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PRICE TWOPENCE

He that would end his days well must spend them well.

—HENRY MONTAGU,
Earl of Manchester (seventeenth century).

From the Capitol Terrace.

THE day will surely come when high-spirited men will rejoice in the traditions of nations once opposed to their own;—rejoice, and not merely show respect. I dreamed of such a time when, one Sunday evening, in November, 1913, I walked slowly along the broad Pennsylvania Avenue towards the Capitol at Washington.

Only the day before, I had looked from a rising ground into the smoky valley of Monongahela at Pittsburg, Pa., and watched the gigantic steel-works making machinery for five continents. This was a throbbing representative of the industry of the American people, unresting, inventive, passionate. Now I had come to the serenity of the Federal City, where the genius of the Republic broods over the dominion that stretches from ocean to ocean, and from the lakes of the St. Lawrence to the tides of the Mexican Gulf. Daylight was gently lessening, and an orange glow brightened the West. The sunset rays sparkled on the glass in the windows of the dome which rose over a most glorious pillared building constructed of sandstone and marble. This was the Capitol, the corner-stone of which was laid by George Washington, September 18, 1793.

Open-air speaking is permitted at certain spots along the Pennsylvania Avenue, and I paused to hear what two small groups of citizens were listening to. One group were gathered about a wild-man-of-the-woods sort of orator (he said he lived with the eagles on the hills of California!), who had lifted on high a pole bearing a placard; and on the placard ran the inscription, "Did Adam belong to the Colored Race?" As it happened, the wild man's remarks were very irrelevant, and I had no time to wait for the development of the argument; and I am still unable to say whether there are good reasons for believing Adam to have been a negro. I suppose, but I am not sure, it would follow that Eve was a negress, since she evolved her beauty from a rib of her honored spouse. A negress, spectacled and anxious, stood among the crowd, and I could not help wishing she might be comforted by the lecturer's assurance that she and Eve had close resemblances.

The next group were somewhat listlessly attending to a band of Evangelical missionaries, some white, and some mulatto. When a feeble hymn had creaked its last bar, an elderly colored preacher, whose grey hair and brown face were contrasted with a white tie and white collar, opened the Bible, and read the text "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" For various reasons, I felt melancholy myself as I hearkened; everybody else looked melancholy; and the good old evangelist (should he happen to read these lines!) may take it from me that his sermon quite distinctly affected a contributor to the *Free-thinker*.

But the gold and crimson light on the dome of the Capitol drew me forward. I halted again when I

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saw the Peace Monument under the shadow of the trees at the entrance to the Grounds. It commemorates the close of the Civil War, 1861-5, and America weeps at the record of pain and death, and Victory upholds the wreath, and Peace offers the olive branch. Then I hastened up many steps to the noble terrace that extends along the western front. Here I meditated, while the crescent moon graced the twilight, and the lamps of the city flashed out along the avenues.

It seemed to me so natural that, when all humanity becomes consciously, as well as historically, one race, the generous heart should pass from land to land, and be glad impartially to recall the story of the struggles and achievements of each people. Wars and massacres we must everlastingly regret, and the act of disembowelling one's fellow-man can never become sacred in history or art. But, above all the lamentable brutalities which have accompanied the progress of civilisations and the strife for liberty, there soared the spirit,—pure relatively, and ever purer as the ages succeeded,—which aspired towards human idealisation. We can none of us work more devotedly for a cherished cause than did our forefathers; but we can work more intelligently, more wisely, and more fraternally. In other words, we shall learn how to improve the world without war, and reconcile conflicting interests without malice.

When that necessary qualification is made, however, I claim that we may honorably and joyfully sympathise with the valiant efforts of our ancestors and predecessors to break fetters, political or spiritual, under no matter what star, or on no matter what far shore. Willingly and patriotically, I render homage to the finer souls among our barbaric English fathers, the feudal baronage that aided in the establishment of our Parliament, the seventeenth-century Puritans who removed the bauble of Divine monarchic right, and the Radicals and Trade Unionists who laid the basis of the democracy that is not yet completed in our islands. With equal admiration, I salute the makers of the French Revolution,* and the initiators of that tremendous upheaval which introduced a new age, a new thought, and a new popular activity. In like manner, and without any national class-distinctions,—without, for instance, implying that Spain is decadent and the Turks moribund,—may we not be happy to greet every sign of growth, of spontaneity, enlightenment in Turk, Spaniard, Chinaman, or African; and every record of progress in the annals of the past in every quarter of the globe?

Hence, English of the English as I am, I do not see why I should not be proud in America's pride, and catch the inspiration of her dignified rebellion against the unreasoning demands of my own fatherland. On this terrace of the Capitol, and under this starry heaven (for night has now fallen on the pilgrim), I applaud the courage and resolution which nerved Washington, Adams, Hamilton, Paine, Franklin, to direct the destinies of the United States towards a glory that never could have been attained by a people that submitted to injustice. And, again, why should not I, English as I am, respond to the grandeur of Lincoln's consecration—with the

* So much so, that I follow the Positivist plan of dating letters from the year 1789, this present year being the 125th.

exception of one phrase,—of the Gettysburg cemetery?—

"The world will little note, nor long remember, what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here, to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be dedicated to the great task remaining before us—that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause to which they gave the last full measure of devotion—that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain; that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

We will except the phrase *under God*, and the Gettysburg address has additional force; for it then expresses the self-reliance of the human heart, determined at all hazards to prove its power for heroism and an ever-enlarging co-operation.

What I have said comes to this, that we are approaching a stage of human thought at which, instead of studying the attributes of God, we shall contemplate the achievements of a civilisation that has incessantly struggled to purify itself, and that conducts this struggle in all peoples, and not merely in a nation here or a nation there. How rich is history in treasures of bravery and sincerity if only we searched its pages with a keener sense of human values! How rich is daily life all over the world, if we will but open our eyes to the endless creation of generous ideas and generous service! These riches are a universal heritage. The glory of one country is the glory of humanity, and he who acts finely does it for mankind.

Such were my thoughts on the esplanade of the Capitol of Washington.

As I returned along the Avenue, the ancient preacher was wearily terminating his sermon, and still he sighed,—“O wretched man that I am!”

Poor soul! The Nineteenth Century, in its more foolish moments, taught this negro mind a creed that was already declining. Education and the Twentieth Century will bring in music instead of this wheezy dirge.

F. J. GOULD.

Washington, D.C., U.S.A., November, 1913.

Nonconformist Cant.

OF all shams in the modern religious world, the sham of Nonconformity is about the worst. Nonconformists talk loudly about their having a “Free” Church, when as a matter of fact the average Nonconformist chapel is more hidebound by orthodox dogmas than any other. It is, indeed, one of their complaints against the Church of England that too much freedom is allowed its ministers, and more than once Nonconformists have urged the State to interfere and put down illegal religious practices. They denounce Churchmen for accepting State aid, and at the same time seek relief from taxation by every possible means. They denounce State patronage, and eagerly grasp and loudly demand official recognition at State and municipal functions. They talk about freedom of opinion, and meanwhile help to maintain Blasphemy Laws and Sunday laws specially intended to oppress one set of opinions and maintain another set. If Nonconformists were genuine in their talk, these laws would be swept away almost at once. As it is, they continue with their cant about freedom and equality until the very name of Nonconformist has become a synonym for deep-grained hypocrisy.

I am, of course, speaking of Nonconformists as a whole. There are exceptions to the general run, but these only serve to throw into greater relief the truth of what has just been said. Amongst these exceptions is Mr. Halley Stewart, a gentleman well known as a Nonconformist and for his lifelong devotion to principle. Mr. Halley Stewart was for several years President of the Secular Education

League; he did valuable work while he held that office, and is still doing valuable work as a member of the League's Executive. He is also an ardent Liberationist, and, above all, he is one who, in whatever movement engages his services, never belies his principles. He is a Nonconformist in the fullest and truest sense of the word; denying the right of the State to patronise or support religious opinion with all the greater vehemence when, by a turn of the political wheel, the opinion receiving such support happens to be his own. Such devotion to principle is exceedingly rare in the Nonconformist world, and a recent occurrence shows how much Mr. Halley Stewart stands alone when he tries to induce his friends to act on their professed principles.

The Liberation Society is a body organised for the purpose of liberating religious opinion from State patronage and State control. So far—in theory—its program is wholly commendable. In practice the Society is not so commendable, as will be seen. On November 11 the Liberation Society held its Triennial Conference at the Holborn Hall. The Chairman said that 146 Free Church Councils and other organisations had sent delegates. So there was a good representation, and the delegates in their speeches breathed a whole-souled devotion to principle and religious liberty. Dr. Clifford wrote expressing “sorrow” at his inability to attend, accompanied by the characteristic expression—

“We know our minds. We are convinced that anything short of the complete neutrality of Parliament towards Churches is unjust to the people, injurious to religion, a source of division among Christians, an obstacle to social progress, and confusion and weakening to the Church that accepts it.”

Here is high principle for you! Here is a man who is evidently so wedded to principle that he would go to the stake sooner than surrender. At least it would seem so. When it is remembered, however, that Dr. Clifford regularly accepts State aid for his own church in the shape of relief from taxation, and quite as regularly upholds the State teaching religion in schools, one begins to be a little bit suspicious. We will return to Dr. Clifford in a moment.

At the Liberation Society's meeting, just towards its close—it was probably deferred as long as possible, Mr. Halley Stewart moved the following resolution:—

“That, while regretting the difficulties which have so long prevented a settlement of the Education question, this conference renews and emphasises its conviction that no system of national education can be satisfactory unless it recognises that it is unjust for the State either to impart or pay for religious instruction, and that the entire responsibility for such instruction rests upon parents and Churches.”

Now, this was a resolution that ought to have been carried unanimously. It was no more than a plain affirmation of the principles that all the speakers had been proclaiming with might and main. If that resolution was in place anywhere, it was in place at a Liberation Society's meeting. How was it received? The resolution, says the report before me, “met with considerable opposition on the ground that it was bad tactics to confuse the Disestablishment question on which they were agreed with the debatable question of Secular Education.” The debatable question of Secular Education! In the name of all that is reasonable, what is in it debatable about among a body of men who really believe in the disestablishment of religion? Mr. Halley Stewart properly replied that the Liberation Society existed to propagate principles, not to support compromises. Perhaps he should have said *ought* to exist for that purpose. As a matter of fact, the overwhelming majority did not agree with him. Out of several hundred delegates, only twenty-one supported the resolution, probably not more than about four per cent. of those present. A more disgraceful exhibition could hardly have been given. And one's admiration for Mr. Halley Stewart's action is increased by the sweeping nature of his defeat.

What is the Liberation Society after? What is the world of Nonconformity after? A speaker who preceded Mr. Halley Stewart, the Rev. H. J. Taylor, said that the attitude of the State should be complete neutrality towards the Churches. Dr. Clifford, also, in his smug manner, wrote of the neutrality of Parliament toward Churches. What does it mean? What a great many simple souls imagine it means when they hear this protagonist of the Passive Resisters roll out the expression, is the neutrality of Parliament towards all *opinion*. That, however, is not what Dr. Clifford means, although it suits his game to let people think this is what he means. What he is fighting for, what evidently the Liberation Society is fighting for, is *the equal patronage of all forms of religious opinion by the State*. They practically say to the State:—

"We do not ask you to cease making other people pay our rates, we do not ask you to cease to patronise religion, to give it official recognition on State occasions, or to repeal laws made for the protection of religious opinion. With all these things we are content. But we complain that this patronage is not equally distributed. You favor one Church more than another. When you plunder the general public, you give one Church more than others. We do not object to the plunder, we do not object to the patronage, all we ask for is equal shares."

That is really the attitude of the average Nonconformist. Analysed, it is the morality of the thieves' kitchen. The State is to treat all Churches alike. It is to be neutral towards them, but not towards those who do not belong to any of the Churches. They exist to be fleeced, and the Liberation Society, with Dr. Clifford, then appeals to those that are fleeced to see that what is taken from them is shared equally among those who take it. It reminds one of a couple of highwaymen compelling a coach full of victims to divide the "swag" equally between them.

Twenty-one people in an audience of several hundreds voted in favor of the State leaving religion alone. All honor to the twenty-one. All the rest voted in favor of the State disestablishing one Church, and establishing all the others. That is really what the vast majority of Nonconformists in this country want—equal establishment of all sects by the State. And for my part, I am convinced that the last state would be worse than the first. No more fatal blow to genuine progress in this country could be conceived than the equal establishment of all forms of religious opinion. Dr. Clifford may be right that the present form of establishment leads to division among Christians. That is one of the securities we have of at least the possibility of progress. And, contrariwise, he may be right that his form of establishment—which he facetiously calls disestablishment—would lead to greater unity among Christians. It would, in all probability. On the one side there would be greater union in making demands of the State; and on the other hand there would be greater unanimity in stifling all opinions that threatened the security of religious belief. And from both eventualities, in the words of the Litany, "Good Lord deliver us."

There is only one form of disestablishment that it is worth while any honest and intelligent person troubling about. That is a disestablishment of the Church that involves the disestablishment of religious opinion. To disestablish a Church and to establish the opinion for which the Church stands is securing by an act of hypocrisy what has been surrendered to the force of facts. The duty of the State is to *ignore* religious opinion altogether, and to treat Churches exactly as it treats other associations of men and women—protect them so long as they are exercising those legal rights that are possessed by all. A genuine propaganda of disestablishment would have supported Mr. Halley Stewart's resolution. It would also support the exclusion of religion from all State offices and municipal functions. It would decline a State subvention in the shape of either a direct money grant or of a remission of

rates. It would ask no more for itself than it asks for every other form of opinion—and that is protection from direct aggression, and liberty to propagate itself by its own methods and at its own expense. A Liberation Society that aimed at this would command the respect of all. A Society that merely aims at securing equal patronage by the State deserves the contempt of all.

Above all, a Society that upholds the State teaching of religion to children, and opposes it being so taught to adults, only adds cowardice to its other qualities. The adult can resist where the child cannot. The child is helpless in the hands of its elders. It looks to them for protection and for guidance. And we protect it by exposing it to the assault of teachings that everyone knows and admits are of doubtful veracity. We guide it by leading it into paths out of which it must afterwards find its own way at the cost of much time and pain. That the State shall cease to force religion upon adults is an act of social and political justice. But that the State shall cease to exert its powers to force religion upon the child involves more than mere political and social justice, it touches upon some of the deeper aspects of human morality.

C. COHEN.

Reasons for Not Being a Christian.

THE Rev. G. Stanley Russell, M.A., minister of St. Anne's Congregational Church, has published four sermons the object of which is to inform his readers why he is a Christian, Protestant, Free Churchman, and Congregationalist. We are only concerned with his reasons for being a Christian. Mr. Russell confesses that in passing from youth to manhood he "had to fight his way through the deserts of intellectual doubt." In this connection he repeats the common but wholly inexcusable lie that "the old Atheist lecturer of the Charles Bradlaugh type was extinct as the dodo." If Mr. Russell does not know that such a statement is utterly false he must be going through the world with his eyes shut. "Atheist lecturers of the Charles Bradlaugh type" are more numerous to-day than ever, and several of them have recently been prosecuted under the odious Blasphemy Laws. The reverend gentleman falls into another grievous mistake when he says that "it is now generally admitted that if the mind that is abreast with modern thought and steeped in modern culture is to have a religion at all, the only possible one is Christianity." As a matter of fact, the mind so described has, as a rule, no religion at all, in the conventional sense. Ever since Huxley's day the adjective by which it generally qualifies itself is "Agnostic." But when such a mind has a religion, it is not necessarily Christianity. Is Mr. Russell aware how many hundreds of cultivated British people are avowed Buddhists, simply because they are convinced that Buddhism is a sounder philosophy of life than Christianity? If he were to make inquiry he would soon learn how untrue and absurd his assertion is. A third blunder committed by the preacher in his introduction is the statement that "those who to-day maintain aloofness from the faith do so not from motives of hostility, but from a sheer indifference which has either never given a consideration to its value, or which regards it as an idealistic teaching too high for a busy and complex world to attain." The majority of those who hold aloof from Christianity do so, not because they are indifferent and thoughtless, but because they are unable to believe in its truth, while some disbelieve it so thoroughly that they are bound to maintain an attitude of active hostility to it.

At this point Mr. Russell asks, "What is Christianity?" and declares that if we look around us on the Church of to-day we shall only be driven to bewilderment and despair by the many conflicting and sometimes degenerate conceptions of it which are offered for our acceptance, while if we consult the theo-

logical libraries we shall find not only conflict of opinions, "but also a degree of verbosity and juggling with words which may make us conclude" that the game is not worth the candle; but the curious thing is that the reverend gentleman, though himself a divine, answers the question thus: "Christianity is Jesus; the real Jesus, the human Jesus." The peculiarity of this answer is that it is no answer at all, because Jesus, the real Jesus, the human Jesus, is an unknown quantity, existing only in the imagination of the preacher. The Gospel Jesus was super-human, and consequently unreal.

Now, strangely enough, Mr. Russell assigns the alleged historicity of the human Jesus as his first reason for being a Christian. In the most oracular manner possible he affirms that "the man of Galilee actually lived and moved and spoke and died," forgetting that the *actuality* of Jesus is the point in dispute. We repeat that the Gospel Jesus was super-human and supernatural, and therefore unhistorical. Such a being never lived, and so far as we know, never shall live. In each of the Four Gospels Jesus is "the Son of God." In two he is supernaturally born, in one he who is supernaturally born is the Word of God, who by means of that birth becomes flesh, while in the four he supernaturally rises from the dead and ascends to heaven. A being of whom such miracles are reported is not human and cannot be historical. Mr. Russell quotes Tacitus, John Stuart Mill, Lecky, and Morley as witnesses to his historicity; and yet he cannot but know that not one of these distinguished men can be claimed as a believer in the Gospel Jesus, or as a follower of the Christ. Assuming, without even attempting to establish, the actuality of "the sublime Mystic of the Galilean hills," the reverend gentleman proceeds to expatiate upon his perfect and compassionate humanity and his perfect parity, which is a very easy thing to do in the absence of knowledge. At some points, however, the panegyric touches historic ground, and we can challenge it. Take the following example:—

"Hospitals are one of the results of the coming of Jesus; the great river of human philanthropy not only rose among the hills of God but rose from the fathomless well of the compassion of Christ. The leper, the lunatic, and the rest of the family of affliction who could render no service and represent no tangible value to the community were uncared for until Jesus came and imbued the world with a new and deeper spirit of compassion. Woman was a slave and a plaything until the Man of Nazareth by his own example inspired mankind with chivalry, and placed her not under man's feet but by his side."

We are surprised that a Master of Arts, who presumably has read history, should betray such gross ignorance and invincible prejudice. Possibly it is an instance of prejudice concealing knowledge that we have here. In any case, the preacher unblushingly contradicts the unanimous testimony of historians. In ancient Greece care for the weak was a duty universally imposed upon the strong. In a work often attributed to Aristotle we read: "What the strong may gain by their work for the weak, the weak in their old age receive from the strong." Plato describes honor to parents as "the first and greatest and oldest of all debts" (*Laws*, 717). Orphans were objects of great attention. Both Plato and Aristotle strongly insisted upon the duty of the State to provide for them. Poverty was relieved with the utmost scrupulosity. There was systematic poor relief for the infirm, and relief for the children of those fallen in war. While those who could but did not work were severely punished, yet for those who were unable to work on account of bodily defects and infirmities there was a system of public relief. We also read of mutual aid societies. Strangers and travellers were amply provided for at inns or resting-places in the temples. At the temples, too, the sick received free medical treatment. As Mr. C. S. Loch, Secretary of the Charity Organisation Society, London, well says, "the 'sons' of Asklepios became a profession, and the temple with its adjacent buildings a kind of hospital." Lecky informs us that

Rome was not one whit behind Greece in the matter of private and public charities. While stating that "public hospitals were probably unknown in Europe before Christianity," he admits that medicines were distributed to the sick poor, that there were infirmaries for slaves, and military hospitals, under Paganism. Why, we know from the Edicts of King Asoka that two hundred years before Christ India was dotted with hospitals both for man and beast; and as there is no difficulty whatever in accumulating examples of the most tender charity practised by the much-maligned Romans, it is impossible to believe that, whereas the charitable institutions of the Emperors Nerva, Trajan, and Hadrian embraced all the orphans and the minor children of the whole Empire, the sick poor were neglected. The truth is that Christianity closed the Pagan hospitals by force. So strong was the prejudice against the Asklepien temples, which were also hospitals, that by the end of the fifth century not one of them remained.

The allusion to the position of woman in pre-Christian times is calculated to entirely mislead the thoughtless and unlearned among the readers of Mr. Russell's sermon. To say that woman was "a slave and a plaything" until Jesus came is to give expression to an unmitigated falsehood. In Rome, from the earliest times woman enjoyed greater independence and liberty than she has ever done, even to this day, under Christianity. On the woman question Jesus never uttered a word, nor left his disciples any example. This is what Mommsen says about woman under the original constitution of Rome:—

"Woman did not indeed occupy a position inferior to man in the acquiring of property and money; on the contrary, the daughter inherited an equal share with her brother, and the mother an equal share with her children" (*History of Rome*, vol. i., p. 57).

By the year 169 B.C. the family jurisdiction over women was becoming practically more and more antiquated. As Mommsen says:—

"Even in public matters women already began to have a will of their own and occasionally, as Cato thought, 'to rule the rulers of the world.' Their influence might be traced in the comitia, and already statues were erected in the provinces to Roman ladies" (vol. ii., p. 384).

At this time almost the only disability woman had to endure was that of perpetual guardianship by her family, her own son often becoming her guardian. Now, between the years A.D. 180 and 180 there flourished an exceptionally great jurist, called Gaius, who wrote a remarkable work, entitled *Institutes*, which was unfortunately lost. In 1816, however, Niebuhr had the good luck to find it at Verona; and, as Sir Henry Maine informs us, this is what it says about the law of Perpetual Guardianship, which from the mature Roman jurisprudence had entirely disappeared:—

"The great jurisconsult himself scorns the popular apology offered for it in the mental inferiority of the female sex, and a considerable part of his volume is taken up with descriptions of the numerous expedients, some of them displaying extraordinary ingenuity, which the Roman lawyers had devised for enabling women to defeat the ancient rules. Led by their theory of Natural Law, the jurisconsults had evidently at this time assumed the equality of the sexes as a principle of their code of equity.....The consequence was that the situation of the Roman female, whether married or unmarried, became one of great personal and proprietary independence, for the tendency of the later law was to reduce the power of the guardian to a nullity, while the form of marriage in fashion conferred on the husband no compensating superiority" (*Ancient Law*, pp. 127, 129).

Sir Henry Maine does not hesitate to add (p. 129) that under the Christian emperors there took place "a reaction against the liberal doctrines of the great Antonine jurisconsults." We have fallen back upon these incontestable authorities to show the readers of Mr. Russell how unspeakably groundless and absurd his remark about woman is. J. T. LLOYD.

(To be concluded.)

The Truth About the Holy Land.

"Within the walls and behind the door [of the Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem] there has been much fighting among the representatives of the Church of Christ: the result, at the moment, being a sullen truce which leaves the building in the joint occupation of the Greeks, and Latins, and the Armenians. As at any moment the ministers of God may be seized with a passion to murder their brethren in the faith, a Turkish soldier, fully armed, stands on duty in the little chapel which professes to be the actual place where Christ was born. This is a picture to contemplate—a Mohammedan soldier keeping watch over the spot where the shepherds found 'the babe lying in a manger.'—SIR FREDERICK TREVES, *The Land That is Desolate*, p. 123.

"A Protestant, familiar with the Holy Scriptures, but ignorant of tradition and the geography of modern Jerusalem, finds himself a good deal 'mazed' when he first looks for the sacred sites. The Holy Sepulchre is not in a field without the walls, but in the midst and in the best part of the town, under the roof of the great church which I have been talking about. It is a handsome tomb of oblong form, partly subterranean, and partly above ground, and closed in on all sides except the one by which it is entered. You descend into the interior by a few steps, and there find an altar with burning tapers. This is the spot held in greater sanctity than any other in Jerusalem. When you have seen enough of it, you feel perhaps weary of the busy crowd, and inclined for a gallop; you ask your Dragoman whether there will be time before sunset to send for horses and take a ride to Mount Calvary. Mount Calvary, Signor? Eccolo! it is upstairs—on the first floor!"—A. W. KINGLAKE, *Sothen* (Nelson's edition), pp. 152-3.

The average untravelling Englishman, who has been trained from earliest childhood to believe in the historical accuracy of the Bible, pictures to himself Palestine, the country of the Bible, as a land of ravishing beauty. He may hedge somewhat on Jonah in the whale's belly, or privately rationalise in the matter of Joshua commanding the sun to stand still. He may whittle away the Deluge until it is quite a private affair, extending only a hundred miles or so. He may extend the six days of creation into millions of years, and have his own opinion as to Balaam's talking ass; but no doubt has ever disturbed his mind as to the accuracy of the description drawn by the Hebrew prophets of the country in which they lived.

He reads of it as being a "land flowing with milk and honey," of the "Rose of Sharon," of the "Balm of Gilead"; and, from the sermons he has heard, he gathers that the life of Jesus was spent in an environment of lilies, cornfields, and vineyards. The picture is completed by the multitude of cheap prints and oleographs of picturesque shepherds and their flocks; or the shores of Galilee, dotted with the white sails of fishing boats in the distance.

This was the belief in which we ourselves were trained, helped by an immense Bible containing hundreds of illustrations bearing out this view of the Holy Land—a belief long since dissipated by true accounts of the country by modern travellers.

Sir Frederick Treves, the well-known surgeon to the late king, is the latest traveller to record his experience of a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, in a book entitled *The Land That is Desolate* (Smith Elder, 1912).

Sir Frederick Treves utterly demolishes the popular idea of Palestine as a land of plenty, and shows the country in all its natural desolation. Of the far-famed Sharon, he says:—

"The Plain of Sharon is emphatically not beautiful, from its vastness and monotony it is very wearisome. It is as level as a billiard table and almost as smooth and as uniformly green. One thinks of the Rose of Sharon and imagines banks and terraces covered with some such transcendental crimson rambler as runs riot in old Persian embroideries, but the Rose of Sharon, the learned say, is no other than the sickly narcissus" (p. 22).

Of the hills of Judæa, where Samson lived, he observes:—

"It cannot be claimed that the scenery of the country where the drama of Samson's life was played can add one single touch of vividness or of character to the familiar history. The background, indeed, is as negative as a bank of mist. Keith truly says, in his *Land of Israel*, that 'the rounded and rocky hills of

Judæa swell out in empty, unattractiveness, with nothing to relieve the eye or capture the fancy.'"

Of the valley of Sorek, where lived Delilah, the woman beloved by Samson, he remarks: "The fascination of Delilah must have been great indeed if she could attract any but a prospective stone merchant to this wizened place" (p. 81).

Of the road to Jerusalem, Sir Frederick says: "I know of no approach to any town that is quite so austere, or so haunting as this. The road toils ever upwards, hidden from the sight of the world, along an interminable valley of stones, along a melancholy ravine, sullen and secretive." At the end of this pass, open country is reached, and finally a place called Bittir, a dismal and barren place where goats and human beings search for a living among the rocks and stones.

Bittir stands at the entrance of the gorge which leads up to Jerusalem, and our author declares:—

"Throughout Palestine I met with no spot which appeared to be so well fitted as this to be the scene of Ezekiel's vision of the Valley of Dry Bones, since the place is so unhappy-looking, so bleak, and so full of the shadow of death."

The train,—

"after crawling out of Ezekiel's Valley of Dry Bones, loiters across a rock-strewn plain of unreasonable ugliness, and, finally, with every symptom of extreme exhaustion, staggers into the terminus of Jerusalem."

Jerusalem itself, within the walls, is described as—

"made up of a tangle of lanes and byways of infinite and alarming complexity.....The traveller wanders to and fro expecting every moment to find himself in an honest roadway open to the sky, but such a fair street he will never find. Jerusalem appears to be composed wholly of intriguing, bewildering slums. Let the curious turn aside but a few paces from a known path, and he may be lost for hours. This is one of the most impressive and memory-haunting things in the sorrowful city—this human labyrinth, devilish in its ingenuity, baffling in its maniacal aimlessness, mocking in its elfish trickery."

Of the celebrated Via Dolorosa, the Path of Pain, along which Christ is reported to have walked to the place of crucifixion, we are told:—

"The Via Dolorosa which pilgrims come thousands of miles to see is quite a modern lane. For some distance it is a paved passage between blank walls; it then changes to a mean street, and at last ends ignobly in the bazaar in a vaulted passage full of noisome shops. Along this dirty and callous street the Stations of the Cross are marked by inscribed stones let into the walls, or by other insignia. Here, for example, is indicated the exact spot where the cross was laid upon Jesus. Here is the place where He sank under the weight of His burden. Here is the point in the lane where He met His mother, and a little farther on is the spot where Veronica wiped the sweat from his brow. A picturesque mediæval house, projecting over the street, is pointed out as the house of the rich man Dives, while near the fifth station there is—built into the wall—a stone which has a hollow in it caused by the pressure of the hand of Christ. The Via Dolorosa is a mere fiction, a lane of lies, a path of fraud. The present road does not appear to have come into existence until the sixteenth century, and, according to Dr. Sanday, 'its course has been frequently changed.' It is a great commercial asset, however, so it can be understood that when next its direction is modified there will be keen competition to turn it to individual advantage" (p. 54).

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is described as "a show-place full of objects of doubtful authenticity, and, in its dark alleys and deep crypts, a kind of necromancer's cavern." In the side wall of the Chapel of the Sepulchre is an oval opening which, says Sir Frederick, "suggests the orifice of a shooting gallery at a fair. Sir Rider Haggard compares it to a 'hawse-pipe in the bows of a steamer.' It is through this hole, on Easter Eve, that—

"fire descends from Heaven to the Holy Sepulchre, where it is received by a minister of God, who passes it, in the form of a lighted taper, to the yelling multitude

* Sir Frederick Treves, *The Land That is Desolate*, p. 33.

without. This Easter scene has been described by many with varying degrees of disgust. It is only to be equalled by those degrading religious orgies which are to be met within the forests of savage Africa" (p. 77).

He quotes Dean Stanley as speaking of it as "probably the most offensive imposture in the world."

The Pool of Bethesda, which, as our author points out, in the account in the Gospel of St. John, suggests a wide sheet of limpid water, surrounded by a cloister of some magnitude, "is far down at the bottom of a pit." And "In the cistern, which could not accommodate a larger multitude than five or six, is water which would probably be condemned by any medical officer of health. This is the Pool of Bethesda." The Pool of Siloam is no better, for we read, "The Pool of Siloam is described as 'an evil-smelling mud hole.' It is a wretched spot.....The village of Siloam is, I think, the most abject hamlet I can call to mind" (pp. 109-10).

Some five and a half miles south of Jerusalem lies the town of Bethlehem. Says Sir Frederick:—

"Imagination has endowed this way with picturesqueness, but a chilled upland in Derbyshire, where stone walls and a thorn bush may be the only features in the landscape, is to be preferred to the country towards Bethlehem."

A little way beyond Jerusalem, on the Jericho road, lies Bethany. Sir Frederick describes the place and its inhabitants, as follows:—

"It is now represented by a few wretched hovels, grey, filthy, and ruinous—a slum detached from a city, a pitiless man-hating spot. The houses piled up on the hill would seem to be as empty as a heap of skulls, their staring windows sightless as the eye sockets of the dead. The inhabitants are reputed to be the dirtiest and most importunate in Palestine. This reputation is maintained. The hamlet stands in all the effrontery of shameless squalor, at the head of a dejected valley. Being on the verge of the desert of Judæa, the view southward from poor Bethany is very grievous.

"Accompanied by a yapping crowd of children, who are extravagantly unclean, the visitor is taken to the house of Martha and Mary. This is a mere penance observed by pilgrims and others, for the spacious building may as well be called the house of Ananias and Sapphira. He is finally invited by a dozen begrimed hands to enter the tomb of Lazarus, this sepulchre being the joy of Bethany. The children smile through their dirt as they reiterate the invitation, for, seemingly, they know that the burying-place of Martha's brother has changed its site from time to time. It is possible that at this point the tourist rebels, for there is little object in descending into a foul street cellar for the purpose of being shown a grave in which Lazarus did not lie" (p. 131).

The country between Jerusalem and Jericho is described as "a weary desert, grey with melancholy, bare to pitifulness, and silent as a land of the dead"; it is "a mean country, a waste of innumerable hills.....hills that are dead. Their bones, in the form of grey rocks, show through the tattered covering of threadbare grass and wiry shrub. The whole place is treeless.....The monotony of the way is unspeakable."

Sir Frederick, of course, visited the Sea of Galilee, only to sustain further disillusion, for we learn that the far-famed water of Galilee,—

"On nearer view, fails to exhibit any hitherto undiscovered charm. It is still a lonely stretch of water, as monotonous and unsympathetic in its environment as the basin of a reservoir.....It may seem a sanctified experience to walk in meditative mood by the Sea of Galilee in the still of the evening, but when one has to pick one's way among aggressive filth, and to hold a handkerchief to one's nose all the while, even the enchanting story of the lake avails for little" (p. 194).

In fact, the Holy Land may be summed up in the writer's words as "A country of imposture and make-believe" (p. 23). And he warns "Those who find comfort in the belief that—

'There is a green hill far away,
Without a city wall,'

And who would keep that vision clear and unspoiled, should never come nigh Jerusalem" (p. 84). Sir Frederick Treves appears to accept

the Bible as substantially correct as an historical record. And to square the present desolate condition of the land with the Bible description, he suggests that in ancient times it was better cultivated and more thickly populated; but he produces no evidence in favor of this view, and, in fact, there is none to produce. In spite of the many years, and vast sums expended by the Palestine Exploration Fund, the results have been meagre in the extreme compared with the discoveries in Babylonia, Egypt, and Assyria, and shows that the land was most prosperous under the rule of the Romans.

Scientists are agreed that the geology and climate of the country have not changed since ancient times. It is a small country, about the size of Wales, and before its conquest by the Romans it was often the contending ground of the great empires of Babylonia, Egypt, and Assyria, to one or other of which the country was nearly always a vassal.

W. MANN.

Acid Drops.

John Bright. By R. Barry O'Brien. London: Thomas Nelson. This is one of the volumes in Nelson's Shilling Library. We have looked into it to see what is said about Bright's attitude and speeches on the Bradlaugh question, and we have not been able to find a single word on the subject. We wonder if this omission was intended to please the Catholics. Whatever the author's motive, he has been guilty of a very disreputable proceeding. Biographers are under obligation to tell the truth about the men and women they undertake to present to the public. Partisanship of any kind is bad enough, but to select the facts is downright dishonesty. And in this instance the selection is a very foolish one. The Bradlaugh question cannot be suppressed. It has its indefeasable page in English history. And it is to John Bright's credit that he dealt with it, from first to last, in a lofty and generous spirit. Other men, even Mr. Gladstone, made mistakes in connection with it, but Bright never made one—he was right every time. And the explanation is that his public life, as well as his private life, was guided by principles. He consulted them, and them only, when he wanted to know what he ought to say. This also must be said. Bright was scrupulous in giving Bradlaugh credit for the most honorable intentions. He plainly told the bigots in the House of Commons that some of them had far less reason to talk about conscience and honor than Bradlaugh had. When this was laughed at Bright said something stronger. It was loftily said, and it was full of true humility. Only a fine nature could have said it as an impromptu in reply to an interruption. "I pretend," he retorted, "to have no conscience and honor superior to the conscience of Mr. Bradlaugh." He stuck to that. He meant it. And before he finished that speech he sent a still heavier explosive into the ranks of the "Christian gentleman" who were baiting Bradlaugh. "To a large extent," he told them, "the working people of this country do not care any more for the dogmas of Christianity than the upper classes care for the practice of that religion."

John Bright's attitude on the Bradlaugh question did him infinite credit, for he had not only to fight his natural enemies but also to fight many of his natural friends; and that is the greatest test of a man's sincerity and courage. Yet this noble episode in Bright's career is carefully concealed by his biographer. What on earth is the reason? We have suggested one, but there may be another.

Bright was the greatest orator of his time (he preceded Bradlaugh). We heard him once at an open-air election meeting at Birmingham. Joseph Chamberlain spoke first, and was much applauded; but the speech was that of a smart commercial traveller of politics, with the inevitable reference to *Pickwick*, and we did not notice anyone shedding a tear at his departure. Chamberlain drove off to another meeting, and up came John Bright. No one could help noticing the leonine head and face, though it must be admitted that the nose was hardly in keeping with the other features. How the audience looked up to him! "Now," they seemed to be saying to each other, "we are going to hear something." And they did. The slow, low, sympathetic voice (all the poetry, pathos, and passion of the human voice are in the lower register) in six sentences made everybody forget Joseph Chamberlain and all his tribe, and "ah's" responded to the inspired and inspiring statement that failure was impossible in that contest because the soil

of Birmingham had been consecrated and reconsecrated to the cause of freedom.

Who can ever forget, having once read it, that pathetic speech in which Bright told how Cobden came to see him and begged him to come out and fight the Corn Laws. Bright had just lost his young wife—her body was still unburied. "I was in the depth of grief," Bright said, "I might almost say of despair, for the light and sunshine of my house had been extinguished. All that was left on earth of my young wife, except the memory of a sainted life and of a too brief happiness, was lying still and cold in the chamber above us." Every man in that meeting who had lost a wife, every man who feared to lose a wife, was caught by the throat. One who was present told us years afterwards that the meeting was shaken by a great sob. But the orator retained command of himself and went on with his narrative.

The Rev. A. J. Waldron is in a fair way to be made a saint. A *Daily Mail* reporter thus describes him at the production of his sketch at a music-hall: "He sat full in the light, smiling at the painted lady in tights and on all generally, while the wreaths of smoke from his cigarette curled above, forming a kind of halo round his head." We hope Waldron will not have a set back. It would be sad to see his halo in the sale-room.

The worst thing said about Waldron's play appeared in the *Daily Sketch* (Nov. 12). Mr. W. R. Titterton, representing that journal, went to see "Should the Woman Tell?" He found that there was nothing indecent or suggestive in it, but — "It is just the sort of thing clergymen would give us if they ran the halls. *In which case I am sure I would not take my daughter there.*" The italics are Mr. Titterton's.

Mrs. Dan Crawford, wife of the African missionary, told the following story to an audience at Westminster Chapel. She was taken dangerously ill when visiting a native chief. There was no food suitable to her, and her native boy said, "Your God has forgotten; he is not a God of love." Just then an eagle carrying a fish in its mouth was seen flying high up in the sky. The bird was just over a broad river, and it suddenly dropped the fish. Even then this remarkable eagle took care not to drop the fish in the river. Right in the midst of the water was a little flat rock, and on "this the eagle dropped the fish." Mrs. Crawford "owed her recovery to the providential supply of food, and the faith of her companions was restored." Now, we like this story, but we suggest that the next time it is told it would be more effective if a bottle of quinine and a hammock chair were added. The Westminster Chapel congregation would not be at all alarmed. They would probably relish it the more.

Some of the comments on Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace's death are really funny. Here is one by "Historicus" of the *Methodist Times*. Wallace, we are told, "had none of the narrowness of outlook that blinds the vision of some great scientists." We do not wish it to be understood that we attribute narrowness of mind to Alfred Russel Wallace. But what is the matter with the other scientists? As a mere matter of fact, Wallace's scientific limitations were marked. And by the narrowness of other scientists one just has to understand scientists who refused to be caught by a disguised—or refined, if you will—animism.

The *Guardian* wishes that Wallace had "strengthened his religious belief with less questionable support than the phenomena of Spiritualism," but is thankful that he had some religion, even though, from its own point of view, it was quite wrong. And it adds, "It counts most of all that whatever may be said of the logical import of evolution, this famous exponent of the idea was no Materialist." That is a piece of true theological criticism. The only interest in the subject is so far as it supports religion. And even if the idea makes for the disintegration of religion, it is something a scientist declined to call himself a Materialist. Materialism, however, does not depend upon whether certain people choose to call themselves Materialists or not. It depends upon the sanity of its method and the fruitfulness of its principles. And Wallace lived to see these become the commonly accepted data of all scientific work—even of his own.

Leave it to the Bishop of London to say the silly thing when the time arrives—and often when it hasn't arrived. "Thank God," he says, on the question of music-hall sketches, "the Christian folk of London are in a vast majority, and the question we have to make up our minds about is: Are we going to be masters in our own home?" A

little less silly, and the remark would be impertinent. "London is ours"—that is, it belongs to the Christians. Everybody else is here on sufferance. And we are convinced that the Bishop really thinks this to be the case. Years ago, when the Bishop was "spreading" himself in East London, and drawing meanwhile a large salary from a sinecure attached to St. Paul's, he asked Mr. Cohen why Secularists, if they were dissatisfied with this Christian country, didn't leave it and settle in some new land? The reply he got was that when one found rats in one's house one didn't sit on the doorstep waiting for them to leave. One bought vermin destroyer and cleared them out. The Bishop has yet to learn that none but a fool ventures to claim civilisation as the property of a sect.

We venture to say that the Bishop of London and his helpers offer more encouragement to indecency in the course of a week than the worst music-hall does in the course of a year. They incite people who go to music-halls to look for indecency. And nothing in the world could be worse than that.

The Bishop of London's secretary says that the morality of the music-hall stage is to be watched from the auditorium with even greater rigor than ever in the future. Are the pious "deadheads" going to use telescopes instead of opera glasses?

The Yellow Press editors have been manufacturing headlines concerning two men who ordered a £13 supper at a Paris restaurant, and then refused to pay. It is a lot of money for a meal, but the last supper mentioned in the Gospels has cost humanity more.

Beiliss, the Jew recently acquitted in the ritual murder trial at Kieff, has received an offer to appear on the stage in several European cities. If the Carpenter of Nazareth were alive to-day he would be similarly exploited by his wooden-headed followers.

A low class paper devoted to sporting interests is naturally Conservative and Christian, and perhaps we ought not to be surprised at its combining deep piety with excessive vulgarity. But it might as well pay a little regard to truth occasionally in order to prevent itself from becoming intolerably monotonous. It is a pure fiction, with reference to Bradlaugh and Northampton, that "there stands a statue of him in bronze, erected outside a public lavatory." We assisted and spoke at the unveiling of that statue; it was not in bronze, and we saw no public lavatory near it, though one may have been erected since. It was in the middle of a large square, and we suppose it has not removed to another spot since.

Evan Roberts has been figuring in the newspapers again. He is the most melancholy memento of the Welsh revival. The orgy of excitement was too much for him, and it appears that he will never recover from it. He has lately refused to visit his dying mother. In this he resembles another revivalist who would not go out from a meeting to see his mother and other members of the family. The revivalist species always have marked characteristics in common.

More trouble in Wales! It seems that railway companies are in the habit of running cheap Sunday excursion trains from English districts to popular places in Wales, with the result that the "Sunday calm" is rudely broken. There is "intense indignation," of course, and only "a degree less acute" is the annoyance of Sunday motor traffic and Sunday golf. This is all very distressing, and doubtless if these distressed Welsh people had their way they would erect a Sunday barricade all round the Principality, with "Abandon all enjoyment, ye who enter here," liberally displayed.

Mr. Bottomley narrowly escaped joining the train-wreck near Melun. The train he was travelling by was pulled up just in time to prevent it from dashing into the two trains already in collision. Mr. Bottomley speaks with horror of the "mass of burning wreckage and writhing humanity" he saw before him. "And in the midst of it all," he says, "priests prated of the love of God, whilst ordinary men and women flung themselves into the flames to rescue the sufferers—for love of mankind. Said a fellow-passenger to us, 'We have had a Providential escape.' *We!* Twenty honest postal clerks burnt to ashes! *He,* a wholesale jeweller—and *we*—well, never mind about ourselves. Verily, God 'moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform'! *God!* It was the work of the Devil!" It was the work of neither, Mr. Bottomley, though the sentiment does you

credit. If it were the work of either it would be the work of both, for God and the Devil are the Siamese twins of theology, and, like Wordsworth's cropping sheep, they move altogether or not at all.

"G. B. S." is having a fine old time. Headlines—such as "Mr. Shaw on This," "Mr. Shaw on That," and "Mr. Shaw on the Other" are now of frequent appearance in the *Daily News* and other halfpenny papers. We shall come to "Mr. Shaw on Babies" presently. And when we do the Bishop of London and Father Vaughan will take a back seat.

The London Wesleyan Methodist Council has passed a resolution "welcoming the Bishop of London's attitude with reference to Mr. Bernard Shaw's recent pronouncement on the indeterminate standard of morality concerning music-hall performances, and heartily responds to his call for support in the matter." What composition! Before the Council takes up any more Godly resolutions it should learn to write English.

We referred last week to the author of the *Age of Reason* being called "Tom Paine" in one of the latest volumes of the "Home University Library" by H. N. Brailsford. We do not wish to suggest, however, that the author is in any other way unfair to Paine; on the contrary, he makes him the object of some very eloquent praise. The little book altogether is well-written, and rather more than that in several parts. It is entitled *Shelley, Godwin, and Their Circle*, the price is only one shilling, and the publishers are Williams and Norgate.

What we want to draw special attention to in Mr. Brailsford's book is an extraordinary misreading of a passage in Shelley's *Prothemeus Unbound*. The passage occurs at the soaring end of Act III.:-

"The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man
Equal, unclassed, tribeless and nationless.
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
Over himself; just, gentle, wise: but man
Passionless."

That is how Mr. Brailsford reads it. And he waxes facetious over this "passionless" man of Shelley's fancy as a most uninteresting personage. We daresay he trusted to the old punctuation, which is very obviously wrong, making Shelley say the very opposite of what he means. A note of interrogation should follow "passionless":—

"but man
Passionless? no, yet free from guilt or pain,
Which were, for his will made or suffered them,
Nor yet exempt, though ruling them like slaves,
From chance, and death, and mutability,
The clogs of that which else might oversoar
The loftiest star of unascended heaven,
Pinnacled dim in the intense inane."

Mr. Brailsford should rectify his nasty blunder in the next edition of this volume—for we hope another edition, at least, will be called for.

The worst misreading of a great poet we remember is that of Mr. Hudson, who edits one of the numerous pocket editions of Shakespeare now on the market. He puts Hamlet's "The rest is silence" into the mouth of Horatio—and defends it! It is impossible to go beyond that.

Two hundred lives are already known to be lost in the Great Lakes storm in America, and the number is sure to be found much larger as the bodies get washed up on the shores. Altogether it was a fine effort on the part of "Providence."

An earthquake has destroyed ten small towns in Peru, and some hundreds of people have been killed and a greater number rendered homeless. "Our Heavenly Father" is somewhat careless of his children.

We have heard of men sinking with weights attached to them, but we never heard until just lately of a man sinking with a Bible in his hand. This was the case in the drowning of Roger Sowerbutts Cornall, the assistant scoutmaster, one of the victims of the *Mirror* disaster in the Thames. According to the report of the inquest in the *Gravesend Standard* (Nov. 11), Mr. Cornall, "who was a devout Wesleyan, was conducting prayers with the boys, and had an open Bible in his hands to read a passage of scripture, when the ketch was struck by the steamship *Hogarth*." What a testimony to Providence! It couldn't have been worse for the poor man if he had been reading the *Age of Reason*.

Rev. Philip Bernard Wingate, rector of Tarrant Keynton, Blandford, Dorset, left £16,919. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth."

John D. Rockefeller has given £75,000 towards the £800,000 cost of the new buildings in New York City connected with the Young Men's and Women's Christian Associations. Rockefeller knows what he's about.

The Rev. T. Simpson, of Brecon, suggests that ministers should witness football matches in order to cure their "mental disease." Coming from such a source, this is "the unkindest cut of all."

"A specialist" informs the Rev. F. B. Meyer that he must break off all engagements and take a complete rest for three months. The reverend gentleman obeys the medico's orders, and will doubtless find the prescription agreeable. But what will happen if Jack Johnson comes to London again during Mr. Meyer's absence? One shudders at the thought.

Dr. Headlam, late Principal of King's College, says that so long as Christianity is an unrecognised religion—unrecognised by the State, that is—its influence would never extend far. We are inclined to agree with Dr. Headlam on this point. A study of Christian history will show that in every country where it has established itself it has been by the aid of the State. First of all as the State Church, and afterwards by the creation of laws devised for the protection and propagation of Christianity. Wipe all these out to-day, leave Christianity absolutely unassisted by State power and prestige, and in the course of a generation or two its power would hardly be worth troubling about.

The Berlin police, instigated by the Emperor, are prohibiting meetings of the "General Church Strike" Committee on a day which is set aside for humiliation and prayer for the kingdom of Prussia. "The feelings of Church circles must not be wounded" by opposition on that day. Poor dear Church circles!

The late Mr. Justice North sent the editor of the *Freethinker* to prison for twelve months for "blasphemy"—that is, for attacking the Christian religion (as it were) without a permit from the police. Mr. Foote was, and is, an Atheist. Mr. Justice North was (we don't know what he is) a Christian. Christianity teaches "Blessed be ye poor." Mr. Justice North has left £87,936. Mr. Foote will be lucky to leave anything. Which is the more profitable, Christianity or Freethought? And which was the more honest man, the judge or the prisoner?

Mr. Steel Maitland, M.P., has been chaffing Mr. Lloyd George for likening himself to so many Biblical characters. Mr. Maitland likened him to Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, who took the gift which his master refused, and "was a leper ever afterwards," as the Conservative orator put it. How these Christians love one another!

The *Catholic Universe* breaks out in a fresh direction. A correspondent of that paper writes to know why the "lurid and luring" titles of "lower-class melodrama" are permitted, such as *The Worst Woman in London*, *Her One False Step*, etc. When pruriency sets out on a purity crusade, there is no telling where it will stop. We would like to suggest, on our own part, they should turn their attention to "lurid and luring" sermons "to men only," and congresses and meetings on "Social Purity," both of which attract "nice" people with "nasty" minds. And, above all, the editor of the *Universe* might start a crusade against the erotic hymns and manuals in use in his own Church.

An increase of the dog tax was contemplated at Hamburg. When it became known there was a great commotion amongst the dog owners, who threatened that they would leave the Church if the idea were not dropped. They appear to have thought that they couldn't pay more for dogs and keep the clergy too.

The silk hat is being displaced by the cloth cap, one of the most hideous and inartistic head coverings which the mind of man has devised. If this sort of thing continues people may yet return to the "blankets" and sandals of the twelve disciples, or even the more primitive clothing of Eden.

"Why not advertise the Army?" is a query in large type in a recent issue of the *Daily Mail*. If this refers to the Salvation Army, there is small need to ask the question.

Mr. Foote's Engagements

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

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1918.—Previously acknowledged, £249 3s. 1d. Received since:—R. Wood, 5s.; A. D. (Glasgow), 10s.; A. W. Coleman (Sydney), £2 2s.; F. E. Willis, 5s.

R. WOOD writes: "Every little helps. If only a considerable number of sympathisers got this well into their heads, the President's Honorarium Fund would grow more satisfactorily."

E. B.—Many thanks for cuttings.

T. NEWBURY.—Sorry cannot forward it in this case.

J. E. REMSBURG.—Very pleased to see your handwriting again. Order passed over to shop manager.

W. GARRON.—The Northern Tour, as it was called, lasted six months, and cost the Secular Society, Ltd., £130, to say nothing of Miss Vance's extra work at headquarters and unlimited gratuitous advertisements in this journal.

A. D.—Sorry it was omitted last week.

E. SCHMIDT.—See paragraph. Thanks.

J. TOMKINS.—Two have been dealt with. The other one is out of date now. Thanks all the same.

W. HIRD.—There is nothing new in charging Darwin with intellectual dishonesty. Christians have been doing that for fifty years. Very likely they will do it for another fifty years. But they cannot affect his place in the firmament of fame. They remind us of dogs howling at the moon.

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

A. W. COLEMAN (Sydney).—The President's Honorarium Fund is not up to the best level this year. But it has suffered from the death of several generous subscribers. There is satisfaction in our having friends in all parts of the world. Thanks for your good wishes.

W. DAVIDSON.—Pleased to hear that everything went off well at Edmonton, and that our advice was found useful.

F. E. WILLIS.—We think there is a chance of your good wishes being realised.

S. A. COSCORN.—Draw up your own advertisement, and we will insert it gratuitously.

C. BRADY.—Arrived safely. Much obliged.

ANONYMOUS correspondents are once more warned that their letters cannot be attended to in this column.

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. 8d.; half year, 5s. 3d.; three months 2s. 8d.

Sugar Plums.

Our London readers are reminded once more of Mr. Foote's two special lectures at Queen's (Minor) Hall on the first two Sundays in December. An advertisement of them appears on the last page of this week's *Freethinker*. Further details will be announced in our next issue.

We have to devote another (final) article to Professor Bury's book. It seems to us really necessary to do this, for reasons which will appear in the article itself.

We have had next to no intercourse of late years with J. H. Levy, whose death we see recorded in the newspapers. But we knew him rather intimately a good while ago, and we had a high opinion of his intellect and character. His articles signed "D." in the *National Reformer* were very

able and well-written, and would have done credit to any journal. The *Daily Chronicle* says that Mr. Levy was "a very high-minded man and would never accept fee or reward for his services." The first statement is true; the latter statement is not true. We happen to know that Mr. Levy was paid for the "D." articles in Bradlaugh's paper. And why not? What is there discreditable in reasonable pay for good work?

Mr. Halley Stewart is one of the few public men we have come across who are as true as steel to their principles on all occasions. He is a real Radical stalwart. No one takes a more logical, or a bolder, view of Secular Education than he does. He is not frightened by the fact that this subject is one on which Freethinkers and Christians may agree together, and on the same grounds of honesty, equity, and good citizenship. Not an inch does he give way in order to please or flatter his Nonconformist brethren. He tells them plainly that it is their recreancy to the old Nonconformist ideal of the total separation between Religion and the State that is responsible for all the present trouble. We are delighted to see that he stood his ground bravely at the recent annual meeting of the Liberation Society, as appears by the following report from the *Westminster Gazette* (Nov. 12):—

"On the subject of religious instruction in State-supported schools, Mr. Halley Stewart moved a resolution 'regretting the difficulties which have so long prevented a settlement of the education question,' and stating further that 'this conference renews and emphasises its conviction that no system of national education can be satisfactory unless it recognises that the State has no right either to impart or pay for religious instruction, and that the entire responsibility for such instruction rests upon parents and churches.' In a closely reasoned speech, Mr. Halley Stewart claimed that secular teaching in the schools was the only logical position of Liberationists. Where it had been tried a higher morality was to be found than in places where religious teaching was given at the expense of the State.

"Mr. Charles Steele, C.B., seconded, and confessed that as a Passive Resister he objected to the intrusion of the State into the domain of conscience. They had not yet got a national system of education, and he was convinced that they could only give secular education in the schools and religious teaching outside the schools.

"A speaker asked Dr. Massie whether the ideal of the society on the matter included the Lord's Prayer, the singing of a hymn, and the reading of a Bible lesson without exposition. In reply, the Chairman stated that he did not think the things mentioned were included in religious instruction, but he considered these to be a compromise. In the States they were allowed, though there was no law on the subject.

"Lieut.-Colonel Seton Churchill was in favor of religious teaching, and questioned whether it was wise to weaken the cause of Disestablishment at the present time by suggesting secular education in the schools.

"Some other speakers also took the same line, but the amendment was defeated, and the original resolution was carried by a large majority."

The following appears below a portrait of Mr. Foote in the *New York Truthseeker* (Nov. 1):—

"One of the most brilliant writers of the English language is G. W. Foote, Editor of the *London Freethinker*, former associate of Charles Bradlaugh as publisher of the *National Reformer*, and Bradlaugh's successor as President of the National Secular Society. He started the *Freethinker* in 1881, and in point of years of service is the oldest of the *Freethought* editors. He is an orator of rare abilities. In 1883 he was prosecuted for Atheism, or blasphemy, and spent a year in the Holloway jail. His judge and sentencer, who is not remembered for anything else, was named North. At the age of 63 Mr. Foote retains the mental vigor and alertness of his prime, and remains the favorite writer and speaker of the English Freethinkers."

Our boots will fit us after this, but we are apprehensive about the hat. And it is not long since we bought a new one, which we provide ourselves with once a year, unless we can elude the wife's vigilance. We hope the *Truthseeker's* flattering notice won't result in a fatal shock to our hatter when we pay him our next annual visit.

Apart from whatever is wrong with the eulogy, there is one mistake to be corrected in the *Truthseeker* paragraph. Mr. Foote had no connection whatever with the publication of Bradlaugh's paper, but he was a well-known contributor to its columns.

Our portrait in the *Truthseeker* does us more or less than justice now. It appears to be derived from a photograph we had taken in America in 1896. We must send Mr. George Macdonald a photograph taken more recently, which has some artistic merit, and which most who have seen it call "good" and "satisfactory."

Dr. George Brandes, who is visiting England on his way to America, is to be entertained at a dinner at the Hotel Cecil, but as the tickets are one guinea each (including wine) the function will not be of much practical interest to the readers of the *Freethinker*. The reception committee have arranged for a lecture by Dr. Brandes on "Shakespeare." It will take place at Caxton Hall on Tuesday evening, November 25, at 8.45 p.m. Reserved seats are 7s. 6d. and 4s. Unreserved seats 2s. 6d. Obtainable from Chappell's Queen's Hall Box Office.

Mr. Thomas William Stewart's trial for "blasphemy" took place at the Staffordshire Assizes on Monday. He was charged with "committing blasphemy by attacking Christianity by ribaldry, profanity, and indecency." He elected to defend himself, and we do not know precisely the line he took, as we have only a brief report of the case before us as we are going to press. We are afraid, however, that justice was not done to the legal side of the case, which is now of the utmost importance. Mr. Justice Coleridge's summing up is far too brief in the summary report to authorise us in trusting to it in that form. We must wait till next week. Meanwhile we regret to say that the jury returned a verdict of Guilty. Sentence was deferred and the prisoner released on bail.

There is no end to the books published reconciling science with religion, and Professor Bonney has just added one more to the pile. He concludes that the recent advances in physics have in no way made Theism more difficult—rather they have produced the opposite effect. We quite agree that they have not made Theism *more* difficult. As the difficulties were already insuperable, it is not easy to see how they could become more so. But how have the advances in science made the approach to Theism easier? One would imagine that something had been discovered pointing to the existence of a God. Professor Bonney, as a man of science, knows that not only is this not the case, but also that it is impossible that it should be so. As a theologian, Professor Bonney forgets both his science and his caution. Such statements impose only on the unwary, and one suspects that very often they are deliberately concocted for their benefit.

The Great Iconoclast.

"THAT distinguished man," as Gladstone on more than one occasion called him, the illustrious Charles Bradlaugh, began his career as a Freethought lecturer under the name of "Iconoclast," a breaker of idols. His mission was to make men think. In order to effect his purpose, he found it necessary to destroy many of their objects of worship. With his great iconoclastic club he shattered their idols. He destroyed the Bible fetish, and convinced the crowds that flocked to hear him that the Bible was a human production, full of errors, absurdities, and anomalies, opposed alike to science, philosophy, and common sense. He shattered the old conception of the God of the Bible—old Jahveh—and trampled the fragments of the old god in the dust. Nor did he stop there. With tremendous force he brought his club down upon the Christian fetish—the supernatural Jesus of the Gospels. He showed that no such being ever lived—that a supernatural man-god was an absurdity. Nor was that all. When he had demolished the gods, he turned to priests and kings, and demonstrated the hollowness of their pretensions. He hated all shams, and ruthlessly tore the masks from the faces of charlatans. No wonder that the priests and the privileged of all sorts hated him; but the people who heard him gave heed to his teachings and followed him. And his teachings are bearing fruit day by day as the years roll on; and, personally, I feel proud of the fact that I lived in the age that produced Charles Bradlaugh—that I lived to see him and hear him many times, and that my life has been influenced in many ways by his mighty personality and his wise and practical teachings.

More than once I have heard it said by persons who never heard Bradlaugh that though he was a great orator and intensely earnest in all he did, he was deficient in humor. Only those who never knew Bradlaugh could make such a statement as that. How could he be a great orator unless he were also

witty and humorous? An orator who was always grave, and never gay, would soon become tedious. To hear Bradlaugh lecture on the Bible, and point out the absurdities of it, or to hear him criticise the contradictory passages in the Gospel narratives, was to be convulsed with laughter by his native wit and humor. Indeed, he bubbled over with them both. More than once I have laughed till I cried over the grotesquely absurd position in which he placed the writers of the Gospels; how cleverly he pointed out their discrepancies and contradictions; how skilfully he examined the arguments of the theologians who tried to establish the inspiration of these writings and the divine character of Jesus, and tore them (their arguments, not the poor parsons) into very rags and tatters by the brilliancy of his wit and logic. Bradlaugh was great as a lecturer, but he was greater still as a debater. Nobody who ever heard him in debate would be ever likely to forget him. To have heard him, as I did on several occasions, in debate with the Rev. Brewin Grant and others, was to have heard speeches from Bradlaugh that were matchless for their eloquence, their logical force, and thrilling effect; and when Brewin Grant replied by making a number of malicious innuendoes and wicked slanders as the safest way of establishing the superiority of Christianity over Secularism, Bradlaugh rose to a height of eloquence and oratory that came like an avalanche upon his opponent, and overwhelmed and crushed him. Bradlaugh was not only great as a Freethought orator—he was great in many other respects; in fact, he was full of talent, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot. Great orator, great debater, great thinker, great lawyer, great statesman. With all these great qualities in combination, what could not a man with his great physical and intellectual energy do? He seemed only to have to will to do a thing, and forthwith it was accomplished. The most distinguishing characteristic of Charles Bradlaugh was his intense earnestness. Some of the superfine people sneered at him, said that he was vulgar and unrefined, and tried to ridicule him; but all to no purpose. Bradlaugh pursued his course undismayed, and in time brushed aside every obstacle. And now, after he has been dead over twenty years, the result of his great work is beginning to be realised. The clergy of the Church of England are reluctantly constrained to admit that the old Hebrew God, Jahveh, is really shattered; that this old anthropomorphic conception of Deity can no longer hold the place it did in Christian theology; and that even the man-God, Jesus, has been effectively dislodged from his pedestal by Bradlaugh and other iconoclasts.

Bradlaugh unquestionably did a great work in this country as the champion of intellectual liberty, and his labors in this direction have inspired others to continue the great work which his indefatigable energy, his will-power, and his enthusiasm enabled him to accomplish.

According to Mr. Bernard Shaw, Mr. Bradlaugh did not take the rational course in knocking down the Christian idols. What he should have done was to have followed the line of least resistance, and when "he met one of these idols he should have taken off his hat and filled his pockets." Mr. Shaw did not say what with. Obviously, if Mr. Bradlaugh had followed the line of least resistance he would have done what other Freethinkers, unhappily, had done before him; and when he stood for Parliament in 1868, he would have let the people know nothing about his Freethought views; he would have kept them to himself, or written about them in expensive books, and then, perhaps, he would have got returned early in his career as Member of Parliament, and, no doubt, would have soon made his way to Cabinet rank and have become Prime Minister of this country. But the great Iconoclast was not built that way. He was not a man who could hide any of his views which he thought would benefit mankind any more than Mr. Shaw could hide his heretical views—as he demonstrates in his plays; for assuredly the author of *Androcles and the Lion* laughed con-

sumedly over the childish ideas of the Christians in that clever play.

In Mr. Bradlaugh's day a frontal attack against all these primitive superstitions was the only effective method. A few eminent men of science, a few distinguished philosophers and thinkers, were doing useful work in the direction of undermining the very foundations of all religious superstitions; but their work was slow and unobserved by the masses of the people. Mr. Bradlaugh came out into the open, a physical and intellectual giant, and threw the weight of his great intellect and argumentative skill and wonderful eloquence into the work of shattering the edifice of superstition, section by section. I have said that one of the secrets of Mr. Bradlaugh's great success was his intense earnestness. If he had been constantly laughing and joking at the Christian doctrines, and not seriously examining them, people might have said, "this blasphemer is not to be taken seriously, he is only joking"; but when they saw what he did and how he went about his work, they said, "we had better be careful about this man for he means what he says and says what he means." The clergy felt that if they did not defend their creed their occupation, like Othello's, would soon be gone. And when he had shattered their idols one after the other they exclaimed "Great heavens! what will he do next?" His mental and physical activities were marvellous. He would be occupied all day in arguing a legal question, probably with three judges, and at night he would be found at the Hall of Science, fresh as a daisy, delighting his followers with a faithful description of his efforts to free the press from the tyranny of either a Liberal or Tory government. Or he would appear at the great St. James's Hall in Regent-street with a number of other speakers, mostly Members of Parliament, and after they had all spoken on the subject under consideration, he would be called upon to wind up the meeting, and do so in a brief, impassioned speech so full of cogent reasoning and mighty eloquence that would so stir his audience as to cause them to rise from their seats and wave their handkerchiefs and shout their approval in a way that would demonstrate beyond doubt that Bradlaugh was their great hero and a real savior of mankind.

And if the Jews claim that Moses, the Christians that Jesus, and the Mohammedans that Mohammed were inspired, Freethinkers can without irreverence claim that Charles Bradlaugh was equally inspired; for assuredly no man could move the people as he did in his day and generation. So self-reliant in all he did, so courageous, no man ever trusted reason more than he; and so we may say of him in the language of the poet—

"Honor to him who, self-complete, if lone,
Carves to the grave one pathway all his own,
And heeding nought that men may think or say,
Asks but his Soul [Reason] if doubtful of the way."

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Worrying Women!

FREQUENTLY in the columns of the *Freethinker* it has been asserted, and proved, that Religion attached itself to movements *after* they became sturdy of growth and showed ample evidence of their likelihood to survive. Different writers have given us many examples of this safe attitude of the Church to human progress. We are quite familiar with the historic treacherous knavery of an institution whose living pillars are capable of anything if only they can keep themselves firmly founded and erect; and to discover the Church doing something purely unselfish would, most certainly, occasion us great surprise.

Within comparatively modern times the Church has bitterly, but unsuccessfully, attacked at least three great human movements, and has turned sycophantically to admire them when it realised they were here to remain. The Rationalist—or, rather,

the Freethought—movement, the Scientific movement, and the Humanist movement have all been vigorously assailed by Christianity during their infancy; and we have experienced the questionable pleasure of witnessing a complete reversal of the tactics used by the unscrupulous agents of a nefarious establishment.

These exhibitions of fawning imbecilic complacency would sicken a heart of adamant. There is a baseness about the mental manœuvres of the Church that is sufficient, in itself, completely to nauseate the hardest stomach. The longer you study the cravings of the Church for power, the more repellant becomes the utter depravity of its methods. Ignominiously neglected by every movement that sought the emancipation of the mind and body from thralldom here upon earth, the Church, exercising a long-practised ingenuity, has tried to ally itself to those movements, after having opposed them tooth and nail.

Naturally you loathe a man who kicks you when you are down. Naturally you loathe him still more when he performs insincere genuflexions once you have gathered strength greater than his own. Your antipathy fills you with an uncontrollable disgust; and it may be enough to say that, if you turn from him, you act leniently and charitably.

The Church has treated those three movements in that detestable manner; and now the Feminist movement comes into parallelism, in this respect, with the others. Suddenly aware that there are possibilities in the Women's movement, that it shows traces of abiding power, the Church has turned one of those brilliant somersaults for which it has become infamous in the minds of unprejudiced people. It now fawns upon what it fought. It professes to admire what it certainly despised. It offers sympathy and encouragement to what it did most to handicap. It speaks of liberty to what it enslaved. It proffers bread to what it stoned. Another heavy, damning proof of the incorrigible hypocrisy of the Church has been laid, by itself, upon the crumbling walls of the religious edifice. Another occasion for laughter, and another occasion for unswerving enmity, have been afforded us.

The whole history of Christianity is bespattered with black stains; and nowhere, perhaps, are the evil influences of religion made so manifest as in its treatment of women. Socially and psychologically the utter perniciousness of Christianity may be authenticated beyond the least suspicion of doubt simply by studying the relationship between the Church and our womenkind.

Psychological science has grave tasks before it; and it may be that one of the gravest will be the tracing of the dastardly enslavement of the female mind by Religion.

Lacking the inventive faculty, we might even say with a close approximation to truth, lacking the spirit of revolt, which, after all, is but the inventive faculty used in the domain of ideas, the female mind has been, in the past, an easy prey to a circle of thought that enclosed conservatism and excluded change. Religion made the most of the inadaptability of the female mind to the rough ways of pioneering. The comparative, let us say, absence of intellectual revolt from the woman mind, no doubt due, if indirectly, like so many things, to the demands of the physical constitution, Religion made one of its principal supports. Without the assistance of that mental limitation or conservatism, engendered by the restrictions imposed upon women by nature's necessity for propagation, Religion might long since have disappeared. But, ever 'cute to the boons and blessings of expediency, it has deftly enwoven its polished tinsel threads of thought around the mother-mind. It has played upon the chords of motherhood with a minstrel's artistry, ay, even while it affected to despise the contact with a woman's body, alleging unholy such a union. With an albescent hypocrisy it has glorified maternity that it might obtain the child-mind as a reward for its adoration, even while it bedeviled the body of the woman. It hung a

curtain of mysticism around the unborn child; and the mother-mind was within beside the child. It illumined the inseparable bonds with its soft seductive light, until the female mind became habitually religious.

Religion, as far back through the stages of social evolution as science can take us, has never given the denial to our indictments. From the religious mystification of barbaric procreation right down to the christening service of to-day, Religion has stood, with outstretched arms, beside mother and child. Anthropology is full of instances of the interfering power of Religion over the mother-mind at times when its encroachments were most selfishly opportunate.

Inevitably Religion waxed good of growth. It practically bent the female mind to its own wishes. The natural tenderness, the fear of danger, the inclemency of change, the projected hopes and swiftly fleeting joys and sorrows that are the mother-mind's nature, as sunlight makes the day, Religion transformed into the richest loam for the spread of its weeds.

The weeds are becoming, with the thinning of religious belief, more refined in texture of root, stem, and leaf; but the crop is still heavy, and the soil still retains much of the ancient fertiliser.

However, a new fear floats vaguely in the clerical atmosphere, irritating the Christian serenity afresh. Another problem worries the venerable dignity of the Church. The spirit of revolt animates the minds of women. A new consciousness of their individuality is springing up. The opening gates of the intellect are providing new avenues, giving rise to new desires, new wants, new longings. What though Free-thought, the strongest enemy of the holders of the gate keys, the real opener of the gates of the mind, is forgotten in the new movement? That the first step in the work is accomplished is enough to warrant the claim to success, if it be true that Religion guarded the closed gates and Free-thought shattered the locks.

The suspicious outlook of Religion upon the Feminist movement seems to corroborate what has been said. Where will these newly opened avenues of thought lead? Religion is asking itself. How far will the women-minds go? What strength will they attain? How much will their ideas change towards me? How will the results affect me? What attitude am I now to adopt?

Religion is worried. It feels insecure. This rebelliousness of the woman-mind is straightly antagonistic to all the teachings of the Church; and the Church experiences great mental discomfort at the incomprehensible revolt against all its most cherished beatitudes. The women-minds are apparently treating the instructions of the Church, nay, its commandments, with contempt. There is danger ahead.

At the recent congress, so deeply concerned were the pillars of the Church, it was said that the Church should support the Feminist movement; if it didn't, both the Feminist movement and the Church would be the losers. We agree. The Church would lose its life-blood. The Feminist movement would lose its irrationality.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Freedom of Thought.—III.

(Continued from p. 724.)

WE have to begin by offering a kind of apology to Professor Bury. We mixed him up with Professor Gilbert Murray in our last article. There was no insult in that, as it happens; but every man prefers his own identity to another's,—and in any case a mistake is a mistake, and is to be corrected. We suppose it arose from the fact of our reading a new book by Professor Murray in the same series at the same time. The reader will understand that it was

not Professor Bury but Professor Murray who was responsible for the adverse remarks on Shakespeare in the *Positivist Review*. But all the rest of our criticism *re* Shakespeare applies to Professor Bury. We hope we have made this clear. But you never can tell. For a blunder is a good deal like a lie in this, that it often has a peculiarly malign power of longevity and reproduction.

We now resume our criticism of Professor Bury's book, starting with the fifth chapter, in which he traces the growth of toleration on the continent of Europe, in North America, and in Great Britain. "The Puritans who fled from the intolerance of the English Church and State and founded colonies in New England, were themselves equally intolerant," Professor Bury says, "not only to Anglicans and Catholics, but to Baptists and Quakers." This statement errs on the side of moderation. "Equally" might well be changed for "more." And this renders the conduct of those Puritan persecutors all the more detestable. Moreover the good Protestants were worse than the Catholics, as they usually have been wherever they have had the opportunity. Take the case of Maryland. Under the humane Lord Baltimore, this Catholic colony passed an Act of Toleration in 1649. No Christian was to be molested in regard to his religion. But the law was heavy on outsiders. "Anyone who blasphemed God or attacked the Trinity, or any member of the Trinity," Professor Bury says, "was threatened by the penalty of death." Tolerance amongst Christians, however, attracted Protestant settlers, until at last they became a majority, when they introduced (1654) another Toleration Act excluding Catholics and Episcopalians from legal protection. Six years afterwards the Baltimore régime was revived, but on the accession of William III., of ever blessed memory, the Protestants came into power again and once more excluded Catholics as well as other non-Protestants from toleration.

Justice is hardly done to Cromwell, who was far in advance of his time in the matter of religious freedom. It is easy to misunderstand his attitude towards the Catholics. They were a political party then, always ready to fight openly, as their leaders fought secretly, for the overthrow of the Commonwealth and the restoration of the Monarchy. Cromwell had no objection to the Catholic faith in itself. He allowed the banished Jews to return to England, he did his utmost to protect the Quakers, he appears to have had no animosity towards downright unbelievers. He had naturally what one may call a civilised mind. He was an Independent and more than an Independent. Party after party, sect after sect, found that he was too broad-minded for their shibboleths. The Scotch Presbyterians learnt this at a bitter cost. They thought that when the State Church fell with the Monarchy the religious life of England was to be organised on the Presbyterian model. But they got their lesson, and a grim one it was, at Preston, at Danbar, and finally in Cromwell's "crowning mercy" at Worcester.

"The Presbyterians," as Professor Bury says, "regarded toleration as a work of the Devil, and would have persecuted the Independents if they could." But they had to reckon with the genius and the sword of Cromwell. He had not fought through a ten years' civil war to exchange one tyranny for another. And he was for a practical, statesmanlike settlement of the country. Anglicans were outlawed by the parliament, but Cromwell treated them as ordinary citizens as long as they kept from plotting against the established Government. His policy was to be at peace with every man who would be at peace with him.

Professor Bury devotes a careful paragraph to Milton's famous plea for the liberty of unlicensed printing—the *Arcopagitica*. He does well to notice that Milton "places freedom of thought above civil liberty." John Locke's equally famous *Letter Concerning Toleration* receives a fuller treatment. Locke excluded Catholics from toleration on the ground that they are "in the service of a foreign prince—the

Pope." He also excluded Atheists:—

"Those are not at all to be tolerated who deny the being of God. Promises, covenants, and oaths, which are the bonds of human society, can have no hold upon an Atheist. The taking away of God, though but even in thought, dissolves all. Besides also, those that by their Atheism undermine and destroy all religion, can have no pretence of religion to challenge the privilege of a Toleration."

This was unworthy of the manly mind of John Locke, for he knew many virtuous Freethinkers (including Anthony Collins) who were to all practical intents and purposes Atheists. But he stated very clearly the sum and substance of English law on the subject. The only *argument* ever advanced in support of the Blasphemy Laws is that the very existence of human society rests upon the sanctity of the oath, and that the sanctity of the oath rests upon belief in God. But the oath is no longer necessary; in fact, it is destroyed by being made optional. Bradlaugh's Act makes one man's word as good as another man's oath. Belief in God is therefore no longer indispensable in courts of justice, and the whole foundation of the Blasphemy Laws is thus subverted. We should be glad of the opportunity of arguing that they have really been repealed by the march of events and the progress of legislation.

Some interesting and important pages are devoted to a very interesting and (in its time) important book—the once famous *Dictionary* of Peter Bayle. Bayle was very learned, very sceptical, and terribly ironical. His tributes to Christianity made the clergy mad. He was almost the equal of Gibbon in this respect. Professor Bury gives the following example of what a Scotsman would call his pawkiness:—

"The *Dictionary* was also criticised for the justice done to the moral excellences of persons who denied the existence of God. Bayle replies that if he had been able to find any atheistical thinkers, who lived bad lives, he would have been delighted to dwell on their vices, but he knew of none such. As for the criminals you meet in history, whose abominable actions make you tremble, their impieties and blasphemies prove they believed in a Divinity. This is a natural consequence of the theological doctrine that the Devil, who is incapable of Atheism, is the instigator of all the sins of man. For man's wickedness must clearly resemble that of the Devil, and must therefore be joined to a belief in God's existence, since the Devil is not an Atheist. And is it not a proof of the infinite wisdom of God that the worst criminals are not Atheists, and that most of the Atheists whose names are recorded have been honest men? By this arrangement Providence sets bounds to the corruption of man; for if Atheism and moral wickedness were united in the same persons, the societies of earth would be exposed to a fatal inundation of sin."

It was an exquisite joke. And if, as Goldsmith said, there are two classes of people who dread ridicule—priests and fools—Bayle must have been a terror to both.

Voltaire's name naturally follows that of Bayle. This is what Professor Bury says of the great man whom Victor Hugo called "laughter incarnate for the salvation of mankind":—

"Perhaps no writer has ever roused more hatred in Christendom than Voltaire. He was looked on as a sort of anti-Christ. That was natural; his attacks were so tremendously effectual at the time. But he has been sometimes decried on the ground that he only demolished and made no effort to build up where he had pulled down. This is a narrow complaint. It might be replied that when a sewer is spreading plague in a town, we cannot wait to remove it till we have a new system of drains, and it may fairly be said that religion as practised in contemporary France was a poisonous sewer. But the true answer is that knowledge, and therefore civilisation, are advanced by criticism and negation, as well as by construction and positive discovery."

This eulogy is on the lines of Buckle's. It is clear and uncompromising, and we are delighted to see it in a book for the people, who have mostly heard of Voltaire as a very subtle, insinuating, and malicious scoundrel, who held a very profitable working contract with the Devil.

(To be concluded.)

G. W. FOOTE.

Ingersoll on Oratory.—II.

(Concluded from p. 729.)

NOTHING is more difficult than a perfect close. Few poems, few pieces of music, few novels, end well. A good story, a great speech, a perfect poem, should end just at the proper point. The bud, the blossom, the fruit. No delay. A great speech is a crystallisation in its logic, an efflorescence in its poetry.

"I have not heard many speeches. Most of the great speakers in our country were before my time. I heard Beecher, and he was an orator. He had imagination, humor, and intensity. His brain was fertile as the valleys of the tropics. He was too broad, too philosophic, too poetic for the pulpit. Now and then he broke the fetters of his creed, escaped from his orthodox prison, and became sublime.

"Theodore Parker was an orator. He preached great sermons. His sermons on 'Old Age' and 'Webster' and his address on 'Liberty' were filled with great thoughts, marvellously expressed. When he dealt with human events, with realities, with things he knew, he was superb. When he spoke of freedom, of duty, of living to the ideal, of mental integrity, he seemed inspired.

"Webster I never heard. He had great qualities, force, dignity, clearness, grandeur; but, after all, he worshiped the past. He kept his back to the sunrise. There was no dawn in his brain. He was not creative. He had no spirit of prophecy. He lighted no torch. He was not true to his ideal. He talked sometimes as though his head was among the stars, but he stood in the gutter. In the name of religion he tried to break the will of Stephen Girard—to destroy the greatest charity in all the world; and in the name of the same religion he defended the fugitive slave law. His purpose was the same in both cases. He wanted office. Yet he uttered a few very great paragraphs, rich with thought, perfectly expressed.

"Clay I never heard, but he must have had a commanding presence, a chivalric bearing, a heroic voice. He cared little for the past. He was a natural leader, a wonderful talker—forcible, persuasive, convincing. He was not a poet, not a master of metaphor, but he was practical. He kept in view the end to be accomplished. He was the opposite of Webster. Clay was the morning, Webster the evening. Clay had large views, a wide horizon. He was ample, vigorous, and a little tyrannical.

"Benton was thoroughly commonplace. He never uttered an inspired word. He was an intense egotist. No subject was great enough to make him forget himself. Colhoun was a political Calvinist—narrow, logical, dogmatic. He was not an orator. He delivered essays, not orations. I think it was in 1851 that Kossuth visited this country. He was an orator. There was no man, at that time, under our flag who could speak English as well as he. In the first speech I read of Kossuth's was this: 'Russia is the rock against which the sigh for freedom breaks.' In this you see the poet, the painter, the orator.

"S. S. Prentiss was an orator; but, with the recklessness of a gamester, he threw his life away. He said profound and beautiful things, but he lacked application. He was uneven, disproportionate, saying ordinary things on great occasions, and now and then, without the slightest provocation, uttering the sublimest and most beautiful thoughts.

"In my judgment, Corwin was the greatest orator of them all. He had more arrows in his quiver. He had genius. He was full of humor, pathos, wit, and logic. He was an actor. His body talked. His meaning was in his eyes and lips. Governor O. P. Morton, of Indiana, had the greatest power of statement of any man I ever heard. All the argument was in his statement. The facts were perfectly grouped. The conclusion was a necessity.

"The best political speech I ever heard was made by Governor Richard J. Oglesby, of Illinois. It had every element of greatness, reason, humor, wit, pathos, imagination, and perfect naturalness. That was in the grand years, long ago. Lincoln had reason, wonderful humor and wit, but his presence was not good. His voice was poor, his gestures awkward; but his thoughts were profound. His speech at Gettysburg is one of the masterpieces of the world. The word 'here' is used four or five times too often. Leave the 'heres' out, and the speech is perfect.

"Of course I have heard a great many talkers, but orators are few and far between. They are produced by victorious nations—born in the midst of great events, of marvellous achievements. They utter the thoughts, the aspirations of their age. They clothe the children of the people in the gorgeous robes of genius. They interpret the dreams. With the poets they prophesy. They fill the future with heroic forms, with lofty deeds. They keep their faces towards the dawn—towards the ever-coming day."

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INDOOR.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, R. H. Rosetti, "Christianity's Harmony with Science: Anthropology."

OUTDOOR.

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

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, E. Morris Young, "Wonder, the Mother of Knowledge."

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