

THE Freethinker

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Greatness is great power, producing great effects.
—WILLIAM HAZLITT.

Fighting Christians.

JESUS CHRIST is most frequently called the Savior. Whether he will save us, or any of us, somehow and somewhere, in the next world, if there is a next world, is a matter of pure speculation. Whatever we find out on this point, we must die to do it. Meanwhile, it is pretty certain that he has not saved us in this world. All the salvation we get comes from the progress of science and civilisation. England is a Christian country, and is well to the front in the race of progress. Abyssinia has been a Christian country ever so much longer, and is just as far behind. The difference between them is due, not to Christianity, but to secular causes. And the same rule applies in all cases. Every nation that has an advantage over other nations owes it to natural conditions, such as soil, climate, position, material resources, education, and good government. Of course the most advanced nations still profess and call themselves Christians. But profession is one thing and practice another. It seems to be generally admitted that real Christianity is only possible—if it is possible at all—on off-days, like Sunday, when business is suspended, and people are free to indulge in all sorts of sentimentalities, without the least hindrance to their prosperity. Indeed, an English bishop has openly declared that any State which tried to carry out the Sermon on the Mount would be ruined in a week.

Another inappropriate name of Jesus Christ is the Prince of Peace. This is not only inappropriate, but positively facetious. Jesus himself said that he came not to send peace, but a sword; and this prophecy, at any rate, has been amply fulfilled. One can hardly find in all history a religion which has been so cantankerous and quarrelsome as his. All religions have been more or less bitter and contentious, and creators of discord and division. According to the Bible itself the first quarrel in the world was a religious one. Cain worshiped God in one way, Abel in another; and they settled the dispute by one knocking out the other's brains. This is the way in which religious disputes have been settled ever since. But the religion founded—whether in reality or only in repute—by Jesus Christ has been the most fruitful in hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. It has always been marked by bigotry, arrogance, persecution, and cruelty. Never has it truly served the cause of peace. Even if it aimed at doing so it has signally failed. The history of Christendom is a long record of war, bloodshed, and conquest. The map of Europe has always been adjusted on battlefields. And the fighting power of Christian nations is simply overwhelming. The late Mr. Gladstone, indeed, cited this fact as a proof of the divine origin and character of Christianity. Christian nations build all the battleships, manufacture all the guns, rifles, and explosives, drill and maintain all the great armies, and carry the arts of destruction to the highest pitch of perfection. Christian nations, too, are the chief disturbers of the peace of the

world. Wherever war is going on they are in it. Even when China and Japan had a set-to the Christian nations looked on longingly, and soon arranged to take part in any future quarrels in that locality. The commonest, twopenny-halfpenny Englishman talks about "our empire" and "the soldiers of the King," and quotes odds and ends of the latest patriotic poets. Our American cousins went mad over Admiral Dewey, because he performed the by no means miraculous feat of smashing up a number of ineffective Spanish ships in the bay of Manila. Millions would not have turned out to welcome the greatest genius who ever contributed to the world's highest civilisation—to its science, its art, its literature, or its industrial development. They go wild over gunpowder and glory. Yet the vast majority of them are Christians, and are ready to talk by the yard (on Sundays) about the Prince of Peace. No doubt they think Dewey was a far greater man than Ingersoll. Perhaps if Jesus Christ himself had turned up during the Dewey celebrations they would have voted him a nuisance and sent him to Sing-Sing.

Some time ago the Czar's Love-Feast was sitting at the Hague. The Christian nations, including the United States of America, were all represented there. Ostensibly their object was to promote peace. Really their object was to diminish the cost and risks of war. It was like a Conference of Bargainers discussing how they might reduce the expenses of their profession. Even the expressed horror of Dum-Dam bullets, and new explosives, was not really humane. Christian rulers want to keep up armies and navies, and they see that war will cease altogether if science is allowed to make it too deadly. So they want to construct a ring, and have a good set of international Queensberry rules, in the interest of the noble art of slaughter. Anyhow, the chairs upon which the Hague Conference sat were hardly cold before another war was in progress. And of course it was the dear, good, peaceable Christians who were at it again. They put the Prince of Peace in a cupboard in the joss-house, and have brought out and trimmed up the Lord of Hosts. Boers and Britishers both worshiped this deity. The Boer had a Mauser rifle in one hand and a Dutch Bible in the other, while the Britisher had weapons in both hands and a Bible behind his back. Each relied upon the God of that book. Each prayed to the God of that book. Each informed the God of that book which side he ought to take in the quarrel. And what did this God do? He sat silent in heaven and did nothing. He let both sides take his name in vain. He read them no lesson in honesty and charity; he did not bid them try justice and mutual toleration instead of fighting; he simply went to sleep and left word for the victor to call him when the fight was over. Such a God is only fit for a museum. Some will say he is hardly fit for that.

At the present moment a number of Christian nations are engaged in the biggest war in history. Millions of soldiers are in the field, and the killed and wounded amount to thousands a day.

It may be said that Christianity is not responsible for the fighting disposition of Christian nations. But this is a confession of its moral impotence. It means that Christianity must be supplanted by another regulating power—the Religion of Humanity.

G. W. FOOTE.

God's Opportunity.

EVERYBODY is familiar with the story of the Castilian king who said that had he been present at the creation he would have moved an amendment. In spite of its "blasphemy" the story has always commanded considerable sympathy. For what Alfonso said he *would* have done had he been given the chance, all good men and women have been doing since the creation. In one form or other all human effort after betterment resolves itself into attempts to improve God's handiwork. They are so many amendments to the "Divine plan." Nature is—so say theologians—God's handiwork. It expresses his plan; and man is everywhere remoulding it. Man is everywhere in conflict with nature; it is his one constant opponent. There never exists anything better than an armed truce, and the slightest relaxation of vigilance, the overlooking of a weak point of defence, is followed by some natural catastrophe on a more or less comprehensive scale. If God's work is to be seen anywhere it must be found in nature. And man is everywhere trying to pass amendments.

"Man's weakness," say the theologians, "is God's opportunity." Freethinkers understand the phrase and appreciate it. Ultimately, it means that the belief in God, the fear of God, is never so strong as when man is weak and helpless. Give man knowledge, and the strength that comes of knowledge, and—to again follow our religious guides—he becomes puffed up with pride and arrogance. Let him realise his weakness, his ignorance, his helplessness, and he becomes more susceptible to religious influences. There is a truth—of a kind—in this. Historically, human civilisation develops along the line of a challenge to the control and commands of Deity. Early human history shows us man everywhere oppressed by the thought of what the gods want, and by the fear of what may happen if their desires are not gratified. Had that fear continued civilisation would have been an impossibility. One generation would have succeeded another, treading the same round, with no greater variation than could be secured by the slow operation of natural selection. It was the revolt against the gods that lifted man out of that rut. Man had to learn to dare the anger of the gods in order to investigate, to criticise, and, as a consequence, to improve. The power of the gods had to be broken before civilisation could advance. Heresy is the condition of progress in all ages.

What, however, theologians mean by man's weakness being God's opportunity, is that his pride must be broken before God's will can be done. It is a curious argument, and I am not now going to discuss either its sense or its relevancy. I desire only to point out that there are many other opportunities that offer themselves whereby God might impress upon the world both his presence and his power. One such opportunity has just presented itself. All the world is ringing with the story of the German bombardment of Rheims Cathedral. It has been called an offence against civilisation—as though the acts that led up to that bombardment were not a still greater offence. The world has been horrified and protests have been made, as though there were not greater cause for horror and greater need for protest on account of the thousands of ruined homesteads and the slaughter of thousands of human beings—including women and children. New cathedrals may be, and I suppose will be, built. But a family once blotted out is destroyed for ever. And if the world is less affected by the thought of the families destroyed than by the contemplation of a cathedral in ruins, it is only because its imagination is not yet sufficiently civilised to appraise things at their proper value. A great artistic structure in ruins and a ruined home are both deplorable sights, but there should be little doubt as to which constitutes the greater sin against humanity.

No Freethinker would wish to do aught that could destroy or depreciate a work of art, whether it be a

statue, a cathedral, a painting, or a secular building. But there are some considerations in connection with these cathedrals that everyone would do well to bear in mind. Quite naturally journalists have been "spreading themselves" on the subject. They have written largely about the piety, the love, the devotion, the self-sacrifice that went to the building of a cathedral such as that of Rheims. Some element of truth there may be in this; but it is all greatly overdone. Artists—whether painters, sculptors, or engravers—worked in the Middle Ages much as they work now; and in earlier times a more religious form was given to their production than is the case to-day, the cause was economic, not religious. Religion does not create art; it is doubtful whether it improves it or purifies it. All it does is to *buy* it. The Church bought art as it bought everything else that was likely to advance its claims or strengthen its position. And while we admire the cathedrals of the world, let us not forget that the religion which brought about their erection was content to see men and women herded like cattle and treated like slaves beneath their very shadow. A church might be rich with carved stone or wood, the sun's rays might enter through windows rich with the colors of the rainbow and depicting all the glories that supreme art could portray, but the people out of whose enforced labor they were reared were living meanwhile in windowless huts that were fœtid with disease, amid streets unpaved, and with sanitation unknown. The "glorious cathedrals" of the Middle Ages is only one side of the picture. To get the picture complete we must realise how their richness of construction and endowment was procured through widespread misery and oppression; how the solemn music of the cathedral was accompanied by the clank of prisoners' chains, the songs of marching priests by the groans of tortured men and women, the perfume of incense by the smoke of the *auto-da-fe*; and that while within the church there might be the peace of God, outside there existed the very misery of fabled hells. The beauties of Rheims, Amiens, Cologne, remain; they are part of the world's possessions. We appreciate their beauties, but we do not forget that the religion which could raise them could do nothing to promote a better human life for those who saw their erection.

The horror expressed at the bombardment of Rheims is not wholly artistic. It is partly religious. The building was one erected to the glory of God; it was his house; it belonged in a peculiar sense to him. So be it. The Germans, in shelling the cathedral, were not merely vandals—they were impious vandals. They had raised their hands against God's house. What was God doing to permit such sacrilege? Here was a glorious opportunity for him to vindicate his presence and his power. At a time when the eyes of the whole civilised world are fixed on Northern France, what a triumph for religion it would have been had the German shells been miraculously deflected from their course, or if paralysis had seized the arms of every gunner who aimed a shot at the cathedral! Or the shells might have reached their mark, but have failed to do injury. There are a dozen ways in which a miracle might have been wrought in order to save the cathedral, each one of which would have been enough to convert the world to religion. Or if God had only—to use the conventional religious jargon—"moved the hearts" of the Germans to spare the cathedral. Even that would have been something. But no nothing was done. The German shells went as true to the mark whether they were directed towards a church or a fort. God did nothing. A first-rate opportunity was there, and God refused to avail himself of it.

Is this asking or expecting too much? I do not think it is. The religious world is full of stories of miraculous happenings in obscure ways and to obscure persons. It also tells us of the many ways in which God *does* move the hearts of people to act as he would have them act. Why not then, just for once, perform a miracle and manifest his presence in

so public a way that all doubt would be silenced? Or is the German heart quite beyond his power? Consider the number of religious stories we have of people who were preserved from death or disaster by the interposition of "Providence." Consider, also, the solemn testimonies of men like the late Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, or of the Rev. Dr. Horton, that God has directly influenced people to send them sums of money, or help them recover missing articles. If God can do these things, are we to say that either a German gunner or a siege gun is beyond his control? That would, indeed, be blasphemy. Or, are we to conclude that these stories are all wrong, and that God does nothing either at Rheims or elsewhere?

"What terrible punishments God must be reserving for this German nation, which commits so many acts of sacrilege," said the Archbishop of Rheims, when he was informed of the German action. That is a truly Christian view. God is reserving "terrible punishments" for the German nation! But what is the use of that? Whom will they benefit? These terrible punishments will not rebuild the cathedral, they will not re-people the devastated villages, they will not bring to life again the women and children who have been murdered. They do not, obviously, stop the Germans continuing their work. God is waiting until it is all over; he is making a note of all the Germans are doing, and will square accounts with them later. That policy benefits no one. Any man, who could prevent outrage, and permitted it, would not be allowed to defend himself with such a plea. It is not God's duty to punish; if there is a God, it is his duty to guide and prevent. A parent does not lie in wait for his children to do wrong in order to punish them later. He guides; he, if possible, restrains; and only punishes in order to prevent a repetition of the wrong-doing. Why does not our "heavenly father" act likewise? A God who will not prevent has no right to punish. His standing aside makes him an accessory to the act. His "terrible punishments" later is the act of one who does not play the straight game even with his accomplices.

Perhaps, after all, it is better to leave God altogether out of account. It is true that he did not avail himself of this opportunity to vindicate his presence. But then he never has seized opportunities of this kind. He has watched unmoved massacre after massacre, war after war, with all the horrors and outrages that war always brings wherever and by whomsoever waged. A God who has done nothing for so long is not likely to start doing something now. Powder takes no note of Deity, and Deity returns the compliment by taking no note of powder. God did nothing at Rheims. He did nothing when his Spanish followers, in the sixteenth century, killed 50,000 heretics in Belgium and Holland. He did nothing when his French followers perpetrated the massacre of St. Bartholomew. Opportunities are always present for the manifestations of God's power. But these manifestations never come.

C. COHEN.

An Infamous Libel on Humanity.

WHILE the war-drum is at its loudest and Europe deluged with innocent blood, the *Saturday Journal* affords space for a discussion of the trite question, "After Death—What?" In two of its issues, September 19 and 26, the doctrine of a future state is dogmatically stated for the hundred millionth time by Mr. Lee Danvers and the President of the Wesleyan Conference. The latter's article is of the extremely commonplace type, and neither deserves nor requires any further notice, its arguments being those threadbare ones with which we are all familiar, and which have been triumphantly refuted innumerable times. The peculiarity of Mr. Danvers's contribution is that it does not pretend to adduce any arguments at all.

This eccentric writer goes so far as to admit that "it may be true, as some would have us believe, that there is no future life for any of us; that when we die nothing happens except the thing which is obvious to us all—the decomposition of our bodies." He candidly acknowledges that "death is utterly beyond the domain of reason," and that "therefore we 'cannot reason about it.'" "We can speculate about its meaning," he adds, "or we can decide to leave it out of our thoughts, but we cannot argue about it and prove our arguments right before we ourselves die." He also grants that science is opposed to the belief in immortality, and accuses the parsons of having paid too much deference to the scientists, and in consequence discarded the simple Gospel of the primitive Church. Of course, so tremendous a believer as Mr. Danvers is profoundly convinced that "religion has not gained anything by its adaptation to the scientific thought of the twentieth century," and this is a conviction in which we fully concur. As a matter of fact, religion has lost on a stupendous scale as the result of its various attempts to accommodate itself to the conclusions of science. Religion and science have absolutely nothing in common, though the latter completely undermines the foundations of the former.

Mr. Danvers tramples reason as dust under his feet. Take the following as a sample of the process:—

"To construct is always better than to destroy, to build up better than to pull down; therefore, the simple, unquestioning faith of the Christian in a life after death must obviously be finer than the complicated reasoning of the scientist and the discontented questioning of the unbeliever. For Christianity constructs a Hereafter, whereas most of the scientists and all of the unbelievers do their best to destroy the Christian idea of a Hereafter without seeking to supply a substitute."

With a man who can write in that wild, irresponsible manner it is quite impossible to argue, for no argument, however well-founded and true, would find anything in him to which to appeal. Like the seed in the parable, it falls upon a rocky soil, and can bear no fruit whatever. The biggest fool on earth is aware that sometimes it is better to destroy than to construct, to pull down than to build up, and that, therefore, it by no means follows that "the simple, unquestioning faith of the Christian in a life after death must obviously be finer than the complicated reasoning of the scientist." The world at this moment abounds in evil constructions which need to be destroyed. Does Mr. Danvers really believe that it is better to construct militarism than to destroy it; better to fill the world with armaments than to pull them down? If Mr. Danvers's statement were true, it would be a justification of all the terrible evils now rampant on the planet. It is a mistake to say that Christianity constructs a Hereafter, the Hereafter being simply an old superstition which Christianity, at the commencement of its career, appropriated, regarding it as an invaluable asset, which it has abundantly proved itself to be. We can trace its evolution as a Pagan superstition during countless ages before Christianity was ever heard of; but although admitting that its incorporation with Christianity has eventuated in incalculable profit to the Church, we are firmly of opinion that its effect upon the morals of Christendom has been wholly bad. We belong to the category of unbelievers so wholeheartedly despised by Mr. Danvers; but we beg to inform him that it is excessively foolish to expect us to supply a substitute for a baseless superstition which we seek to demolish. It is an injurious exorcism of which the world should be rid as soon as possible, and for which, certainly, no substitute is required.

Mr. Danvers clings to the Biblical doctrine of life after death, not because it is true, but because it is more attractive than the view that death ends all. This is how he puts it:—

"The Christian used to believe in a life after death that should consist of becoming an ethereal creature with wings on one's shoulders and a harp in one's hands, and eternity was pictured very largely as an

eternity of music. Such a belief is grotesquely absurd according to the scientist and the unbeliever, but, at least, it is more attractive than a belief in nothingness, or in nothing in particular, after death."

According to this teaching, if error is more attractive than truth, we should cherish it and fling truth from us as a despicable thing. If evil is more fascinating than good, by all means let us choose evil and hurl good down the wind. If hate has greater charms than love, let us give free vent to our hatred and bottle up our love. It is a damnable and damning doctrine, and our detestation of it cannot be too vehement. There are neither wings nor harps of gold in the next world, Mr. Danvers tells us, inasmuch as the inhabitants are disembodied spirits, but both wings and harps must be retained, not because they are real, but because they are such lovely symbols; nor are there angels, "but, all the same, angels serve a very useful purpose, if not as facts, at least as figures." Now, listen to this balderdash:—

"The wings and the harp and the music are held nowadays to be the childish figments of childlike minds, and the ministers of the Gospel have agreed to banish them from their talk of an after-life, out of deference to the fact that humanity has, so to speak, grown up. But those things ought not to be banished; we need them."

Let us leave such trivialisms and proceed to consider the only important point in the whole article. Mr. Danvers shall state it in his own words:—

"If everyone believed that death meant utter annihilation, the world would promptly become a place of unspeakable horror. It is all very well to argue that many people would live honestly, soberly, and decently, that they would do right for the mere sake of doing right; but we all know well enough that the majority would do wrong, for the simple reason that it is so very much easier to do wrong than to do right. Let us not deceive ourselves. It is the simple faith of the bulk of mankind in a life after death of infinite possibilities that prevents the world from becoming a hell of madness, murder, and debauchery."

It is extremely difficult to realise that a man in his right senses, or any man who lived on this globe, could have written such ineffably silly stuff. Is not Europe at this hour a veritable "hell of madness, murder, and debauchery?" What about poor little Belgium, France, Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Russia? Is Great Britain a Paradise to-day? *But all the people who are responsible for the existing state of things are firm believers in God and a future life.* Mr. Danvers is simply talking unmitigated nonsense. No one who keeps his eyes open can conscientiously assert that its Christian faith has ever been of the slightest service to Christendom. What has Christian Germany lived to achieve? Domination. Which Christian Power has ever existed for any other purpose? What other object has even the Christian Church ever had in view? We challenge Mr. Danvers to answer. We know to our sorrow what awful evils have flourished, what harrowing injustices, tyrannies, cruelties, murders, and debaucheries have run riot all through the ages under Christianity; but this champion of a life to come evidently does not know what the death of Christianity would mean. Indeed, the depths of his ignorance and prejudice are altogether unfathomable. He may be speaking for himself when he avers that it is so very much easier to do wrong than to do right; but so to characterise all mankind is to indulge in grossest slander. To say of those who repudiate the belief in immortality "that they have nothing to live for," is to fling at them the most abominable affront. If Mr. Danvers is so morally weak, of himself, that he would steal our watch or murder us if he did not believe in a world to come, he has no right to infer that the rest of the race is equally depraved; and this inference which he is conceited and audacious enough to draw is absolutely false. He entertains a low opinion of himself, and a much lower one of all others.

We have been told by eminent men of God that the War owes its origin to the blatant Atheism of Prussia; but out of his hopeless insularity of view, Mr. Danvers assures us that there is no such thing as Atheism. So reckless are his utterances on this

point that we are almost tempted to conclude that he is himself an Atheist masquerading as the most irrational Christian believer ever known, and waxing furiously merry at the expense of his readers. Surely the following extract must emanate from insanity or from hypocrisy:—

"The Atheist declares that there is no God, but the real truth is that there is no Atheist. There are professed Atheists, just as there are professed Christians, but there is no genuine Atheist. There is no man or woman on the face of the earth who does not believe in the existence of an omnipotent God. Atheism is nothing more than a wanton, impotent bravado. It is a sheer impossibility for anyone to live and disbelieve in an Almighty, no matter what name you may bestow upon him."

In spite of all the sorrows and sufferings of the times, all we can do is to laugh at a man who is the victim of such deplorably blind prejudice, or capable of such silly and offensive play-acting. In any case, he is a convicted false accuser of his fellow-human beings.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Grey Street.

BENEATH their superficial simplicity human affairs are so complex that we are often amazed at the ease with which the most audacious conclusions are obtained. The difficulty of imagining even the possibility of the existence of a group of ideas directly opposed to their own seems to be insuperable to most people, presuming the endeavor is made. To think of two different lines of thought; to analyse them; to ponder over their antagonistic merits and demerits; and to base opinion, not on the emotional appeal of either, but upon the rationality of the one as distinguished from the other, seems a hopeless task. Nearly invariably, emotion is elevated at the expense of reason.

British patriotism is the patriotism. We forget our opponents are equally in love with their Fatherland, and for similar reasons. We have nationalism so badly that we forget we are not the only nation on the face of the earth. We forget that, if we insist upon a nation being likened to a superman, then an expanding nation *must* have the opportunity to grow. It is dangerous to thwart its growth. Obeying the evolutionary forces, it will fight, and fight hard, for its essential increase in life. We bitterly condemn brutality, forgetting the horrors we tolerate next door. We prate of the refinement of an evil, of the culture that should accompany warfare, forgetting that every great human mind considers war barbaric. We are chokeful of ideas of honor, omitting to recollect that *our* honor, as a nation, is not altogether stainless, and that, in our national expansion, we painted the map red with patriotic blood.

These are just a few of the popular purblindnesses. And perhaps the funniest, at the present time, circles round our Christianity. God is in the King; but the Devil inhabits the Kaiser. We are too much concerned with motes, too little occupied with beams. The power to observe both sides seems lacking. One might justly put it down to an inability to use the reasoning faculties. And as religion has always been an opposing factor to the free use of reason, we fail to see why it should not be held semi-responsible for a calamity that might have been easily avoided with a little reasonable give-and-take on both sides. Less religion and more reason would save the world much suffering.

So long as people never strive to see both sides of a question, just so long will the fruits of reason remain solely with science; just so long will social power remain in the hands of the financially powerful; just so long will religion have ample human food to nourish it. Religion has cultivated the one-sidedness of the human mind to such an extent that we cannot, regardless of our wishes, deem it immune from blame. And Freethought, above any other

human movement, has accomplished more in the ridding of this purblindness from the mind than its adversaries give it credit for. But, in these strenuous days, we are afforded evidence, unmistakable and incontrovertible, that the anti-social nature of religion must be opposed; that Freethought's time of rest is not yet. Freethinkers are fighters; and we have, perhaps, the conceited opinion that their fight and their bravery shadow the warfare and bravery of conflicting militarism.

There is, naturally, a comic side to this war affair; and in the reaping of the great harvest of human sorrow priests, being single-minded men, are forgetting that the crystal of human life has more than one facet.

The prevailing color-tone is grey. The factory on the other side, its massive stone masonry hiding the western skies, is grey. On this side the tenement houses are grey. Even the atmosphere seems tinted in grey. Age and the smoke from many tall stacks have accomplished their task well; for the street is steeped in a hopelessly melancholic moroseness. Even on the freshest of spring days you can smell it. Anyone whose feelings were in the least susceptible to lights and shades, and whose nature rejoiced in the wide open spaces above fields and hills, would soon discover how easily and rapidly such an environment breeds an ugliness closely akin to immorality.

And yet there is the happiness that is elemental with life in the dismal place. During the daytime it resounds in the whirring of machinery; the rattle of traffic carries the same chorus; the loud-voiced hawkers unconsciously embody in their calls the basic happiness of life; and in the early evening the children, with their ceaseless laughter and shouting and quarreling, continue the life-refrain.

However distressful may be one's comparison of ideal and reality, however sorely the need for improvement may impress itself on the mind, and however painful may be the undesirable opinion that progress is a forlorn hope against an impregnable phlegmatism, it is impossible to overlook the happiness underlying it all. Life, full of activities useful and useless, average commonplace life, with all its stagnant repellant to ideas and all its dull-witted safeguarding of social customs once dearly bought, the sluggish life the people live, is here; and in the heavy grey of it there is only one thread of light, the indestructible fundamental happiness inseparable from human life.

Tawdriness, squalor, and lowness cannot thoroughly conceal it. Depressing monotony and sordid excitement cannot hide it. The two outstanding characteristics of the place and the people, child breeding and labor, serve only to intensify it by different means. The life-happiness laughs in uproarious merriment, smiles in coarse pleasures, leers in obscene jokes. Through the touches of beauty and the splashes of ugliness, through the conglomeration of services and virtues, joys and pains, runs the life-sustaining rivulet of happiness, one thread of gold in the overwhelming grey. It is the happiness of being alive; for even the slave with the greatest burden prefers life to death, prefers to carry the load rather than give Death the knife to cut the burden's cords.

Not that this in any way softens the hardships religion has completely failed to remove, or the griefs that Christianity cannot assuage, or the sorrows God cannot eradicate. Despite them, the life-happiness exists; and sometimes I fancy I can see the smile of the life-happiness flaunting its strange powers in the lugubrious face of God.

God, if he exist, has lamentably failed to crush love for himself into the human heart, and failed, also, to crush merriment out. And if, as some of our religious luminaries seem to have been informed by wireless phonographic communication from heaven, God, at the present time, is doing his utmost to blacken the soul of man with battle smoke, and lacerate his heart with all the hideous sorrows of war, and obliterate from his mind all the humanistic teachings of centuries, so that man may be taught

the error of his ways, then God, again, will ignominiously fail. Notwithstanding the hellishness of his educational methods, Humanity will still smile, for Humanity will still live; and the smile will rob God of the essence of his victory.

Twenty centuries of Christianity have not been enough to keep men from the throats of their brothers. Twenty centuries of Christian teaching of morality have not secured one single step of progress from the brute. Twenty centuries of idealistic instruction have not given us the least justification for saying that we have been civilized by Christianity, or even that it has been helpful to us in eliminating the lower instincts from our natures. And yet these twenty centuries of Christianity, on the other hand, have not been able to freeze the laugh on our lips.

Never has God, if what religionists say be true, poured such a sackful of horrors into the heart of Humanity. Never before has God flooded the white flesh of his little ones with such a sea of red blood. Never before, we are told, has God seen fit so terrifically to blazon forth the wrath of his love for us. But the innumerable grey people of millions of grey streets like this can still laugh.

Although his grey people are all interested more in battles than in anything else; although victories, defeats, advances, rearguard movements, and all the rest hold our attention nearly entirely; although we know our lives are being gradually screwed down to subsistence levels, and that the sufferings of thousands of children at home will be no less severe than the sufferings of soldiers at the front; although we know that misery is deepening her depths in the life of man, and that most of us will, at some time or other, be affected by the overspreading darkness of the valley in which we live, we can still laugh. And the laughter becomes more bitterly ironic the nearer its sound gets to God.

To-day we are all speaking of warfare. We compare casualties. Braveries and brutalities fill our little minds. We are full of an accreted animosity against an enemy. We are fighting, not so much for victory, as to the death. We are soldier mad. Militarism has gripped us. We might be living in a tribal state a few degrees from animalism. We must yield implicit obedience to the most foolish command of the merest minion of the tribal chief.

Christianity, in fact, with all its contemptible morality might be dead. But we can still laugh.

Those who are praying around the putrescent corpse of Christianity forget this facet of human life. They forget that Humanity is bigger than their conceptions of God and his heavenly clique of assistants. They forget that Humanity can smile through its tears; that man can laugh when his heart has been furrowed by the plough of sorrow.

In this grey street the people are living their grey lives as usual. Perhaps it is as well that they cannot vision the sufferings of which they so easily speak; perhaps it is as well their minds cannot imagine the terrible tortures that have come upon their unknown fellow-beings, unsolicited and unjustly; perhaps it is as well their little grey minds cannot feel the hardships others are toiling through.

Sometimes I think that; at other times I wish they could realise a hail of bullets, and could feel the sudden plunge of bloody steel into a human breast—could feel the twist, and wrench, and crunch as it was pulled out. I wish they could see, in idea, the horrors of a lovely meadow strewn with dead and dying bodies, portions of flesh, limbs, and muscles and human organs in all stages of decomposition and in all degrees of laceration. Sometimes I wish they could see their own sons and daughters lying there. And then, when the idea begins more fully to develop, a sickness creeps over, and I become glad the little grey minds of the people cannot see these things; and yet, how else will they ever realise the unheroic side of ugly barbarism?

The question brings me back to my starting point. Perhaps the little grey minds of the people of these grey streets can only be reached by the interpenetra-

tive teaching of what is opposed to the cause of their singlemindedness. Slowly that teaching will work through religion into their lives. Fighting religion, we are fighting one of the great original causes of their purblindness. Opening the gates of Reason, it may be we are opening the gates to a more civilised life; for when Reason dominates life, we are justified in thinking, barbarism, in all its aspects, and horrors, and sufferings, will be no more.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Acid Drops.

That eminently Christian novelist, Mr. Hall Caine, has contributed to the October number of *Nash's and Pall Mall Magazine* an eminently Christian article on the war, which is but a distinct echo of the utterances of the Bishop of Zanzibar, Drs. Clifford and Campbell Morgan, and the editor of the *British Weekly* on the same subject. The article as a whole is extremely commonplace, written in the slovenly, diffuse style peculiar to this novelist, and we would not dream of noticing it at all were it not for its reiteration of a fundamental heresy. Like the leaders of his public, Mr. Hall Caine asserts that the war, on the part of Germany, is a reversion to Paganism; and Paganism, from his point of view, means Atheism. In this assertion there lurk two radical errors. The first is that Paganism was Atheistical, and the second that Paganism favored war. For these two errors, fallen into by a public man, there is absolutely no excuse.

Surely there is no need at this time of day to prove that many Pagan philosophers were profoundly religious men. No readers of Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius would dare to question that fact; but it may be news to Mr. Hall Caine and the generality of his numerous readers that, like the early Church Fathers, Pagan philosophers were zealous denouncers of war. If he were to consult the works of Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch, Celsus, as quoted by Origen, and many others still accessible, he would be heartily ashamed of several prejudiced statements in his article. One citation only must suffice here. In Epistle 95, Seneca, by far the most brilliant of the Latin writers of the Silver Age, says:—

"We punish murders and individual homicides; what of wars and the glorious wickedness of slaughtered nations? Neither our avarice nor our cruelty knows a bound."

In point of fact, Paganism was incomparably more pacific than Christianity has ever been from the moment it came to power under Constantine.

Mr. Hall Caine quotes largely from the sayings of the Gospel Jesus; but he carefully selects the pacific maxims, and makes no allusion to the warlike ones, of which there are several. Not a word is uttered about sending a sword rather than peace, about selling cloaks and purchasing swords, or about sowing discord in families. Is it fair to cite one set of sayings and omit another set of an opposite character? But it is a Christian habit—oh, so Christian!

Sir Joseph Compton-Rickett, M.P., President-elect of the Free Churches' Council, writing in that religious periodical, the *Daily Mail*, says it is a "mistaken idea that Christianity excludes the exercise of force—The Divine Word itself abounds in warnings, and utters its last comforts and cautions beneath the lurid sunset of the Apocalypse." We know that "sunset." It used to be a coaling station.

According to some of the daily papers, the Germans are all "Atheists," whilst others deride them as "religious maniacs." The reader pays his halfpenny and takes his choice.

Those Christian gentlemen who are so very anxious for other people to consider that the Germans are all "Atheists" might explain how it is that the German soldiers wear belts with a buckle bearing the inscription "Gott mit uns" ("God with us"). That is the motto of the German Army, and it reads very oddly as an Atheistic inscription.

We hope, or rather we don't hope, that Mr. Lloyd George was sure of his figures in his Criccieth speech the other day. "You will be surprised to know," he said, "that for every one Belgian soldier lost on the battlefield three unoffending, innocent people were ruthlessly killed in that country."

This is a terrible statement. If true, it damns Germany beyond redemption.

Dr. Arthur Canon Doyle, writing in the *Chronicle* on "The Great German Plot," says that "the real cause of war was universal national insanity," and that this insanity "was based upon the universal supposition that the Germans were the Lord's chosen people." This is plain enough. And it shows how much Atheism had to do with this great calamity.

"Randall Cantuar" (alias Canterbury) is a very good name for the Archbishop who has been contributing hypocritical absurdity to the war correspondence in the newspapers. A very good name. Cant he is.

Mr. R. J. Campbell says that "a spirit of swagger and bullying appears to have taken possession of what was once a simple and God-fearing race." Well, we have often observed that "swagger" is one of the outstanding characteristics of God-fearing. Consider the spiritual "swagger" of the old-type Puritan, or of the newly made revivalistic convert. There are other kinds of swagger beside that of the military bully, and that of the Christian is among the more objectionable of its many forms. Besides, if "God-fearing" is of any real value, it should have protected this simple race from the swagger to which Mr. Campbell alludes. There are things that often act as a protection against the development of objectionable qualities. Christianity seems to invite their presence.

Mr. Campbell says that "perhaps" the war "has been divinely permitted as a stern discipline" to save us from becoming a decadent people. And perhaps, also, Belgium "needed this purifying flame" because "her record in the Congo is not a good one." This is unmitigated rubbish. Decadence is not brought about by an absence of war; it is induced by war. Germany is decadent—in comparison with the Germany of forty years ago—precisely because in the interval it has given so much of its energies to thoughts of militarism. And the men of England who are responding to the call for soldiers have not been produced by war, but by peace. Recruiting officers are expressing their pleasure and surprise at the quality—physical and mental—of those who offer themselves for enlistment. We need only remember that these recruits are not the products of a military system to realise the absurdity of the talk about war being needful to prevent decadence. Character is made in the home and in the peaceful pursuits of social life. At best war only employs what has been otherwise produced, and generally it leads to waste and demoralisation.

To talk of the desolation of Belgium as a "purifying flame" is an insult to common sense, if not to common decency. True, the brutalities of Belgian officials on the Congo were almost beyond description; but what had the peaceful Belgian villager to do with these? And how are they remedied by God permitting the German armies to ravage Belgium? The man chiefly responsible for those outrages, King Leopold, died peacefully in his bed. God let him alone; and now, years after his death, according to Mr. Campbell, he blasts the Belgian people for what Leopold did, and for what he permitted. Mr. Campbell says it is "blasphemous" for the Kaiser to talk of the "divine blessings" that follow the German armies. But if Mr. Campbell is correct in saying that this war is permitted by God to act as a "purifying flame" in Belgium, then the Kaiser is, after all, correct. He is God's instrument. He is purifying Belgium. Really, Mr. Campbell might try to be consistent, even in his unreason.

According to a *Times* report the Bishop of St. Albans said that "the war had brought a strange position with regard to ordination candidates. In one case with which he was acquainted, every single candidate on the list had volunteered for service in the New Army." They preferred fighting to preaching, and Kitchener to Christ.

"What you say about the administration of the Prince's Fund," Mr. J. T. Lloyd writes to Mr. Foote, "is perfectly true everywhere. I know a poor woman in Paddington who has been abominably treated. She has two sons in the Army, and six helpless ones depending upon her at home, one an invalid husband. She works her finger nails out, and yet she was asked if she couldn't do some more work, and which church she attended. Another case is that of a young girl who was engaged to be married to a reservist. The banns had been put up, but he was called out before the marriage could be performed. Soon after he left she gave birth to a child. When an application for assistance was made she

was informed that 'she didn't count.' And yet England is fighting for Christianity!"

Truth (September 17) devotes a pointed paragraph to this subject:—

"From all I can gather the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association are dealing pretty efficiently with the mass of relief work which the war has entailed upon them, but here and there one hears of incidents which show that local committees are not always wise in their choice of the voluntary workers who do the necessary inquiry work. Here is one of them. A widow whose son is on active service at the front applied to the Glasgow Committee on August 15. After answering a number of questions, she was told that someone would call on her the following week. On August 20 a lady called and gave her 4s. On the 27th appeared a gentleman visitor. After putting the widow through the usual catechism, he told her that she must put her whole trust in the Lord, and, dropping on his knees, prayed for four or five minutes. He then presented her with an evangelical tract and took his departure. When people ask for bread they ought not to be given tracts."

We hope *Truth* will continue these exposures.

Information reaches us that it is quite common in South London to ask applicants if they attend church, and to treat them according to their replies. In this way the National Relief Fund becomes an agency for promoting the interests of the Church of England mainly, though other denominations are not wholly ignored.

"Religion Under Fire" is the title of an article, by "One from the Front," in the *Globe*. The writer's object is to show that only religious men are brave on the battlefield. Probably he never heard that nearly half the men in France are Freethinkers. That they fight as well as their comrades, and both of them as well as the British, is beyond question. As to great soldiers of the past, Napoleon was a Freethinker, and Frederick the Great was a Freethinker. These will do to go on with.

"No one," the writer says, "ever heard of a man giving his life for the cause of arithmetic, agnosticism, or atheism; he will for religion and what it teaches." The word "arithmetic" shows that this journalist or preacher (for we don't believe in his being one from the front at all) doesn't know what he is writing or talking about. An intelligent child would not confuse arithmetic with agnosticism or atheism. What possible relation can they have to each other, except, perhaps, where the subject of the Trinity is concerned? In that regard it might be said that Servetus gave his life for arithmetic. Atheism has had its martyrs. No doubt men have given their lives for religion, but they have been far more prone to taking other people's lives for it. Nor is it only on the battlefield that men have to face death. Whoever you are, you have to face him when he comes—even on a feather bed.

In all the ages nothing has been more distinctively Christian than for Christians to differ from and contradict one another, and they are still doing so with a vengeance. For example, Dr. Clifford and Dr. Campbell Morgan have asserted, again and again, that the prevalence of the philosophy of Schopenhauer and Nietzsche in Prussia is responsible for the present war, forgetting, or not knowing, that the latter philosopher was the former's severest critic. Now, a lady, writing in the *Church Times* for September 25, assures us that such an assertion has no foundation whatever in fact. Her words are worth quoting:—

"However much Nietzsche may be disliked and despised in England, it is perfectly certain that the mass of human beings in Germany dislike and despise him even more than those gentlemen who, never having read a word of his writings, hold him up to opprobrium in this country. They have an equally false idea of his teaching, and one has only to mention Nietzsche in most German houses to call down a chorus of disapprobation from everybody..... It is not, perhaps, too much to say that the keynote of his philosophy is that only by suffering pain with acceptance can we make any way towards becoming a Superman. And this secret life itself whispered in my ear: 'See,' he said, 'I am that which must always conquer itself.' This is very different from the cult of the 'blond beast' which he is supposed to have taught."

This testimony is fully borne out by all who know both Nietzsche and modern Germany. What have Dr. Clifford and Dr. Campbell Morgan to say to this counter-Christian opinion based on knowledge?

The lady maintains, further, that Pan-Germanism is not at all inconsistent with a zealous profession of the Protestant form of the Christian religion. She tells us that "Germany

is the only country which has really adopted Protestantism, and carried Protestantism to its logical conclusion." Germany is dominated even to-day, not by Nietzsche, but by a much greater man, namely, Martin Luther, who was as much a man of blood and iron as Bismarck himself. On this point, again, her words are well worth quoting:—

"If in the great scheme of things punishment lies in seeing the result of our actions, then the saddest soul in the Universe to-day is that of Martin Luther. The German Kaiser has always posed as his great defender and exponent, and he is perfectly right in so doing, given his point of view. Without Martin Luther there would have been no Treitschke, no Bernhardt..... Anyone who will take the trouble to read the writings of Martin Luther will see that if one accepted this man as a prophet, one would have to accept the gospel of force which the Kaiser is promulgating to-day..... That was the immense strength of Martin Luther, that he believed in himself and in his right to trample under foot anything, however holy, which seemed to him to collide with his ideas of what was expedient and just."

We exhort Sir W. Robertson Nicoll, in particular, to ponder the above extract from the pen of an intelligent Christian lady, with whom, on this point we fully agree. It is, to us, exceedingly pleasing to learn with what ease an enlightened Christian exposes the gross and culpable ignorance of some of the leaders of religious thought in this country.

Religious love and religious logic are both curious things. Here, for example, is the *Catholic Times* chuckling gleefully over the disestablishment of the Church in Wales, and congratulating Welshmen on being freed from "the incubus of an alien Church." It also asks, "Why should Wales, if she does not want Anglicanism, be compelled to put up with it?" and looks forward to a time when the principle that freed Ireland, and has now freed Wales, will free England also. We have no objection to this; on the contrary, we approve of it; but, all the same, it comes curiously from the representatives of a Church that has, whenever it has had the opportunity, put down by force all dissentient opinion, and has always insisted upon the supremacy of religion in secular life. With what amount of grace did the *Catholic Times* consent to the disestablishment of the Church in France? With what grace would it consent to the disestablishment of the Church in Spain? It welcomes disestablishment in Ireland, Wales, or England, because these Churches are not branches of the Roman Catholic Church. But everyone knows that, given the chance, the Roman Catholic Church would insist upon forcing itself once more upon the British people. A Roman Catholic championship of the right of people to choose what Church they will live under is indeed something to make one open one's eyes.

"Everyone knows," continues the *Catholic Times*, "that the Church was living on endowments, many of which were stolen from the Catholic Church at the time of the Reformation." "Stolen" is quite a misnomer in relation to funds that are for the larger part essentially State funds, and which can no more be "stolen" than a man can steal money from himself. Either a person or a State may spend money unwisely, but to steal, someone else's property must be involved. Moreover, in any genuine sense of the word, the wealth of the Roman Catholic Church was largely "stolen" from the people. It was taken from them in the shape of toll and tithe, of Government grants and forced labor. The people were robbed right and left for centuries, to build up the wealth of the Church. What occurred at the Reformation was, it is true, very largely a case of changing the name of those who followed this policy of spoliation; but the Catholic Church ought to be the last in the world to raise its voice against a policy to which it owes so large a part of its own possessions.

Here is a story, given in the *Church Times*, by a Church of England clergyman. A newly enlisted soldier of his acquaintance asked permission to go to early communion. He was asked, What for? To this he replied: "Christ died for me as well as for you, sir, and I wish to feed upon His Blood and His Flesh, which I believe are there." It sounds like an invitation to a cannibal feast. And the people who can talk in this way imagine themselves civilised!

It seems that President Wilson has received many appeals to act as mediator in the War. As none of the parties directly responsible for, and concerned in the war have made the request, the President is, of course, powerless. But he has hit upon, if not a *via media*, at least an alternative. He has issued an official appeal to God. He has appointed Sunday, October 4, as a day of prayer throughout the United States for peace in Europe. This seems like shifting his own troubles on to the shoulders of God. And he must be bothered enough already. The

Germans are praying to him to crush the Allies, the Allies are praying to him to crush the Germans. Now the Americans join in with the request that he will stop the war at once, and make peace between them. If God tries to please all these people it will be the fable of the old man and the donkey over again. He can't possibly satisfy all, and he may offend all. And if he does nothing, other people will ask what is the use of his government? It is a very ticklish position, and a very lengthy essay might be written on "The Troubles of Diety."

President Wilson asks "all God-fearing persons" to pray that "He vouchsafe His children healing peace again, and restore once more that concord among men and nations, without which there can be neither happiness, nor true friendship, nor any wholesome fruit of toil or thought in the world." The general drift of this is all right, but when God is asked to restore "once more" the concord among nations, one wonders where it existed. As a matter of fact it has not existed. What concord can there be when the nations—before the actual outbreak of war—were all piling up armaments against each other? How can a man live at concord with his neighbor if he feels that he must keep him under constant surveillance, and be prepared to employ brute force to prevent direct aggression? President Wilson should know that genuine concord between Christian nations does not exist, and never has existed. The President asks these same "God-fearing" people to confess their "lack of any wisdom" equal to bringing about genuine peace. And with that sentiment non God-fearing people will cordially agree.

The best thing about the Kaiser lately is from America. It occurs in a letter to Mr. Eugene Wason, M.P., as having been overheard: "Nobody seems to be on Germany's side except the Almighty, and we have only the Kaiser's word for that."

Mr. Robert Blatchford will have to look out. The British soldier at the front to-day dislikes being called a "Tommy," and "Tommy Atkins" is still worse. "Tommy" is half Mr. Blatchford's stock-in-trade as a military writer, and we should hardly like to see him with such a large stock left on hand.

The Bishop of London's latest volume of collected addresses has the charming title, *Eyes of Flame*. The book contains the sermon preached at St. Paul's after the outbreak of war, entitled, "Drinking the Cup." There is no necessary connection between these two titles.

How very shy journalists are in mentioning the dreadful word, *Freethinker*. This how *T. P.'s Weekly* refers to Abraham Lincoln's theological opinions: "Like all strong men, his religion was that of the little boy who did not pray in the morning, because 'a bright lad can take care of himself.'" It is hard to believe that the writer is "grown-up."

Importance may be attached to the opinion of Mr. Vivian Phelps, author of the *Churches and Modern Thought*, on the question of the treatment by the Germans of the Belgians. Mr. Phelps has lived in Belgium for some time, and being asked what was his view as to the reality of "German atrocities," he replied:—

"I am seeing my girls off at Ostend to-morrow. I have come unwillingly to the conclusion (I've had opportunities to verify) that the stories of German atrocities are only too true, and, in fact, that much has been kept from the public for fear of playing into the hands of the enemy, and creating the panic, which is just what they want. The violation of young girls and young wives, and the cruel killing of helpless non-combatants, have been too terrible for words. All this makes one the more indignant with those who continue to repeat the old parrot-cry that nations become soft and sensuous without war. There is no greater offender in this respect than the average Church of England parson. He should follow the track of the German Army in Belgium if he would wish to know which part of a man's nature is most fostered in war time."

Those who doubt the truth of common reports, and even the official protests made by the Belgian Government to the civilised world, might trust Mr. Phelps. He is a fair-minded gentleman, as his book shows, and has nothing to gain by any kind of misrepresentation.

Are a number of the leader writers on the daily press Roman Catholics? One of the five daily papers, each claiming the largest circulation in the world, referred to the

murder of "priests, women, and children," by the German soldiers. As the rest of the article was devoted to the "most hallowed French shrine," Rheims Cathedral, the Protestantism of the writer is not unduly obtrusive.

In the *Saturday Journal* for September 19, Mr. Lee Danvers undertakes to defend, in the most extravagant language, the blindest belief in a future life. In a reckless mood, he denies the existence of Atheism altogether, and asserts that, though Christianity may be assailed, "human life has been built upon it these nineteen hundred years," with the result, we affirm, that Europe is at this moment in such an awful welter of savage cruelty as has never been experienced before since the world began. But Mr. Danvers is not a reliable witness on any point. Here is a sample of his extreme recklessness and dense ignorance:—

"The Bible may be full of faults and contradictions, but it has been the biggest power in the world for hundreds of centuries."

"Hundreds of centuries" could not possibly be improved upon. One hundred centuries is a period of ten thousand years, while two hundred centuries cover twenty thousand years. Thus the Bible is, at the very least, twenty thousand years old. Was ever such folly indulged in out of Bedlam? And yet Mr. Danvers is the best defender of the Faith the *Saturday Journal* could find.

Rev. Nelson Bitton, an ardent missionary advocate, has just published a little book on *The Regeneration of New China*. He says we must save China from the "coldly intellectual ideal man of Confucius," and give it Christianity, which is, of course, the only thing that can save it. What a horror Christians seem to have of things "intellectual." The use of that word is, apparently, enough to damn anything in the eyes of most. And what is the "coldly intellectual ideal man of Confucius"? Confucius made ample allowance for love and duty to friend, family, and the State. He taught that our sentiment should be guided by the intellect, but so does anyone who is not either a fanatic or a fool. And why should China exchange Confucius for Christianity? Look at the nations that already have Christianity! Consider their treatment of one another—let alone their treatment of outsiders! How much goodwill or trust is there among them? Hatred of a third may drive two of them together, but does it go any farther than this? What colossal cheek for anyone, with the present European war in being, to invite a non-Christian nation to adopt their religion! What a recommendation for anyone outside a lunatic asylum!

The *Christian World* points out that the Baptismal Service of the *Church of England* was originally written under the idea that every child really belonged to the Devil, and the original form of the service ran:—

"I command thee, unclean spirit, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, that thou come out and depart from these infants."

Baptism was thus a method of getting rid of the Devil within the child. This portion of the service was afterwards omitted, but let anyone seriously consider the ethical value of a creed which could solemnly regard every child born into the world as the property of the Devil!

Sighing for more worlds to conquer, the Rev. A. J. Waldron, the irrepressible Vicar of Brixton, has taken to the pleasant pastime of writing "puffs" for a patent medicine, which is advertised as being useful for men, women, and children. In the olden days the clergy advocated prayer, now it appears they pin their faith to patent prescriptions. Which number of the "Jelloids" does the Vicar of Brixton take—one, two, or three?

The *Daily Mail* has been using bold headlines to describe an apple, which is believed to be the largest on record. It weighs 2 lb. 2 oz., and measures 1 ft. 6 in. round, and is over 5 in. high. The *Mail* would have needed red ink to do justice to the apple that caused all the trouble in Eden.

A few poor Jesusites have died lately. Here are some of them. Rev. Joseph Hargrove, of Royston, Herts, left £7,592. Ven. Edward Barber left £5,745. Rev. Edmond Fisher, of Graveley Rectory, Cambridge, left £19,406. Rev. W. Thomas Penfold-Dixon, of Eastbourne, left £49,886. "Leave all, and follow me," said Jesus. They did it.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £208 4s. 0d. Received since:—H. Good, 6s.; J. H. Sanders, 4s.; A. T. H., 5s.; B. Siger, 3s.; Arthur Feltrup, £5; Concordia, £1.

T. H. ELSTOR.—No, it was not Harnack but Haeckel. We shall have something to say on the matter next week. Only a puppy would offer insolence to so great a man.

R. H. YELDHAM.—Darwin has been defended by his son, so there is no more to be said.

B. SIGER.—Thanks for wishes.

CONCORDIA.—A beautiful name.

F. ROBERTS.—Glad you were so interested in the "Priestley" article.

A. B. MOSS.—Sorry to hear that Mr. Heaford is progressing so slowly.

H. GEORGE FARMER.—Thanks. Shall appear next week.

E. B.—Your cuttings are always welcome.

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

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THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S 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.

Queen's (Minor) Hall has been taken for next Sunday evening (October 11) for a lecture by Mr. G. W. Foot. Details are not ready as we go to press. They will appear next week.

Mr. George Macdonald, editor of the *New York Truth-seeker*, in an excellent article on the war, says it is natural to blame the mad-headed Kaiser for all the bloodshed. "But," he says, "Editor Foote, of the *Freethinker*, in a few pithy sentences, places the responsibility where it belongs." Some forty lines from our pen are then reproduced. We are glad that our American comrade endorses our diagnosis.

The Monk and the Woman.

A Public Address by M. M. Mangasarian
to the Free Religious Association (Rationalist), Chicago.

ONE of the most popular plays of the present season is the dramatisation of Robert Hichens' *The Garden of Allah*. It is the story of a monk, a woman, and the desert. I am under the impression that the author of the book is a Catholic, though I may be in error. But the talented lady, Madam de Navarro, or Mary Anderson, the name by which she has become better known, who helped in the staging of the play, is surely one.

The play has drawn phenomenal audiences, of which a very large percentage, I am told, were Catholics. If I am not misinformed, even priests attended the performances, which, I believe, is not a frequent occurrence. On the whole the play has given great satisfaction to the members of the Catholic Church, although some of its minor details they have criticised freely. When I went to see the performance my main object was to learn what it was that attracted the multitude. Was it the scenery? The Orientalism of the spectacle? Or was it the strangeness of a monk making love to a woman—in public?

The theme of the play is the same as that which we find in *Thias*. A certain Father Antoine has

taken an eternal vow of silence—we can form an idea of the man from the nature of his vow—and has shut himself up within the four walls of a Trappist Monastery. Father Antoine has forsworn marriage as well as speech. It is well-known that in the Orient some people make eunuchs of themselves. These are neither men nor women. They are an artificial race. In one of the texts of scripture, Jesus recommends to his followers the example of the eunuch. On the other hand, Victor Hugo, in a powerful passage, not only expresses his disagreement with the Oriental Christ on this matter, but he condemns also the Catholic Church for making celibates of its priests. The difference between a monk and a eunuch is this: the eunuch is a man whose body has been *damned*, that he may not marry; the monk is a man whose soul will be *damned* if he marries. But the monk in Robert Hichens' story is willing to risk the damnation for a woman. He therefore leaves his prison-house, discards his garb, casts aside his vow, and becomes a *man*. After a brief acquaintance, he proposes to the woman of his choice, is accepted, and together they pitch their tent in the African desert.

Of course, the woman does not know that her husband was at one time a monk. Had she known of this fact, judging by her subsequent conduct, she would have married a less holy man. But she had seen nothing about her husband to lead her to suspect that he was less or more than an average human being. As long as she remains ignorant of his secret they are both quite happy. Happiness is so exquisite and so rare a thing that it makes even the desert beautiful. Happiness should always be encouraged, even if it be that of a married monk. But why did Father Antoine select the desert for his honeymoon? I wonder if it ever entered the mind of the author of the story that the desert was the first love of the monk? Did he not renounce the world when he first became a monk? Was not his monastery isolated from the rest of the world, a sort of wilderness? Is not a monk barren, celibate, childless, a desert? By taking his wife to the desert, the monk, unconsciously perhaps, was trying to compromise. He had left the cloister for the world; but the world was too real, too practical, too large for him—and so he compromised on the desert.

In the midst of their blissful existence a visitor at their camp recognises the monk, calls him by his name, and threatens to divulge the secret of his life to his young wife. This raises a crisis in the life of the monk. If the monk ever needed the help of his religion it was then. Instead of saying to his meddlesome guest that he had nothing to be ashamed or afraid of, that in marrying the woman of his choice he had only proved himself to be greater than all the traditions of ancient times, he whips out a revolver and threatens to kill his accuser. But the wife compels the secret from the lips of her husband, and then follows a scene which I suppose both the author and the dramatiser consider as the strongest in the play, but which was very disappointing to me. Had she just learned that her husband had been a murderer instead of a monk, I do not think she could have been more shocked or alarmed. She shrieks and becomes hysterical when it dawns upon her that the father of her baby soon to arrive was at one time a consecrated man. Well, if I thought that this silly female in the story represented woman in general I would not want to speak to another woman. But what a magnificent opportunity she let slip through her hands! When her husband, white with fear, and bitten by remorse, lay writhing at her feet like a trampled worm, she should have placed her hand upon his brow and bid him arise to his feet, and then opening her arms she should have said to him, "Come to me, nothing shall separate us. The heaven of the gods is not attractive enough, nor their hell fearful enough, to tear us apart." That would have been a woman.

(To be continued.)

The Evolution of Flowers.

THE mutual adaptations of flowers to insects and of insects to flowers are almost, if not quite, as wonderful as those marvellous instances of Symbiotic union described in an earlier essay. These mutual accommodations have been developed as a result of the habit which so many insects display in visiting the blossoms of plants in search of their pollen. In fine, these compound phenomena suffice to explain the manner in which the floral adornments of the botanical kingdom have been brought into being.

In pre-Darwinian days the colors, the beauties, and the perfumes of flowers were looked upon either as the gifts of God to his chosen creatures or as the prodigal products of great Nature's boundless exuberance. But modern science is not satisfied with such facile explanations, and therefore replaces the imaginative theories of previous generations with a doctrine that is based on countless observations and experiments. Nor does the beauty of the blossom fail to awaken an æsthetic emotion in the breast of the instructed student of science; rather one may claim that the marvels unfolded by recent botanical inquiries add to the loveliness of the sweet-scented flowers of the garden and the wild.

That bees and butterflies sipped the nectar of blooms, and that bees stored pollen in their hives, were facts familiar to the peoples of antiquity. It is also true that among early Eastern races the fertilisation of the date-palm was artificially aided by "cutting off the male inflorescences just before the stamens ripened, and suspending them among those of the female tree; so avoiding the risks of ordinary wind fertilisation." But beyond this, little attention was paid to the story of floral life which modern science was destined to disclose.

As the eighteenth century neared its end, a thoughtful and observant naturalist, C. K. Sprengel, published his views to the world. He announced the discovery that very many flowers were specially adapted to attract the attention of insects. But he was before his time, and his views passed unnoticed for more than fifty years. Sprengel was dominated by the Design theory, and he sought from this standpoint to elucidate the facts he had brought to light. In the language of a leading contemporary biologist:

"He recognised that the hairs which cover the lower surface of the petals of the wood-cranesbill (*Geranium sylvaticum*) protect the nectar of the flower from being diluted by rain, and he drew the conclusion, correct enough, though far from our modern ideas as regards the directly efficient cause, that the nectar was there for the insects."

Sprengel likewise noted the fact that the corolla of the forget-me-not is provided with a yellow circle at the opening of the corolla-tube, and he regarded this as a guide to the insects in quest of the honey which is stored in the base of the tube.

It has since been demonstrated that such "honey-guides" are to be found in nearly all blossoms entered by insects, and also that they are usually of a color quite distinct from the main coloration of the flower. Seeing that these honey-guides served the purpose of directing the insects to the nectar lying in their vicinity, Sprengel shrewdly surmised that the gaily colored blossoms answered the purpose of attracting the insects to the flowers themselves, and thus secured the presence of the creatures that were to be conducted to the sweet treasures within by the more specialised honey-guides. He also ascertained that certain flowers are incapable of self-fertilisation, and that the visits of insects were essential to that cross-fertilisation, apart from which, as we now know, such flowers are unable to set their seeds.

Another German botanist, Gärtner, made further advances along the path prepared by Sprengel; but the problem was not completely solved until the Englishman, Darwin, applied his master mind to the subject. The author of the *Origin of Species* realised

in terms of innumerable observations and experiments that as a rule self-fertilisation is distinctly unfavorable to plants; that seeds so produced are few in number, and that the plants that arise from them, are poor in quality. When, on the other hand, the pollen, or male element, of one plant is carried to the female organs of another, the results are highly advantageous. In numerous species, as Sprengel had discovered, self-fertilisation leads to utter sterility. This Darwin demonstrated to be true, and he also showed that very few plants are as fertile when pollinated from their own stamens as with those of different plants of the same species, and that occasional cross-fertilisation was imperatively demanded by all flowering plants if they were to retain their normal vigor of life and growth.

The value of the visits of insects is now obvious, as these animals, in wandering from flower to flower, carry out the important function of dusting their wings or bodies with pollen, which they transfer from one plant to another, thus effecting that form of fructification which is so necessary to the health and strength of the plant race. Any floral variation which served to promote the visits of the insects helped also to secure the production of a greater abundance of seeds. One therefore understands why such an endless array of contrivances evolved for the sole purpose of attracting insects to flowers have blossomed into being, and why the scentless and inconspicuous blooms of the earlier plant world have been transformed into the wealth of richly colored inflorescences which have gladdened the earth in more recent periods of its history.

Not all the Phanerogams—the higher flowering plants—are dependent upon insect activity for purposes of sound and serviceable seed production. With the grasses, the hop, the catkin-bearing plants such as the willow and the hazel, the wind carries the pollen through the air from one plant to another. But in the immense majority of phanerogams, particularly those that bear colored flowers, insect fertilisation is indispensable. Moreover, the diversity of floral structure evolved for this purpose is well-nigh incredible. Some flowers expose their nectar to every visitor, and all insect honey-lovers are welcomed to the feast. Others there are among which the nectar is less open to view, but of which a cosmopolitan assembly of short-mouthed insects may easily partake. The magnolias are members of this floral group, and are sometimes dubbed "beetle flowers," as they are great favorites with the sweet-toothed Longicorn beetles. Some blooms are specially adapted to the visits of bees, which appear essential to their cross-pollination. The writer has watched the balsam blooms for several seasons, and has never seen any insect save the bee succeed in reaching the honey. In various flowers the honey-holding nectary lies some distance down, and can only be reached by the relatively long proboscis of the bee. And the structural arrangements of the blossoms are such that the insect cannot obtain the sugary sap without at the same time cross-pollinating the plant. In the meadow-sage the male organs lie concealed in the helmet-shaped part of the flower, but they bend down as soon as a bee alights on the lower lip of the blossom, and scatter their pollen over its body. Should the bee now fly to a more mature flower in which the female parts are ripe for fertilisation, the feminine structure "stands just in front of the entrance to the flower, so that the bee must rub off part of the pollen covering its back on to the stigma, and fertilisation is thus effected."

Various are the flowers which have evolved adaptations that are specially devised for the reception of a strictly select circle of visitors, while other floral adaptations bar the entrance to all insect-callers who are outside the recognised set.

Still more striking are those botanical organisms which have made themselves specially attractive to the fertilising activities of flies. The hairy arm of the Mediterranean is an extreme example of this. This flower smells like putrid meat; blow-flies crowd in, and they are imprisoned until they have fertilised

the inflorescence. Many perish, and there seems small doubt that this plant not only utilises the services of the flies for fertilisation, but also to some extent absorbs the juices of their bodies. In our common birth-wort, as also in the cuckoo-pint, or lords and ladies, the phenomena are somewhat similar. These strange flowers display long corolla-tubes which lead to an extensive base, which contains both the male and female organs of the plants. The narrow entrance to the base of the birth-wort is thickly beset with rigid hairs, which all point downwards. Small flies quickly gather round the appetising odor of the blossom, and eagerly make their way to the promised feast, but when once arrived at their destination they find themselves entrapped. All efforts to escape are frustrated by the very bristles that facilitated their entry. But no sooner is the fertilisation of the flower effected than the bristles begin to wither, and the flies, having now served the procreative purposes of the plant, are permitted to regain their liberty. Many other fly-flower devices might be mentioned, but all have the same object in view—the transference of the pollen to the stigma, in order to ensure the perpetuation of the vegetable species.

Plant-forms very nearly related have evolved the most dissimilar methods for procreative purposes. The flower of the common Daphne "is adapted to the visits of butterflies, bees, and hover-flies, while its nearest relative (*Daphne striata*) has a somewhat longer and narrower corolla-tube, so that only butterflies can feast upon it." This is but one instance out of many in which blossoms are restricted to the visits of butterflies; and specialisation has proceeded much further than this, for some flowers favor the visits of daylight-loving butterflies, while others encourage those that appear only in the gloaming and the night. Flowers fertilised by nocturnal insects are usually white or primrose in color; they are consequently quite conspicuous in the half-light of a summer night; they send forth a fragrant smell after sunset, but remain quite closed throughout the day. This is the case with the beautiful evening primrose, whose twilight fragrance is so delicately sweet. The fine blossom of the bindweed is sometimes completely shrouded until day declines, and, although it is destitute of scent, it unfolds a pale glory as it courts the visits of the hawkmoth under the evening stars.

It was reserved to the orchids to reveal the most wondrous adaptations of the plant domain. The patient labors of Darwin in this one floral group are recorded for all time in his classic on their contrivances to effect cross-fertilisation, and to that work the interested reader may turn for a detailed description of their fascinating phenomena. We may sum up the first part of this article on the genesis and development of flowers by stating that the only conceivable explanation of the facts set forth is to be found in those numerous natural agencies which necessitate organic evolution. Of these, a main factor has undoubtedly been that of Natural Selection, and this truth is nowhere more abundantly illustrated than in the modifications to which the organs of insects have been subjected to secure the cross-pollination of plants. As we shall see, these insect transformations have proceeded *pari passu* with the adaptations which plant inflorescences themselves have undergone, and to these coincident phenomena the second part of our essay will be devoted.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

Primitive Marriage.—II.

(BY THE LATE J. M. WHEELER.)

(Continued from p. 621.)

IN ancient Persia, sisters and brothers married, and even mothers and sons, such unions being required by religion for the production of persons eligible to

certain offices. The ancient Greeks permitted all relations save parents and children to marry with one another. Thus, the six sons of Æolus are married to his six daughters; Iphidamus and Diomed to their maternal aunts; and Alcinoüs to his niece. In the ancient Hindu epic, the Mahabharata, the five Pandava princes, are all husbands of the one princess Draupadi. The Nairs of Malabar have communities of wives and husbands in common, and, the wisest fathers, not knowing their own children, leave their property to their sisters' children. The heirship of nephews is common in Africa, and in America among the aborigines of Labrador, and also among the Hurons and Iroquois. When these tribes have been asked to explain this custom, they have always replied that there could be no doubt of the relationship of the sister's children, whereas that on the father's side might be questioned. This seems to dispose of the suggestion that kinship through mothers may have arisen from a belief that the woman was mainly concerned in procreation, the bodily relation being so evidently stronger.

In Southern India various tribes allow all the brothers, as they grow up, to become the husbands of the eldest brother's wife, and conversely, the younger sisters of the wife become the wives of this conjugal community. According to Cæsar ("De bello Gallico," v. 14), the early Britons had the same habit. Of our Scandinavian ancestors it is stated in the Heimskringla Saga that Niord took his own sister in marriage, "for that was allowed by" the Vanaland law. Traces of Polyandry remained in the time of Tacitus among the Germans. Polyandry—that is the marriage of one woman to several men—and consanguineous marriage still prevail among the nations connecting Asiatics and Americans, Eskimo, Aleuts, Koniaks, etc. Among the Ostiaks no degree of relationship is an impediment to marriage; and though the son will not marry his mother, the father often takes his daughter to wife, and the brother his own sister. It was so with the aboriginal Californians. Community of wives is limited to brothers and other relatives in Thibet. Polyandry, although very rare among animals, seems to have prevailed among all races of men among whom women were scarce, either through migrations or, a more potent cause, female infanticide.

An early prohibition seems to have been the custom, forbidding marriage to a half-sister having the same mother, though not to one having the same father. This implies how much less the male parent-hood was thought of. Marriage between half-brothers and sisters seems almost the ordinary rule among ancient peoples. It is known to have prevailed among Canaanites, Assyrians, Persians, the ancient Greeks and Egyptians. Among the Jews (despite the late prohibition in Leviticus xviii. 9) the evidence is clear. It was practised among the patriarchs, Abraham himself having married Sarah, "the daughter of my father, but not the daughter of my mother" (Gen. xx. 12). Nahor married his brother's daughter. Jacob had two sisters to wife at once. Moses' father, Amram, married his father's sister. The Levitical law was evidently unknown to pious King David, for when Ammon wished to force his half-sister Tamar, she urged him to speak to the king, "for he will not withhold me from thee" (2 Sam. xiii. 18). Brothers who are sons of the same mother are especially distinguished (Deut. xiii. 6; Judges viii. 19).

A survival of consanguine marriage is found in Deut. xxv., where it is expressly ordered that when a brother's widow is left childless "her husband's brother shall go in unto her and take her to him to wife"; and in the event of his refusing to do so, he has to have his shoe loosed and his face spat upon. Of the antiquity of this usage we have evidence in Gen. xxxviii. When Er, Judah's firstborn, died, the father commanded his second son, "Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother." The second son refusing, the thing which he did displeased the Lord, wherefore he slew him. Judah now putting Tamar off from taking his

next son, she disguised herself and made her father-in-law do his son's duty; he acknowledging "she hath been more righteous than I." The custom is also referred to in the story of Ruth. Ewald amends Ruth iv. 5: "Thou must buy also Ruth the Moabitess." The Bible reader will remember that the disgusting story of the patriarch Lot and his daughter is related without the slightest token of disapproval.

Casting off a shoe, it may be said, constituted the foregoing a right; thus the relatives of a bride still "throw slippers." The Arabs have preserved the ceremony intact. A proverb among them, when a young man forgoes his prescriptive right to marry his first cousin, is, "She was my slipper, I have cast her off" (Burckhardt, *Bedouins and Wahabys*, i., 113). Among the Caribs of Venezuela and in Equatorial West Africa, the eldest son inherits all the wives of his deceased father, with the sole exception of his own mother. Schweinfurth relates that the same custom obtains in Central Africa. On the Gold Coast the throne is occupied by the prince, who gains possession of the paternal harem before his other brothers. Thus Absalom took David's harem in the sight of all Israel before the old man had gone to glory, as a proof he wished his reign to be considered over; and when Adonijah asks his brother Solomon for Abishag, the comforter of David's old age, the wise Solomon kills him, as thus betraying designs on the throne. In the custom that widows passed to the heir with other property, and hence that marriage with the widow grew to be a sign of a claim to the deceased person's possessions, we have a reasonable explanation of what must otherwise appear irrational crime. The custom of inheriting widows is adverted to in the Koran, and Bendhawi, in his commentary, gives the whole ceremony, which consists in the deceased's relative throwing his cloak over the widow and saying, "I claim her."

Among Hindus, the Code of Manu orders that on failure of direct issue "the brother shall with due rites take the wife." The law is repeated to meet the case of those who die before consummation of marriage, in which event the duty of "raising up seed" to the deceased devolves upon his brother. We learn, moreover, from the Mahabharata, that among the Kshatriyas, or warrior tribes, two forms of marriage prevailed. One was simply a union without ceremony, the other a forcible abduction of the women of a conquered enemy. The Kshatriyas were polygamists, and followed the custom of a man taking the wife of his deceased brother for the purpose of raising up sons to him.

Probably men's sexual instincts were originally uncontrolled save by physical necessity. The one law was that the weak had to give place to the strong.

"The good old plan
That he should take who has the power
And he should keep who can."

The necessity of providing for offspring in their tender years would lead to the establishment of usages giving some permanence to unions. Marriage, and with marriage Law, arose because it was an advantage in the struggle for existence. The descendants of parents who held together and formed an incipient tribe would be able to "hold their own" against those who had no such bond of adherence. Habits of warfare and consequent woman-capture would lead to the restriction of incestuous unions. We need not resort to the theory of L. H. Morgan, that man early learnt the evils of interbreeding, for that can scarcely be said to be sufficiently determined by modern physiological science. The observation of Sir Henry Maine is, however, worth attention, that if the advantage given by exogamous marriage (marriage outside certain limits) be now a slight one, owing to facilities of artificial cure, it might be of great advantage to primitive mankind, to whom, before all things, a good natural constitution was a necessity. If close interbreeding is detrimental, the stern process of natural selection

would force it into notice, or at any rate give an advantage to those who acquired habits of exogamy. Nor need we, I think, conclude with Lang that exogamy is "connected with some early superstition or idea of which we have lost the touch, and which we can no longer explain" (*Custom and Myth*, page 258; 1884). Love of contrast, as well as of conquest, would lead to habits of wife-capture, which would be further necessitated by the scarcity of women consequent upon female infanticide, migration, and wife-stealing by other tribes. The policy of Moses towards the Midianites of slaying the men and reserving the young women was universal in ancient and savage warfare. Lang finds it

"difficult to conceive that the frequent habit of stealing women should indispose men to marry the native women they had at hand. That this indisposition should grow into a positive law, and the infringement of the law be regarded as a capital offence, seems still more inconceivable."

Lang appears to overlook the great influence of sexual jealousy which must operate powerfully where wives are taken from a narrow home-circle, and which would soon institute rules for the prevention of feuds. The acquisition of a mate from abroad would prevent jealousy at home; the stealing of a wife would be the best title to possess one. A man who is denied a mate until he has proved his courage by capturing one, satisfies his want and achieves a reputation at the same time. We may see how such a law would grow up in the fact that among many tribes the chiefs consider themselves exempt from the limitations imposed upon others. In Siam, the seventh degree of blood affinity is the limit within which marriage is prohibited, with the important exception that the king may marry his own sister, as among the Incas of Peru, the Lagide dynasty, etc., and even his own daughter (Sir John Bowring, *Siam*, vol. i., p. 185). Of course, the danger of disturbing the succession is the cause of such arrangements being allowed; yet when we remember that the king is descended from, and inherits the privileges of, the patriarch or house chief, we may see in his exemption a survival of earlier usage.

Amongst most races, both exogamy and endogamy prevail—that is, there is both an inner and outer limit to marriage; thus princes by custom must marry within the blood royal, but must not, without a dispensation, marry within the ecclesiastical Table of Prohibited Degrees. Even among very low races, endogamy and exogamy co-existed, as among Comanches, New Zealanders, and Californians. In India, a Hindu must neither marry out of caste nor marry a wife whose clan name is the same as his own: a prohibition which bars marriage among relatives in the male line indefinitely. This shows the prohibition must have come in force when kinship was so little understood that it could best be denoted by the family name. Similarly in China, a man may not marry a woman of his own surname, so that relationship by the male side, however distant, is a barrier; while on the female side it is no barrier, however close. This prohibition is undoubtedly very ancient, for the Chinese trace it to the time of Fou-hi, 2207 B.C. Fou-hi is related to have divided the people into one hundred clans, and prohibited any of them intermarrying. Previously to his time, descent has been traced through mothers only, and this, as we have previously seen, we have reason to believe has been everywhere the rule. A recent observer, Mr. Jamieson (*China Review*, vol. x, No. 2), has, however, noticed that the Chinese are also endogamous. "Externally they are endogamous—they refuse marriage with any surrounding tribe; internally they are exogamous—they refuse marriage with anyone whose surname shows him to be of the same stock." The pride of race, which is probably the chief cause of endogamy, seem to be later than the rules of exogamy, and laws prohibiting marriage with the mother's kin seem to be earlier than those prohibiting marriage on the male side. I have already noticed the custom of marrying half-sisters on the father's side, which prevailed amongst most ancient nations.

The nature of the prohibition in ancient nations and savage races shows that kinship was understood in a different way from our modern system. The limit was everywhere the family name, a limit which excludes many kinsfolk and includes many who are not kinsfolk at all. In Australia especially, and in America, India, and Africa to a slighter extent, that definition of kindred by the family name included serpents, alligators, kangaroos, birds, fish, plants, vegetables, and what not. Natives of Australia call these objects their kin, "of one flesh" with them. Is it not then possible, as McLennan suggests, "that the prejudice against marrying women of the same group may have been established before the facts of blood-relationship had made any deep impression on the human mind": consequently earlier than the patriarchal stage? Savages know the persons they may not marry by their totem, or by tattoo-marks. If a savage sees a maid with the same tattoo-mark, or crest, as his own, he knows he must not touch her. If it is, however, different, he makes her his own without scruple, the law of exogamy indeed compelling him to seek abroad for wives.

(To be concluded.)

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON SEPT. 24.

The President, Mr. G. W. Foote, occupied the chair. There were also present: Messrs. Barry, Cohen, Cowell, Cunningham, Davidson, Judge, Lazarnick, Neate, Quinton, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Silverstein, Thurlow, Miss Kough and Miss Stanley.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed. The monthly cash statement was presented and adopted.

New members were received for the Edmonton Branch and the Parent Society.

The Secretary received instructions *re* propaganda at Leeds.

The President reported the serious illness of Mr. W. Heaford, and the following resolution was carried unanimously:—

"This Executive learns with much regret of Mr. Heaford's illness, and trusts to hear of his speedy and complete return to health and to activity in the cause to which he has so long devoted himself."

The issue of a cheap pamphlet dealing with the war from the Freethought standpoint, suggested at the last meeting, was again discussed, and the President inquired whether the Executive wished him to write a pamphlet germane to the present aspect. The answer being unanimously "Yes," he consented to do so, and also gave permission for a recent editorial in the *Freethinker* to be reprinted as a leaflet.

After a general discussion, the following resolution was moved:—

"That this Executive, without presuming to judge in particular cases, protests in the strongest way against the gross violation of the rules of the Hague Convention which is going on in the present war, and calls upon all civilised nations to demand that those rules shall be respected."

The Secretary reported the receipt of a grant from the Secular Society, Ltd., of £10 to the National Secular Society.

The Secretary received instructions to arrange for the Annual Dinner to be held at Frascati's Restaurant. Other matters of business were transacted.

E. M. VANCE, *General Secretary.*

Correspondence.

"DEMOCRACY AND WAR."

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your correspondent, Mr. A. J. Marriott, raises an important question in connection with the war. With his permission, and in the hope that I do not trespass on forbidden ground, I would like to bring to his notice a book entitled *National Guilds*, by A. P. Orage, published by Bell and Sons, 5s. net. It can be obtained at most libraries. My only reason for this suggestion is a personal one, and it is this: I find that the economics of National Guilds are the only kind to harmoniously blend with the ethics of Free-

thought. I am in agreement with your correspondent's views, and, furthermore, I firmly hold that a return to craft and industrial guilds would incorporate Norman Angelism and give status to democracy and, consequently, its children. After status, all things would be possible—even the prevention of international warfare.

CHRISTOPHER GAY.

Maps.

I TRAVERSED Christian Europe's page,
Each bloody advance, each red retreat;
Lomburg, Sabatz, Soissons, Liege—
I pondered—then turned back the sheet.
China spread vast, antiques sage;
Strange truth! On Heathen field and hill
(Thought I) brood Peace and Wisdom still.

E. L. BRINE.

The Trade of Piety.

"IN the name of the prophet, figs!"—such is the cry
That echoes through an eastern city's streets;
And that it helps their sale who will deny
That knows how pompous words man's reason cheats?
Piety is the badge your Mawworm bears
While offering his goods to simple folk;
And every dealer in religious wares
Uses his faith his selfish ends to cloak.
A compact with his God the saint doth make,
And for the trials which he undergoes
Bargains the joys of heaven he shall partake
And look down thence upon the sinners' woes:
The crown, the coronet, the judges' wigs,
"In the name of locus-pocus, figs, figs, figs!"

B. D.

WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT ANGELS.

"Auntie, did the angels carry Charlie Jones's mother up to heaven?"

"Why, I think so, dear. Mrs. Jones was a good woman." "She was an awfully fat woman. The angels must be strong."

Passengers in the train from Watford turned to look at the six-year-old boy who was bent on getting information. He was a manly little fellow, with a bright, pretty face that showed intelligence beyond his years. His young aunt seemed to be anxious to stop the flow of questions, but he was bound to know something more about angels then and there.

"How do you know there are angels, auntie?"

"Because we read about them. Wait until you can read and then you will know more about them."

"But why—why don't we see the angels? Did you ever see an angel?"

"Hum! Don't talk so loud, Charlie. Of course we don't see them, but we see their pictures. Don't you remember the angels in that pretty book that Uncle John sent you?"

"Yes, but—where do the angels get their pictures taken, auntie? Is there a gallery where they take pictures of angels—only just of angels?"

"Perhaps so. I don't know."

"Then why don't the angels put on more clothes when they have their pictures taken?"

"Oh, Charlie! Please be quiet! You will make auntie's head ache."

Charlie meditated in silence for a few minutes, and remarked:—

"I don't know why Mr. Brown said you were his —"

"Euston!" shouted a porter, and as the train came to a standstill, the small boy got a shaking and a whispered warning that stopped all further talk about angels.

The Pastor: "Miss Ethel, you should be engaged in some missionary work." Miss Ethel: "Oh, I am, and have been for some time past." The Pastor: "I'm so gratified to hear you say so. In what field are you engaged?" Miss Ethel (proudly): "I'm teaching my parrot not to swear."

A recently ordained clergyman of the Church of England went into a tobacconist's and said: "Give me an ounce of 'baccy; I shan't get any in heaven." He may find plenty of smoke in another quarter.

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.**OUTDOOR.**

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 11.30, Mr. Drake, "The Meaning of Evolution."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Parliament Hill): 3.30, a Lecture. Regent's Park (near the Fountain): 3.30, a Lecture.

WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.): 7, W. Davidson, a Lecture.

COUNTRY**INDOOR.**

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