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That which violence wins for us to-day, another act of violence may wrest from us to-morrow.

—FRANCISCO FERRER.

Canon Horsley on Blasphemy.

CANON HORSLEY is, of course, a Christian gentleman. But this is an adjective which often spoils the substantive. We remember his look of disdainful astonishment, a good many years ago, when we told him at a public meeting that he knew nothing about prison life. His reply was meant to be withering. He informed us that he had been a prison chaplain for ever so long. "Yes," we said, "but you have been on the right side of the cell door. It is only the man on the wrong side of the cell door who knows what prison life is." He took the correction in very ill part. But the audience took the point against him, and their applause was disconcerting to the cocksure ecclesiastic.

We expected to see Canon Horsley joining in the *Daily News* correspondence on the Blasphemy Laws, and we were not disappointed. We have not joined in it ourselves, partly because we have at our command an organ in which we can say exactly what we mean, and partly because we have long given up courting the insolence of hireling journalists and Liberal newspapers. We could not depend on any letter of ours, on any subject whatever—even though it were one on which we might reasonably regard ourselves a specialist—being inserted in journals like the *Daily News* or the *Daily Chronicle*, or being inserted, if at all, without serious and calculated mutilation. From one point of view this is an honor. The President of the National Secular Society, the editor of the *Freethinker*, the ex-prisoner for "blasphemy," is quite naturally selected as an object for Christian malignity. To be hated and insulted by some persons is the price one has to pay for the affection and praise of others. In a certain sense, therefore, we are rather proud of our isolation; though the wish is natural that we might occasionally enjoy the pleasure of applying the whip to a bigoted fool, or a foolish bigot, in the very presence of the audience before whom he has perpetrated his capers. But all that is by the way. Our real subject is Canon Horsley's letter. Here it is without the alteration or omission of a single word except the formalities—which, by the way, is the *Freethinker* tradition:—

> "Does not Mr. Leon give his case away when he argues that 'Stewart is punished not for blasphemy, but for the way he did it; therefore, the Home Secretary should at once order his release'? A bigamist is punished not for marrying, but for the way in which he did it. A drunkard is in prison not for being drunk, but for being drunk to the annoyance of the public. A motorist (ought to be) in prison not for driving quickly, but for the way in which he did it. What public opinion, what code of laws, has ever allowed action or speed without any limit at all when such action or speed is to the annoyance or injury of the majority?
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> "Some rationalist speeches or writings make me desire to reason amicably with the writers or speakers. Some others make me desire that 'some layman would express my feelings for me'—with his boot.
>
> J. W. HORSLEY."

Such is the wisdom, such is the logic, such is the good-nature, such is the toleration, of a high-placed Christian clergyman, who is at least old enough to have learnt that it is only vanity that makes a man demand special respect to be paid to what happen to be *his* opinions on religion — or any other subject.

Look at the confusion in the bigamy illustration. Each of the two marriages is a separate act—not the same act done in different ways. The first marriage is legal—it *is* a marriage; the second marriage is illegal—it has no validity at all, in other words it is *not* a marriage. It is simply a fraud. Canon Horsley's other illustrations might be disposed of just as easily. We agree that no one should be allowed to act to the injury of the public, though it is done every day of the week with perfect impunity—by the classes against the masses. But in the case of criminal prosecutions the "injury" should be clear and unquestionable; and no such injury was alleged in the Stewart case,—or, for the matter of that, in any former "blasphemy" case. In our own case, thirty years ago, it was alleged that we had acted "to the great displeasure of Almighty God," which no attempt was made to prove at the trial. When it comes to "annoyance" still greater care is necessary. Especially in matters of controversy. It is a sufficient annoyance to some people that you differ from them at all. They overlook what is an obvious fact, that precisely as much as you differ from them they differ from you; so that the fault or the impudence on the one side is exactly cancelled by the fault or the impudence on the other. But bigots are built on lines that are a constant challenge to humor; and to "annoy" these people is the easiest thing in the world. You annoy them by inhabiting the same planet. Hosts of other people, of course, are not so bad as the born bigots; but they have their prejudices and prepossessions, and it is a wonder if some of these are not "wounded" in the course of controversy on any live topic. It is hard for a Liberal not to annoy a Conservative, it is hard for a Conservative not to annoy a Liberal, and hard for a Socialist not to annoy both. Many speakers, on all sides, cultivate the habit of annoying their opponents. It is not the man who says the best things for his own side, but the man who says the worst things of the other side, that is most applauded at public meetings. To talk about "annoying" people in *this* way is quite atrociously absurd in a country where the Prime Minister speaks of his "convictions" and the Leader of the Opposition bawls across the House "You haven't got any."

If it be argued that religion is a subject on which speakers should be specially careful—on the ground, apparently, that it is a subject on which people are specially tetchy—we reply, "Very well, then; let us have a definite law to this effect; and let it be *the same for all.*" Why should the feelings of Christians on the subject of religion be assumed to be any more tender than the feelings of Freethinkers? Very often, as a matter of fact, they are decidedly not so. The present law is really directed against one disputant and in favor of the other. It is always the Freethinker who annoys the Christian—never the Christian who annoys the Freethinker. That in the

Christian is a choleric word which in the Freethinker is flat blasphemy.

To put the case in a nutshell. The present law of "blasphemy" no more protects religion than it protects astrology or alchemy. The speeches and writings that do most damage to religion are out of the reach of danger. (We do not say they always will be; we say they are now.) The law does not protect Christianity—it protects Christians. When they find it practicable they lay a street lecturer by the heels—especially if he appears to have no friends, and talks east-end instead of west-end English. Everybody knows that they are doing Christianity no good; but they are "getting their own back," which is a great comfort to the human nature that is a product or a survival of two thousand years of Christian civilisation. The present law of "blasphemy," indeed, is nothing but mob law, and is none the better for being carried out under judicial forms.

Canon Horsley's talk about the "majority" does not mend matters. The moral rights of the majority are not universal and absolute, nor are the moral rights of the minority dependent on their good will. Morality rests not upon numbers but upon reason. Canon Horsley ignores this altogether. His ethical position is that if the minority annoy the majority—no matter what the annoyance consists in—they must pay the penalty; but if the majority annoy the minority—that is what they are entitled to do if they please, just because they *are* the majority. Which is the most vulgar, insolent, and dangerous criterion ever propounded,—and would compel Canon Horsley to side with the mob that cried out "Crucify him! Crucify him!" on a famous occasion.

In spite of all this, however, it will be noticed that Canon Horsley does not plainly commit himself to the support of the Blasphemy Laws. He appears to lack the courage of his intolerance. His last sentences only imply what he dares not proclaim. Some rationalist speakers are meek enough to satisfy this reverend gentleman; some others call for a reply with a "boot." Not the Canon's boot, but a layman's: a policeman's, a judge's, a prison warder's. For this, of course, is what the angry man of God means.

The Bishop in the story who asked a layman to say what was appropriate to a trying occasion, did not suggest that suitable language had to be invented. There was no need for that. The Bible is still a handy book, and is quite a treasure-house of strong, vehement, and even violent language. The most savage speaker need not go beyond the vocabulary of Holy Writ for his boldest effects. The most reckless outdoor propagandist of Atheism would find it difficult to exceed the vituperative language of Jesus during the brief period of his last visit to Jerusalem.

We might have ended here. But we have yet a final word to Canon Horsley. Does he really mean us to believe that he is totally unaware of the kind of discourse so much indulged in by Christian lecturers in the open-air? We will take his word for it if he tells us so; but in that case we must tell *him* that it is high time he extended his investigations. If he favors the continuance of the Blasphemy Laws, after listening to the abominable and malicious talk of many of his co-religionists, it will be because he is a hopeless bigot and an incurable partisan.

G. W. FOOTE.

Religion and Morals.

SEVERAL weeks ago I made a passing reference to Mr. Harold Begbie's shocker, the *Weakest Link*. Mr. Begbie's book is concerned with the "White Slave" traffic, and as it provides a delectable feast for all those pure-minded people who delight to read of vice—real or assumed—around them, it has doubtless enjoyed a good sale. The author himself would say that he wrote the book in the interests of morality; and, indeed, he has a deal to say about morality in the course of his essay. But like most religious writers, he labors under a fatal delusion. Somehow or the other he has got it into his ill-instructed head that morality is the special concern of religion, and that good conduct can only flourish under its patronage and protection. I use the term "ill-instructed" deliberately, because a man who can write as Mr. Begbie writes is ill-instructed—one might almost say uncultured. For culture is not a question of mere scholastic attainment. One may have plenty of this, may boast of any number of degrees, and still remain, in the truest sense of the word, uncultured. It is the use to which one's knowledge is put, the ability to see life with its true measure of light and shade, and to see life as a whole—that is the sign of a true culture.

Now, the assumption that morality is the peculiar concern of religion, that it began under the shelter of religion, and flourished under its patronage, is one of the stock poses of the modern religious teacher. And the reason for this is that, with a declining interest in purely theological matters, the preachers of religion are driven to profess a concern for things in which a more living interest is shown. There is no justification whatever for the clergy posing as authorities in morals, either in teaching or in practice. They do not teach a *better* morality than other people, and they are certainly no better behaved. Generally speaking, their teaching is scarcely as good; and their conduct will not compare favorably with that of other educated classes. I do not mean by this that they are more often in the Courts than other people, although they are not strangers even there. But in their behavior towards each other, or towards those who disagree with them, in the habit of making reckless and unfounded assertions, and in cultivating the petty, non-legal vices of social life, the clergy evidence a somewhat lower standard than do most other classes of the community. A collection of testimonies from tradesmen and domestic servants, for instance, concerning the clergy, would be very illuminating reading for some people.

It is, however, almost doing the clergy an injustice to bracket Mr. Begbie with them. For many of the better ones would hesitate to say what he says on the subject of morals, and some might flatly contradict him. At least, one hopes so; for Mr. Begbie's view of morality is that of the most ignorant type of Salvation Army preacher. To him morality appears to be nothing more than animalism plus piety. Take piety away from animalism and morality disappears. Connect the two and you have morality again. Nothing, he says, can give man the courage to be moral save a "strength from outside us, a supernatural strength.....this it is alone which can cleanse the heart and fortify the soul in virtue." And this, I repeat, is making morality consist of a mere animalism with piety as a restraining force. For, like many Christian writers, with Mr. Begbie morality is all a matter of restraint—a case of denial. A man is moral because of a supernatural strength that enables him to crush the desire to have a "good time." It never dawns upon him that morality may not be a matter of self-denial but of self-expression, and that the man who behaves morally is having a genuinely "good time." That would be to make morality a matter of natural growth, and in that case the function of religion would be gone.

Here, again, is Mr. Begbie at his best—and worst. No man, he says,—

> "will dispute that animalism has a just right to preach its gospel and organise the life of the nation to suit its real and living principle, if we abandon faith in God..... Therefore, the salvation of humanity lies absolutely in God. Rescind the divine hypothesis, set democracy to think only of physical well-being, educate that democracy to believe in the naturalness of lust, and the right, nay the duty of every individual to extract from animal existence as much animal pleasure as he can comfortably assimilate,—do this, and in a generation you will have halved the population, you will have wrecked flesh and blood, you will have struck a deathblow at

family life, you will have destroyed the vital instinct for transcendence."

Stupidity and slander are well harnessed here. Of course, if people think only of animal or sexual gratification, and sacrifice everything to this, the result is bound to be deplorable. But who teaches this? Who are the teachers of this gospel of animalism? They really have no existence outside Mr. Begbie's imagination. The notion that anybody or anything desires to organise national life on a basis of sheer animalism is almost too ridiculous for discussion. Probably the negation of religion means this to Mr. Begbie, but that is his fault. His own conception of human nature is so poor and so inadequate that he sees it as a mere bundle of gross appetites unless it is constrained by some "strength from outside of us." Thus, he dispenses slanders with the air of one scattering moral truisms. If he were in business and discussed his trade rivals with the same carelessness as to truth, he would soon find himself in the Courts. In social life he would find every door closed to him. Even in politics he would become a pariah. In each of these departments a higher standard of rectitude is imposed than is usual in religious controversy. Mr. Begbie confesses that he has written "with blood rather too heated for a nice discrimination in language." It is well to detect some glimmerings, however faint, of uneasiness. But no amount of heated blood can excuse a writer showing gross ignorance of the subject about which he is writing, and for slandering people whose ideals of life are at least as high as his own. The world would have survived had Mr. Begbie deferred writing his essay until his blood was cooler. It is not likely to benefit much now that it has been written.

When Mr. Begbie runs up against what might prove to be an instructive fact, he shows a complete inability to appreciate it. He cannot help but see that good conduct is not confined to religious circles, and if he were pressed he would probably admit that those outside were often better than those within. This is a very awkward fact for the religious advocate, and Mr. Begbie's way of meeting it is anything but original. He says:—

> "The long heredity of religion has exercised in the souls of men, however tolerant or base they may have been, an influence tending towards respect for virtue. Thus it has come to pass that reversions to barbarism have been rare among nations, and that the story of the human race, after the foreword of Christianity, is, for the most part, a tale of progress in respectablity."

There has been progress, but only after the foreword of Christianity! Well, was there no progress before Christianity? Let anyone read the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, the writings of Cicero, or Plutarch, or Epictetus, or Aristotle, in the light of Mr. Begbie's comment, and he will realise how supremely ridiculous it is. And what has the heredity of religion to do with it? Morality has not, and never has had, any really vital association with religion. On the contrary, the greatest disturbing force in morals has been religion. Had men and women been always in the habit of measuring right and wrong by reference to some commonly accepted fact of daily experience, ethical theory and practice might have been more uniform than has actually been the case. But, by resting the theory of morals upon a belief in some supernatural power, confusion was made inevitable. And so it has happened that there is scarcely a virtue that religion has not somewhere and at some time branded as a vice, hardly a vice it has not at some time declared a virtue. People have robbed, and killed, and lied, and slandered in the name of religion, and they are at the same game to-day.

The driving force behind morality is not religious but social. Man is not an ethical animal because he is often a religious one, but because his nature is moulded by and for constant association with his fellows. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as an individual ethic. Truthfulness, chastity, honesty, kindness, etc., are expressions of a relation. Destroy this relation and morality disappears. This is really why there is, on the whole, progress, and why human society can no more exist and disregard the virtues than an individual can flourish on a diet of prussic acid. And consequently the heredity that does operate is not that of religious teaching but that of social selection. The dice are loaded against vice because vice is the name for what are fundamentally life-destroying actions, just as virtue is the name for actions that are fundamentally life-preserving. The Freethinker knows this, and is therefore not afraid that morality is going to die out because this or that theory is propounded. Morality does not spring from theories, but from life. It is actual before it is theoretical. Mr. Begbie's foolish outbursts simply illustrate the truth that the worst possible teacher of morals is the ardent religionist with "blood rather too heated" for either discrimination in language or patience to acquire knowledge concerning the subject on which he writes.

The curious thing is that these religious writers seldom realise that all their attacks on contemporary life and manners are so many indictments of religion. When someone objected to Ruskin attacking the clergy because, he said, the clergy were the only friends the poor man had, Ruskin replied that that was the very worst thing ever said about them; for it meant that the clergy had played their part as moral instructors so badly that, with all their influence, they had not impressed upon people the most elementary notions of duty towards each other. So also with the moral condition of the world. So far as morality is a matter of conscious reflection, of action following upon theory, it has hitherto been mainly under the influence of religion. Had that influence been a healthy one, the world would have been moralised long since. Each newcomer would have found himself in a world where, if evil was not unknown, it would have been a negligible quantity. Our social heredity would have been thoroughly moralised. The world complained about is a world that has been under religious tutelage for thousands of generations, and its evil features are so many evidences of the failure of religion. "If human life is to be organised," says Mr. Begbie, "without reference of any kind to a God, then for a certainty civilisation may perish." To which one may well reply that a civilisation that has lived in spite of the rule of the gods may well consider itself indestructible.

C. COHEN.

The Quintessence of Irrationality.

ONE never ceases to wonder at the utterly and palpably irrational manner in which Christian apologists endeavor to justify the belief in the supernatural. Surely nothing can be more contrary to reason than the claim that science is at last lending substantial support to it. Mr. Hugh Capron is certainly wrong when he states, in his *Anatomy of Truth*, that to-day "we see the very weapons of religion being forged in the arsenals of science." Assertions of that kind are very easily made, as the readers of Mr. R. J. Campbell's sermons are well aware; but they are wholly insusceptible of verification. Indeed, Mr. Campbell, quoting Mr. Capron's wild averment as his sole authority, assures his public that he has been a true prophet in the prediction that we "should soon be witnessing a rehabilitation from the side of science of belief in the so-called miraculous—namely, of the occasional supersession of what we are pleased to call natural laws by the operation of facts and forces not hitherto included in that category, facts and forces only to be explained on the hypothesis that there is a spiritual as well as a material world." Without fear of any intelligent contradiction, we pronounce the reverend gentleman an entirely false prophet. He cannot name the science, or mention the scientific discovery, which furnishes the slightest bit of evidence that an immaterial world exists. We know of some scientists who believe in the supernatural; but they

are honest enough to admit that they can find no warrant for their belief in science. Dr. Osler, the Regius Professor of Medicine at Oxford, quotes the following passage from Sir Thomas Browne's famous *Religio Medici*, which he regards as a beautiful expression of what he calls "this old Platonic and orthodox view":—

> "Thus we are men and we know not how: there is something in us that can be without us and will be after us; though it is strange that it has no history what it was before us, nor cannot tell how it entered into us."

The remarkable fact is that Dr. Osler, whilst firmly holding this theological view, frankly confesses that it "has no place in science, which ignores completely this something which will be after us." Then he adds:—

> "The new psychologists have ceased to think nobly of the soul, and even speak of it as a complete superfluity.....Modern psychological science dispenses altogether with the soul" (*Science and Immortality*, pp. 47-50).

According to Mr. Campbell, what we have in the Gospel Jesus is the supernatural tabernacling in the natural, the most wondrous Being wearing human flesh. The portents and prodigies which preceded, accompanied, and followed his birth are looked upon as "what might be called a thrusting into our dark and narrow earthly conditions of something which belongs intrinsically to another and far higher mode of being." This may be exceedingly good theology, but we unhesitatingly affirm that from the side of science it derives no attestation whatsoever. Not a single religious weapon has ever been forged in the arsenals of science. Mr. Campbell himself tacitly acknowledges the truth of this in the following amazing utterance:—

> "As to the mystery of the Divine Incarnation, what can we say but that the glory before which angels veil their faces has revealed itself in terms of our own humanity? It is a mystery to be adored, but not understood; the intellect fails before it, but the spirit rises on the wings of faith into a joyful apprehension of its truth."

Thus science is shut out, the intellect beats an undignified retreat, and the spirit soars aloft on imaginative wings. How beautifully is the game given away. Curiously enough, Mr. Campbell says that it does not follow that "all that is recorded in the New Testament about the annunciation, the angelic appearances both before and after the holy birth at Bethlehem, and the like, is literally exact." "These winsome stories," he continues, "are rightly described as the poetry of the Nativity. But poetry is not less true than prose; quite the contrary. The very essence of poetry is that it suggests what literal and exact statement cannot convey; it is the language of the inexpressible." If this is not juggling with words we know not what it is. Jesus was born of a virgin or he was not; shepherds watching their flocks by night were informed of the wonderful birth by angels, or they were not; wise men from the east came to Bethlehem led by a star, or they did not. All the marvellous events related either happened or did not happen. Science insists upon it that all things must be either true or false. Until the advent of geology the Genesis story of creation was accepted as literally true; now it is taken for a beautiful legend, embodying poetically some great but inexpressible spiritual truth. Until the New Theologians appeared the narratives of the Nativity were either believed or disbelieved; now they are treated as partly true and partly untrue, as lovely poems essentially though not literally or exactly true. No science on earth will ever approve of such a shilly-shallying system of interpretation.

Mr. Campbell has the disagreeable knack of ruling out of court all schools that differ from the one to which he now belongs. A few years ago he used to declare that Jesus was Divine only in the sense that we are all Divine. To-day he pronounces him "essentially super-human." "The old Protestant liberalism," he announces, "is out of court." Is Unitarianism out of court simply because Mr. Campbell happens to be opposed to it? Are the views of such distinguished scholars as Schmiedel, Arno Neumann, Harnack, and Bacon out of court merely because the minister of the City Temple no longer sees eye to eye with them? Their teaching, he maintains, is "ruled out by the facts of history and of spiritual experience"; but this is sheer pulpit nonsense, because the illustrious divines just named are quite as competent to interpret "the facts of history and of experience" as Mr. Campbell, and yet they teach that Jesus was "essentially human," but in no sense "essentially super-human." Besides, science has no knowledge, direct or indirect, of superhuman beings.

This brings us to another illustration which the reverend gentleman supplies of the absolute irrationality of his position. His contention is that we are "witnessing a rehabilitation from the side of science of belief in the so-called miraculous—namely, of the occasional supersession of what we are pleased to call natural laws by the operation of facts and forces not hitherto included in that category, facts and forces only to be explained on the hypothesis that there is a spiritual as well as a material world." But further on in the same discourse he admits the immutability of the laws of nature. Listen:—

> "The physical universe is a closed system, complete in itself so far as its processes are concerned. We know, roughly speaking, how life has come to be what it is on this planet, what stages it has passed through, and what conditions have governed its growth. We should be all at sea if we suddenly found that that line of development were no longer being followed.....If the world were really as inconsequent and whimsical, and its happenings as unpredictable, as they are represented to be in the fairy books,.....we should be entirely different beings from what we are now. These things are all very well in works of imagination, but if they were sober facts we should have to revise all our means of acquiring knowledge; such a world would not be the world we know, and its ways would not be our ways."

We are in full agreement, and of course, such a view rules out the miraculous completely. "The physical universe *is* a closed system, complete in itself so far as its processes are concerned"; and being such there can be no supersession of its laws by the operation of any facts and forces of a higher order. And yet, in spite of this undoubted truth, Mr. Campbell still believes that Jesus Christ came from another and better world than this.

We now reach another glaring example of the fundamental irrationality of theological teaching. There is another world, Mr. Campbell oracularly informs us, infinitely higher and better than this, from which the Gospel Jesus claims to have come. Now, on the unverifiable assumption that there is another world, how on earth can anybody tell that it is better than this? The reverend gentleman entertains a shockingly bad opinion of the one we all know:—

> "Our lot in this world is very sad and dreadful. I hope my outlook is not becoming more sombre with advancing years, but I seem to perceive with ever-increasing clearness as time goes on the piteousness of humanity. What a welter of sorrow and pain! What pathetic, futile dreams, baffled purposes, foiled endeavors, tragic defeats! What wonderful gains succeeded by miserable losses, as if some mighty, mocking demon watched our vain castle-building in order to have the pleasure of throwing it down! And what is there in this world that is worth our seeking that is lasting and secure? Nothing at all."

We beg to call Mr. Campbell's special attention to the highly significant fact that, according to his own teaching, the world he denounces in such eloquent and scathing terms is God's. God made it and God governs it, and it inevitably follows that he both made and governs it very badly. Now, what guarantee have we that if there is another world, also God-made and God-governed, it is one whit better and happier than this? None whatever, except the bare word of people who know nothing at all about it. A stronger and more irrefutable argument for Atheism than Mr. Campbell's sermon furnishes does

not exist. It robs the Deity of every scrap of his character. To preach a just and loving Heavenly Father in a world such as the discourse under discussion depicts is the quintessence of irrationality.

J. T. LLOYD.

Saint Patrick Nothing but a Popish Myth.

THERE are several ancient lives of the saint, all written, as Miss Cusack admits, for edification—that is, to stir feelings of devotion, not to awaken intelligence or to give information. Not one of those lives reaches back to within two hundred years of the alleged death of the saint; and there is no evidence to carry us farther back.

Patrick cannot be regarded as a historical character. He belongs essentially to the class of beings known as Irish giants, or giants of any other land; and his deeds are all on a par with those of necromancers, wizards, fairies, genii, etc. His whole career is one of miracle—that is, of fudge and falsehood, borrowed from old mythological tales, worked up in their present garb, and located here and there to suit the purpose and improve the trade of the priests. The Irish fairy-tales are quite as real history as the legend of St. Patrick; and Puck or Titania is just as historical a reality as the Irish saint.

The miracle Patrick is best known for is the expulsion of all demons, snakes, and toads from Ireland. Supposing it were a true story, still Patrick introduced into Ireland and established there the worst vermin and the worst reptiles the world has ever yet been cursed by—namely, the Romish priests and their agents.

But the clearing of Ireland of snakes, etc., is ascribed also to Joseph of Arimathea, an older fiction located in the first century, or 400 years before Patrick's time. Solinus, a geographer of the third century, or 200 years earlier than Patrick, mentions the absence of reptiles, etc., from Ireland.

Patrick employed a drum to frighten away the venomous reptiles of Ireland, as Booth does now to scare devils. It must be pleasant for Booth to remember that he but follows the Popish saint in the use of the drum. Patrick beat his drum so vigorously that he knocked a hole in it. However, an angel, who had probably been brought up to that trade, soon mended it for him, and he banged away again.

One cunning old serpent refused to budge, do what the saint would. At length Patrick made a box, and told the serpent he could not get into it. This led to a controversy, and the serpent was foolish enough to get into the box to prove to the saint that he could get in. The saint clapped on the lid, fastened it, and flung box and contents into the sea—which proves that serpents are no match for Romish saints in point of cunning.

Another reptile, a monster, Patrick chained up in Lough Dilveen, and told him to remain there till Monday. There the poor thing still remains, and every Monday morning he calls out, in good old Irish, "It is a long Monday, Patrick." The people around the Lough are said still to believe that. And why not? It is as true as anything else they say of Patrick (*Credulities: Past and Present;* W. Jones; 1884).

Patrick began his fight with the demons of Ireland before he landed there. When he approached the island he found a cordon of devils (no one else saw them) on the shore to prevent his landing. He made the sign of the cross, and they fled.

In Christian art Patrick is represented with a staff, around which a serpent is coiled. Exactly. Patrick is merely the Pagan god of healing, Æsculapius.

Patrick is said to have blessed the shamrock, and to have used it to prove to an Irish chief that the conundrum of the Trinity was a true doctrine. But this yarn did not see the true light until about 700 years after Patrick's death. In sober truth, the Irish reverence for the shamrock has survived from the old Pagan times—as everything else now called Christian has done.

But I must pay particular attention to Patrick's miracles and miraculous experiences. We are told that he went in early life to Lerins, an isle in the Mediterranean. Here he found a very old woman. A blooming young man appeared and claimed the old woman as his daughter. Patrick was astonished. The young man explained that Christ had bestowed upon him the gift of perpetual youth; that this precious gift he had forgotten to ask for his children as well as himself; consequently his children grew old and died, while he himself was ever young.

From this island Patrick bore away with him the staff of Jesus—a miraculous crozier, or walking-stick; and with that he performed the miracles and signs he showed to the Irish.

When the blessed saint went to Ireland, he sailed thither upon his altar-stone, which he seems ever to have borne about with him, and which was quite capable of taking a trip through the air much better than any bird could fly.

Another version of the stone-yarn is given by Miss Cusack. She says that when Patrick was leaving the coast of Gaul a poor leper on the beach begged to be taken on board. The crew refused, but the saint flung his stone altar within reach of the leper, who sailed thereon in the wake of the ship until they reached Ireland; there the leper was the first to land.

On one occasion Patrick kindled a fire by five drops of water that fell from his fingers; and on another he performed the same trick with icicles. This happened while he was yet a child. He raised five cows to life and one man, while still in his boyhood. During the same early period he turned a bucket of water into the purest honey. Bee farmers would be delighted with a boy like that.

The fisherman at Wicklow refused to give the saint some fish, and he cursed the river to that degree that the fellow could never find fish there again.

A staff fell from heaven for Patrick—if it wasn't from a tree it fell.

Patrick had a furious contest, at the court of Tara, with the king's Druids. He raised one of them high in the air, and let him fall and killed him. Then an earthquake shook the place, and a furious storm came on, and a mysterious darkness surrounded the Pagans. Like Christ, he passed through the keyhole into the palace, much to the fright of the king and his people.

The Druid, not able to poison the saint, brought down a mass of snow, which covered the ground up to the waists of men. Patrick swept it all away in a moment. The Druid then covered the land with dense darkness; and Patrick dispelled that also.

Patrick then offered to shut up one of his converts in a hut with a Druid—the Druid clad in the Christian's tunic, and the Christian wearing the Druid's. The hut was set fire to, after being piled on one side with dry faggots, on the other with green wood. The Christian took his place on the dry wood, the Pagan on the green. The Christian came out quite unhurt, but the Pagan garment he wore was reduced to ashes. The Druid himself was burned to death, but the Christian garment he wore had not the least sign of fire upon it.

The king was not converted, but he might as well have been. There was no resisting a juggler like Patrick.

Patrick's stone altar, when an outrage was committed near it, emitted three streams of pure blood; but they do not say what animal's blood it was.

Patrick, in his travels, came to a cross erected over a grave. He went to the grave, and asked the corpse who he was. "A poor Pagan," replied the corpse. "How came the cross here then?" demanded the saint. A certain foreigner was buried not far off, and his mother came to erect this cross on his tomb. Grief blinded her, and she put the cross on

the wrong grave. The saint thereupon rectified the mistake.

He lost his horses in the darkness, and he held up five fingers which illuminated all the plain like an electric light, and the horses were found.

Near Limerick they show a stone marked by the impress of Patrick's knees and body.

I have given a selection of the incidents and juggler-tricks in what is called "St. Patrick's Life." The Romanists believe all that wretched stuff—and gape for more.

That Patrick is but one of the heroes of the nursery tales, or of fairy tales, or of household tales, must be clear to all unbiassed people. Fin McCoul, the ancient Irish giant, was as historical as Patrick, and his miracles quite as edifying. Irish and other popular tales preserved by the peasantry are of exactly the same character and equally true.

And this ridiculous fiction the Irish Romanists yearly celebrate as the most important "personage" in their history! Such is one result of priestly tuition.

(The late) Jos. Symes.

A Deathless Tragedy.

It was quite by accident that we came to read *Foxglove Manor*. We had known George Buchanan by some of his terrible and arresting poems, and also by his melodious and pleasing "Wedding of Shon Maclean"; but his fiction to us was a closed book until we strayed across this exquisite specimen of a satirical and venemous attack on the Church. Whether it be through the medium of the novel, the pamphlet, by speech, or by scientific discourse, that the "Mother of Lies" is exposed and annihilated, any means is commendable. As Nietzsche says in one of his fierce indictments, no methods are too petty to use in attacking Christianity—the one immortal blemish on mankind. Messrs. Chatto and Windus are responsible for the publication of this little Voltairean gem; this does not in any way surprise us. Publishers who were prepared to be the medium of Swinburne's works would not strain at George Buchanan.

In a prefatory note, the author announces that the tragedy in fiction must not be construed into an attack on the priesthood generally. This, we venture to say, may be interpreted to suit the taste of any reader. If he happens to have orthodox inclinations, it will be quite acceptable; but, on the other hand, if he should be a reader of wider tastes than are found in Christian limits, he will smile; the powder is there in spite of the jam in the preface. Rabelais knew how to administer the powder; he did not convey it through his prefaces, but in what the superficial might consider coarseness and vulgarity. In a similar manner, Buchanan, working within limitations well known to creative artists in England, accomplished his task of writing a novel which, at an earlier date, might have meant burning at the stake for its author. Nowadays, kind Christian people freeze the unorthodox to death by many forms of social ostracism just for a little difference of opinion about the soul or other abstract questions.

The book opens with a pretty sketch of the parish of Oomberley, and in the village church we are introduced to the vicar of St. Cuthbert's, who is preaching a sermon. The Pagan richness of his discourse could never have emanated from any clergyman, we feel sure; we are indebted to the author for that. From a magnificent dissertation on the Greek gods, the preacher, of course, makes the inevitable transition to the Christian God, and terminates in an impassioned burst of rhetoric, which conveyed no definite meaning to the majority of his listeners. The pretty church organist, Edith Dove, is in love with this immaculate saint, and he, for spiritual reasons (this is a delightful stab), will not consent to having the engagement made public, and it therefore resolves itself into a *liaison*, with the usual clandestine meetings. On the day of the sermon there appears on the scene a Mrs. Ellen Haldane, who has attended the church, and the vicar recognises her as his favorite pupil when he was a teacher of classics in a seminary for young ladies. The beautiful girl of years ago is now wife of the owner of Foxglove Manor. This reappearance of the vicar's old love spells disaster to his amors with the pretty organist, and his time is now very well occupied with uninvited visits on the least pretence to see his former sweetheart. In a few words our author powerfully sketches her husband, who is—and we whisper it gently—an Agnostic.

> "His face, especially in repose, was by no means handsome. His grave, large, strongly marked features expressed decision, daring, and indomitable force.....a grim, self-sufficing, iron-natured man, one would have said, until one had looked into his blue-grey eyes which lit up his strong, rugged face."

Between George Haldane and his beautiful wife there is much conversation about religion, which all Freethinkers will enjoy. In one part of the book he asks her, "Why cannot you Christians dispense with incense and allow smoking instead—at least during the sermon?" There is also much argument between him and the vicar; and, when the husband has at last realised the intentions of this holy man, he declares vehemently to his wife:—

> "Mr. Santley is like all his tribe—a meddler and a mischief-maker. That is the worst of other-worldliness; it gives these traders in the Godhead, these peddlers who would give us in exchange for belief in their superstitions a *bonus* in paradise, an excuse for making this world unbearable. Well, my atheism, if you choose to call it so, against his theism. Mine at least keeps me a man among men, while his keeps him a twaddler among women."

There is a perfect little quotation from Lucretius, that splendid old Pagan, who knew what religion was:—

> "Which with horrid head
> Leered hideously from all the gates of heaven!"

We think now that we have quoted enough to prove that it will well repay reading by Freethinkers, who, as a class, are not so well provided with fiction as they might be. In these days it would almost seem, to judge by modern productions, that mental robustness in fiction is dead. The novel closes with a wise dispensation of poetic justice; and although it is tragedy in fiction, no one is killed.

Many Freethinkers may have read *Foxglove Manor;* some may not have heard of it; and others may not be able to procure it from their local libraries, those fountains of intellectual supply, whose needs are supervised very often by old gentlemen who would be better engaged in trimming rose-trees.

George Buchanan has been dead about twelve years. In the present day we read panegyrics of the latest work of genius from Manxland, *The Woman Thou Gavest Me*. It is difficult to pass an opinion on such works as this without a little heat. Given a supply of Christianity and a subject of illegitimacy, and lo! we have fame and a huge following. What a decline and fall from *Foxglove Manor!* We understand the symbol of the cross now. It should be, in all conscience, the cross of the Phallic worshipers.

The present writer once jokingly asked a friend of his why he did not read Hall Caine's novels. He replied: "I cannot work for my living and read his novels too"! *Foxglove Manor* will be a splendid antidote to this production, if anyone has been inveigled into reading it. We shall be most happy to send it to any Freethinker who would like to read it. If the writer were a millionaire it would give him much pleasure to circulate, free, ten thousand copies, say, in Leeds; afterwards we might try the Isle of Man.

William Repton.

I shall pass through this world but once; therefore, any good thing that I may do, or any kindness that I may show to my fellow-human creatures, let me do it *now;* let me not neglect it, or defer it, as I shall not pass this way again.—*Carlyle.*

Acid Drops.

The greatest torturer of the age is dead. We refer to Lord Cross. He invented the plank bed for prisoners when he was at the Home Office under a Tory administration. He never achieved anything else worth mentioning. He was reckoned a good Christian and an exemplary man. In reality he was one of the worst criminals on earth. He was not called upon to inflict sleepless agony on his already unfortunate fellow-men. He did it by choice. We wish we could add that he has his reward.

Lord Cross did not patent the plank bed—he presented it to the nation, which accepted it and still uses it. But he obtained his payment in another way. He joined the band of political pensioners. Having filled three offices under the Crown, it was impossible to live afterwards on his own resources with adequate "dignity." He signed a paper to that effect and got his £2,000 a year accordingly; and he drew it for twenty-seven years. £54,000 was therefore the price of the plank bed. For that is all the nation ever got out of Lord Cross for it.

The Archbishop of Canterbury cries off from a correspondence on the Church and Sport with the Rev. J. Stratton, an active member of the Humanitarian League. He says it is "impossible." Quite so. If he says anything against fox-hunting, etc., he annoys his dearest friends. If he says anything in favor of it he deepens the modern hostility to the Church. So mum's the word now,—though he was indiscreet enough some time ago in the speech that occasioned Mr. Stratton's challenge.

For stealing umbrellas from Westminster Abbey a woman was sentenced to a year's imprisonment last week. It was her third offence at that church. Evidently she believed in putting something aside for a rainy day.

The *Essex Weekly News* tells us that "An Essex Vicar, writing in his Parish Magazine a description of the evening service on Christmas Day, says:—'The carols were nicely sung, although some of the choristers had apparently succumbed to Christmas fare.'" Comment is superfluous.

Three prisoners were confirmed by the Bishop of St. David's in Swansea prison chapel recently. The Church must get hold of men somehow.

What is there in the wit and wisdom of the Nonconformists that makes their ideas on the school question the standard and norm for everybody else? asks the *Catholic Times*. We can only reply, nothing but sheer impudence, only the question has a much wider scope than is given it here, and applies to all classes of Christians. What is there in the wit and wisdom of Christians as a whole that their ideas on life should be made the standard and norm for everybody else? When the question of divorce is under discussion, we are deluged with information about the "Christian ideal," what Christ taught, and what are the teachings of the Christian Church. So also with all other questions. Christians talk as though it was their duty to lay down rules and everybody else's to observe them. The attitude of Nonconformists on the education question is only part of the general Christian attitude. All other than Christians are calmly ignored. And this, we repeat, is just impertinence. It is part of the lack of consideration for others that is so striking a feature of Christianity wherever it is planted.

Consider the impertinence of the common expression, "Christian civilisation." Our civilisation, such as it is, has been built up by all kinds of men and women, holding all kinds of opinions. Inventors and discoverers, artists, musicians, and men of letters, philosophers and scientists, hewers of wood and drawers of water, have all played their parts. Many of the things that have contributed to our civilisation—the printing press, the steam engine, the telegraph, etc.—have no more connection with religion than with the inhabitants of Mars. And yet the whole is claimed as a part of *Christian* civilisation. Even the virtues do not escape; for we hear of Christian kindness, Christian truth, Christian charity, etc., as though anyone who possesses these qualities must be either a Christian or a poacher on the Christian preserves. Of course, there is only one adequate explanation, and that may be given in the words of Dr. Johnson. When Johnson was asked how he came to give a faulty definition of a certain word, he promptly replied, "Ignorance, madam, pure ignorance."

There was a keen fight the other day before the licensing authorities of Middlesex over the Sunday opening of cinematograph shows. The Middlesex Council has made it a condition of granting a licence for six days that the proprietors shall not open on the seventh. The cinematograph proprietors exhibiting within the County of Middlesex applied to have this condition struck out, and in support of their application produced a letter from Scotland Yard to the effect that the police had received no complaints concerning the conduct of these places, either as regards the character of the pictures or the behavior of the audience. Against this request Mr. Blacklock, on behalf of the opposition, urged that the opening of places of amusement on Sundays "flagrantly violated the dearest convictions of a considerable section of the population." This may be the case; but as no one suggests that they should be compelled to attend, it is difficult to see the relevancy of the objection. There is no noise made outside a picture show, things are admittedly well managed within, and the general testimony of the police in all parts of the country is that the conduct of young people has improved where these Sunday entertainments are given. Nevertheless these Sabbatarians object, and the Middlesex authorities prefer to please them rather than allow a perfectly harmless form of entertainment to be carried on.

We are glad to learn, however, that the proprietors of thirty picture shows have decided to open on Sundays without the Council's permission. Moreover, the Secretary of the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association declares that if any action is taken by the Council the proprietors will receive the Association's support, and the matter will, in the event of a conviction, be carried to appeal. This is the proper course to adopt, and we are surprised that it has not been taken before. The position of the Council on this matter is far from secure, and a little courage on the part of those who have permitted the bigoted section of the Council to bully them into submission may result in teaching these catspaws of Church and Chapel a much-needed lesson.

Y. M. C. A. picture services are being held in London "for the benefit of young men who have no home in London." A film of the "last supper" would be an appropriate finale.

Mr. George R. Sims, writing over the signature of "Dagonet" in the *Referee*, has some amusing and pertinent remarks on the latest ecclesiastical rumpus. He says, "You made me Kikuyu; I didn't want to do it, is the refrain which is threatening to shake the Anglican Church to its foundations. I am wondering whether I am right in coming to the conclusion that the Anglican argument is that the confirmed murderer is more worthy of recognition than the unconfirmed Methodist."

"A Baptist Minister," writing in the *Daily Chronicle*, refers to Mr. Asquith, the Prime Minister, as "a good Old Testament saint." Decidedly a back-handed compliment.

Canon Ottley, the Secretary of the Imperial Sunday Alliance, was interviewed by a representative of the *Daily Telegraph*, and brought forward the usual *greasy* objections. Feeling was very intense against Sunday opening, of course. But, he said, they were not kill-joys.

> "If the people cared to open their places and give a pure, uplifting exhibition without charge, we would rejoice. We have no objection to cinematograph exhibitions in themselves. I would like to see the cinematograph adopted by every religious body in London, and in fact attached to Sunday-schools all over the country.....But we are out against these shows being run for profit on Sunday, entailing as they do much Sunday labor."

The humbug of this is painfully evident. In the first place, there is no more justification for asking cinematograph proprietors to work for nothing on Sunday than there is for asking all parsons to preach without payment. Second, whether a profit is made or not makes no difference to the labor employed. Third, the running of a picture palace involves no more labor than the opening of a church. Fourth, if they are attached to "religious bodies" and Sunday-schools, as much labor will be required as under present conditions. Finally, the whole of the apology rings false from beginning to end. What Canon Ottley wants is Sabbatarianism pure and simple. His is sheer bigotry *plus* cowardice.

It is concluded, by a writer in one of the weeklies, that because more "conscience money" is paid into the

exchequer in England than in any other country, Englishmen have a more sensitive conscience. The circumstance is open to an exactly opposite inference. It may be that the exchequer is defrauded of more here than elsewhere.

Some extracts from a privately circulated note in favor of a new religion, by Sir Francis Younghusband, appeared in a recent issue of the *Daily Telegraph* Sir Francis's new religion is of the Imperialist variety, and, so far as it aims at uniting people in all parts of the world in a common ideal of well-doing, no fault can be found with it. The mistake made is the common one of assuming that any such possible bond must be called, or deserves to be called, a religion. Sir Francis's career has brought him into direct touch with all, or nearly all, the principal religions of the world, and on reflection we think he would admit that nothing so fails to produce a common working bond as does religion. Of course, people of the same form of religion will unite, but their union only serves to make their separation from others sharper and more deadly. Men will sink their differences, in favor of some elements held in common, on any topic sooner than on a matter of religious belief.

Curiously enough, Sir Francis bears testimony to the truth of what has been said. He says that he has no desire to force men's faiths ino a single groove, but aims at "a common recognition by all creeds of the essential identity of their ethical aims." Exactly; the religious basis is impossible as a means of union, but ethics or sociology *may* supply what is needed. Why, then, call the appeal religious? It is ethical, or humanitarian, but it is not religious. For thousands of years teachers have been striving for union on a basis of religion, and the end is as far off as ever. Such union as the world has realised has been brought about by the spread of humanitarian ideas and ideals, which have also forced religion to become more humanitarian in its teachings. Sir Francis's appeal cannot possibly bring union among people of different religious beliefs, and his lavish use of the word "religion" can only cool the ardor of those who might take some interest in his proposals.

The Central Y. M. C. A., Tottenham-court-road, intends starting a series of Sunday evening Picture Services. We beg to protest. This will involve much Sunday labor, and, besides, collections will be taken up—even if there is not a charge for seats. Moreover, there remains that large section of the population whose feelings are so terribly outraged by Sunday cinematograph shows.

The hero of the "Curate's Slander Case" won an easy victory on Monday. Rev. Thomas Ghent, curate of St. Andrew's Church, Stockwell Green, pursued Mr. Arthur Fitzgerald, a police-sergeant, of Stockwell, for slander—the said slander being that the reverend gentleman had misconducted himself (in the sense of adultery) with the defendant's wife. After a trial of nine days the jury disagreed. Mr. Ghent arranged for a new trial as promptly as possible, and the case came into court again on Monday. Mr. Fitzgerald appeared in person, but said that he could not conduct the defence himself. The first hearing had cost him £592, a good deal of which was still owing to his solicitors. He had no money to employ solicitors and counsel again, or to bring his witnesses into court, and was therefore bound to ask for an adjournment, which the prosecution opposed and Mr. Justice Lush refused. When the case was ordered to proceed, Mr. Fitzgerald, while not withdrawing his defence, walked out of court, saying "He must take his judgment, that's all. He is a man of means." Then the prosecution, the judge, and the jury went to work, and in a very short time judgment was given for the plaintiff, with £1,000 damages. Which shows that England is indeed a free country, with *one* law for the rich and the poor.

It appears that subscriptions were opened in the *Church Times* and the *Guardian* to assist Mr. Ghent in carrying on his action. The regulations of the Metropolitan Police prevented Mr. Fitzgerald from procuring assistance in the same way. Happy curate! Poor constable!

The clergy are not always in the wrong. According to last week's *Observer* the Rev. W. Temple has made the following statement. "I suppose," he said, "that no nation has ever been so indifferent and negligent of truth as the English nation." The only criticism we wish to make is that the reverend gentleman need not "suppose" this.

Rev. Evan Edwards, the oldest Baptist minister in the world, has just died at Torquay, at the age of ninety-nine. He started early as "the boy preacher" and continued until Christmas 1911. It is computed that he preached 8,080 sermons altogether. He will be glad to sit down a bit where he is now—if he can only find the floor. Another Welsh preacher, Rev. E. Morris, of Dyffryn, Merioneth, who died at ninety, is reckoned to have preached 10,000 sermons. He would be company for Mr. Edwards. Fortunately they belonged to the same denomination.

Rev. William Francis John Romanis, of Homefield, Godalming, Surrey, left £40,295. A big lump to thread the old needle's eye with. But the clergy seem to discount all that difficulty.

Rev. Canon Arthur Henry Sanxay Barwell, of Blechingley House, Blechingley, Surrey, left estate valued at £72,789 gross, with net personality £65,823. Not bad for a "Blessed be ye poor exhorter."

Mr. J. M. Robertson lectured at South Place Institute last Sunday morning on Carlyle and Diderot. An interesting subject, of course, and no doubt treated in an interesting manner. But a more seasonable subject might have been Mr. McKenna and the Blasphemy Laws.

The Bible has done mischief in many ways. Here is a new one. Copies printed in small type, and used in schools by children, are responsible for much injurious eyestrain. Dr. Lydia Towers, one of the schools' medical inspectors for Shropshire, has just made a serious complaint of this evil.

"Laughter as a Crime" runs a headline in the *Daily News*. It is considered so when it is directed against Christian superstition.

Mr. Balfour began his Gifford Lectures on "Natural Theology" at Glasgow on Monday. He is a very clever word-spinner and he attracted a vast audience—of the "classes" of course. A headline in the *Daily News* report indicated that Mr. Balfour wanted "A Social God"—which might suggest "A Smoke-Room God" to a good many people, and raise a vision of pipes and glasses. It seems to us that Mr. Balfour will have to take whatever "God" there is—and that his own wishes will count for nothing in the matter.

GOD'S APOLOGIES.

Small Boy: "Does God make apologies?"
Clerical Visitor: "Certainly not."
Small Boy: "Didn't he make you?"
Clerical Visitor: "Certainly."
Small Boy: "Well, pa says you are only an apology for a man."

She was a lone widow, and was spending her last day upon earth. The mild young curate at her bedside remarked that the end was very near. "Yes," she responded, "it's very comforting to think that before to-night I shall be folded in Beelzebub's bosom." "My good lady, you mean Abraham's bosom," corrected the young apostle. "Ah, well," responded the departing one, "it doesn't matter. After twenty years of widowhood, I'm not particular as to what the gentleman's name might be." And in this sweet truthfulness she died.

A clerical gentleman was the other day walking along the main street of a village where he had once been minister, and, on meeting one of his old parishioners, paused to speak with her. "How are you, Mrs. Block?" said he, kindly. "Vera weel, sir," replied the woman, plaintively. "And how is your husband?" "My man, sir, is in heaven, sir, this twa year." "In heaven? I am very sorry to hear it," responded the clergyman absently, as he passed on, leaving the poor woman dumb with astonishment.

An old Yorkshire woman being much distressed at the sudden loss of her husband, the dissenting minister assured her consolingly: "He is now with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob." "That's the worst of it," she sobbed; "and he always was so shy among strangers."

Farmer Brown: We git drought right along every year now.
Farmer Greene: We allers got plenty rain till we got summer boarders. I think them cusses prays fer fair weather.

To Correspondents.

E. B.—Thanks for welcome cuttings.

W. P. BALL.—We hope your health keeps fairly good. Many thanks for cuttings.

R. AXELLEY.—You would find an answer to almost all such questions in our *Bible Romances*. Profane historians—that is, real historians—do not relate the Israelites' crossing of the Red Sea.

H. B. AMOS.—Thanks for the copy of Mr. Salt's new volume, which we shall have pleasure in noticing.

J. W. GIFFEN (Australia).—Glad to receive your encouraging letter. You were just in time to get a copy out of the last packet of *Bible Romances* that we have in stock. The book will have to be reprinted.

E. PINDER.—Pleased to have "the Pinder family's Congratulations" and good wishes.

FREDERICK WALSH.—Thanks for marked paper. It is so good of you to trouble about such matters at all.

S. SCOTT.—See paragraph. Thanks.

N. S. S. GENERAL FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges: John Alexander (Melbourne), £1 4s. 5d.

H. BLACK.—Yes, it *was* a successful meeting. Thanks for cuttings. Glad to see the correspondence continues in the *Manchester Guardian*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Blasphemy Case.

THERE is not much more to be said on this particular case. We propose to deal with the whole question of the Blasphemy Laws at an early date. Even now there are misunderstandings all round. We speak, of course, as an expert in this matter.

Mr. Stewart will evidently serve out his sentence. We never really hoped for any good from a petition. We signed it in a soft moment, so that what was being done in that way might have the best possible *chance* of success. The second petition to Mr. Asquith seems to us a mere waste of time—at least as far as this Stewart case is concerned.

Mr. McKenna's first reply to the petition was a caddish one. His second reply is purely controversial, and his ace of trumps was played rather skilfully. Why petition the Home Secretary now that there is a Court of Criminal Appeal? Stewart knew he could appeal and he has not done so. Mr. Asquith may urge the same objection to *his* petition.

What has been done in this case is all very well in its way. We congratulate those who have engineered the Petition on their conversion since the Boulter case, and we hope the change will be lasting. But the two things that ought to have been done have not been attempted. There should have been the biggest possible protest meeting of all advanced parties in London, and the case should have been taken to the Court of Appeal. The latter point was absolutely vital; as our readers will see presently—when we return to the subject.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote was quite right in arranging for his Sunday evening's address at the Queen's (Minor) Hall on "Mr. McKenna and Prisoners for Blasphemy." In spite of the bitter cold snap that had set in so suddenly a large and enthusiastic audience assembled to hear the President of the National Secular Society on a subject in regard to which he might claim to be the first specialist in England. His address was listened to with profound attention, and the applause was very marked when he resumed his seat. Mr. Herbert Burrows, who is not a member of the N. S. S., but is an old enemy of the Blasphemy Laws, made an excellent chairman, and explained the "abolitionists'" position in a compact little speech, which was loudly cheered. Mr. Arthur B. Moss occupied a seat on the platform. A resolution of protest against Mr. Stewart's imprisonment was carried unanimously. It was short and sharp, and ran as follows: "That this meeting protests against the imprisonment for blasphemy of Mr. T. W. Stewart, and calls upon the Government to release him forthwith and put an end to the possibility of such an outrage on personal liberty occurring again."

The London Freethinkers' Annual Dinner takes place at Frascati's on Wednesday evening, January 28. Mr. Foote will take the chair as President of the National Secular Society, and will be "supported" by Mr. Cohen, Mr. Lloyd, Mr. Moss, and other well-known speakers. There are special reasons for a good rally this year, and the President hopes to see old friends as well as new ones. The reference to two hundred diners being all that Frascati's people can arrange for in the room engaged should not frighten any friends away. It was merely a friendly hint to certain friends, especially to those at a considerable distance, to make quite sure of their tickets.

Miss Vance asks us to invite friends who have tickets to dispose of to return those they feel assured of *not* getting rid of as early as possible, in order that she may make use of them otherwise.

A Burton-on-Trent subscriber writes as follows in renewing his *Freethinker* subscription:—

> "I read a great many papers and periodicals, but as a constant reader of the *Freethinker* (every word of it!) for more than 30 years I have to say of it that it is the best, the purest, the brightest, the clearest, the truest, the bravest, the cleverest, the wittiest, the most thoughtful, intellectual, honest, outspoken, truthful, and unbribable of them all. My debt to it is untold, incalculable, and can never be discharged."

This is a full measure of praise, pressed down and running over.

It is a sign of the times that Mr. Bottomley dealt with the "Kikuyu" trouble in last week's *John Bull*. His pointed and outspoken article ended with a laugh at what the Bishops are quarreling, and a quotation from Ingersoll to the effect that the mystery of things is understood by chimpanzees as well as by cardinals, by apes as well as by popes.

Without talking politics we venture to express our belief that the final and decisive retirement of Mr. Chamberlain from public life will allow the breath of a greater freedom to blow through the City of Birmingham. There seems a foretaste of this in the *Gazette's* editorial on the Stewart case, which we reproduce for our own pleasure and we are sure the pleasure of the great majority of our readers:—

> "Mr. McKenna's letter refusing to modify the sentence of four months' imprisonment passed at the Stafford Assizes on William Stewart for blasphemy is a keen disappointment to those of us who had supposed that Liberalism stood for freedom of thought, liberty of Press and platform, and equal treatment for all offenders. When men of eminence like Canon Cheyne, the head of the critical school in the Established Church, Dr. Clifford, and Dr. Estlin Carpenter join in protesting against such a sentence, it seems strange that a Liberal Home Secretary should lag behind them. Mr. McKenna's plea is that Stewart was sentenced, not for his opinions but because he expressed them publicly in a manner calculated to wound the feelings of others—a contention which is only another disguise for the old principles of intolerance by which the Blasphemy Laws were inspired. 'Bad taste' and 'vulgarity' are to be deprecated in all controversialists, but they are not the monopoly of one form of opinion. The Home Secretary makes his case worse by trying to palliate the sentence on the ground that Stewart was engaged in a neo-Malthusian propaganda. A pamphlet of that character formed the subject of a second indictment

at Stafford Assizes, on which Stewart was acquitted, and Mr. Justice Coleridge specifically stated that in his sentence he was punishing Stewart only for the offence of blasphemy of which he had been convicted. It is grossly unfair that the Home Secretary should justify Stewart's sentence because of a charge of which he was acquitted by the jury."

The Birmingham of the old days speaks in that leaderette.

The *Gazette* did even better than that. It not only printed an excellent letter from Mr. John Breese but it returned to the subject on its own account. Two days later another editorial appeared, from which we make the following extracts:—

"It may not be easy for Mr. Asquith to censure the Home Secretary by reversing his judgment, but the principle involved is of more vital importance than Mr. McKenna's official status or personal feelings.....Nobody pretends that Mr. Stewart used nice language, or language that we should like to see made common in controversy. At the same time, vulgarity is neither a crime nor a monopoly. It is one of the abominable absurdities of the musty law under which Mr. Stewart was convicted that it only protects the established religion. 'Not only are some Christian religions entirely unprotected,' said Professor Geldart recently, 'but the peculiar doctrines of non-established Christian bodies, such as the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Mass or the beliefs of Unitarians, may be wantonly insulted so far as the law of blasphemy goes.' No Liberalism worth its salt will tolerate the pernicious discrimination and punctilious application of a law so self-condemned on all grounds of religious and civil fairness."

Stands Birmingham where it did? No. It is moving forward—and at a good pace too.

One point in Mr. Breese's excellent letter deserves special notice. After mentioning the high character of so many of the signatories to the petition for Mr. Stewart's release he continued: "But all these were ignored, and will be ignored, until one of these cases is taken to the Court of Appeal. The President of the National Secular Society offered to do this in the Stewart case, but, unfortunately, his proferred help and expert advice were declined." Mr. Breese recognises the vital point of the whole case, which was bungled from the very first. It was his own fault originally in thinking too much of himself, and too little of the Freethought party's interest in the fight for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. And it was the fault afterwards of the extraordinary ineptitude of the "friends" who got around him. Mr. Stewart himself does not always seem to be in his right senses; of his "friends" one must go to Dante for the proper words to say of them—*Non ragionem di lor, ma guarda e passa.*

We have pleasure in quoting the following paragraph from last week's *Inquirer* (Unitarian):—

"It is hardly necessary for us to add that we do not for one moment palliate the conduct of Stewart, or underestimate the danger to public morals, if he has offended in the way suggested. We wish that we could have made our protest against the Blasphemy Laws in a case which had not so many unpleasant features associated with it. But we must ask our readers to keep the distinction clearly in their minds between a public attack upon the Christian religion—the technical offence of blasphemy—and offences of an entirely different kind, which may deserve severe punishment when they can be brought home to the offender in a court of law. We object to prosecutions under the obsolete blasphemy laws as contrary to public policy and the true interests of religion, whether the accused be a scoundrel or a saint."

The last sentence hits the right nail well on the head.

We have often thought of making a collection of Ingersoll's best bons mots. We come across new ones now and then, even at this time of day. Ingersoll said once, in conversation, that England reminded him of a burglar with a white necktie. A palpable hit at John Bull's behavior in all parts of the world where anything is to be appropriated.

TRUE COURAGE.

I honor the man who is willing to sink
Half his present repute for the freedom to think;
And when he has thought, be his cause strong or weak,
Will sink t'other half for the freedom to speak;
Not caring what vengeance the mob has in store,
Be that mob the upper ten thousand or lower.

—*Lowell.*

Professor Bonney on Religion and Science.

"A man may reach the loftiest pinnacle of scientific glory whose heart has never heaved with one religious emotion. He may penetrate to the very holy of holies in nature's temple, and yet retain his Atheism, in spite of the hallowed influences that surround him. Nothing is plainer in theory, and, alas! nothing has been more surely confirmed by experience, than that the possession of science is not the possession of religion."—PROFESSOR HITCHCOCK, *The Religion of Geology*, p. 303.

"It is unfortunate to have a religion against which every good and noble heart protests. Let us have a good one or none. O! my pity has been excited by seeing these ministers endeavor to warp and twist the passages of Scripture to fit some demonstration in science. These pious evasions! these solemn pretences! When they are caught in one way they give a different meaning to the words, and say the world was not made in seven days. They say 'good whiles'—epochs."—COLONEL INGERSOLL, *The Dying Creed*, p. 18.

PROFESSOR BONNEY'S new book, *The Present Relations of Science and Religion*, is an interesting work, as any work needs must be, coming from one who is a Professor of Geology and a Canon of the Church of England. Here we shall have the reasons by means of which the author is enabled to run with the Church hare and follow with the hounds of science. It used to be the hare of science and the hounds of the Church, but the position is reversed now.

A good idea of the devastation wrought by science among religious beliefs may be gained by comparing this work with Professor Hitchcock's work on *The Religion of Geology*, written seventy years ago,* with precisely the same purpose; the author of which was also a Professor of Theology and Geology. This work was written before the advent of Darwinism, although the author laments the spread of Materialism and the use made of geological discoveries in attacking the Bible, and reluctantly confesses that the Deluge could not have been universal; yet, on p. 327, he gives a diagram, or geological column, beginning with the creation of the earth on the first day, the lowest forms of life on the second day, plants and fishes on the third day, and sun, moon, and stars on the fourth day! No more need be said. Every astronomer and geologist knows that millions of stars existed before the sun, that the sun existed many millions of years before the earth, and that the moon was thrown off from the earth while it was yet in a molten state, ages before any sign of life appeared on the earth's surface.

The writer also remarks that, in spite of the surrender of the universality of the Deluge,—

"the Bible has remained unaffected. The infidel felt confident that the arrows which he drew from this quiver would certainly pierce Christianity to the heart. But they rebounded from her adamantine breastplate, blunted and broken; and no one will have the courage to pick them up and hurl them again" (p. 99).

Let us see how the Bible stands to-day. Professor Bonney—who, by the way, admits nothing which he is not obliged, and takes refuge in all the holes and corners not yet explored by science—surrenders the scientific accuracy of the Bible, as follows:—

"The opening chapters of Genesis were formerly supposed to give the history of the early days of the earth more accurately than the Annals of Tacitus do that of his own age. We must frankly admit that at the present day no geologist of any repute would accept the narrative of the Deluge, or that of the episodes of the Creation, as actual history. Records of both of these are to be found on the clay tablets which once formed part of an Assyrian library, and they may be traced back from the later days of that monarchy to the times when the Semetic had hardly began to blend with the Sumerian race."†

Not only does the Professor give up the Creation and Deluge stories, but he candidly admits that the Darwinian theory of the origin of species is scientifically proved. He tells us that when Darwin published his *Origin of Species*, he frankly acknowledged

* Published in 1851, but mostly written, says the author, "eight or ten years ago"; preface, p. 5.

† T. G. Bonney, *The Present Relations of Science and Religion* (1913), p. 120.

that the geological evidence, though strong in some places, was weak in others, attributing this to the imperfections in the geological record, and suggesting that the missing links would be found by later discoverers. "That," observes Professor Bonney, "has been done to an extent to satisfy the expectations even of the most sanguine" (p. 53). And further:—

> "Thus, the past history of plant-life, though on the whole it is rather less complete, confirms that of animal life, and we can confidently affirm that the facts which have been discovered since 1859 show that the gaps which then existed in the Geological Record have been largely filled up, and that evidence has been obtained which justifies the assertion that a process of evolution holds good in all parts of the earth, among all forms of life, both high and low, and throughout the whole course of terrestrial history."

Upon this point Professor Bonney speaks with authority, as, being a Professor of Geology, it lies peculiarly within his province. It is worthy of note that, in the science with which he is familiar, and in which he is an expert, he can find no support, but positive contradiction, to the Bible. Therefore, whatever support the writer gives to religion cannot be said to be founded upon his independent discoveries and researches in science; for he himself says, "I cannot venture to speak as an expert outside the particular branch at which I have worked. I have therefore preferred, in dealing with these results, to quote from some recognised authority rather than put his opinion into my own words" (p. 8).

In his chapter on "Recent Advances in Physical Science," Professor Bonney relies wholly upon such writers as Sir Oliver Lodge, Mr. Whetham, and De Tunzlemann, all theologians disguised as scientists, the only one cited on the other side being Professor Haeckel, but only cited for the purpose of attacking. In this connection we should like to point out that while the Nonconformist clergy—with a mixture of ignorance and malignity—treat Haeckel as though he was some ignorant little schoolboy, and they were schoolmasters, Professor Bonney knows better, and, though he accuses Haeckel of begging the question, he acknowledges his "wide knowledge of and valuable researches in biology" (p. 29); although we are sorry to see that he reproduces some insolent remarks regarding Haeckel, by De Tunzlemann; also the remark of Sir Oliver Lodge that it is impossible for a physicist to discuss, "within the terms of courtesy, the physical hypothesis which forms the basis of" Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe*. Well, there is nothing remarkable about *that;* very few Christians are able to discuss Atheism "within the terms of courtesy," and, although the tone of Professor Bonney's work is far above the scurrility of the common or garden Christian Evidencer, yet even he cannot avoid the following flash: "A bald and blatant Atheism does, unfortunately, find more favor with the quarter-educated crowd." If Professor Bonney had studied the writings of the opponents of Christianity and religion as much as he has studied the apologists of them, he would have left this unsaid. In fact, he never really comes to grips with the Atheist at all, and those who go to the book for a confutation of Atheism will find nothing of what they want. In the meanwhile, he grants the evolution of plants and animals, and, indeed, finds the origin of the world and all its inhabitants, in the atoms of the Materialist, and he grants that these, in turn, are evolved from the ether; but his mind oscillates between science and religion. Replying to the objection that the evolutionist is prevented from accepting any revelation which is not gradual in its action, like the processes of ordinary growth, he observes:—

> "But we must remember that there are not a few authorities in zoology who would strongly repudiate anything like creation, as this was formerly understood, and yet believe that there are occasionally 'jumps' in the passage from one species to another, and many suppose, that notwithstanding a recent discussion, a break can still be found between the animate and the inanimate, between living and dead protoplasm, and even if we admit that, as we have endeavored to indicate, everything may be reduced to ether and electricity, yet even then a gap exists between that ether and its 'granulated' state as matter." *

That is to say that in all those problems of which science has not yet discovered the natural cause, the believer is entitled to say "it is the work of God." Very well, so be it; but in that case his religion has but a precarious existence, subject to constant alarms lest science should penetrate these mysteries upon which his religion depends. The past history of the warfare of science with religion proves this. At one time it was asked "Who made the world?" And when the nebular hypothesis solved the problem of the origin of stars and plants, the believer was ready with another mystery, "Who made the animals and plants?" And when Darwin solved that question with his book on the *Origin of Species*, the question was shifted to, "Who made man?" which he answered by his *Descent of Man*. Now, they ask, "Who made life?" The scientists reply, "If you will have a little patience and wait, we shall probably be able to explain the natural evolution of the living from the non-living, as we are actively engaged upon the problem now. And, as we have been so successful in explaining the natural origin of worlds, plants, animals, and man, so we have not the least doubt that we shall ultimately solve the problem of the origin of life."

The "gaps" in our knowledge are closing up. The fortress of religion is beleaguered. The advance guard of science is ever pushing forward; it is gradually encircling the walls of superstition, and when the circle is complete, there will be no gaps—as Professor Bonney calls them—by which the supernatural can intrude into the ordered domain of nature.

Further on, the claim for the interference of God at certain stages in the course of nature is altogether abandoned, as follows:—

> "Pantheism in some important respects comes nearer to the truth than that vague and indefinite dualism which contrasts God and His works and regards the universe as an elaborate piece of mechanism which, though once devised by Him, is not adequate or adapted for all possible contingencies, but requires Him to 'interfere,' as an engineer must occasionally do with a complicated machine, either to adjust it or add some temporary contrivance" (p. 138).

We shall come nearer the truth, he continues, if we say that in one sense all things are equally natural, "for they are all the outcome of law"; while in another sense "everything is supernatural," because we can follow the evolution from the complex to the simple; yet "we come at last to the cloud of impenetrable mystery, and begin to realise the significance of that phrase in the Book of Exodus, "Man shall not see me and live."

But if the universe and God are one and indivisible—as the Pantheist asserts—it is difficult to understand how anyone could see God, whether he lived or died as the consequence. For the rest, it is true that modern religion, pursued by its enemies, at last takes refuge in a "cloud of impenetrable mystery," being, in this respect, not unlike the cuttlefish, which surrounds itself with an inky fluid to escape observation. But it is the business of science to clear up mysteries; and religion will maintain but a shivering existence among these clouds.

Of the Pantheism of the ancients, Epicurus and Lucretius—who held that the gods had created the universe and then left it to its fate—he observes: "This, of course, is not Atheism, but so far as any practical results are likely to go, it is no great improvement" (p. 93); yet he thinks a form of Pantheism possible in which God and the universe might be regarded as one, and yet "that this God might love the world as, and because, it was a part of himself." The rock upon which Pantheism—as a religious system—splits, is the fact that if God and the universe are one, then man, who is a part of the universe, is also a part of God, and if he prays he is

* Bonney, *The Present Relations of Science and Religion*, p. 117.

partly praying to himself. In other words, it does away with the personality of God; for you cannot have God and the universe as one and yet regard God as a person who sees and hears, and who can be prayed to and supplicated. As Schopenhauer truly remarked—Professor Bonney gives the quotation from Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe*:—

> "Pantheism is only a polite form of Atheism. The truth of Pantheism lies in its destruction of the dualist antithesis of God and the world, in its recognition that the world exists in virtue of its own inherent forces. The maxim of the Pantheist, God and the world are one, is merely a polite way of giving the Lord God His *congé*."

The chapter entitled "The Credibility of Christianity" is a peculiarly futile performance; the Professor appears to think that if it can only be proved that the Gospels were written by, or during, the time of the Apostles whose names they bear, then we ought to believe in them as historical documents. He appears to be quite unaware that criticism has long passed this point. That it is not a question now of the authenticity of the Gospels that Christians have to defend, but whether there ever existed such a person as Jesus Christ or not. Professor Bonney has performed the feat of writing a defence of Christianity without mentioning Robertson's *Pagan Christs*, Professor Drew's *Christ Myth*, and Professor Benjamin Smith's *Ecce Deus*, to say nothing of Dr. Frazer's *Golden Bough*, which—in spite of its author's concession of the historical existence of Jesus as a man—is calculated to raise insuppressible doubts upon the subject. Whether this is due to an ostrich policy of burying the head in the sand to escape its enemies, or because Professor Bonney does not study his opponents' case, and has found no mention of the subject in the numerous apologetic works he cites from, we are unable to say; but the fact remains that this part of the work is about twenty years behind the times.

For a man of Professor Bonney's ability, the whole book is an exceedingly poor one. In spite of the rush of Rationalist and Freethought works from the press of late years, Haeckel's *Riddle of the Universe* is the only one noticed, and that only slightly. All the others works cited are apologies for religion or neutral. Professor Bonney, instead of coming as a scientific champion to the assistance of religion, appears to us as one who has himself had to wrestle with doubt, and has eagerly sought fresh air for faith in the apologies offered in defence of Christianity.

The work is more likely to raise doubts than to still them; especially the chapter—founded upon White's *Warfare of Science*—in which he, metaphorically speaking, stands in sackcloth and ashes; and proves how the Church in all ages has been the deadly opponent of science. We would welcome a few more chapters upon this subject—there is plenty of material—from Professor Bonney.

W. MANN.

The Locomotive Organs of Animals.

PLANTS possess the power of assimilating lifeless substances such as carbonic acid gas (carbon dioxide, CO_2) and mineral salts. Animals, on the other hand, require a supply of complex, living matter for their nourishment. As these organic foods do not come to animals, there arose the necessity for the power of movement, and to this end innumerable devices have been developed in the zoological kingdom.

As animal organisms developed in structure and function, the need of movement from place to place became essential. In consequence of this, the organs which assumed the responsibilities of transferring the animal from one spot to another usually took the form of elongations or processes projecting from its body. Moreover, in connection with these processes, which, in the higher animals take the form of fins, wings, arms, and legs, special muscular tissue was evolved for the purpose of securing the motion in question.

The energy essential to this power of movement is derived from the decomposition of the complex food substances which animals assimilate.

In some of the simpler animal creatures movement is secured through the protrusion of protoplasmic processes, as in the well-known instance of the amœba, whilst in other single-celled organisms it is made possible by the presence of minute filaments, resembling hairs, which are termed cilia or flagella. These processes move to and fro, and in this way propel the tiny creatures through the running brook or stagnant pool in which they dwell. But in the more advanced forms of life muscles are the chief agents in producing movement; they are, indeed, the driving forces of the various organs employed in locomotion.

As we ascend the ladder of life the more specialised become the instruments which secure motion. And among those vertebrate organisms, of which man is the highest product, some of the most remarkable locomotive adaptations are to be met with. As muscles render the fullest service when they have some rigid body to pull against, special hard parts of the animal frame were evolved for their support. With invertebrate animals the same result has been reached through the development of a hardened integument such as shells and leathery skins. But with backboned creatures, however, internal supports were evolved in the form of bone. The skeleton of these is a bony structure which not only provides greater play for the muscles but also serves to support the weight of the body and to preserve its shape.

Locomotion being so essential to the well-being of multicellular life, the bodily forms of vertebrates are so fashioned that they easily overcome the antagonistic incident forces of their environment. In other words, the shape of the body is such that it offers the least resistance to the medium in which the animal lives, whether its habitat be aquatic or terrestrial. With fishes, for instance, the body and its organs are specially adapted to meet the requirements of their watery home:—

> "Their bodies are elongated and flattened laterally, pointed in front and tapering behind, to offer as little resistance as possible when moving through the water. The head joins the trunk directly, so that no appearance of a neck is seen. The tapering hinder end of the body expands into a powerful tail set on vertically. The paired fins correspond to the front and hind limbs of the higher classes of vertebrates, but are much simpler in form; unpaired fins are also present. Locomotion is effected principally by the waving of the tail and the flexion of the body, the fins serving chiefly for balancing purposes."

Various very striking adaptations to their medium are afforded by the penguins, seals, porpoises, and whales. The modifications which these last have undergone are indeed remarkable. Those sea-dwelling mammals, the porpoises and whales, which are justly regarded as the descendants of four-footed terrestrial ancestors, have assumed such a fish-like appearance that until comparatively recent years they were regarded as fishes even by students of nature, a circumstance which still survives in the term "whale fisheries."

Every vertebrated animal possesses a long bony axis which is known as the vertebral column. This runs through the length of the body, and thus forms a firm foundation around which the body is built up. At one end the backbone terminates in a bony chamber, the brain-box or skull, which contains the brain and sense organs, whilst at the other extremity it usually tapers off gradually to form the tail. As a rule, two pairs of appendages are attached to the bony column, whose duty it is to perform the function of locomotion. Whether these appendages assume the form of fins, arms, legs, or wings, the paired arrangement of the limbs enables the organism to maintain its balance; although, as previously intimated, fishes are furnished with additional unpaired fins.

Further interesting phenomena are disclosed by a fuller and more detailed examination of the anatomy of the animal body. Not for purposes of locomotion alone is the power of movement required. The comforts and conveniences of general life also demand adaptive power, and as a result endless modifications have arisen to meet this necessity.

The mechanical contrivances contained in the body of that faithful and intelligent creature, the dog, afford an excellent illustration of this. The canine body is composed of an axial portion (head, trunk, and tail) and an appendicular portion (limbs), the foundation being the backbone. Hence, if this foundation were formed of one unending bone, its rigidity would necessarily seriously incommode the bodily movements of the animal, and would render the body liable to sudden shocks and jars. To avoid such inconveniences, while at the same time securing a sufficiently firm support, the backbone is made up of a chain of bony rings termed vertebral, "fitted end to end, so as to form a canal or tube, which contains the spinal cord." Lying between these rings are pads of gristle, which deaden shocks, and, in addition, the bones are bound together by tough ligaments. Thus, the vertebral column, though essentially one body, has been so adapted that it permits a certain amount of pliability.

The skull is attached to the first vertebra, or *atlas*, and this attachment is so arranged that the head is at liberty to move up and down just as if it were on a hinge. In addition to this, the head and the atlas together are capable of moving from side to side around a projecting pivot on the second vertebra—the *axis*. In this way the head is enabled to nod or to shake.

The skull is divided into the brain cavity and the facial section. The brain-box is built up of flattened bone plates, which form a rigid covering for that delicate organ, the brain. In the facial portion of the skull, the only movable part is the lower jaw bone, which is joined to the base of the skull, and its power of movement is essential to the mastication of food.

When we examine the structure of the chest, we discover that its expansion and contraction are essential to the process of respiration, and the ribs are so arranged as to provide for the necessary movement. As Randal Mundy writes in his excellent *Biology* :—

> "This freedom of movement is brought about by the rounded top of each rib fitting into a hollow cavity on the outside face of a vertebra, and by the lower end of the rib being either fastened to the breastbone by flexible gristle or ending freely without any attachment."

The upper and lower extremities, the arms and legs, are attached to the trunk by means of bony girdles. The fore limbs possess a wider range of movement than the hind limbs, and in consequence of this the hand and arm have become of vast importance to such animals as monkeys and men. Even in the case of the scratching dog, the fore feet are of far greater service than the hind feet to the animal.

Although the skeleton of a frog is built upon the same general plan as that of dogs and apes, it displays several distinctive features which mark it off from the anatomical arrangements of these higher vertebrates. These differences have arisen from its unlike mode of life. The frog is a poor and lumbering walker, but it leaps well on land and swims readily in the water. We therefore find that the amphibian's hind limbs have been splendidly adapted to these special modes of movement. The hind limbs are unusually long, are well provided with strong muscles, and are bent back upon themselves so that the frog may move forward by their sudden extension. The frog's strongly developed webbed feet, again, furnish an excellent leverage for leaping and swimming alike. And, in addition, the vertebral column has been so modified that it provides an increased support to the hind limbs. To a squatting and leaping animal a tail is an unnecessary burden, and the caudal appendage which the frog carries during its tadpole period is discarded as soon as it reaches its land-dwelling stage.

In surveying bird life we meet with other adaptive devices for purposes of locomotion. In handling a bird's skeleton the attention is at once arrested by its surprising lightness. This structural feature is an immense advantage to birds that are constantly on the wing. The following noteworthy adaptations present themselves in connection with the power of flight. The tail and wing feathers are well-developed; many of the bones are hollow and contain air, instead of marrow. In most cases, these pneumatic structures are the wing bones, breast bone, and some of the cranium bones. In some birds, however, the ribs, pelvis, and thigh bones, and even the vertebræ, are hollow also. With birds the head enjoys a freer movement than that of the dog. The neck is usually longer than in mammals, thus securing a wider range of movement for the head. Long legs are correlated with long necks, and greater facilities are in this way afforded for feeding. Various other adaptations occur, all tending to bring the animal into harmony with its environment. When walking or roosting, a bird is a biped, and in consequence the leg-bones and the pelvis have to bear the weight of the body, just as they do with ourselves. The toes betray a dwindling tendency, and they vary considerably in structure in different species. Some are furnished with talons, while others have been modified for running, hopping, perching, or for swimming.

Among backboned organisms the caudal appendage is almost universal. In man and the manlike apes it survives as an attenuated relic of former utility. Whether all life arose from the primitive oceans or not, the earliest vertebrates were most certainly aquatic creatures. In the fish family the tail is employed as a means of propulsion through the waters in which they dwell. All vertebrate denizens of the seas and lakes are provided with tails, which they utilise for forcing their bodies through the water, as well as for steering purposes. With the evolution of higher forms of life, many animals struggled to the shore, and their tails underwent those transformations which were rendered imperative by their changed surroundings. Where no longer necessary, their tails became rudimentary, or were modified so as to serve some new need. In the contemporary horse and cow the tail is used as a whip to drive off troublesome insects; among other animals it serves to shield the rectum. Climbing animals employ the appendage as a balancing organ; with monkeys and other creatures it has been modified into a prehensile organ which enables these animals to cling to the branches of trees; while in birds it fulfils the function of a steering apparatus.

We thus see that from the pseudopodia and cilia of unicellular organisms all the most highly elaborated instruments of animal locomotion have been evolved. Every available scrap of evidence points to these evolved products as the outcome of purely natural causes, and of these alone. The power of the adaptive process is everywhere manifested, but for the exercise of creative energy or guidance no particle of evidence is anywhere to be found.

T. F. PALMER.

Science is properly more scrupulous than dogma. Dogma gives a charter to mistake; but the very breath of science is a contest with mistake, and must keep the conscience alive.—*George Eliot.*

Obituary.

The remains of Mrs. Geo. Duncan, daughter of the late Thos. Thompson, of 50 Washington-terrace, North Shields, were interred at Preston Cemetery on Tuesday, Dec. 30, 1913, in the presence of her sorrowing husband, son-in-law, grandchildren, and friends. Messrs. Rowe, Chapman, and others representing the South Shields Branch, of which deceased was a member.—R. C.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (Workman's Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E.): 7.30, C. Cohen, a Lecture.

OUTDOOR.

EDMONTON BRANCH N. S. S. (Edmonton Green): 7.45, E. Burke, "Kikuyu; or, The Kick-Out Controversy."

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, J. E. Ellam, "Hospital Patients and their Treatment."

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Chairman of Board of Directors—MR. G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

THIS Society was ormed in 1898 to afford legal security to the acquisition and application of funds for Secular purposes.

The Memorandum of Association sets forth that the Society's Objects are:—To promote the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action. To promote freedom of inquiry. To promote universal Secular Education. To promote the complete secularisation of the State, etc., etc. And to do all such lawful things as are conducive to such objects. Also to have, hold, receive, and retain any sums of money paid, given, devised, or bequeathed by any person, and to employ the same for any of the purposes of the Society.

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Members pay an entrance fee of ten shillings, and a subsequent yearly subscription of five shillings.

The Society has a considerable number of members, but a much larger number is desirable, and it is hoped that some will be gained amongst those who read this announcement. All who join it participate in the control of its business and the trusteeship of its resources. It is expressly provided in the Articles of Association that no member, as such, shall derive any sort of profit from the Society, either by way of dividend, bonus, or interest, or in any way whatever.

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of not less than five and not more than twelve members, one-third of whom retire by ballot) each year, but are capable of re-election. An Annual General Meeting of members must be held in London, to receive the Report, elect new Directors, and transact any other business that may arise.

Being a duly registered body, the Secular Society, Limited, can receive donations and bequests with absolute security. Those who are in a position to do so are invited to make donations, or to insert a bequest in the Society's favor in their wills. On this point there need not be the slightest apprehension. It is quite impossible to set aside such bequests. The executors have no option but to pay them over in the ordinary course of administration. No objection of any kind has been raised in connection with any of the wills by which the Society has already been benefited.

The Society's solicitors are Messrs. Harper and Battcock, 23 Rood-lane, Fenchurch-street, London, E.C.

A Form of Bequest.—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators:—"I give and "bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £—— "free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt signed by "two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary "thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors for the "said Legacy."

Friends of the Society who have remembered it in their wills, or who intend to do so, should formally notify the Secretary of the fact, or send a private intimation to the Chairman, who will (if desired) treat it as strictly confidential. This is not necessary, but it is advisable, as wills sometimes get lost or mislaid, and their contents have to be established by competent testimony.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President: G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary: MISS E M. VANCE, 2 Newcastle-st. London, E.C.

Principles and Objects.

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action, and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious, and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of Progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalise morality; to promote peace; to dignify labor; to extend material well-being; and to realise the self-government of the people.

Membership.

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

"I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects."

Name.....

Address.....

Occupation.....

Dated this.....*day of*.....*190*.....

This Declaration should be transmitted to the Secretary with a subscription.

P.S.—Beyond a minimum of Two Shillings per year, every member is left to fix his own subscription according to his means and interest in the cause.

Immediate Practical Objects.

The Legitimation of Bequests to Secular or other Freethought Societies, for the maintenance and propagation of heterodox opinions on matters of religion, on the same conditions as apply to Christian or Theistic churches or organisations.

The Abolition of the Blasphemy Laws, in order that Religion may be canvassed as freely as other subjects, without fear of fine or imprisonment.

The Disestablishment and Disendowment of the State Churches in England, Scotland, and Wales.

The Abolition of all Religious Teaching and Bible Reading in Schools, or other educational establishments supported by the State.

The Opening of all endowed educational institutions to the children and youth of all classes alike.

The Abrogation of all laws interfering with the free use of Sunday for the purpose of culture and recreation; and the Sunday opening of State and Municipal Museums, Libraries, and Art Galleries.

A Reform of the Marriage Laws, especially to secure equal justice for husband and wife, and a reasonable liberty and facility of divorce.

The Equalisation of the legal status of men and women, so that all rights may be independent of sexual distinctions.

The Protection of children from all forms of violence, and from the greed of those who would make a profit out of their premature labor.

The Abolition of all hereditary distinctions and privileges, fostering a spirit antagonistic to justice and human brotherhood.

The Improvement by all just and wise means of the conditions of daily life for the masses of the people, especially in towns and cities, where insanitary and incommodious dwellings, and the want of open spaces, cause physical weakness and disease, and the deterioration of family life.

The Promotion of the right and duty of Labor to organise itself for its moral and economical advancement, and of its claim to legal protection in such combinations.

The Substitution of the idea of Reform for that of Punishment in the treatment of criminals, so that gaols may no longer be places of brutalisation, or even of mere detention, but places of physical, intellectual, and moral elevation for those who are afflicted with anti-social tendencies.

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