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People will not look forward to posterity who never looked backward to their ancestors.—EDMUND BURKE.

## Christian Self-glorification.

THE annual meeting of the Free Church Council held at Norwich last week was notable for the extraordinarily high estimate of Christians generally, and of Christian ministers in particular, to which it gave so emphatic an expression. While self-esteem is doubtless to be encouraged, being the faculty that adds dignity and power to a man's character, it is certainly anything but a virtue to exalt ourselves at the expense of depreciating others. The doing of this is by no means a sign of real greatness. Boasting always indicates moral littleness. It is true that Christians sing their own praises presumably in order to glorify God, because the better they are supposed to be the greater is the credit due to him. Briefly stated, the following is their position: "Not unto us, but unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father—to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Sheltered behind such a sentiment a man may and does indulge in self-glorification to his heart's content. But we must not forget that by God or Christ, in such a connection, is meant a glorified picture of the man himself. Analyse any conception of the Divine Being and you will find that it consists of an unnatural and ludicrous magnification of purely human attributes. It is this alone that accounts for the endless number of such conceptions, and the enormous differences and even contradictions which characterise them. The prophet Jeremiah informs us that the Gods of Israel were as numerous as his cities, which is equally true of the divinities worshiped in Christendom to-day. It follows from this that to glorify God is equivalent to glorifying self. Preachers talk very glibly about the Holy Ghost, the Great White Throne, and the words of the living God, as if they were objects of direct knowledge, when in reality their very existence is insusceptible of demonstration. The moment you examine the so-called words of the living God you learn that they are extremely human in their nature and origin.

Now, the retiring President of the Council, the Rev. Alexander Connell, preached a sermon from the text, "The word of God came unto John, the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness" (Luke iii. 2), in which he confidently asserted that the people who do not believe such a text are the biggest fools on earth. He said:—

"The people most to be pitied in this generation, or in any generation, are the people who go about the world spiritually blind. They may be masters of many sciences, but the secret of all true knowledge eludes them. They may have much joy out of life, but life itself they never know. They may gather much wealth, but their eyes never rest on the pearl of great price. They may live their length of days, and see many a peaceful sunset; but they never see the world as God made it, or as God meant it to be. They may taste of human affection, and may value it above all else; but they miss the love that lies disclosed like a glory about

the humblest inquirer who lights his way with the lamp of the Spirit and has his brow fanned by the faintest breath of the Holy Ghost."

What is it to be "spiritually blind"? Simply not to believe that John the Baptist was God's spokesman, not to regard the Bible either as being, or as continuing, a Divine revelation, or not to accept Jesus Christ as one's all-loving Savior. Well, we frankly admit that we are "spiritually blind," and we positively decline to accept any Christian's pity. We even glory in our blindness. Mr. Connell, himself a Christian minister, addressed a Christian assembly, saying, in effect, "We alone are truly good and wise; we alone know what life is, and how to live it; we alone can read history, and shall yet have to rewrite it from beginning to end; we alone are ever reshaping our ideals and recapturing our dreams, floating our barques on life's highest tides and having the light of the morning in our faces." No wonder that he was heard with gladness. It was eminently soothing flattery that flowed from his mouth, and like most flattery, it was wholly false. We boldly deny the intellectual and moral superiority of Christians. What knowledge does Mr. Connell possess of which an Atheistic scientist is destitute? What is that "secret of all true knowledge" which is said to elude an unbeliever? Does the reverend gentleman really think that Sir Ray Lankester, or Dr. Chalmers Mitchell, is ignorant of, while he knows, "life itself"? As a matter of fact, Christians are not knowers, but believers. The only genuine knower is the natural man whom Mr. Connell looks down upon. This despised species, we are told, may have much joy out of life, live on to a ripe old age, and witness many a lovely sunset, may gather much wealth, taste the sweetness of human affection, and value it as if it were the pearl of greatest price; but he can never see the world as God made it, or as God meant it to be, or experience "the love that lies disclosed like a glory about the humblest inquirer who lights his way with the lamp of the Spirit and has his brow fanned by the faintest breath of the Holy Ghost." That is perfectly true, as the natural man is proud to admit; but his contention is that what is true of him is, in reality, equally true of all others. Has Mr. Connell ever seen the world as God made it, or as God meant it to be, or does he know that the world was ever made at all, or is meant to serve any specific purpose? It is comparatively easy to write fine sentences about the lamp of the Spirit and the breath of the Holy Ghost, and thereby to stir the emotions of credulous people; but we cannot repeat too often that both the lamp of the Spirit and the breath of the Holy Ghost are but creatures of the fancy, absolutely unknown to unbelievers.

While Mr. Connell devoted his discourse to the glorification of Christians in general, and only incidentally to that of ministers, Principal Forsyth, a trainer of young preachers, confined his attention to the rights and privileges of the ministry. As reported in the *Christian World* for March 12, he said:—

"The ministry had not to reform the world, but to create a Church for the world's reformation. The ministry was effective as it was creative. It was not there merely for the sake of decency and order in the Church. No wonder the ministry is lightly treated if it is viewed as a mere convenience, like a chairman, or the proposer of a motion. And in some quarters it is

so viewed. Some preaching is like proposing the health of the Gospel. Some prayer is like moving a vote of thanks to the Almighty. There are those who look upon the minister simply as one of the members of the Church—the talking or the presiding member. They think anything else spoils him as a brother. They believe a church could go on without a minister, only not so well, with less decency and order. That is all wrong. The minister is much more than a brother. He is neither the mouthpiece of the church, nor its chairman, nor its secretary. He is not the servant of the church. He is an apostle to it, the mouthpiece of Christ, the servant of the Word, and of the church only for that sake. The ministry is a sacramental office..... The ministry represents God. It carries the Word of his mercy to the world. Nay, more, it *conveys* God in his grace."

We are in full agreement with the erudite Principal. Preaching is essential to the existence of the Church, just as the Church is essential to that of Christianity; but preaching cannot be effective unless it is viewed as a Divine institution. A church's success is completely dependent upon the minister, and the minister's influence upon the belief that he is the mouthpiece of God. Indeed, the existence of God is conditioned on the belief in the minister as his vicegerent. As the Principal so aptly says, the minister *conveys* him. Now, such a belief in the minister is rapidly dying out, and in consequence churches and chapels are emptying. It is true that a few places of worship are still crowded, but in every instance that is due to the minister's superior gifts, by the prudent exercise of which he manages to keep the belief in himself as God's ambassador still alive. God has never filled a single church yet, nor has the Holy Ghost ever displayed his power in the conversion of sinners. All the work has always been done by the clergy and their supporters, and when their work fails the Church's life is endangered. It is all very well for Dr. Forsyth to say that "it is not an effective ministry when the crowds the minister drew melt whenever he goes, when they gather about a personality rather than about the Church"; but there is no doubt whatever but that the crowds do melt when the popular minister leaves, unless he is succeeded by an equally popular one.

Now our conclusion is that the self-glorification so ardently indulged in by Christians is sure to end in the disintegration of their creed and the entire loss of their hold upon the world. In any truly human sense they have never been better than other people, and assuredly they owe nothing to the so-called mercy and grace of God in Christ. It is to the advent and ministrations of Humanism that the world is indebted for whatever progress it has made during the last few centuries; and Humanism has come in and done its work almost in the exact proportion in which supernaturalism has been decaying.

J. T. LLOYD.

## The Limitations of Science.—II.

(Concluded from p. 163.)

It is nonsense, says Professor Mellone, to assume that natural evolution leads to good, or that the one desire is any better or worse than the other, because science cannot prove it. These things lie outside the scope of science. Therefore, it is vain to hope to build human life on "Rationalism" or on science:

"An outlook on life based entirely on science means an outlook, which does indeed leave out every ground for accepting any religious belief as true, but it also leaves out every ground for distinguishing degrees of worth or goodness and badness in human purposes. The whole world of appreciation, that is, the distinctively human world, is dissolved into chaos. By implication, all the distinctive tendencies of human nature (as distinguished from animal nature) are disregarded, save the one ideal—the ascertainment of laws of cause and effect."

The cat is out of the bag here with a vengeance. So long as we base life entirely on science it leaves

out all ground for accepting religious belief. Therefore, some other reason must be found for religion. Hence the desire to prove that science cannot cover the whole of life, but leaves untouched what is to human beings the most important part. The confession is interesting.

As I have already pointed out, it is not true that science is incompetent to deal with *any* part of life. Its method is equally applicable to every aspect. There is, however, a certain truth mixed up with Dr. Mellone's statements, and it is well worth while setting forth that truth as plainly as possible.

In what sense can we hold that some desires are better than others, that some things are good and some bad, or that the process of natural evolution is good? Eliminating ourselves and our standards of valuation, what right have we to call anything good or bad? The answer is, none at all. If Dr. Mellone had put the case in this way I should have agreed with him. As mere natural facts all desires are equal. As natural facts an earthquake is neither better nor worse than a gleam of sunshine. As natural facts a man is no better and no worse than a tapeworm. In truth, good and bad, better or worse, higher or lower, have no meaning once we put on one side the human standard of valuation. Things are. They are what they are because of all the circumstances that made them what they are. Good and bad are inapplicable to nature, because such terms are only valid in the region of intelligent purpose. This is the truth contained in Dr. Mellone's statement, although in setting it down he has quite lost sight of its real import, and has mixed it up with a lot of quite irrelevant matter.

This is the exact truth of the matter so long as we eliminate the human standard of value. But this standard exists, and as it exists, it becomes a fact of which a sane science duly takes note. In order to better group, and better understand existing facts, we agree to call certain things good or bad, higher or lower, perfect or imperfect. From our point of view we consider the preservation of the race, the health of the race, the happiness of the race, as good things. Consequently, anything that favors these ends we call good. As Dr. Mellone rightly says, "good" means good for *something*, that is, in relation to some ideal end or purpose. But so far as nature itself is concerned, there is no justification for assuming any end or purpose in particular. Given appropriate conditions, and the germs of tuberculosis develop as surely as the human embryo becomes a man or a woman. Nature shows just as much "care" in producing a poison as in furnishing an antidote. You simply cannot deduce any end or purpose from nature because it shows a constant war of antagonistic tendencies, a constant building up and pulling down, with just as much "foresight" or "care" or "wisdom" shown in the one direction as in the other.

Of course, it may be said that we have the growth of higher forms of life and their prevalence as so much evidence in favor of natural progress. But this phrase "higher forms of life" is a sheer begging of the question. Man is only perfect after his kind, as other animals are perfect after theirs. We say that the prevalence of the human, and of animals and plants that are useful or pleasing to man, is a sign of advance. But can anyone point out in what way, once we eliminate *our* standard of value, this is advancement? One may safely challenge all the logicians and scientists in existence to prove that the present earth is actually "higher" or "better" than it was in the Carboniferous epoch. They can show it is different; but difference in nature is only difference. It is we who make things better or worse, good or bad. We say that things are improving when they favor our ends and the realisation of our ideals, just as other forms of life might have argued that things were deteriorating when changing conditions threatened their destruction. Order, improvement, progress, are, in short, what logicians call methodological concepts. They are conceptions framed by us to express changes in the direction of

realising our ideals. But they have no value apart from our ideals. And their inapplicability to nature at large is shown by the scientific certainty that just as death puts an end to the individual, so nature will write "finis" to all our "progress" by making the earth impossible for animal habitation.

Nevertheless, these ideals exist; they have their place and their value. No one denies either the one or the other; all that is needful is to understand their place and their character. Dr. Mellone's error lies in taking it for granted that because science declares our measures of "good" and "bad" to be purely ideal constructions, therefore they do not exist to science, and science can say nothing concerning them. This is absurdly inaccurate. Whatever the nature of these ideals, there is no questioning their existence, and they become part of the "facts" which influence human action, and with which science has, consequently, to deal. "Science," says Dr. Mellone, "cannot sit in judgment on human purposes and decide on their relative worth." As a matter of fact, that is exactly what science is always doing. Unless Dr. Mellone denies the possibility of a science of human conduct—and to do so would indeed mean that the "distinctively human world is dissolved into chaos"—he must admit that certain desires are preferable to others in order to achieve a given end—whatever that end may be. Most emphatically science can do more than ascertain "the natural conditions under which they occur"—although even this would go a long way towards destroying Dr. Mellone's case—she can indicate their consequences. That is, science can do here exactly what she does elsewhere. She can analyse and she can synthesise. She can show under what conditions desires occur, and indicate the consequences that will result from their operation. And that is only what is done when the question is concerned with purely physical facts and forces.

Now, common observation finds that people desire to live; also that they desire to live experiencing the minimum of pain and the maximum of happiness. And with these desires dominant, there goes the conclusion that any conduct that favors these ends is good, and a conduct that prevents their realization is bad. Next, science, which is only common observation organised and elaborated, analyses the conditions of healthy and pleasurable life, and says, virtually, If you desire to live, and live happily, these are the things that must be done and these are the things that must be avoided. It goes further, and points out why there exists this desire to live, and why the desire for happiness. Without the first the race would long since have ceased to exist, and without the second there would be no guarantee that, having discovered what was beneficial, the race would have gone on practising it. The main functions of life are really carried on because people find an organic pleasure in their performance, and the reason for this is perfectly plain to those who care to go into the subject. Every reason that we have for calling one thing good and another thing bad remains, whether we base life on science or not. The real distinction lies in the fact that science enables us to say why things are called good, and the reason why we have come to regard them as such.

But, says Dr. Mellone, "If a man chooses to deny any of these statements, there is not a word, from the merely scientific point of view, to be said against him." It all depends upon how far his denials go. If he denies that certain things are considered good by most people, and that the movement of society is in the direction of what they consider good, then he is certainly in the wrong, and can be shown to be so. But if he denies that happiness is a good thing, if he asserts that the sooner life comes to an end the better, then one can only question the conclusion by challenging the grounds on which it is made. Really, no one does deny the distinction—between good and bad. The correctness of our classification may be questioned, but the possibility of a classification is admitted in the act of framing the indictment. Man is a bundle of antipathies and attractions, and these

are inevitably expressed under the categories of good and bad.

But suppose some one does choose to deny that things usually accepted as good are good, and that from the "merely scientific" point of view, what then? It is only what may happen to Dr. Mellone's position. Dr. Mellone believes that good and bad exist in virtue of a belief in the decree of some "Supreme Reason." But suppose anyone chooses to deny this "Supreme Reason." What can Dr. Mellone do? He is obviously helpless. He can only say, "If you accept my premiss of a 'Supreme Reason,' then I can show that some things are good and others bad. If you do not accept the premiss, the conclusion cannot be accepted either." Well, that is really the position of the scientist. He says, "If you grant that my reading of life is correct, then there is an obvious standard by which you may determine what is right and wrong. If you deny my premisses, I cannot expect you to accept the conclusions." So far the scientist and the religionist are on equal grounds. But now the scientist has a distinct advantage over the religionist. When all is said and done, belief in the "Supreme Reason" is an act of pure faith. The scientist asks for no such act of intellectual abnegation. He appeals to human nature as it is, as we know it in ourselves and in intercourse with others. He starts with facts, and his generalisations are in the nature of conclusions drawn therefrom. The religionist commences with a mystery and ends in a fog.

Finally, I do not think anyone can seriously read apologetics of the kind I have been considering without being struck by their unreality. The genuine ground of the criticism is not stated. This is not that science fails to supply grounds for ethical judgments, but that it offers no foothold for religion. It is seen, in spite of apologies offered to reconcile religion and science, that no genuine reconciliation is possible. If science does not pronounce against religion, it affords no reason for it. All that remains is to mark off a region and label it "Religion; No Admittance to Science." The subterfuge is patent, the policy futile. Science does not claim a part of life, but the whole. All knowledge, actual and possible, is its province; all facts, physical, biological, mental and moral, its material. Beyond these lies ignorance, deep, impenetrable, irremovable. Religion is welcome to that region; but it will have to release its hold on human nature, as it has already given up the physical universe.

C. COHEN.

## Science and the Soul.—VIII.

(Continued from p. 171.)

"Of all our acquired tastes, the taste for living for ever is the one which will be found least deeply rooted amongst men, if for no other reason, because it has never been strengthened by indulgence. No mortal knows whether a resurrection to eternal life would answer his expectations or not."—EDITH SIMCOX, *Natural Law*, p. 359.

"Christians believe themselves to be the aristocracy of heaven upon earth; they are admitted to the spiritual court, while millions of men in foreign lands have never been presented. They bow their knees and say that they are miserable sinners, and their hearts rankle with abominable pride. Poor infatuated fools! Their servility is real, and their insolence is real, but their king is a phantom and their palace is a dream."

"What a state of society is this in which *free-thinker* is a term of abuse, and in which doubt is regarded as a sin. Men have a Bluebeard's chamber in their minds which they dare not open; they have a faith which they dare not examine lest they should be forced to cast it from them in contempt."—WINWOOD READE, *The Martyrdom of Man*, pp. 534-541.

"We may love the mystical and talk much of the shadows, but when it comes to going out among them and laying hold of them with the hand of faith, we are not of the excursion."—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, *Literary Friends and Acquaintance*; cited by Osler, *Science and Immortality*, p. 25.

WE have now seen how man came by his ideas of ghosts, spirits, souls, and a future existence after death. Primitive man arrived at them, quite logically, in the same way that he derived the

idea that the earth was fixed and the sun moved, from the evidence of his senses, although we know that the evidence of his senses was false.

Science gives no countenance to the crude idea that certain cunning men invented tales of ghosts and bogies to frighten their fellows into doing what they required them to, and so rule them through their fears.

It is true that priests and kings have used these superstitions, added to them and intensified them, to further their own ends; but they did not invent them, and, until comparatively recent times, they themselves believed in them.

It is only in our own time that science has succeeded in freeing man from the gigantic web spun from the brain of primitive man in his first childish attempts to explain the things he felt and saw. And if, as some scientists think, our world, in the course of ages, is again reduced to the primitive nebula, and passes through all the phases of evolution resulting in man, then these illusions will produce similar superstitions, with all their resulting miseries. It was this idea of the "eternal recurrence" of the past which struck Nietzsche with such unutterable horror that it is said to have been the main cause of the breakdown of that fine brain, from which he never recovered.

It remains to consider the ruling beliefs now held concerning a future life. The Buddhists have no such belief. Confucius told his followers not to trouble about it. The Mohammedan believes in a heaven of ease and voluptuousness. The Christian, with Chinese superciliousness, looks upon all other beliefs as unworthy of a moment's consideration.

And what are the Christian beliefs upon the subject? The early Christians believed in a material hell of endless torment for the wicked—the great majority—and a material heaven—for a select few—provided with mansions, golden streets, pearly gates, etc., where they will spend eternity in singing endless praises to God. These conceptions lasted throughout the Middle Ages down to our own times. The present writer was brought up in that belief, nor ever doubted it until he left home to go out into the world. The Salvation Army still teach this view in all its nakedness. Probably the vast majority of the old members of the Nonconformist Churches also hold this belief; also the majority of the women folk of the working classes.

The working man has got rid of the *fear* of hell—this is the real reason of the total failure of the religious revival missions to touch the masses, and their desertion of the Churches. The working man thinks, with old Omar, that, if there is a future life, God is "a Good Fellow and 'twill all be well," and dismisses the subject from his mind. For what is there in the conception of the Christian heaven to appeal to any civilised and intelligent being? Golden crowns, and harps, and streets might appeal to a Johannesburg financier, but who would not prefer a beautiful English lawn to the flashiest of golden streets?

As Mr. George Bernard Shaw remarked, the Salvationist looks forward to spending eternity "in a sort of bliss which would bore any active person to a second death."\*

Sir William Osler also refers to—

"the absence of features in the presentation which prove attractive, and the presence of others most repulsive to the Western spirit. What is there in the description in the Apocalypse to appeal to the matter-of-fact Occidental mind? The infinite monotony of the Oriental presentation repels rather than attracts, and the sober aspirations of Socrates are more appreciated than the ecstasies of St. John. Commenting upon this, Jowett says: 'And yet to beings constituted as we are, the monotony of singing psalms would be as great an affliction as the pains of hell, and might be even pleasantly interrupted by them.' How little account is taken of our changed attitude of mind on these questions."†

\* *John Bull's Other Island*, p. 169.

† Professor Osler, *Science and Immortality*, pp. 30-31.

But not more absurd than the idea of singing the praises of God for ever is the idea that an intelligent omnipotent power would require, or permit, such a degrading and stupid performance. What earthly civilised king would submit to having his praises sung to his face for an hour?

But we must remember that Christianity is an Eastern religion and thoroughly oriental in spirit. As Winwood Reade observes:—

"Heaven was invented in the East; and in the East to be a courtier has always been regarded as the supreme felicity. The feelings of men towards their god, in the period to which we have now arrived, are precisely those of an Eastern subject towards his king. The oriental king is the Lord of all the land: his subjects are his children and his slaves. The man who is doomed to death kisses the fatal firman, and submits with reverence to his fate. The man who is robbed by the king of all that he has earned, will fold his hands and say, 'The king gave, and the king taketh away. Blessed be the name of the king!'"\*

And, as he further remarks, "Men resort to churches to fall on their knees and to sing hymns, from the same servile propensity which makes the Oriental delight in prostrating himself before the throne."

And where is this heaven supposed to be? No one knows. During the Middle Ages, the ages of ignorance and darkness, they knew. It was just above the clouds, not very far away; and hell was underground, and could be entered through volcanoes, which were entrances to it. But science has searched the skies for millions of miles, and the most powerful telescopes have not revealed the towers and battlements of the New Jerusalem. Even the most sensitive photographic plate, which reveals stars too faint to be detected by the telescope, has no better success; and, as Bachner remarked, "There is no theological or ecclesiastical natural science; and there will be none, so long as the telescope does not reach the regions where the angels dwell."†

The old conception of heaven as a place of eternal psalm-singing has almost faded away. Among the educated who still cling to the idea of a future life probably there are scarcely two with exactly similar ideas upon the subject. Where there are no facts to work upon, everything is nebulous and hazy. Each one moulds it to the heart's desire.

The conception of heaven, among the working classes, especially among the women folk, is much more definite. It is a place where everybody will be good and happy. There will be no more scrubbing and mending; no more washing days, in spite of the fact that everyone will be clothed in white. Everyone will be provided with a crown and a harp. All their friends and relations will be there, as God would never be so unkind as to exclude any friend they may have known on earth. In fact, it will be a continuation of the old earthly life, with all the dirt and discomfort, all the pain and sorrow and want taken out of it—an eternal Bank Holiday. And those who have suffered most in this life will receive a greater recompense in the world to come. It is a dream born of the hard struggle for existence. For as Leslie Stephen remarked, "The argument that because good and evil are mixed wherever we can observe, therefore there is elsewhere unmixed good, does not obey any recognised canons of induction."‡

Not only is there no foundation in science for the popular idea of a future life, but it is in opposition to the teachings of the Church itself. For the Church teaches that the soul is *immaterial*, and how is an immaterial father going to recognise an immaterial son; or an immaterial husband going to recognise an immaterial wife? How is an immaterial body going to be clothed in garments of white and wear a crown or play a harp. How can its immaterial feet walk the golden streets?

\* Winwood Reade, *The Martyrdom of Man*, p. 175.

† Preface to the Fourth Edition of *Force and Matter*.

‡ *Free Thinking and Plain Speaking*, p. 356.

The nearest we can get to the immaterial is a vacuum, and even our most exhausted vacuum is full of the inter-stellar ether; if a glass bell-jar was exhausted of air, and we could exclude the ether as well, we should attain to the immaterial. No sound could be heard inside of it, no light could penetrate the glass walls, for light could not travel without the ether. And when the priest talks about an immaterial existence, he palters with us in a double sense to "keep the word of promise to our ear, and break it to our hope."

What would be the use of an immaterial life? A life where we could not look into the eyes of our wife, hear her voice, and touch her hand, would be a ghastly mockery. As Ingersoll well says, "If, when the grave bursts, I am not to meet the faces that have been my sunshine in this life, let me sleep on."\*

W. MANN.

(To be concluded.)

### The Savior.

WE are the rockfolk, who live in the caves on the mountains near where the clouds come to sleep. Men, women, and children there are of us, many—how many we do not know; nor do we need to care; for we have no foes to trouble us, and there grows plenty food on the slopes, and plenty birds are there to feed the young amongst us. And standing at the edges of the rocks there are piles of stones, built there that we may be ready for the enemy that never comes. So we live together amid the rocks, in peace one with the other, and the days of our lives are many, and many are the children that make the mountains ring with their laughter and playing.

Many snowfalls ago our people left the valley, and came to the caves to dwell, and their coming is the only story we know of the days that are gone and of the people who never come back. We shall never forget the story, nor shall we ever let it grow dim in the lives of our children.

On the day of memory, the day when the snow goes from the peaks of the mountains, we gather, all of us, in the great cave that is open to the light of the sun, to hear the story told by him who is softest of tongue amongst us. And as we sit in the great circle in the sunlight he tells us of our father who was the savior of our people, Ironhand, who was eaten by the strange beasts that came from the darkness of the trees to feed upon us, Ironhand who now lives in the great cave in the heart of the mountain that is open to the sun.

The singer tells us how Ironhand, he who was strongest and bravest of the men of his time, and more beautiful than a woman, was teaching the young men to use the stone-headed stick; for farther than any two men could he fling the stick, and no beast ever twice crossed his path, nor was he ever known to be foolish. As he was teaching the young men there was a mighty crashing of trees, and a great strange beast came rushing from the forest towards them. The foam dropped from its gaping mouth, and the noise of its roaring was like the voice of the mountains when the sky is black, and the men who live there shoot arrows of fire that blacken and shrivel and kill, arrows that cannot be found when afterwards we look for them. The young men fled in fear from the terrible beast, but Ironhand stayed to fight that he would let them reach the huts in safety. Bravely did he attack the beast, but the blows of his stick were like pebbles falling on the rocks; for, afterwards, when the beasts were stoned from the rocks, the biggest stone was useless to hurt them. And Ironhand, the bravest and best of the men who came before us, was caught in the jaws of the ugly monster, and carried away into the darkness of the trees, before the men could know what had happened.

And the air was full of the wailing of the women for Ironhand, the well-beloved, and there was misery in the hearts of the men. The bravest of them went to the edge of the trees, but were afraid to follow the tracks of the beast that had carried him off from amongst them; for the young men told with trembling of the size, and the strength, and the anger of it, and there were fallen trees to prove that they spoke only the truth. In woe and fear they returned home to their dwellings to tell what they had seen; and no one could understand. But when the weeping of the women was most sorrowful and the anger of the men was most bitter, a sudden shout of joy went up from one of the young men who, being ashamed, had ventured some little way from the huts. And Ironhand was seen flying from the trees towards them. He called upon the people to rush to the mountains, for the great beasts were coming from the forest to devour them. And as he called the joy was turned to woe again, for it seemed as if the trees were being torn to pieces by a mighty storm of wind, and the air was full of angry roarings that silenced the shouts of Ironhand. But he waved his hands that they might know to flee to the rocks.

Soon the huts were all empty, and the people were quickly flying to the mountain; all but Ironhand. Once more did the well-beloved turn to face the hungry monster that came first. Once more did he stay to save his fellows; and their hurried shouts of grief affected him not, nor would he have any to assist him, but he waved them all away, and they went. And so it was that those who lived before us reached the rocks in safety, while the great beasts fought each other for the flesh of Ironhand, and tore him to pieces, and devoured him. But they could not climb the mountain.

For many snow times the beasts made the valley their home, and often caught and ate the foolish of our people who were tempted by the fruits that grow there. And one day, when the snow was deep in the valley, the beasts disappeared into the trees, and came no more; but our people remained here, on the mountain side, living in the caves amongst the rocks, knowing not cold nor heat, nor lack of food, nor lack of drink; and the women gave birth to children that loved the rocks even more than did our forefathers for whom the rocks were the sacrifice of Ironhand, the brave and beautiful. The people were happy and lived in peace.

So it is that we gather, all of us, on the day of memory, in the great cave that looks upwards to the sun; and the singer tells the story I have told you. When the sun looks down into the great cave, when its rays first fill the darkness with light, we gather together to weep for Ironhand, the savior of our people, and the giver to us of peace. And on that day it often happens that the last snow goes from the mountains and we know that the sun-time has come; and that day we have made the day of memory, when we gather together, all of us, men, women, and children, to rejoice over the death of Ironhand, who died so that we might live, who gave his strong life to the hungry beasts that he might save those whom he loved.

And we have set up the rock that glints like the rays of the yellow sun near nightfall, and on it we have carved the life-giving of Ironhand, that our children, in the days to come, will weep and rejoice as we weep and rejoice in the days that are; and that they will remember and worship in the days that are yet to be as we remember and worship in the days that are now. For the name of Ironhand is sacred to us; and the memory of him is like the sweet clear waters that spring from the rocks near where stands the yellow-starred stone around which we gather on the day of memory in the great cave that looks to the sun.

\* \* \* \* \*

The pastor is really responsible for all this. I got sick of his seemingly interminable delights over his Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of Man; and I went a-dreaming.

ROBERT MORELAND.

\* Colonel Ingersoll, *The Dying Creed*, p. 30.

### Realism.

WHEN Nietzsche aimed at the Superman idea, he had thrown overboard the trappings of Christianity, and had set out on the voyage of life determined to find or create something better than the discarded book of theology. If *Hyperion* had never been written, the trend of thought which ever outgrows the God-idea would still make itself articulate. Thus man, at a certain stage, appears to tower above what were once his gods. So long as the unsatisfying objects of worship do not appeal to the intellect, so long shall we have them discredited and despised. In the evolution of deities, the theory of natural selection is reversed. This may at first appear a paradox, but when we consider that artificial interests keep alive the crude objects of veneration, we must not be surprised. Sun-worship for England would be unprofitable; so would Buddhism. Both would be too cheap and easy of access for everybody, and the gigantic interests of parsonic middlemen would be cut away. Therefore, it is to the benefit of the middlemen of heaven to keep alive the tradition and God-idea of Christianity, and so reverse the theory of natural selection in the religious sphere.

If we may divide society in three sections, and label them respectively, Philistines, Idealists, and Realists, we shall find that Freethinkers fall in the third category. We, as Freethinkers and Realists, should not mind if we only had the forces of hell against us; the galling part is, that we have also the heaven idea thrust in our path, and, therefore, we are Realists with no illusions. The advanced Christians, much against their will, have destroyed hell; it is our task to force them to dispense with heaven. And none but Realists could venture on such a super-quixotic adventure. If we are bespattered with mud in the process, we must not complain; it is for future generations that we build, and the superman's conception of immortality extends no further than that attained through future generations. Meredith was fully aware of this when he wrote—

" Life begets with fair increase  
Beyond the flesh if life be true! "

We shall break down the marble walls and golden pillars of heaven for the benefit of posterity, and, in doing so, prison gates shall open for us, slander assail us, and every vice invented shall figure to our names. With this sweet prospect in view, we cannot be accused of avoiding reality; we are Realists in the nethermost sense of the word.

This brings us to an interesting position. The Christian, through his hopes being centred in heaven, says, *in theory*, "Nay" to life. The Freethinker, having dispensed with such an illusion, says "Yea," and would probably say so again if the theory of eternal recurrence were true. He would come to the banquet of life and say, "Once again." The Realists are truly those who are not afraid to face life and everything the term connotes; to the Philistines we leave the prospects of heaven and any other delusion they may like to cherish.

In philosophy, in art, in science, it has always been the fate of those who had any length of vision to be execrated by the mob, that is, by the Philistines. Shelley pitched out of Oxford, Swinburne sneered at by the mid-Victorian school of milk-and-water poetry, Thomas Paine hounded from his country—these are but a few of the examples of the treatment received by pioneers or realists. And a list of such names could be carried on indefinitely. They are the men who light the torch, and it is our duty to keep it burning. They have made the path easier for us, and they have paid the price demanded by their respective generations of Philistines. The altar of Progress will always have its victims; where the high priests are Philistines this cannot be avoided.

Consciously or otherwise, Nietzsche trumpeted the Freethinker of to-day when he spoke of the Super-

man. Social reconstruction is nothing short of blasphemy if one truly believes in any of the hundred-and-one versions of the Christian God; to touch with desecrating finger the work of one who made "the world and the stars also" is an act too impious for words. For this reason alone we are of the opinion that a Christian, by his own creed, should not meddle with the betterment of society, but rather leave it to those who are quite willing to take their chance in the great hereafter. Nietzsche had nothing but scorn for those whose sympathies were for the weak and the botched, the inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. He knew that such conduct could not uplift a single human being, and therefore, in his vision of the superman, he places courage and hope as two chief virtues. And the first is as necessary as the second in the Freethinker's armory.

In the writings of Nietzsche Freethinkers will find much with which they can agree, and little that will meet with their disapproval. Freethought is eclectic; it is this very quality which makes it universal. And the realism of Nietzsche comes as no shock to us who have been face to face with realities ever since the Christian God was commercialised. Let him blow his mighty blasts through the pages of *The Antichrist*, or wither creeds in the aphorisms of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*—we are not amazed, for he is a man after our own heart, and the patriotism of Freethinkers knows no country. His reception in England is an index to his position; and we conclude by saying that there is work for many Biblical Samsons in this country before Nietzsche can claim a fair judgment.

WILLIAM REPTON.

### CHILDREN OF FAITH.

Diana's children are of a distinctly religious turn of mind. I think most children are, and what a wonderful and curious thing their religion is.....

Hugh wants to know if God put in the quack before he made the duck? It is difficult, isn't it, to answer those sort of questions? On another occasion he asked Betty if God was alive? Betty, eager to instruct, said, "My dear Hugh, God is a spirit."

"Then we can boil our milk on him." That was a poser for Betty.

Diana was at a loss, too, when Hugh announced his intention of going to heaven. She asked him what he would do when he got there? "Oh!" said Hugh, "stroll round with Jesus, I suppose, and have a shot at the rabbits.".....

It is the custom of Diana to read the Bible every morning with her children.....On this particular Sunday, Hugh marched through the hall with his Bible under his arm, followed by Betty, carrying a smaller Bible. He said to her, "I will teach you, darling."

Betty said, "Can you, Hugh?" and he said "Rather."..... "What's it going to be about?" she said.

"All sorts of things," said Hugh, grandly. "Pr'aps about Adam and Eve, and Jonah and the whale, and Samson and Elijah. Do you know the difference between Enoch and Elijah, that's the first thing?"

"No, I don't," said Betty, reluctantly.

"Well, darling, you must remember the difference is that Enoch only walked with God, but the carriage was sent for Elijah!"

"Was it a carriage and pair, Hugh?"

"More, I expect."

"What next, Hugh?"

"We'll just look until we find something," and Hugh opened the Bible.

"It's upside down," whispered Betty.

Hugh assumed the expression my spaniel puts on when he meets a dog bigger than himself.

....."Go on Hugh," said Betty, humbly.

"Now, Betty," he said, "you must listen properly, and not talk, because it's a proper lesson, just like mother gives us when visitors aren't here." A pause, then Hugh said in a very solemn voice, "You know, darlin', Jesus would have been born in the manger, but the dog in the manger wouldn't let him."

I stole out of the room.—George Wemyss, "The Professional Aunt."

In calling a man a hog, it is the man who gets angry, but it is the hog who is insulted. Men are always taking up the quarrels of others.—Ambrose Bierce ("Dod Grile").

## Acid Drops.

Father Furniss's *Sight of Hell*—a little penny book "for children"—has been denounced in Freethought journals for the last fifty or sixty years. It is now discovered by the *Christian Commonwealth*—"rather late in the day" as *John Bull* says. Our pious contemporary says it ought to be suppressed by law. That's it. Resort to violence against anything you object to. This is the Christian all over. What he once burnt you alive for denying he is now ready to burn you alive for teaching. And how, we should like to ask, does he know that he is right in either case. Father Furniss gives the children good New Testament pictures of hell. The alteration is not in the substance but in the reasoning.

Mr. Bottomley denounces Father Furniss's truly "hellish" teaching. But hasn't he found the very same teaching in the New Testament? If he hasn't he must have read it most inattentively. For our part, we prefer dealing with principals to dealing with subordinates. Moreover, if the doctrine of hell is true, let it by all means be preached; and, if it be not true, let it by all means be repudiated. Never mind the preacher's name. Jesus Christ or Father Furniss, what does it matter? A "damnable lie" is a "damnable lie" and comes from a damnable liar.

At a speechless dinner in honor of Sir Edward Carson at the Ritz Hotel on March 13 a presentation was made to him of a sword and a book of signatures. The sword was sheathed in a very useful silver scabbard; in order, we suppose, that the right honorable gentleman may shine on the field of the battle of Belfast like King Henry the Fourth on the field of Ivry. "And be your oriflamme to-day the helmet of Navarre." The blade of this fine weapon bore the following inscription: "Presented to Edward Carson by friends of Ulster in sure confidence that God will defend the right." Has it come to that? No wonder the dinner was speechless.

Readers of this paper will be quite familiar with arguments such as these:—

"It is easy to say 'in the beginning,' but what was God doing before the beginning? A beginning of beginnings is inconceivable, and if God himself never began, a million million years would bring him no nearer the act of creation than he was at first. It is plain that what we call a beginning is not a beginning, but somehow a part of an eternal process.....Again there is an insuperable difficulty involved in the very conception of a purposeful artificer away at the beginning of time fashioning a universe; his own presence needs accounting for. Where did he come from? It is no easier thinking of God as existing without a creator than to think of the world and man existing without a creator."

This is from a recent sermon by Mr. R. J. Campbell. It is interesting to observe the way in which very old Freethought arguments are served up as advanced Christian thinking.

Mr. Campbell also comments on the design argument as stated by Paley, and says that "this kind of reasoning is quite useless nowadays; no one pays heed to it." We fancy we could show that Mr. Campbell's arguments for Deity are not a bit hotter than Paley's; are, indeed, only the Paleyan argument in a new form. But Mr. Campbell is quite wrong in assuming that the weakness of Paley's argument is shown by discovery of imperfection in the world. Imperfections would not prove the absence of design, but only the absence of perfect design. The real weakness of every form of the design argument is just that the evidence selected is the wrong kind of evidence. If everything in nature were of the most perfect and most admirable character, it still could not prove design. All that is proved by a scrutiny of natural process is that the result expresses the conditions that produced it. And this is true in every case, and cannot be otherwise. Design really implies purpose, and purpose is shown by the end reached realising the intention existing in the mind of the designer. The Theist has to assume a God, he has to assume a knowledge of God's intentions, and then he has to show that the ends reached the purpose. But he only knows the ends. He does not and cannot know that there is a God, or what his intentions were, and so cannot say whether these intentions are realised or not. This is the real fallacy of the design argument, and it is surprising that so many able men have missed it.

Dr. Gibson, Bishop of Gloucester, reports a gift from a Christian lady for foreign missions. She had no money to part with, but she handed over a pearl necklace,

which the good bishop sold for over £800. We should like to know what difference it made to the heathen inhabitants of heaven—or hell.

At a recent fire in a tin tabernacle at Southend-on-Sea a notice-board remained intact with its contents. It contained the title of the previous Sunday's sermon, "Prayer to God Answered."

The outrage at the National Gallery, where a Suffragette attempted to destroy a masterpiece by Velasquez, recalls the time when the Christians destroyed priceless works of art because they saw in them sinful idolatry or sinful luxury. It was the same holy feeling which caused Christians to destroy their enemies, and to-day the persecution of Freethinkers under the Blasphemy Laws is a proof that godly people who profess to love their enemies usually finish by hating their neighbors.

"A Star Fish" runs an advertisement in the daily papers. It does not refer to the "fishy" monster who swallowed the prophet Jonah. That story is too "fishy" even for the journalists.

A London lady has just left £10,000 for church building in the metropolis. Who will provide the congregation?

The Rev. J. H. Shakespeare, speaking at the Free Church Council meeting at Norwich, said there were 5 villages with 1,000 persons and 16 chapels, a group of villages with 1,500 people and 19 chapels, and a small town with 6 Free Churches, 2 Brotherhoods, and the Salvation Army, and a total attendance of 800 people. We shall soon be fighting bricks and mortar and parsons, for the congregations are near zero.

The one great thing the Churches need, says Rev. Rhondda Williams, is to sink all ideas about the rights of property, the privileges of classes, etc., and "enter upon a campaign of righteousness." This is the kind of windy blather that does duty in the modern Churches for thinking. You are not to bother about anything else, only to preach righteousness. Anyone with genuine intelligence would realise that it is just these other things that determine righteousness. Current conceptions as to the rights of property or the functions of property, the existence of class privileges, the relations of classes, of capital and labor, of government and its functions, of housing, wages, education, etc., are the things that make a people either usefully and intelligently righteous or a mere collection of moral humbugs. Religion has been prolific in producing the latter; it has very seldom made for the former.

It is not difficult to see the reason why Mr. Williams offers this advice. The moment any genuinely social issue is raised co-operation among the Churches becomes impossible and their generally retrogressive influence manifest. But to unite in a general shriek for a vague, unindicated righteousness is perfectly safe. No one knows exactly what is meant, everybody can join in, and nobody is injured or benefited. For ourselves, we say deliberately we have never known a mere preaching of righteousness do any genuine or lasting good, and do not expect to see it accomplished by this method. To be quite fair to the Churches, there has never been any lack of the preaching of righteousness, and its ineffectiveness is patent. It does encourage the worst of all moral evils—a feeling of self-righteousness; it dissipates moral energy, it makes hypocrites by the cartload, and leaves real evils quite untouched. The religious prig is bad enough; the moral prig is even more nauseating.

Nothing like adapting theory to circumstances. Two stained-glass windows have just been sent out to the Kikuyu Mission Church, one of which represents Christ blessing negro children. We have no doubt that, if necessary, he could be found recommending some particular brand of patent medicine.

Judge Cluer, at Whitechapel County Court, has been asking why litigants lie so in the witness-box. He answers that they do it in order to give magistrates a job. Which shows that Judge Cluer can be facetious; also that he can forget what he has read in the Bible. We must freshen his memory a bit over Acts v. 3:—"Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie?" The Devil has many names to himself in Holy Writ, and one is "the father of lies."

Providence has been playfully inflicting the bubonic plague on the natives of Havana. Maybe, the pastime was

so amusing that the weather got out of hand in England, and the seasons a bit mixed.

The Rev. J. H. Shakespeare wants Free Church Bishops. We are not so keen as the prospective "fathers-in-god," who scent good emoluments.

The Westminster Coroner says the safest thing for taxicab drivers to do is to assume that all people are fools. The advice certainly has the merit of considerable success, for priests of all denominations have feathered their sacred nests on the assumption.

Sir George Alexander assisted a number of clergymen to unveil a monument to the Burbages and other "men of the theatre" at St. Leonard's Church, Shoreditch. How the clergy do like to drag in famous names to bolster up the Christian superstition. Not long since the name of Shakespeare was used to collect sixpences for St. Savior's Church, Southwark.

In godly Paisley we see that the local inspector of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children has during two months investigated 45 complaints of cruelty, affecting 168 children, and implicating 65 adults. Three hundred "supervision" visits have been made. This is not a bad record for a Christian country. In a non-Christian country such a state of affairs would be a consequence of the absence of Christianity. In pious Scotland we must, of course, conclude that things would be much worse if Christianity were non-existent.

In many persons, says Sir Edward Russell, editor of the *Liverpool Post*, "religion or no religion was actually the dividing line between dormancy and intellect, the utter inaction of the intellect and the active employment of the intellect." We agree; although we feel sure we should relate the two differently to Sir Edward. What he means is that dormancy of intellect means with many the absence of religion. Well, that is simply not true. It is not a question of whether non-religious people are right; it is simply a question of fact. Under existing conditions, dormancy of intellect means falling in with ruling conceptions, and these are in form religious. The vast majority of people receive some sort of religious instruction, and dormancy of intellect means that they cannot outgrow it. On the other hand, giving up religion means activity of intellect. It does not mean that one is thinking accurately, but it does mean that one is thinking. Finally, look at the vast majority of believers in religion, and then realise the absurdity of talking about religion being due to a more "active employment of the intellect" than is observable with the non-religious!

Electric light is to be installed and trams are to be run in Jerusalem before long, as a Paris banking house has obtained concessions for those purposes. When Jerusalem and Bethlehem are connected by trams, and resemble Houndsditch, some of the glamor will be removed from the "holy places."

The Rev. S. Baring-Gould has been poking fun at the Nonconformist doctrine of sudden conversion. He says: "A man who is a child of Satan at twenty minutes to six, by a sudden internal commotion of the ganglions becomes an elect saint at six o'clock." When sky-pilots begin to slang one another, they sometimes let the cat out of the bag.

A country rector has been writing to the *Times* and the *Daily Mail*, pleading for the inclusion of the words "by air" in the Litany. He adds in his latest letter that he has had only two responses; one from an Atheist and the other from a Christian who thought that aeronauts deserved broken necks. We don't know which to admire the more—the religious Atheist or the irreligious Christian.

The connection between the advance of Christianity and the consumption of intoxicating liquors is an old one, and there seems no immediate danger of the connection being severed. The *Transvaal Leader* of February 25 reports a case in point. Two native ministers invited people to attend a "Grand Tea Meeting." Those invited were, of course, natives. When the guests arrived, they found a large box standing in the room labelled "Glass." The description was not altogether inaccurate, as the box contained about two dozen bottles of "dop" brandy. The bottles were handed by one minister to the other, who served out the contents to the guests "in the name of Christ." A detective, however, arrived on the scene, the ministers were arrested, and their trial fixed for March 3. As our readers are probably aware, the supplying of alcoholic drinks is

forbidden to natives. White Christians may get drunk with impunity.

Bishop Ryle thinks that religion ought to be advertised. We fancy clergymen are sufficiently alive to the value of advertisement, and hardly need admonitions on this head. As a matter of fact, the business of modern religion is very largely built up on advertising. Its value and its beauties are the themes of countless puffs, and, like many another well-advertised article, if the advertisements were to be dropped the demand would rapidly diminish. We wonder what would be the position of religion in this country if for a single generation people were left severely alone—left, that is, to discover the beauties of religion for themselves? The whole thing, we believe, would then be in a state of social bankruptcy. Intellectual bankruptcy has already been realised.

With reference to the proposed alteration in the Litany, so that "by air" may be added to the "travel" portion, Rev. O. C. Legge-Wilkinson writes from Maidstone saying that he intends to do so, and the "sad fact that three more deaths of Army airmen have just occurred" confirms him in his intention. We do not see that it matters much anyway. Mr. Legge-Wilkinson surely does not believe that these military aviators would not have been killed if the prayer for their protection had been offered. And he will hardly claim that it would have been better for them to have been killed *after* their safety had been prayed for. That would have been to emphasise the uselessness of prayer. Besides, God—if there is a God—knows these aviators are flying round. He knows they don't want their necks broken, and it is anything but gracious for him to allow them to break their necks because he has not been specially asked to preserve them.

Since last December a deputation of American parsons has been touring in Great Britain in favor of bringing the different denominations into unison. These gentlemen have just handed in their report, and the committee which received it is issuing a proclamation calling for "a truce of God among the sects of Christendom." This is not so bad. Centuries of rule, and then the Christian ministers begin to inquire whether it is possible for them to leave off fighting among themselves long enough to hold a "World's Conference." What a religion of love! And what a loving religion! We would suggest to some of these gentlemen that, instead of taking on the whole of Great Britain and America—which is a large order—they should experiment on a small scale. Reconciling Protestant and Catholic in Ireland would do for a start.

The *Christian World* observes that the Free Church Council appears to be suffering from lack of leaders. This means, we suppose, lack of *men*. It is quite true, but not peculiar to the Free Churches. All the Churches are suffering in the same way. The best men, men with the stronger brains and the better characters, do not and will not enter the Churches as leaders or preachers. Many religious authorities have lamented this lack of first-class men in the Churches, and the reason is simple. First-class men shrink from a profession which involves beliefs that the best contemporary knowledge declares to be of either doubtful veracity or altogether false.

The village of Nebo, Denbighshire, is evidently a stronghold of liberty—of a kind. At one of the local tabernacles a local preacher delivered a sermon on the vice of swearing. On the following Sunday, when the preacher ascended the pulpit, he found the church empty. His congregation had gone on strike as a protest against clerical interference with freedom of speech. The way of a modern preacher is unquestionably hard.

Some members of the Omagh Y. M. C. A. have been victimised by a clever adventurer, who represented himself as a millionaire traveller, journeying round the world for a wager and a wife. He asked for a loan and subscriptions were collected. The man told stories of adventures with lions in Africa, and of his being many days in the Sahara without food or water. He knew *where* to tell his tales.

The Rev. A. J. Waldron considers that "man is essentially divine, and that it is our cursed civilisation that defames God's image." This Brixtonian imagery is somewhat mixed, but does it imply that the Deity is uncivilised?

A church choir at Wethersfield, Essex, has gone on strike in defence of the eastward position during the recitation of the creed. This looks like going on strike for a relic of sun-worship.



## Mr. Foote's Engagements

Sunday, March 22, Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints, Manchester: at 3, "Shaw Among the Prophets"; at 6.30, "Mr. Balfour on God."

## To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £96 13s. 3d. Received since:—Percy Main, 5s.; George Taylor, £5; Julius Rasmussen, 8s. 2d.; Prof. Charles Cadmore (Brazil), £1 6s.; M. Brown, 5s.; G. Harker, £2 2s.

PERCY MAIN.—You forgot to add your own name. We note your hope that "the rank and file will hurry up and complete the Fund," which is so "small in comparison with the Archbishop of Canterbury's £15,000."

E. B.—Much obliged for enclosures.

A. L. COATES.—Order, etc., passed over to the publishing department. We cannot say whether we have any other readers in the place from which you date. Thanks for your good wishes.

HARRY POWELL.—We have a cheque of yours; it has got separated from your letter, which has either been lost or mislaid. Will you kindly send us fresh instructions?

MANCHESTER BUSINESS MAN.—We have not seen the paper you refer to, and we have no time to hunt it up at present. Besides, the argument it sets forth has been answered again and again.

ADELAIDE REED (Canada).—If we were to deal with all the questions referred to in your letter we should wear out ourselves and puzzle, instead of enlightening, our readers. Secularism says "one world at a time." Common sense says "one thing at a time." Making men think about religion makes them think better on all other subjects they attempt.

R. H. ROSETTI.—Obligated to make one exception.

THOMAS FAWCETT (Liverpool) asks whether it is true that Mr. John Morley, now Lord Morley, once said that "Mr. Foote was the best writer of English writing to-day." We do not know, but we should imagine not.

S. CHARLES CUDMORE.—Glad to have your appreciation; thanks also for your efforts to promote our circulation.

G. BARBER.—Thanks for papers. The one you say is being circulated in Manchester is being sent round other towns in a similar manner. We do not know the character of the man who produces it, but there is no doubting the mental character of those who provide the funds. It helps one to realise what a poor thing, after all, is our boasted civilisation.

J. F. AUST.—It is a long time since there was any organised Freethought work in the Potteries, but not quite so long as you say. If your newspapers "cannot" supply the *Freethinker* of the date you require, it must be because they will not. That is part of the boycott from which we suffer.

F. PEARSON.—If you cannot get a copy of *A Sight of Hell* from the publishers, and will apply to Miss Vance, she may be able to oblige you.

L. S. MANN.—We cannot say where you can get a copy of the sermon noticed by Mr. Mann in our issue of February 8. Perhaps Mr. Mann will be able to give you the information.

Some correspondence and other items are unavoidably held over till next week.

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

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

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

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

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

## Sugar Plums.

South Lancashire friends will note that Mr. Foote visits Manchester again to-day (March 22). His subjects should be very attractive.

There is just time to call attention to the Blasphemy meeting at Essex Hall on Friday evening (March 20). The

speakers include Mr. F. W. Jowett, M.P., Rev. Walter Walsh, Mr. G. W. Foote, Mr. Herbert Burrows, Mr. Harry Snell, and Mr. G. H. Radford, M.P. The hall should be quite full, and, if London Freethinkers take the matter seriously, will be crowded. The list of speakers is attractive, and the subject important—one of the most important at present before the country.

The Secular Education League's meeting—the seventh annual gathering of members and friends—takes place at Caxton Hall (Room 1) on Tuesday evening, March 24. The annual *business* meeting starts at 7.45 prompt. It will be followed by the annual *public* meeting at 8.15.; when friends of Secular Education are invited to attend, whether members of the League or not. In the enforced absence of the President (Mr. George Greenwood, M.P.) through illness, which his many friends profoundly regret, the chair will be taken by Sir Henry Cotton; and among the speakers will be Lady Byles, Mr. Arthur Henderson, M.P., Mr. Halley Stewart, J.P., Rev. Walter Walsh (the late Mr. Voysey's successor), and Mr. G. W. Foote. We hope there will be a crowded meeting. Admission is free, and no tickets are required.

The half-yearly meeting of London members of the N.S.S. will be held at Chandos Hall, Chandos-street, Charing Cross, on Tuesday evening, March 31. Members' cards should be presented for admission. Any difficulty in this respect should be brought to the attention of the General Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, who will be in attendance. Notice should be sent to her, also, of any matter intended to be brought before the meeting.

The West Ham Branch holds a "social" at the Workman's (Small) Hall, Romford-road, Stratford, E., on Thursday evening, March 26—from 7.30 to 11 o'clock. Admission free; with collection in aid of expenses. Songs, dances, recitations, games, etc. We are asked to extend an open invitation to all Freethinkers and friends. We do so with pleasure—but with one exception. It is the N. S. S. Executive meeting night. We hope to see the members at the post of duty.

A debate on the subject of "Is Theism Rational?" is to take place at the Reformers' School-room, Crete-street, Liverpool, on Friday and Saturday, March 20 and 21. The affirmative is to be taken by Mr. H. D. Longbottom, the negative by Mr. J. Hammond, President of the Liverpool Branch of the National Secular Society. Debates are rare nowadays, and this should make the discussion more than usually attractive. We do not know Mr. Longbottom, but Liverpool Freethinkers may leave their case in Mr. Hammond's hands with the utmost confidence. The chair is to be taken at 8 o'clock, and admission is free.

We have to thank Mr. Cohen for seeing the *Freethinker* pages through the press. The winds of March are very poetical in the writings of English songsters, especially in Shakespeare's magical passage on the daffodils. But a little of them goes a long way with our Editor. A catarrh has brought on a touch of asthma, which always lies in wait for him. He hopes, however, to shake it off in a few days. This is written on Tuesday.

The Bradlaugh Fellowship is holding a "Social Party" at the Shoreditch Radical Club, New North-road, on Wednesday, March 25. There is no charge for entrance to this function, which is timed to commence at 8.30. All Freethinkers will be welcome.

One of our readers in Newport (Mon.) made the offer of a free copy of the *Freethinker*, weekly, to the Free Library. This was declined on the ground that there was no public demand for the paper. This is an old excuse, and we agree with the gentleman who made the offer, it can easily be removed. The truth is that people do not usually ask for what they know is not there. Where the *Freethinker* is taken in the demand for it is large enough. That is why it is often kept out. We should advise that the offer be made again, backed up by a requisition from as many residents as it is possible to secure.

We are very much pleased to see a note from the pen of Mr. Franklin Steiner in the New York *Truthseeker* to the effect that Mr. Mangasarian still holds his large Sunday meeting at Chicago, and that it is usual for a number of people to be turned away. Mr. Clarence S. Darrow also lectures to good audiences in Joe Howard's theatre; and Mr. Percy Ward "has for three months been conducting a 'Mission' in Roseland, south of Chicago, with much success."

## New Lights on Materialism.

THE attitude of the anti-Materialist towards the most recent developments of physical science affords an instructive example of that trick of "shifting one's ground" which is too often practised in philosophical controversy. In times past Materialism was vilified and abused as the "philosophy of dirt," and the Materialist was asked how any sane person could believe that "dead, inert matter" possessed within itself the potentialities of life and mind? Now that this despised matter is being found to be not dead or inert, but instinct with mighty and eternal energies; now that this revolting "dirt" is discovered to be nothing less than the embodiment and manifestation of the primal existence, the anti-Materialist at once shifts his ground, and, assuming a sort of proprietary right over the new aspect of matter, calmly asks the Materialist what is to become now of his attempt to reduce all existence to "blind material forces"—to the fortuitous concurrence of "mere dead atoms"? To this the Materialist, of course, makes reply that the epithets "dead," "inert," and the like have never been applied to matter by *him*. This false and ignorant conception is entirely due to those who have opposed Materialism, not to those who have defended it. The ascription of all the marvellous properties of life and mind to the functioning of matter has meant to the Materialist, not the lowering and degrading of life and mind, but the elevating and glorifying of matter and all its powers and functions. The following pronouncement by the great modern apostle of Materialism, Ludwig Buchner, should be decisive on this point:—

"It is for every man to decide whether he will continue to regard 'matter' as the beggar in rags it has hitherto seemed to the uncultivated mind, or whether he will recognise its true proportions and the splendid vesture of properties with which modern science has endowed it. The scientific mind of these latter days inclines to the assumption of a unified conception of the world, instead of the old dualistic theories, a faith in the simple monistic basis of all things, which remains one and the same in itself throughout all the changes and diversity of its phenomena. When that faith shall have conquered, there will be an end of the old unscientific depreciation of matter, and the world of the long misunderstood and despised Materialist will be grander and nobler than any of the imaginative and artificial structures of the theologian or the philosopher."

The recent investigations in radio-activity and the conclusions now being formed as to the intra-atomic constitution of matter do not in the least discredit the materialistic position—on the contrary, as I hope to show, they tend to strengthen it. The materialistic conclusion is, after all, an extremely simple one. It is merely this, that as all the activities of nature are expressible in terms of what we call matter and energy, these two entities constitute a manifestation of that ultimate reality whose existence we are compelled to postulate. The ultimate existence is known to us through matter and energy, therefore it is a matter-energy existence. If, on the other hand, all the activities of nature were expressible in terms of spirit, soul, or God, we should be equally bound to regard the ultimate existence as spiritual or divine; but, unfortunately for the idealist and the theologian, the cosmos, so far as we know it, absolutely refuses to be expressed in these terms. The materialistic conclusion seems, therefore, to any unprejudiced mind, to be forced upon us by the facts of the case, and no discovery as to the nature of matter or of energy can shake it in the slightest degree. This conclusion can no more be affected by a deeper analysis resolving matter into energy or energy into matter than, say, the chemical fact that water is produced by a combination of oxygen and hydrogen can be affected by a deeper analysis proving that oxygen and hydrogen are different forms of the same thing. The fact that water is produced by a combination of those two forms of existence which we

call oxygen and hydrogen would remain as true as ever.

The sweeping generalisation—so startling in its utter novelty and so revolutionary in its philosophical import—that matter is nothing else than a form of energy, has been definitely and boldly affirmed by Gustave le Bon, and it seems to be the goal towards which the researches of other physicists are irresistibly leading them. The conclusions formed by this eminent scientist as the result of his investigations have been given by him in his work, *The Evolution of Matter*, in the form of seven plainly enunciated propositions, and in order to give the reader a clear idea of his views, I cannot do better than quote these seven propositions in full. They are the following:—

- "1. Matter, hitherto deemed indestructible, vanishes slowly by the continuous dissociation of its component atoms.
- "2. The products of the dematerialisation of matter constitute substances placed by their properties between ponderable bodies and the imponderable ether—that is to say, between two worlds hitherto considered as widely separate.
- "3. Matter, formerly regarded as inert and only able to give back the energy originally supplied to it, is, on the other hand, a colossal reservoir of energy—intra-atomic energy—which it can expend without borrowing anything from without.
- "4. It is from the intra-atomic energy manifested during the dissociation of matter that most of the forces in the universe are derived, and notably electricity and solar heat.
- "5. Force and matter are two different forms of one and the same thing. Matter represents a stable form of intra-atomic energy; heat, light, electricity, etc., represent instable forms of it.
- "6. By the dissociation of atoms—that is to say, by the dematerialisation of matter, the stable form of energy termed matter is simply changed into those unstable forms known by the names of electricity, light, heat, etc.
- "7. The law of evolution applicable to living beings is also applicable to simple bodies; chemical species are no more invariable than are living species."

These conclusions, forming the greatest generalisation ever reached in the whole history of science, are rapidly receiving confirmation, and will, in all probability, soon be fully confirmed. They will receive the whole-hearted assent of all Materialists, since they possess a significance for our monistic conception of the universe far transcending that revealed by all the past generalisations of science put together. This has been admirably expressed by an appreciative critic, M. Sagaret, in the following passage quoted in *The Evolution of Matter* (p. 79), and which I make no apology for reproducing here:—

"No scientific theory has responded, nor can better respond, to our yearning for unity than that of Dr. Gustave le Bon. It sets up a unity than which it would be impossible to imagine anything more complete, and it focusses our knowledge on the following principle: one substance alone exists which moves and produces all things by its movements. This is not a new conception, it is true, for the philosopher, but it has remained hitherto a purely metaphysical speculation. To-day, thanks to Dr. Gustave le Bon, it finds a starting point in experiment.

"The scholar has till now stopped at the atom without perceiving any link between it and the ether. The duality of the ponderable and the imponderable seemed irreducible. Now the theory of the dematerialisation of matter comes to establish a link between them.

"But it realises scientific unity in yet another way by making general the law of evolution. This law, hitherto confined to the organic world, now extends to the whole universe. The atom, like the living being, is born, develops, and dies, and Dr. Gustave le Bon shows us that the chemical species evolves like the organic species."

The unity is indeed complete. From the immaterial, through the proto-material, to the material; from the inorganic, through the proto-organic (the colloids), to the organic, the continuity of existence runs unbroken. Nor does it stop short of the sphere of consciousness. If matter be but a mode of energy,

and if mind be also a mode of energy—which few will be found to deny—then matter and mind are in essence the same. Hence would disappear that “fundamental duality of mind and matter,” that “impassable gap between Thoughts and Things” which has ever been the favorite dogma of the orthodox philosophy, and hence would be established that unity of mind and matter for which Materialistic Monism has all along contended. But this is too large a subject to be entered upon here. It has been merely mentioned to show that even in this aspect of the question the new view regarding matter supports the materialistic position.

The evidences of continuity in the material and proto-material worlds are twofold and mutually confirmatory, being yielded alike by the researches of the chemist and the observations of the stellar physicist. To the chemist the term “element” is becoming almost meaningless. The spectra of many metals vary according to the intensity of the dissociative action to which they are subjected, and the more intense the dissociation the simpler in character becomes the spectrum. These partially dematerialised elements are called proto-elements, and furnish a series of gradations between the material element and the primordial energy of which it is merely a stable form.

Stellar spectroscopy yields exactly similar results. The less hot stars give, in general, spectra of the metals. Hotter stars give spectra of the proto-metals. The stars of highest temperature give spectra of those gases of lowest atomic weight forming what chemists call the “helium group.” These elements of the helium group possess the common characteristic of having no combining power or affinity for other elements or for each other. They form the “non-valent” or “zero” group of the chemist, and come before all others in this periodic table of the elements—that remarkable system of grouping and classification in the inorganic world the significance of which has hitherto been somewhat mystifying, but which the new chemistry will probably show to be a product of evolution just as are the classifications of the biologist. It is obvious that in an evolution from the immaterial to the material these simple, inert, non-valent elements would appear first. The semi-material, proto-elements would first differentiate into the valent and non-valent types, and as the final stages of the progressive materialisation were reached the non-valent forms, by reason of their greater stability and resistance to combination, would stand out as the earliest distinct and separate forms of matter; and this is exactly what the researches in stellar physics reveal. Lastly, the coolest stars contain the elements of higher valencies, notably carbon, which, as is well known, is one of the principal constituents of living matter.

The process of evolution from the immaterial up to the organic seems, therefore, to be gradually revealing itself, and the physicist may in time be able to draw up a genealogical tree to represent a system of inorganic classification, as the biologist has done for organic classification. Even now the vague outline of such a system seems to be foreshadowed. The roots of the tree would lie deep down in the region of immaterial substance whose energy is in a condition of absolute instability—where no equilibrium whatever has yet been initiated. The main trunk of the tree would represent the semi-material forms of existence intermediate between substance and true matter—forms of energy-equilibrium gradually growing more stable, but not yet in that completely stable form manifested in matter. The summit of the trunk would represent the attainment of complete materialisation, and thence evolution would proceed along two main branches—one towards the production of elements of higher and higher atomic weight, and the other evolving elements of higher and higher chemical valency and intra-atomic complexity. The first would terminate in the spontaneously radio-active elements, uranium, radium, etc. The second, passing through ever-increasing

complexities of combination and re-combination, atomic and molecular, would evolve first the great world of ordinary inorganic compounds, then the colloidal substances, and finally protoplasm. Both branches would thus terminate in conditions of unstable equilibrium, resulting in a final return to the non-equilibrium of immaterial substance, whence the same cycle of evolution would recommence.

So much, then, for what may be called the external aspect of the new theory of matter as revealed by those new facts of physics and chemistry which the researches of scientists have brought to light. Let us now examine the question, as it were, from the inside, and scrutinise the theory itself. I think that we shall here find an equally strong justification for the materialistic position.

The theory tells us that the entire material world is nothing but a manifestation of energy. Matter is a stable form of energy. The products of atomic dissociation—the emanations, the positive ions, the electrons, and the X rays—are forms of energy of increasing instability, till finally is reached that primal energy, presumably in a state of complete instability, which constitutes the fountain of all being. What, then, is this all-embracing and all-potent energy which bids fair to become the sole content of modern science?

Physicists conceive of two forms of energy—kinetic or moving energy, and potential or static energy. But the latter can always be expressed as a condition of equilibrium between two or more opposing kinetic energies; that is to say, a state of potential energy is merely a condition of more or less temporary equilibrium obtaining in some system of kinetic energy. For instance, the potential energy of a loaded cartridge is a condition of equilibrium between the atomic energies of the elements forming gunpowder. If the bullet be fired vertically upwards, this potential energy of the cartridge is converted into the kinetic energy of the moving bullet, till, at the instant when the bullet reaches its highest point, all the kinetic energy is retransformed into potential energy. This second condition of potential energy is again a state of equilibrium; this time an equilibrium between its own kinetic energy and that kinetic energy of the ether which we call the force of gravitation. If, instead of being discharged in the neighborhood of a gravitating body like the earth, the cartridge had been discharged in a void of infinite extent, it would never lose its kinetic energy, but would travel through space for ever with its velocity of discharge unabated. In defining energy, therefore, we need concern ourselves with kinetic energy only, and kinetic energy may be defined as *the movement of substance*.

Energy is, therefore, a dual conception, involving *movement and something that moves*. And in this dual conception of energy the notion of substance holds an indefeasible priority, for though we can conceive of substance independently of movement, no effort of the mind avails to form a conception of movement independently of substance. It is this fundamental necessity of human thought that constitutes the eternal and impregnable rock on which the materialistic philosophy is based. The notion of substance is inevitably involved in the notion of energy.

What conception, finally, can we form of substance? The foregoing considerations seem to lead to the conception that this primal existence is not discrete, but continuous and infinitely diffused through space—infinately unstable—infinately mobile; and that it generates by its eternal movement progressive forms of energy-equilibrium, ranging from absolute instability, through many intermediate degrees of imperfect equilibrium, to that form of complete equilibrium which we call matter.

But what substance *is*, and what its nature, we of course know not, since of an ultimate existence no definition is possible. All we can say is that substance manifests itself as energy, and energy in equilibrium is matter; or, to borrow the language of mathematics, energy is the “primitive function”

whose "derived function" is matter—a derivative of which we have no means of finding the integral. But this very fact that substance can only be expressed in material terms amply justifies us in calling ourselves Materialists.

Thus the new lights on Materialism seem to reveal no weak points in its armor. The new conception of matter, besides furnishing a unifying theory of existence which bears out to the full the claims of Monism, leaves in the last analysis the position of Materialism unshaken. Hence there seems to be no occasion just yet to apologise for calling our philosophic system a Materialistic Monism.

A. E. MADDOCK.

### Animal Enemies of Plants.

WHEN surveying the fair face of Nature one is deeply moved by her manifold beauties. A lovely landscape; the valley carved out by the meandering course of the river; the sweet blendings of color presented by the blossoms of summer and spring; the stately magnificence of the lords of the forest; and the multitudinous variety of plant life revealed by brake and copse; the clustering grape, the waving corn; the autumnal glory of the many-tinted apple, pear, and plum; the choice brown hazel nut and the sombre-hued blackberry, all conspire to lend to Nature a never-dying charm. From the darling of the gods—the human species—there almost instinctively arises a prayer of thankfulness to Nature for her unstinted gifts to her proudest and most precious production.

Many a Theistic homily has been written and countless sermons have been preached on the clear evidences of divine handiwork displayed to all who pause to reflect on the marvels and beauties of God's creation. But if we meditate with reverence and gratitude upon the beauties and blessings which our Mother showers upon us in such prodigal abundance, we must not on that account forget that the glories of Nature are the outcome of a pitiless struggle for supremacy which has most constantly accompanied all forms of living matter from the dawn of life many millions of years ago right down to the present moment of our existence.

Parasitic life is legion, and is responsible for incalculable misery and death throughout the entire realm of organic nature, from unicellular creatures to the highest of the backboneed family. The subject is a vast one, and we will for the moment confine our attention to a consideration of a few only of the insect enemies of vegetable growths of outstanding economic value to mankind. A most elaborate study of the animal pests which attach themselves, to the detriment and destruction of the plants upon which they prey, has been carried out on the North American continent by an army of scientific investigators. Experts have come to the conclusion that the annual losses to American agriculturalists which are directly due to insect attack is 10 per cent. for ordinary farm crops, while the vegetable growers' losses reach the high average of 20 per cent. An evil of this magnitude called for serious inquiry, and as an evidence of the time and attention devoted to the study of the question in the United States we may mention that so far back as January, 1905, the various bodies interested in this inquiry had published over 12,000 memoirs containing about 72,000 references to noxious insects, and since that date the number has been constantly increasing.

From the moment a seed is sown until the vegetable is ready to undergo the processes of the culinary art, the plant is ever open to the onslaught of its insect foes. When seeds are "bad," and fail to germinate after planting, this "badness" is almost invariably to be traced either to the agency of injurious insects while still in the granary or to the destructive activities of insects contained in the soil. Weevils, wire-worms, and root maggots are pests of this character.

Asparagus is rendered unmarketable when ready for gathering by the asparagus beetle. Tubers, tomatoes, cereals, and other plants are all liable to the attacks of malign insect organisms. In fact, there is no cultivated plant of any kind that is immune to the depredations of animal parasites. These, however, are preyed upon in their turn; the vegetable fattens its insect enemies that these should afterwards fatten insectivorous birds, and carnivorous insects such as the ladybirds and other useful creatures. Animals useful to the husbandman are variously classified, but are best arranged in four divisions. In Dr. Chittenden's classification the leading forms are grouped as follows:—

"(1) Predaceous insects consisting of those which feed externally on their prey; (2) predatory animals other than insects, such as birds and mammals; (3) parasitic insects which live in the bodies of their hosts; (4) fungi and diseases of bacterial origin."

Climatic conditions are as essential to the control of insect depredation as to the yield of the harvest itself. Intense frost and extreme heat, heavy rainfall or prolonged drought, exercise as great an influence on insect life as on that of the vegetation. The enormous increase of snails, slugs, and other pernicious organisms in our English gardens is very largely attributable to the abnormally mild winters of recent years.

Among the insects most valuable to the farmer and gardener, the ladybird occupies a pre-eminent place, as this useful creature destroys immense numbers of plant lice, while other forms closely related to it limit the destructiveness of scale insects. Ladybirds also feed on the eggs and larvæ of other insect pests. Several species of ground-beetles, spiders, wasps, and syrphus and robber-flies, are likewise instrumental in lessening the activities of noxious insects. Among birds, the quail is eminently useful as a destroyer of plant pests. Skunks and toads are both beneficial to the cultivator of the soil. Fowls, ducks, and turkeys devour incredible quantities of grubs, injurious worms, and similar pests.

"The parasitic enemies of noxious insects are legion, but their activity as useful allies of the farmer is to a large extent dependent on atmospheric conditions. As a general rule, also, they seldom appear in their greatest numbers until their injurious hosts have done more or less damage. Their principal usefulness, then, is in so decimating the numbers of noxious species in one season that few are left to prey upon crops the following year."

The chief members of this useful group are related to the wasps; the ichneumon flies, braconids, and chalcids flies are salient examples of these. In referring to the economic importance of parasitic organisms as insect destroyers, Dr. Chittenden, of the United States Department of Agriculture, writes:—

"An excellent example of the value of parasites is afforded by the imported cabbage worm. One of its parasites, *Pteromalus puparum*, destroys in some seasons from 80 to 90 per cent. of these 'worms.' Another parasite, *Apanteles glomeratus*, was purposely introduced by the United States Government about 1883. During the autumn of 1904 this species held its host under complete control in the District of Columbia, killing every 'worm' which came under the writer's observation."\*

When pestiferous insects are classified as regards the nature of their food plants, we discover that many of these are specially noxious, inasmuch as they restrict their predaceous activities to particular vegetable growths. When parasitic pests display a particular predilection for exceptionally valuable plants, they become a standing menace to the raiser of crops. Some of these malign creatures strictly limit their attention to the cotton plant; others infest the tomato, tobacco, and other members of the same botanical family. Many insect pests, however, are quite cosmopolitan in their tastes; and although they may show a preference for certain plants, the fact remains that, when they have out-

\* *Insects Injurious to Vegetables*, p. 15.

run their favorite means of subsistence, they calmly proceed to devour the next plant they meet with, and orchard, garden, field, and forest are all invaded in turn.

Fortunately for the farmer, this omnivorous group is less destructive than its more special-feeding colleagues. Its attack is spread over a far more extensive area; but the damage to crops for which caterpillars, leaf-beetles, green flies (aphides), and other general crop pests are responsible is still very serious. And it must not be forgotten that omnivorous vermin such as locusts and army-worms may swarm over an entire territory and completely ruin the harvest.

White grubs are deadly antagonists to agriculture. There are several hundred distinct forms of these grubs, and the majority are parasitic on cultivated plants. The wireworms, again, rival the white grubs as general farm pests.

"Though not related to the white grubs, they have very similar habits, the injurious vegetable-feeding forms being strictly subterranean, and subsisting at the expense of various crops, especially corn, cereals, and grasses, but attacking, in the absence of these, various vegetables and other plants."

Important crops such as potatoes, onions, turnips, cabbage, beetroot, lettuce, carrots, and others, are ravaged by these miserable parasites. Plant lice are another scourge to the cultivator. There are numerous species, and all are injurious to plant life. Lucky is the gardener who is not troubled with their presence. In some seasons the hardest products of the kitchen garden suffer severely from their baleful activities, while the ordinary vegetable growths—melons, cucumbers, peas, and young budding fruit trees—are among their favorite victims.

That choice garden growth, asparagus, is the host of various parasites. If America presented Europe with the potato and various other useful plants, the Old World gave asparagus to the New. This vegetable was carried across the Atlantic by the early European colonists, and appears to have remained immune to insect molestation for a couple of hundred years. Few edible plants have ever enjoyed such prolonged security; but now the plant is preyed upon by two leaf beetles which are both of European origin, and whose food is confined to this plant alone. The common asparagus-beetle appears in the list of English exports, and it is now firmly established in the States. This beetle is the chief enemy of the asparagus. It first attracted attention near New York in 1860, four years after its introduction into the country. Both in its larval and adult state this beetle damages and devours the tender shoots of the plants which are cultivated for the early season's markets. Later in the year it destroys the developing vegetable, and is seriously injurious to the seedlings. The larvæ, as well as the adult beetles, destroy the delicate parts of the plant, "but the latter gnaw with seemingly equal relish the epidermis or rind of the stems."

To the artistic naturalist unacquainted with its noxious character this beetle would appeal as a thing of wondrous beauty unalloyed. It is, indeed, a lovely object, "slender and graceful in form, blue-black in color, with red thorax, and lemon-yellow and dark blue elytra on wing-covers, with reddish border. Its length is a trifle less than one-fourth of an inch." From the site of its first settlement in Queen's County, New York, the beetle has spread very widely, and were it not for the immense numbers of adults which perish in severe wintry weather, and the very numerous predaceous animals which feed on its larvæ, it would be an even worse pest than it is. Among its inveterate enemies are the spotted lady-bird, sundry wasps, and small dragon-flies.

Another eyesore to the cultivator is the twelve-spotted asparagus-beetle, which has also spread widely over the United States, and, like the related form above described, is a beetle of great beauty. A third pest is the maggot of a small black fly which is only too well known as the asparagus-miner, a name derived from its habit of tunneling under the

skin of the plant-stalk near, or just below, its base. An ingenious remedy for this untoward happening has been proposed by Dr. Chittenden, which is as follows:—

"Permit a few volunteer asparagus plants to grow as traps to lure the female fly to deposit her eggs. Afterwards, in late June or early July, pull the trap plants and promptly burn them with their contained insects.

"If this is carefully done over a considerable area, there will be little necessity for other methods, as few insects will be left for another season, unless, indeed, the insect has an alternative food plant. Co-operation and thoroughness are essential to success. This method will also operate against the rust which is often present in fields infested by the miner."

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

#### PILLS TO PURGE ORTHODOXY.

It is to be feared that, to most men, the sky is but a concave mirror, showing nothing behind, and in looking into which they see only their own distorted images, like the reflection of a face in a spoon. Hence it needs not surprise that they are not very devout worshippers; it is a great wonder that they do not openly scoff.

Piety, like small-pox, comes by infection. Robinson Crusoe, however, caught it alone on his island. It is probable that he had it in his blood.

Everybody professes to know that it would be difficult to find a needle in a haystack, but very few reflect that this is because haystacks seldom contain needles.

It was never intended that men should be saints in heaven until they are dead and good for nothing else. On earth they are mostly fools.

The influence of climate upon civilisation has been more exhaustively treated than studied. Otherwise, we should know how it is that some countries that have so much climate have no civilisation.

The symbol of charity should be a circle. It usually ends exactly where it begins—at home.

A four-footed beast walks by lifting one foot at a time, but a four-horse team does not walk by lifting one horse at a time. And yet you cannot readily explain why this is so.—*Ambrose Bierce* ("Dod Grile").

#### FAREWELL TO THE CROSS.

Straightway he raised the Cross high in the air;  
Its shadow darkened space: into the deep  
He threw it: then his terrible despair  
Fell from him, as a sleep.

Falls from a young man on a summer morn:  
Wondering and glad a lowly way he took  
By pastures, flowers and fruit, and golden corn,  
And by a murmuring brook:

And while were heard descending from the skies,  
Or out of future times and future lands,  
A bruit low and whispers, shadowy cries  
Of joy and clapping hands.

—*John Davidson.*

So, when dark faith in faith's dark ages heard  
Falsehood, and drank the poison of the Word,  
Two shades misshapen came to monstrous birth,  
A father fiend in heaven, a thrall on earth:  
Man, meanest horn of beasts that press the sod,  
And dia: the vilest of his creatures, God.  
A judge unjust, a slave that praised his name,  
Made life and death one fire of sin and shame.

—*Swinburne.*

#### Obituary.

I regret to hear of the death of Robert Owen Smith, which took place rather suddenly on Friday, March 13—the cause of death being certified as rheumatism and heart failure. The funeral took place on the following Wednesday. It took place without religious rites of any kind. Mr. Smith is well known to the survivors of the "Bradlaugh" days at the Hall of Science. I did not hear of his death till Monday evening, and though I would write more, in the circumstances I cannot.—G. W. F.

## 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, R. Rosetti, sen., "Is Easter a Christian Festival?"

#### OUTDOOR.

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

### COUNTRY.

#### INDOOR.

MANCHESTER BRANCH N. S. S. (Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints): G. W. Foote, 3, "Shaw Among the Prophets"; 6.30, "Mr. Balfour on God."

ST. HELENS BRANCH N. S. S. (Central Café, Bridge-street): Saturday, March 21, at 7.30, F. Gateshill, "Christianity at the Bar of Reason."

## SECULAR EDUCATION LEAGUE.

THE

### Seventh Annual General Meeting OF MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE LEAGUE

WILL BE HELD AT

CAXTON HALL (Room 1), VICTORIA ST., W.C.  
ON TUESDAY, MARCH 24, AT 8.15 P.M. PROMPT.

CHAIR TO BE TAKEN BY

SIR HENRY COTTON.

SPEAKERS:

MR. G. W. FOOTE, MR. ARTHUR HENDERSON, M.P.,  
MR. HALLEY STEWART, J.P., REV. W. WALSH, D.D.

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