to have something to say—something worth saying—something that people would be glad to hear. This is the important thing. Back of the art of speaking must be the power to think. Without thoughts words are empty purses. Most people imagine that almost any words uttered in a loud voice and accompanied by appropriate gestures constitute an oration. I would advise the young man to study his subject, to find what others had thought, to look at it from all sides. Then I would tell him to write out his thoughts, or to arrange them in his mind, so that he would know exactly what he was going to say. Waste no time on the how until you are satisfied with the what. After you know what you are to say, then you can think of how it should be said. Then you can think about tone, emphasis, and gesture; but if you really understand what you say, emphasis, tone, and gesture will take care of themselves. All these should come from the inside. They should be in perfect harmony with the feelings. Voice and gesture should be governed by the emotions. They should unconsciously be in perfect agreement with the sentiments. The orator should be true to his subject, should avoid any reference to himself.

"The great column of his argument should be unbroken. He can adorn it with vines and flowers, but they should not be in such profusion as to hide the column. He should give variety of episode by illustrations, but they should be used only for the purpose of adding strength to the argument. The man who wishes to become an orator should study language. He should know the deeper meaning of words. He should understand the vigor and velocity of verbs and the color of adjectives. He should know how to sketch a scene, to paint a picture, to give life and action. He should be a poet and a dramatist, a painter and an actor. He should cultivate his imagination. He should become familiar with the great poetry and fiction, with splendid and heroic deeds. He should be a student of Shakespeare. He should read and devour the great plays. From Shakespeare he could learn the art of expression, of compression, and all the secrets of the head and heart.

"The great orator is full of variety—of surprises. Like a juggler, he keeps the colored balls in the air. He expresses himself in pictures. His speech is a panorama. By continued change he holds the attention. The interest does not flag. He does not allow himself to be anticipated. He is always in advance. He does not repeat himself. A picture is shown but once. So an orator should avoid the commonplace. There should be no stuffing, no filling. He should put no cotton with his silk, no common metals with his gold. He should remember that 'gilded dust is not as good as dusted gold.' The great orator is honest, sincere. He does not pretend. His brain and heart go together. Every drop of his blood is convinced. Nothing is forced. He knows exactly what he wishes to do—knows when he has finished it, and stops.

"Only a great orator knows when and how to close. Most speakers go on after they are through. They are satisfied only with a lame and impotent conclusion. Most speakers lack variety. They travel a straight and dusty road. The great orator is full of episode. He convinces and charms by indirection. He leaves the roads, visits the fields, wanders in the woods, listens to the murmurs of springs, the song of birds. He gathers flowers, scales the crags, and comes back to the highway refreshed and invigorated. He does not move in a straight line. He wanders and winds like a stream.

"Of course, no one can tell a man what to do to become an orator. The great orator has that wonderful thing called presence. He has the strange something known as magnetism. He must have a flexible, musical voice, capable of expressing the pathetic, the humorous, the heroic. His body must move in unison with his thought. He must be a reasoner, a logician. He must have a keen sense of humor—of the laughable. He must have wit, sharp and quick. He must have sympathy. His smiles should be the neighbors of his tears. He must have imagination. He should give eagles to the air, and painted moths should flutter in the sunlight.

"While I cannot tell a man what to do to become an orator, I can tell him a few things not to do. There should be no introduction to an oration. The orator should commence with his subject. There should be no prelude, no flourish, no apology, no explanation. He should say nothing about himself. Like a sculptor, he stands by his block of stone. Every stroke is for a purpose. As he works the form begins to appear. When the statue is finished the workman stops.

(*To be concluded.*)

Gustave Courbet: Realist.

TIME is the great vindicator of all things. High and low, great and small, all must submit to her final ruling. You cannot escape her. Pæans of praise and crowns of laurels may be yours; torrents of abuse and the marks of insult may be another's. But Time alone can adjust these rights and wrongs. The poet Shelley, during his life and after, suffered all this abuse and insult. And so with the musician Wagner, and the painter Courbet. These great geniuses had to bear the vicious onslaught of those utter mediocrities, the puritans of art and society. It is the lot of everyone, as Murger says in *La Bohême*, who "dares to harness audacity to their talent." The audacity of Shelley, Wagner, and Courbet consisted in holding to, and practising, something more than the fatuous screed of "Art for Art's sake." They preferred the higher doctrine of "Art for Life's sake."

Shelley is one of the world's great poets; but he was an Atheist and a Republican, and he said so. It took the world half a century to get over his saying so. Wagner is one of the world's great musicians; but he was a Freethinker, a State-banned rebel, and a disturber of conventional art. It took the world almost as long to forgive him his heresies. Courbet is among the world's great painters (although not yet recognised); but he was an Atheist, an Anarchist, and a rebel in art, and although thirty years have passed since his death, yet abuse and insult still cling to his name. But Time's judgment is near at hand. Perhaps her voice may even now be heard.

I.

Last year a book was published, entitled *Gustave Courbet*, by Leonce Benedite. It is the first and only book in English on this great master. The author is a State curator—*i.e.*, an "official"—and I suppose that is why the old abuse and insult has still to be maintained against the artist. But more of this presently. This year we have a work by one of our own art *littérateurs*—Sir Frederick Wedmore—entitled *Painters and Painting*, which contains a great pronouncement upon our subject. Courbet is here considered "a very giant of painting," and "the greatest master of *la bonne peinture*." It is surely the first words of Time's vindication.

II.

Courbet began his career in a revolution, and finished it in one. He came to Paris in 1839, at the age of twenty, to study law; but he soon abandoned books and briefs for the brush and palette. At twenty-two he was actually a painter. Two years later he exhibited, and won recognition with his *Courbet with the Black Dog*. It was the first "blow struck for realism," as he himself would say. The stormy days of '48 came, and with the triumph of the political rebels arose the success of the art rebels—the Romanticists. Courbet was with them in their revolt against "official art"; but he was naturally, as a realist, poles asunder from them in their conception of art. As he said in 1855, "I have not imitated the old, nor copied the new. I have simply sought to nurture my own intelligent and independent individuality." And thus it was that, in 1849, when his *After Dinner at Ornaus* flashed upon the world of art, that both the arch-Romanticist, Delacroix, and the arch-Classicist, Ingres, looked with disfavor upon the work.

Whatever critics may attempt in classifying Courbet's art, we must remember that he himself wished to be called a "realist," believing, as he did, that "in pictorial design just as in literature, reality, the thing seen, and the emotion felt or witnessed or divined, must be the basis of the performance that is to last." Courbet's "realism" was, then, *the thing seen*. His art was based upon synthesis, not upon analysis. It was not the object in precise detail, but the object under the artist's sense of feeling, distance, movement, atmosphere, as he really *saw* it. That is what Courbet considered Truth in Art.

In judging art or literature, it is always interesting to seek the personality that is bound up causally with it. Courbet was an inherent rebel. His "rebellion" was part and parcel of his physical structure. No one who has ever seen his portrait could doubt that. It moulded not only his personal character, but his art also. His "realism" was nothing if not the result of sheer physiological necessity. Just as he was forced, by the very nature of his being, to take a stand for truth in art, so he was impelled towards truth in life. As a "realist," his view of the riddle of the universe led him to Atheism. As a "realist," his view of society led him to Anarchism. It was the one immutable physical law all round—necessity.

Few artists, not even Manet, have been subjected to such a vocabulary of abuse as Courbet and his realism. But the truth is, he had something more than mere art opposition to contend with. There were political and clerical enemies that worked behind the scenes; for Courbet was not content with holding the tenets of Anarchism and Atheism, but he must preach them, and, what is more, practise them. Courbet was a friend and disciple of Proudhon, the author of *What is Property?* They first met in 1848, and some years later collaborated in a work entitled *The Principles of Art, and its Social Purpose*. From the days of '48 to 1871, Courbet was an *habitué* of the revolutionary groups, and ever voicing the necessity for the "social revolution." This gave umbrage to the "respectable" folk. It is worthy of note that among his portraits are those of the rebels *Henri Rochefort*, *Jules Vallès*, and *Cluseret*, as well as *Proudhon and his Family*. There can be no doubt that many of his detractors were influenced more on account of his social and religious heresies than his art heresies. His "respectable" friends were continually urging him to keep solely to his art. It was either Baudelaire or Champfleury who said to Courbet one day: "You are talking too much and painting too little." To which Courbet replied: "Here's another fellow who has sold himself to the government!"

Courbet believed, as may be judged from his book just referred to, in a social purpose in art, both in the didactic and subjective sense, such as attracted G. F. Watts, and in the concrete and objective, which was the mission of William Morris. How much of the former he expressed in his works, we have subjects only to guide us, although Proudhon read a social moral in them all. Courbet loved "the people," and some of his finest studies are taken from them, which seems to bear out Mazzini's idea that the power of genius was strengthened by the sense of social aim. *The Stonebreakers*, *The Poor of the Village*, *The Beggar's Charity*, *Peasants of Flagey*, and *Haymakers Nooning* belong to this class. One of these, *The Beggar's Charity*, will one day be considered among the greatest creations of the painter of Ornans, although it is scarcely ever mentioned. *The Stonebreakers* has figures lifesize, and you can almost feel the heavy toil. Proudhon called it "morality in action." One critic, attempting a sneer at the artist's creed, said it would make an excellent altar-piece in a church for Agnostics.

Courbet extended his humanity even to animals. Look at the dogs in *At Bay* (in the Louvre), hesitating between the antlers of the wounded stag and the huntsman's whip. I think it was Max Nordau who said that Courbet gave his animals souls. Another canvas of "pity" is *Run Down in the Snow*, where you see the poor hunted doe at the end of the chase, panting and helpless in the snow. He painted a good number of these subjects—*The Fox Hunt*, *Dogs and the Hare*, *The Quarry*, *The Hunter by Water*; and humanitarians will always reverence Courbet for them.

Over Courbet's studies from "the people" the critics had stormed and raved with such phrases as "painting dirt," "brutalising art," "reasoned ugliness," etc. They could scarcely adopt this language with his animal subjects; so they tried another tack. One critic defied the painter to specify the breed of his dogs. Edmond About was in great humor at the way Courbet's huntsmen held the horn. Maxime du Camp asked the artist if he was aware that hunting in the snow had been prohibited since 1844, and ended by saying: "It is of no great matter, but I understood that the realist only painted what he saw." And this was the stuff that passed for criticism, and the public accepted it as such. How foolish it all was, even in fact. We can now read in a letter of Courbet's (1858) where he actually relates his experience in following a chase over the countryside up to his thighs in snow. As for About's humor over the horn, Courbet was right. The *cor de chasse* is held as he depicts it. Of course, About had most likely only seen the *cor chromatique*, and imagined they were both held alike.

In 1863 Courbet produced a work entitled *The Return from the Conference*, which exasperated the critics more than ever, on account of its satire upon priests. Courbet, as I have said, was an Atheist, and an anti-clerical to boot.[*] He used to boast that he was "the pre-appointed historian of the priests," whom he hated. As early as 1850 his *Funeral at Ornans*, which Sir Frederick Wedmore considers "one of the great pictures of the world," gave offence by reason of its caricature of officials and priests. Chennevieres called it "impious." Gautier said the faces reminded him of a menagerie. But this work was respectability itself beside the *Return from the Conference*. Courbet was quite prepared for an "uproar" with this picture, and he got it. The *Salon* indignantly refused it as "an outrage on religion and morality," and even the *Salon des Réfuses* wouldn't touch it. Proudhon, of course, gave his benediction. He called it "an inevitable reaction of Nature against the Ideal." The picture represents several *curés* returning home from a conference. They have all dined well, if not wisely; and one, more tipsy than the rest, is astride a donkey, supported very indifferently by two others, who have also had more than sufficient of "the mellow." There are some half-dozen of these precious soul-savers, and a delicious piece of study they make. A peasant standing by is convulsed with laughter, though his wife, out of sheer habit, is on her knees in reverence.

On the refusal of the picture by the *salons*, Courbet threw his house open for the public to view it, and determined to paint companion pictures, one of which was to be *La Coucher de la Conférence*. Champfleury then wrote to Buchon (both friends of Courbet):—

> "Courbet has been telling Saint Beuve that he is going to paint another picture of the priests......He is making a great mistake......Whatever he may say—*The Return from the Conference* was a great setback. ......In Heaven's name keep him from symbolism and satire."

Well, it seems that friends finally dissuaded Courbet from his project, although *La Coucher* was not altogether forgotten, as it appeared in a series of vignettes in a pamphlet entitled *Les Curés en goguette*, published at Brussels in 1868. Champfleury uses a mild word when he says *The Return* was a "setback." It might have been that then, but the clericals bore that picture in mind when they took their revenge upon Courbet at the suppression of the Commune.

III.

Of Courbet's connection with the Paris Commune of 1871, M. Benedite, in his recent book, has repeated the old jargon about the Vendôme Column. Courbet, as is well known, took a prominent part in the Commune, and during its brief *régime* the well-known Vendôme Column was destroyed. Courbet has been charged with being the chief instigator of its destruction, and history has laid the sole blame upon him. M. Benedite says that Courbet had recommended its destruction even in the days of the Government of National Defence. This is not true. Courbet did not recommend its *destruction*, but suggested its *removal* to the Esplanade des Invalides. Its destruction had certainly been advocated, not by Courbet, but by no less a person than Auguste Comte, and a certain member of the government that afterwards sent Courbet to prison for "vandalism"—Ernest Picard. The decree for the demolition of the column was passed by the Communal Council on April 12, and as Courbet was not elected to the Council till April 16, he could not take any active part in the decrees. M. Benedite says further that Courbet "urged" the Commune to carry out the project. When and where was this urging? I have read every line of the sittings of the Commune in its *Journal Officiel*, but have seen nothing of this save one instance, which, M. Benedite must know, Courbet disclaimed.

Of course, this story has served for forty years an excellent purpose for all Courbet's art detractors, to say nothing of political and clerical enemies. But surely it is high time that we inquired a little further than from these. However, right or wrong, Courbet paid the penalty in full during his life. Arrested and tried by the Courts-Martial, he was sentenced to six months' imprisonment and a fine. That was not all. He was made a social outlaw, and his name and pictures were spat upon. In 1872, when he sent his picture *Le Femme de Munich* to the Salon, the jury rejected it, one of them—Messonier—saying they would not even look at it. "It is not a question of Art," he said, "but one of dignity." At Ornans, his native town, the municipal council actually removed his statue, a gift, of the *Pêcheur de Chavots* from the Iles-Basses fountain.

The heaviest blow came the following year, when the Chamber voted for the reconstruction of the Vendôme Column, and mulcted Courbet in its cost, over three hundred thousand francs. Poor Courbet fled to Switzerland, thinking to evade this cruel demand. But his property at Ornans and Paris was seized. The Prussians had already destroyed his studio at the former, and now the State despoiled his two in Paris. Pictures entrusted or lent to friends were seized, valuables and moneys at banks, all were impounded. And so Courbet went into exile, and in the little republic of the canton of de Vaud he found not only shelter but honor. But his art days were over. In November, 1877, came the news of the sale of his pictures, and they had gone for a pittance. A month later "amnesty" came, not from France, but from one who gave peace as well as pardon—Death!

IV.

Courbet's *chef d'œuvre* now hangs in the Louvre. It is called *The Wave*, and this is what Sir Frederick Wedmore says of it:—Courbet's "noble painting," says the writer, "is a new thing in painting: a piece than which no sea-piece by Turner or by Constable, by Cotman or by Boudin, can possibly be more expressive. Again it must be said quite plainly, *The Wave* is one of the world's masterpieces."

H. GEORGE FARMER.

Pioneers of Physiology.—II.

(*Concluded from p. 716.*)

As we have seen, Vesalius established modern anatomical science on a purely inductive basis. Some of his conclusions were criticised, and in a few instances corrected, by his disciples; but these amendments were made in terms of observation and experiment. The truth was in each instance ascertained, not by an appeal to the written word of Galen or Vesalius, but by a further study of the facts themselves. Thus was the road made clearer for the even greater revolution which William Harvey was destined to accomplish.

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[*] Among his most intimate friends, who were all militant Freethinkers, was Hippolyte Barnout, a well-known architect, editor of *The Atheist*, a Freethought journal of the 'sixties and 'seventies.

Had the physician Michael Servetus devoted less attention to the barren fields of theology, and more attention to the productive pastures of science, his services to civilisation would have been far greater than they were. An early suspect, he was compelled to flee from Spain in order to escape the clutches of the Inquisition. He studied astronomy, geography, jurisprudence, meteorology, in turn, and strove to pierce the secrets of God through a knowledge of the human frame.

> "To know, said he, the spirit of God, we must know the spirit of man; and to truly know the spirit of man, we must know the structure and working of the body in which the spirit resides."

To this end he studied the human body, and passages in his *Restitutio* prove that he was well on the road towards an understanding of the true processes of the circulation of the blood. But his career was destined to be a short one. The father of Unitarianism refused to recant his anti-Trinitarian heresies, and was burnt alive by the command of that unbending upholder of the right of private judgment, John Calvin, at Geneva in 1553.

> "With him, or at the same time, there was burnt the whole edition of 1,000 copies of his book, the *Restitutio*, with the exception of some copies that had passed into the hands of friends."

Servetus was a martyr to the twin causes of Science and Freethought; but however much the enemies of enlightenment obstruct the paths of progress, they have never yet succeeded in permanently arresting the advance of the human spirit. At the time of Servetus' tragic death, Gabrielus Falloppius was teaching anatomy from the chair of his noble and approved good master, Vesalius, at Padua. The Falloppian tubes and the Falloppian canal perpetuate his name. But he made no particularly important contributions to the progress of physiology, and it is with the epoch-making demonstration of the processes of the blood that the remainder of this article is mainly concerned.

A more important link in the chain of physiological evolution is represented by another pupil of Vesalius—Realdus Columbus, the man who opposed, and as some think betrayed, his master. There seems little room for doubt that Columbus stole, and stole without the slightest compunction, not only from Vesalius, but from Servetus also. His posthumous work, *De Re Anatomica*, was modelled on Vesalius' *Fabrica*.

> "The frontispiece even, is a bad imitation of Vesalius' frontispiece, and the work ends as does Vesalius' with a chapter on vivisection, the one being little more than a varied repetition of the other."

His indebtedness to Servetus is plainly proved by the fact that in describing the pulmonary circulation, Columbus practically repeats the Spanish physician's statements.

Nevertheless, it is only just to remember that Columbus described, and correctly described, the pulmonary circulation. And he showed that all the blood vessels were filled with that ruddy liquid, and that the spirits and vapors with which the vitalists of that day peopled the arteries were entirely mythical.

A further advance was made by Caesalpinus of Pisa towards the solution of the blood's circulation. He discovered that—

> "the heart, at its systole, discharges it contents into the aorta (and pulmonary artery), and at its diastole receives blood from the vena cava (and pulmonary vein)."

Although the valves of the veins appear to have been known to earlier inquirers, Fabricius, a pupil of Falloppius, was the first to explain their structure. He clearly recognised that the valves of the veins, while in no way obstructing the flow of the venous blood towards the heart, would offer serious opposition to the flowing of blood from the heart. But Fabricius was too much under the influence of traditional doctrines to fully appreciate the true meaning of his discovery. He regarded the valves as regulating organs merely, and compares them with the mechanical appliances with which water is dammed up for future use.

It was reserved to William Harvey to gather together into one harmonic whole the discoveries of Fabricius and his forerunners, and to reveal to the world the real mechanism of the circulatory system which forms the foundation of modern physiology.

Harvey was born at Folkestone in 1578. His father was a yeoman, and his brothers were successful merchants in London City. After taking his Arts degree at Cambridge in 1579, he proceeded to Italy to study medicine under the celebrated Fabricius at Padua. In 1602 he received the Paduan degree of Doctor of Medicine, and returned to England in the same year.

Settling in London, he soon joined the Royal College of Physicians, and was appointed Physician to St. Bartholomew's Hospital in 1608. Six years later he commenced his famous lectures on Anatomy at the College of Physicians, in which he propounded his theories concerning the heart and the blood. His written work, however, the *Exercitatio*, was not published until 1628.

Harvey's growing fame increased his medical practice, and he numbered Francis Bacon and the Earl of Arundel among his patients. He accompanied the latter on his embassy to Ferdinand II., and sometimes caused his patron considerable anxiety for his safety. Harvey wandered far in search of objects of natural history in a country overrun by robbers, who had been made what they were by the Thirty Years' War of religion. The country had been reduced to such a sorry state that Harvey tells us in a letter written at the time that—

> "By the way, we could scarce see a dogg, crow, kite, raven, or any bird, or anything to anatomise; only sum few miserable people, the reliques of the war and the plague whom famine had made anatomies before I came."

This, however, was not Harvey's only experience of the dire disasters of war. Physician to Charles I., he was naturally a cavalier, and was consequently regarded with disfavor by the Parliamentary Party. It appears that during the Civil War, "his lodgings at Whitehall were searched and not only the furniture seized but also invaluable manuscripts and anatomical preparations." To this exasperating destruction of precious scientific material, the poet Cowley thus refers:—

> "O cursed war! who can forgive thee this?
> Houses and towns may rise again,
> And ten times easier 'tis
> To rebuild Paul's than any work of his."

When Harvey first set his mind to master the motions and uses of the heart, the perplexities of the problem were so hard to overcome that he was inclined to abandon his search as hopeless. But patient study at last showed him that—

> "the motion of the heart consists in a certain universal tension......that when the heart contracts it is emptied, that the motion which is in general regarded as the diastole of the heart is in truth its systole."

Stated in other words, the heart throbs, not when it sucks blood in, but when it drives blood out. From this discovery flowed important consequences. It was at once apparent that the blood which each systole discharges into the arteries sets up a pressure on its containing vessels which causes the pulses; the artery swells at different points of its course, not in order to suck blood into it, but simply because blood is driven into it by the pressure of the constricting systole of the heart.

Following this discovery, Harvey soon gained a clear conception of the working of the auricles and ventricles and valves of the central blood vessel. Every mystical element in the motions of the heart was now eliminated; the pulsations of that organ were fully interpreted in terms of stress and strain. And now, guided by the considerations which had led to a complete explanation of the circulation of the blood within the heart itself, and throughout its neighboring vessels, Harvey ventured to put forward a conception which—

> "was of so novel and unheard of a character that in putting it forward he not only feared injury to himself from the envy of a few, but trembled lest he should have mankind at large for his enemies."

Yet this startling departure merely consisted in applying to the circulation, as a whole, the self-same laws which governed the lesser circulation of the heart and its adjuncts.

In thus extending his principle, Harvey was guided by purely materialistic considerations. He argued that at every heart-beat a certain quantity of blood passes from the vena cava to the aorta, and that in a short space of time the heart derives from the veins and sends to the arteries all the blood that the human body contains. In the words of that eminent physiologist, the late Sir Michael Foster:—

> "It is obvious, therefore, that the blood which the heart sends along the arteries to the tissues cannot be supplied merely by that blood which exists in the veins as the result of the ingesta of food and drink; only a small part can be so accounted for; the greater part of that blood must be blood which has returned from the tissues to the veins; the blood in the tissues passes from the arteries to the veins, in some such way as in the lungs it passes from the veins (through the heart) to the arteries; the blood moves in a circle from the left side of the heart, through the arteries, the tissues and the veins to the right side of the heart, and from thence through the lungs to the left side of the heart."

Harvey's investigations showed clearly why the heart was emptied when the vena cava—the vein which fed it—was obstructed, and why it became swollen with blood when the aorta—the artery into which it discharged its blood—was tied. It was now obvious why a ligature which pressed on the veins, caused a limb to swell with blood, whereas a ligature which embraced an artery blocked its channel and made the limb pale for want of blood. Now was made plain the reason why the body could be drained of its entire blood supply by opening a single vein. And now became apparent the purpose which the valves of the veins served in the circulatory system, and the whole process of circulation became purely mechanical in its workings.

Harvey's demonstration was a great triumph for scientific Materialism. As Sir Michael Foster says:

> "Harvey's argument is essentially a physical mechanical argument; the problem which he puts before himself to solve is essentially a mechanical physical problem; the solution of that problem at which he arrived is essentially a mechanical solution of the phenomena of the circulation."

In our day paper psychologists, as Maudsley contemptuously calls them, continue to befog the problems of brain function with fancies and fictions. And in Harvey's time, the problems of blood circulation were obscured by theories concerning the existence of various kinds of spirits—natural, vital, and animal. Once only does Harvey condescend to notice these imaginary entities, and he then proceeds to demonstrate the truth of his discovery on purely mechanical principles. As a result, the "spirits" disappeared, and although their names lingered long afterwards, no physiologist of later times has ever regarded them seriously.

The main feature of Harvey's discovery was, that the blood which courses through the body is the same blood which again and again returns to the heart. It travels from the arteries to the veins in the tissues, and from the veins to the arteries through the lungs and heart, undergoing changes in the substance and pores of the tissues, and in the substance and pores of the lungs.

In the absence of the microscope, which came into use later, Harvey was unable to demonstrate the complete course of the circulation. He had no conception of the marvellous capillary system which unites the arteries with the veins. The capillaries were discovered by Malpighi some fifty years later, and the Italian physiologist actually showed them to the wondering eyes of the aged Harvey, who, in his declining days, was thus enabled to realise the complete circuit of the blood through the body.

The life and labors of William Harvey serve once again to illustrate the oft-urged verity that—

> "the greatness of all great men is partly built on the worth of those who have gone before. In science, no man's results are wholly his own; like living things, they come from something which lived before. Vesalius, Fabricius, and the rest led up to Harvey; but they were not Harvey. He was himself, and his greatness is in no wise lessened by its having come through them."

T. F. Palmer.

The Vultures of Faith.

Wicked, blatant infidel,
For Jesus caring naught,
Take this warning—cease your scorning,
Listen to be taught.

In the morning of your days
You may laugh at death;
But there'll come a time, my friend,
When you'll fight for breath.

When around your dying head
Things will fade to mist,
Will you then our faith despise,
Wicked Atheist?

Many such as you have laughed
At the thought of hell;
'Twas an easy thing to do—
Youthful, strong, and well.

But the reaper's shadow came,
Health fled from them fast,
Sight grew feeble, pulse grew slack,
They believed at last.

Wicked, blatant infidel,
Death may come to you,
Night or morning, without warning,
Hear the Gospel true.

. . . .

Puny little Christian soul,
Paltry little worm,
Maggot who infests the dead,
Cease awhile to squirm.

Keep your promises and threats,
And your craven fears,
For a muddy mind like yours
Or your dull compeers.

Many lies contain a germ
Of the precious truth;
Fear of death is rarely found
In healthy, lusty youth.

You do well to seek, my friend,
Moribund recruits;
For the crack-brained ranks of faith
Vigor little suits.

In the darkness of our days,
Like a hungry beast,
On the brain that now decays
Superstition feasts.

And for every falterer,
Through fear or feeble mind,
The fertile liars of your breed
A thousand "converts" find.

Christian vulture, hover on
At the feast of death,
Croak your warning night and morning
With your tainted breath.

Mental racks and moral cripples,
Minds in last decay,
You may keep—let cowards weep
And tremble while you bray.

Putrid soil belief may nourish,
Keep your barren ground;
Philosophy will only flourish
Where the sane abound.

H. W. Thurlow.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON

INDOOR.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, Miss K. B. Kough, "*Androcles and the Lion.*"

OUTDOOR.

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

BIRMINGHAM BRANCH N. S. S. (King's Hall, Corporation-street): 7, C. H. Smith, "Evolution."

GLASGOW SECULAR SOCIETY (North Saloon, City Hall): 12 noon and 6.30, J. T. Lloyd, Lectures.

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, Chas. H. Johns, "Swinburne."

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, C. Stewart, "Vegetarianism and Social Changes."

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