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The paradox and scandal of the world is that for eighteen centuries, since the adoption by the Continent of Christianity, European history has been a tale of blood. To resolve that paradox, to abate that scandal, to substitute concert for conflict, and to teach mankind to grow great in common, is the international future of civilisation.—HON. GEORGE PEEL.

The Churches and the War.

SIR ROBERTSON NICOLL, editor of the *British Weekly*, purposes dealing in a series of articles with "the Christian message to a nation at war." We should have thought that message—or messages—was plain. For, in truth, both in the Bible and out of the Bible, there are two messages. There is the exhortation to war, with its pictures of defeated peoples and ravishing armies, and there is the gospel of non-resistance, of turning one cheek when the other is smitten, with its promise of the earth to the meek as a reward for their meekness. And to do the pulpits justice, it has reflected very faithfully these two and hopelessly irreconcilable views. It has preached peace and encouraged war. It has denounced warfare as unchristian and acted energetically as a recruiting agent. It has talked at large of the overwhelming power of Christian love and supported the theory that the only way to maintain peace is to have an Army and Navy so powerful that no other Christian nation dare attack it. No one can say that the nation has been short of messages from the Churches. It might have been better had there been legitimate ground for complaint in this direction.

There is no information in Sir Robertson's opening article on one point worthy of a little attention. That is, to supply some test by which we may tell what is the genuine Christian message to a nation in time of war. If we listen to the message of the Society of Friends, the answer is that war at all times and under all conditions is wrong, and no real Christian will engage in it. Sir Robertson does notice this position, and I will deal with his comment later. If, on the other side, we are to take the English State Church, then the message is that every war in which England has been engaged was a just one. For, so far as I am aware, the English Church supported all our wars without discrimination. Still more important is it to know whether the Christian message as delivered in Germany or that delivered in England is the authoritative one. Apparently, German theologians are united in the belief that their war is a thoroughly just one, and, therefore, they may be sure that God is on their side. English theologians are quite united in the belief that all the righteousness is on our side, and that God will assist us to smash our enemies.

So far, good; only one is, from the religious point of view, apt to get a little confused. So far as laymen in this country are concerned, we are all agreed that the sooner and the more effectively German militarism is broken the better. And if that serves as a prelude to the break-up of all other militarisms, most of us would be the more pleased. But the layman has to make up his mind on the facts before

him, and in the light of experience. Presumably, as the "Christian message" is given a place by itself, it has a message—if only one can discover it—of a peculiarly distinctive kind. The worst of it is that, up to the present, Christians are not agreed as to what it is. And one fears that, when Sir Robertson Nicoll has unloaded himself, it will at most be the layman's message, decorated with Christian texts more or less ingeniously twisted to meet the present situation. Apart from this, one sees scarcely any necessity for writing a number of articles to state the "Christian message." It is scarcely illuminating to see the "spiritual" leaders of Germany and Britain hurling anathemas at each other in the name of their God. It reminds one of a couple of savage tribes going out to war, each party carrying its own special "Joss" for protection. Only there is this distinction: each tribe carries a different "Joss." Not being civilised, savages do not see the wisdom of two opposing armies praying to the same God for victory.

Sir Robertson says he is writing his articles because Christians complain, either that the Churches are giving people no guidance in the present crisis, or the advice given is very contradictory; while yet others complain that if Christian ministers had done their duty war would be impossible. I sympathise with Sir Robertson when he says it is unreasonable to expect that Christian ministers should have made all evil impossible. Quite so; but, on the other hand, it is certain that if there had really been a "Christian message" in favor of the higher civilisation, and if Christian ministers had preached it, the lavish preparations that have made the present war possible could not have gone forward. Consider what the power of the hundreds of thousands of accredited Christian preachers throughout Europe would be if their influence had been resolutely directed, generation after generation, in favor of peace. What part have they played, as a matter of fact? In the main the peace movements of Europe have been directed by heretics. The Society of Friends form the one exception to the general run of Christians in this direction. But one may safely say that the more orthodox the Church, the less it has done to educate the public mind on this matter. It may be said that the clergy could never have stopped war, even had they been so inclined. That may be so; but at least they could have made their attitude clear. They could have said, "We recognise our inability to stop war and preparations for war, we recognise, also, that there may be occasions when war is forced upon a nation, as one may be compelled to use force against a footpad, an assassin, or a lunatic. But, recognising all this, we decline to associate Christian teaching with it; if war must be, so be it, but that should not blind us to the fact of its brutality, its barbarity, and of its evil effects on the lives of the people."

Had this been done generally by the clergy, all the glamor of war would, by this time, have disappeared. Its "glory" and its glitter would have been recognised for what it is. Nations might still have gone to war, but it would have been regretfully at least, and with no false ideas of its grandeur and ultimate profit. Instead of this, the clergy of all denominations have provided that ethical and religious sanction without which war would either disappear

or become very infrequent. For people do not, after all, go to war for mere plunder. That may be the object of a *clique*, but for the mass of people it must be disguised by some form of idealism, by an appeal to glory, to patriotism, to civilisation. Even Germany, militarised as it has been, has been compelled to recognise this. Nations fight in the name of ideas and ideals, and the ideals that effect them are those to which they are accustomed. The offence of the clergy is, then, not that they have failed to prevent this war. That was clearly beyond their power. Their offence is that they never seriously tried to stop war. More, by their teaching they have given war that ethical and religious justification which has made the perpetuation of warfare an easy matter. In the Middle Ages mail clad Christian Bishops often went to war in the name of religion. To-day they do not go to war, but they bless its implements—which supplies the sanction without the personal risk.

I have said what the Churches might have done, but no one with the history of the Christian Church before them would expect them to act in the manner suggested. For the Church has never discouraged war in principle, and not very often in fact. Lecky, striving to account for the militarism of mediæval Christianity, attributes this to the influence of Mohammedanism. He says that "the spirit of Mohammedanism slowly passed into Christianity, and transformed it into its image." This explanation is on quite Christian lines. It attributes the evil features of Christianity to the influence of another religion, the good it is content to claim as its own. But it is quite false. Mohammedanism is not more warlike than Christianity is, and it has usually been far more tolerant in its conquests. Moreover, Lecky himself supplies the refutation of his own statement, and in the very next sentence to the one quoted. He explains the infection of Christianity by Mohammedanism on the ground that "the spectacle of an essentially military religion [Mohammedanism] fascinated men who were at once very warlike and very superstitious." But if these Christians were already very warlike and very superstitious the alliance was already there. They had nothing to learn, unless it was a more intelligent direction of their military energies.

The truth is, that the peaceful proclivities of the Christian Church are a pure myth. On the whole, the Christian Church is probably more peaceful now than it has been throughout its entire history. What is the first picture of Christians that present themselves in history? It is that of a number of theological disputants conducting their dissent with a fury and an intolerance that disgusted the cultured and tolerant Roman world. Later, we see precisely the same spirit exemplified over a large and widening area. In ferocity of disposition, in ingenuity of torture, no one and no religion has ever outdone mediæval Christianity. Is it likely that a Church such as this could ever make for peace, or could form a genuine bulwark against war? If, as Lecky says, it was predicted by some of the early Christians that the establishment of their religion would lead to perpetual peace, it could only be on the ground that there remained no fresh people to conquer. And on that ground even the Kaiser is willing to give the world peace. The truer view is put by Lecky himself, and against his summary of the facts his apology for militant Christianity loses all force:—

"In looking back, with our present experience, we are driven to the melancholy conclusion that, instead of diminishing the number of wars, ecclesiastical influence has actually very seriously increased it. We may look in vain for any period since Constantine in which the clergy, as a body, exerted themselves to repress the military spirit, or to prevent or abridge a particular war, with an energy at all comparable to that which they displayed in stimulating the fanaticism of the Crusaders, in producing the atrocious massacre of the Albigenes, in embittering the religious wars that followed the Reformation.....With the exception of Mohammedanism, no other religion has done so much to produce war as was done by the religious teachers of

Christendom during several centuries.....Religious fanaticism was a main cause of the earlier wars and an important ingredient in the later ones. The peace principles that were so common before Constantine, have found scarcely any echo except from Erasmus, the Anabaptists, and the Quakers; and although some very important pacific agencies have arisen out of the industrial progress of modern times, these have been, for the most part, wholly unconnected with, and in some cases have been directly opposed to, theological interests."

It is the Church's record against the apologies of the theorist.

(To be concluded.)

C. COHEN.

Confusion Worse Confounded.

IT is impossible to ignore the War even for a week, because there is no other subject of sufficient density to obliterate it. The religious press devotes itself almost exclusively to the discussion of its various phases, and the pulpit recognises no other theme. Even theological disputes are for the time being kept in abeyance. Persistent attempts are being made to justify the War on Christian grounds. All are agreed that Germany's share in it is incapable of vindication, Germany having deliberately substituted Corsica for Galilee, or, as the editor of the *Daily News and Leader* put it, having returned to Odin, her ancient warlike divinity. Either the adoption of Atheism or a reversion to Paganism must be held responsible for that great country's mad appeal to the sword. Those who know Germany at all are aware that such a view is wholly erroneous. Dr. Orchard, for example, does not hold it in the form in which it is usually expressed. While admitting that it contains some truth, he maintains that we must "look deeper for the real causes of the present crisis." Then he says, as reported in the *Christian Commonwealth* for October 21:—

"He believed that the material resources which modern science had placed at our disposal had destroyed our spiritual imagination and led to a complete misunderstanding of Christianity. As a result there had been an attempt to found a new religion, one that had betrayed us from beginning to end. This new religion had taught (1) that Christianity was intellectually inadequate, that its doctrines were unable to explain life and history; (2) that its ethic also was inadequate for a life like ours, and later that that ethic was absolutely pernicious; (3) that Jesus Christ was a myth, and that there never was any such person."

We confess that we are at a loss to know to what movement that extract refers. We have not heard of any new religion answering to the description therein given. It is undeniable that there is a movement in this country, headed by Professor Gilbert Murray, the object of which is to revive the Greek ideals, to restore the rich joy in living which characterised the Greeks, and once more to glorify strength and wisdom rather than weakness and folly. Professor Murray foresees the possibility, if not the probability, of the adoption of the ideals of ancient Greece by Great Britain in the near future. It is well known that there is a similar movement on foot in France and Germany, as well as among the educated classes in Russia. If Dr. Orchard has this movement in mind, he forgets, or has not learned, that the overwhelming majority of the people who take part in it are convinced pacifists, who, if they had their way, would make war a literal impossibility.

The astonishing fact is that clergymen imagine that the moment a man renounces Christianity he of necessity becomes a savage who thirsts for the blood of his fellow-men and draws the sword at the slightest provocation, forgetting that Christians have always been the most warlike people on earth. With the history of Christendom before him, dare Dr. Orchard contradict that statement? Unfortunately, the reverend gentleman will not read history just now. It is wonderfully easy to assert

that "the Kaiser's idea of God has not been Christianised at all"; but what about the Church's idea of God for the last fifteen hundred years? A familiar Christian hymn opens thus:—

"The Son of God goes forth to war,
A kingly crown to gain;
His blood-red banner streams afar!
Who follows in his train?"

We should not be surprised were we to be told that such a martial verse requires "spiritual interpretation"; but it is a literal description of what has always been done by people with the love of Christ in their hearts. And yet because the Germans declared war a couple of months ago, they are said either to have "reverted to pre-Christian times in search of a nobler religion, and adopted the Judaic conception of the God of Battles and Lord of Hosts," or to have "turned to the old Greek world, with its religion of gaiety, without the sense of sin, of battle, valor, and self-assertion, for a faith that was to save the world"; but this is fair neither to Judaism nor to the religion of ancient Greece. Will Dr. Orchard deny that the God of Battles is with us still, believed in and appealed to, or that great prophets of Judaism confidently predicted that a time was coming when men would "beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks"? Does he not know that after two thousand years of a Christianised God that prophecy still remains unfulfilled? Not only has Christianity not abolished war, but wars have been more numerous and more atrocious under Christianity than under any other religion on the planet, while the war that is now devastating Europe is the biggest, bloodiest, and most barbarous in all history.

Dr. Orchard's injustice towards the religion of Greece is inexcusable. He calls it "a religion of gaiety, of battle, valor, and self-assertion." Does he not remember how ardently Athens believed in freedom and the emancipation of the oppressed, how every Greek was exhorted to aim at the highest form of virtue and goodness? Has he forgotten the famous speech of Themistocles, in which he "contrasted what was noble with what was base, and bade them, in all that came within the range of man's nature and constitution, *always* to make choice of the nobler part"? (Herodotus viii. 88). Has he forgotten the high value the Athenians set on generosity, kindness, chivalry, humanity, and the championship of the helpless and oppressed? We invite him to read Herodotus viii. 3, ix. 27, and particularly to ponder the plays of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Theseus was king of Athens, but this is how he describes the city to the Theban herald in the *Suppliants*:—

"Nay, peace, Sir Stranger! Ill hast thou begun,
Seeking a Master here. No will of one
Holdeth this land; it is a city, and free.
The whole folk year by year, in parity
Of service, is our king. Nor yet to gold
Give we high seats, but in one honor hold
The poor man and the rich."

The Greek religion glorified love and vicarious service, and laid stress upon the duty of disciplining the spirit.

Dr. Orchard falls foul also of the Lutheran Church, holding it largely responsible for the present situation, because of its conservatism, uncatholicism, and out-of-date creeds. Certainly we hold no brief on behalf of the Lutheran, or any other Church; but we beg to remind the reverend gentleman that it is an Evangelical Christian Society, and that the Evangelicals form 58 per cent. of the population of the German Empire, and the Catholics 39 per cent., leaving only 3 per cent. to be Atheists, Materialists, or Freethinkers. The point is that Christianity is still supreme in the German Empire, and that the war is being waged under its ægis. Harnack and Eucken profess the Christian religion, and both firmly believe that their country is engaged in an entirely righteous struggle.

We conclude that the endeavors to clear Christianity of responsibility for the present tempest have failed completely, while Freethought shines

forth as a thoroughly pacific agent, its ideal being to bring all questions of dispute between nations, as well as between individuals, before the bar of enlightened and impartial reason, that they may be settled without having recourse to brute force.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Day of Prayer.

An Open Letter to President Wilson.

BY M. M. MANGASARIAN.

I.

MR. PRESIDENT: The writer is an admirer of your many qualifications for the exalted office to which you were elected by the people. It is a blessing in these trying times to have a man of culture and a good heart at the helm of Government. Because of my loyalty, in general, to the ideals you cherish, I feel that I may offer a few comments on your "Day of Prayer" without abusing the privileges of an American citizen.

As your proclamation, calling the nation to prayer, is a most extraordinary document, and as it raises issues which seriously concern every lover of free institutions, I shall endeavor in this and in other letters to follow, to show the perils to which a nation is exposed when its chief magistrate undertakes to play the rôle of a priest. In this connection, I shall also avail myself of the opportunity to comment on certain newspaper editorials which have defended your proclamation.

The appeal to the supernatural by the representative of a Government avowedly and constitutionally divorced, root and branch, from any and every form of public worship, is indeed very regrettable. We are wondering what will be the next object for which you will summon us to prayer. If ever the habit of praying for things grows upon us, it will certainly unfit us for action and initiative. Besides, if wars among nations are to be stopped by American prayers, why may not presidential elections, for example, which often stir up the country from centre to circumference, and threaten its prosperity, be also made a subject of official prayers? Instead of choosing our own presidents, why not ask the Deity to choose one for us, as in the olden days? And what would prevent a Catholic president, should we ever have one, from recommending the Mass, the sacraments, or a pilgrimage to Rome, to the American people, as you have recommended church-prayers to them?

Of course, there is no objection to the Churches praying on Sundays, or for that matter, on every day in the week, and for anything they please. In fact, what are churches for, if not for praying? But for the American Government, in the person of its chief executive, to set apart a Day of Prayer is, in a sense, just as much a nullification of the American constitution insuring religious neutrality on the part of the Government, as the violation of Belgium territory by the Kaiser was of political neutrality. The latter pleaded necessity—What is your excuse? Without wishing to exaggerate, I would say that for the American Government to appoint, through its President, a Day of Prayer, is an infringement on the Constitution. It is treating the glorious document bearing the signatures of the fathers of our Republic, and which guarantees absolute neutrality on the part of the State in matters of religion, as "a scrap of paper."

During my stay in London, a Mr. Leach, M.P., made a motion in the House of Commons to the effect that a day of fasting and prayer be appointed by the Government. His proposition was turned down by the Premier upon the ground that the different denominations were attending to that matter. Why could not the American President, too, have left what praying was needed to the Churches? The neutrality or impartiality you re-

commend in matters of politics you have not observed in matters of religion. While urging us not to take sides with or against the Allies or the Germans, you have taken sides with the Churches against the American Constitution. It would not be a good defence to say that the Thanksgiving Proclamation is also a summons to prayer. Quite so. But two wrongs, Mr. President, do not make a right.

—Chicago.

(To be continued.)

The Armed Peace of the Plants.—II.

(Concluded from p. 678.)

THE armatures, so conspicuous throughout the thorn group of plants, present many interesting features. It is a noteworthy fact that these defences are invariably arranged so as to secure the amplest protection to the most important and the least guarded plant structures. Many species of bush would be entirely extirpated by grazing animals were they not fortified with thorns. The buckthorns, the sloes, and the barberry are examples of this, and in the last of these the young buds are screened from danger by three thorns which project their dagger-like points in three directions. Certain tropical mimosas are furnished with strong, sharp thorns; their leaves are sensitive, and at the slightest touch they close up and retire behind a citadel of thorns, which completely covers them from injury.

With many prickly bushes the young shoots of the early year remain green until the autumn, when they harden into thorns, and these serve to shelter the shoots of the coming spring. With others, the leaf-stalks are transformed during the summer into thorns. In the *Tragacanth*, the vernal foliage is surrounded by a circle of thorns composed of the transformed leaf-stalks of the departed year, and these remain attached to the plant after the leaves themselves have fluttered to the ground.

That spines, thorns, and similar floral appendages are not indispensable to vegetable growth is shown, among other plants, by the cactuses, whose leaves are completely changed into spines. The green stem of the cactus alone carries on the functions of assimilation. In the drought-stricken and stony soil of the Mexican plateau the cactus is the almost solitary representative of the floral world. Although in such barren surroundings the plant's juicy stem is a constant temptation to famished animals, these "rarely venture to approach them, and it is only when tortured by thirst that horses and asses occasionally knock off the spines with their hoofs, and so reach the soft tissues rich in water." But even this is attended with danger, as the powerful spines often penetrate the hoof and occasion great agony to the animals.

In their dry environment the sap of the cactus is protected against dessication by the plant's dense epidermis; the sole ascertainable function of the spines is to render the vegetation immune to the attacks of parched and hungry animals. The agency of Selection has unquestionably served to promote these defensive growths, which are absolutely essential to the life of the species. All plants that failed to produce them perished in these inhospitable regions. Nor are these phenomena special to Mexico. Prickly plants are a distinguishing feature of the arid coast areas of Southern Europe, in Spain and Corsica, as well as in Africa and other lands. The nearest relatives of these forbidding plants that are native to the well-watered districts of Northern Europe are destitute of spines; vegetation of innumerable orders is there richly represented, and the struggle for existence has not been sufficiently keen to compel the appearance of such defensive weapons.

The utility of protective appliances is plainly apparent in the predominating plants which form the "shrubby" that is never absent from the neighborhood of the Alpine herdsman's hut.

"There, where the cattle daily assemble, and where the soil is continually being richly manured by them, we always find a large, luxuriantly growing company of the poisonous aconite, the bitter goosefoot, the stinging-nettle, the thistle, the ill-smelling atriplex, and some other inedible species, while the palatable herbs are gradually exterminated by the cattle which daily gather round the hut."

As every gardener bitterly realises, many of our best-loved plants are ever at the mercy of a legion of insect pests. This very year the ravages of plant-lice, slugs, green caterpillars, and black flies have proved appalling. This lack of immunity to organic destruction is doubtless to some extent due to the circumstance that many of our domesticated floras have largely lost the defensive adaptations natural to their wild state. Moreover, the eliminating operations of unrestrained Nature, which extirpate those plants which fail to accommodate themselves to her rigorous demands, are materially modified by the protecting hand of the husbandman. As a consequence, the cultivated floras are less able to defend themselves from the attacks of their ubiquitous assailants.

Science is deeply indebted to the painstaking researches of the Jena botanist, Professor Stahl, for its present knowledge of the ways and means employed by plants to withstand their enemies' onslaughts. These agencies are both chemical and mechanical. The tannic acid secreted in the clover-leaf scares off many of the gluttonous snails. That the tannin provides the protection the plant enjoys is proved by the fact that when the chemical is washed out the snails eagerly devour the leaf. This explains the circumstance that slugs and snails are most destructive after a heavy fall of rain. Not that this device secures complete immunity to the clover; the field slug (*Limax agrestis*) is contemptuously indifferent to the presence of the tannin, and greedily devours the leaves in the driest of seasons. Still, the tannin deposit is of immense service to those plants that secrete it. Ferns, mosses, and other growths which contain tannin are avoided by herbivorous mammals, and the same chemical is usually effective against snails in the saxifrage, the strawberry, various aquatic floras, and others.

Plants which contain acids, particularly oxalic acid, such as the wood-sorrel and the different varieties of begonia, usually escape persecution. Stahl showed that when slices of carrot were smeared with acid, the snails, which are so extremely fond of this vegetable, positively refused to touch it. Many plants elaborate ethereal oils in their covering hairs. Among these is the herb-Robert, and as a result—

"Even the almost omnivorous field-slug does not attack this plant, and, if it be placed upon it, escapes with all dispatch from the ethereal oil, which burns its naked skin, by covering itself with mucus and letting itself down to the ground by a thread."

Plants also guard themselves from the assaults of snails with mechanical contrivances. Their stalks are furnished with bristles, which prevent the snails from crawling upon them. The meadow-comfrey secures itself in this way in the most successful manner. Its stalk is thickly coated with sharp bristles, from which the predaceous snail retreats in dismay. Other plants have failed in preventing snails from ascending their stalks, but measures have nevertheless been taken to cope with their devastations. In these cases the leaves are not infrequently tough and indigestible. The stoneworts secrete lime, which the snails abhor. It has been experimentally established that if the lime contained in the leaves is dissolved, the snails will then feed ravenously on the plants. Test inquiries among a varied array of vegetable species have yielded similar results to the one just described.

There is one other protective adaptation out of the immense number now known which must not remain unmentioned. This remarkable device also serves to withstand the menace of snails. In the tissues of many floral organisms "microscopic crystal-like needles of oxalate of lime, pointed at both ends," are to be met with. These needles—"Raphides," as they

are termed—unpleasantly affect the sensitive masticating organs of snails, so much so, indeed, that such needle-containing plants—as the arum or cuckoo-plant, the snowdrop, the narcissi, and the squill—are only eaten by snails when faced with absolute necessity. Even the all-voracious field-slug gives these plants a wide berth.

In company with all other known adaptations, these raphides furnish no support to the Design theory. It is true that the raphides afford a large amount of protection, but the defence is frequently broken through. They ward off the attacks of rodents and ruminants; locusts shun them, but many caterpillars specially select these plants as their favorite food. The vine-leaf and the wild balsam, among other plants, contain raphides, but their presence signally fails to safeguard them from the attacks of insects. The caterpillar of the butterfly, *Cbærocampa elpenor*, whose natural food is the leaves of indigenous European plants, has become an eyesore to the fuchsia lover. This beautiful plant is a native of South America, and its tissue often contains raphides; but the female butterfly has now adopted the habit of depositing her eggs on the foliage of this floral favorite, and the caterpillars no sooner hatch out than they set to work to destroy the leaves.

Nearly all the higher wild flowering plants seem to some extent to be protected against the plundering of snails. Why, then, do these molluscs increase and multiply to such a degree that they have become a chronic pest to the cultivator of the soil? As already intimated, our domesticated flora is in many instances deprived of its natural defences. The edible lettuce is attacked and eaten with impunity. In some wet seasons scarcely a lettuce is to be seen which is free from snails. Again, slugs and snails frequently begin their banquet when the plants are decaying and their protective substances have been dissolved by the rain and dew. But the fact remains that any device to outwit the slugs can never be entirely successful. As the plants evolve their defences, their enemies slowly but most certainly adapt themselves to the changing conditions of floral life, and thus the struggle constantly goes on.

As Stahl has discovered, many snails have developed into "specialists."

"Thus, the large slug of our woods eats the poisonous fungi which are rejected by other snails, and in the same way there are many other specialists which, however, are not likely to eliminate unaided the plants to which they have adapted themselves. There are certainly also omnivorous forms, like the field-slug.....and *Arion empiricorum*, the red slug, but just because these eat so many kinds of plant they are less dangerous to any one species."

That these protective plant adaptations find their sole explanation in terms of evolution shines forth with crystal clearness. The innumerable contrivances adopted by the various floral species assist them in life's ceaseless strife. Their evolution is determined by their utility, and consequently Natural Selection has necessarily played a predominant part in their development. That the selective principle has operated most powerfully in their production is proved by the fact that every available mode of armed peace has been elaborated in the vegetable kingdom. Furthermore, Stahl has shown that many of these defensive devices are not indispensable to the healthy existence of plant life. Maize, for example, if deprived of its natural acid, still continues to flourish. The acid is, therefore, not an essential part of its make-up, but acts as a weapon against organic interference. The wild lettuce still arms itself against attack, while the cultivated vegetable has lost its defences through disuse.

The plasticity of protoplasm—the material basis of life—was emphasised in an earlier article. The foregoing survey of the fortifications erected by floral structures strengthens the contention that the plastic powers of plants are made possible by their highly unstable states. Thorns, spines, hairs, bristles, bitter substances, ethereal oils, and tannin com-

pounds are all utilised in the truceless warfare between the kingdom of plants and its ever alert and hungry antagonists.

T. F. PALMER.

The Burden.

A GROUP of women were standing at an alley mouth in a slum part of the city. Some of them were soldiers' wives; all of them were related to regimental numbers; and all of them, very probably, had given, or would give, birth to soldiers.

Their faces were white, hard, coarse, and ugly. Five or six of the women were suckling infants; and the babies also were dirty and ugly. The picture did not induce one to admiration; it tended rather to anger and disgust.

Christianity may be, as it advocates never tire telling us, an indispensable asset to social well-being; perhaps; but we may be pardoned wondering what these people have to lose with the decease of the religion of love and kindness. In fact, Christianity might hide its head in shame at its own ignominy. It should, to be honorable, commit suicide. The contrast between its verbal morality and their horribly uncouth immorality is so striking that we are forced to laughter and tears; for at one end the contrast is terribly unnatural, at the other it is bitterly comic. Should not Christianity have been beside these women? Would Christ have been cheering with loud hurrahs the departing soldiers; or would he have been administering words to these women in their slum alleys and courts and closes?

They were speaking about the War; not the War that means picturesque reports in the press; nor the War that resolves itself into interesting sport for the middle class, and into honor, glory, and fame for the aristocracy; but the real War, that which means unutterable misery, anxiety, sorrow, and suffering, all the tortures of uncertainty, and all the impoverishments that can be imagined, and many unthinkable. They knew what poverty was; but they were becoming every day more trained in its powers. Hunger had never been far from their slum doors; it was nearer now. Misery was a boon companion of theirs; strangely enough they were always conscious of its presence even when they enjoyed life in a "pub," or in the chamber of "all-too-human" animalism; but misery had brought a pal from the grey land; and the women were now doubly guarded by the phantoms of worry and want.

It was an opportunity for organised Christianity, a chance for the purse-full lovers of Jesus Christ. It was their burden.

That these women should feel honestly affectionate to men does not, of course, astonish us; even animals can love. What does astonish us, however, is that they should bear *their* burden of increased poverty so uncomplainingly. It is strange how social customs seem to conspire with Christianity to give it an easy time, to keep it secure. With a little more spunk these suffering women could make a bold attempt to force the realisation of some of the famous precepts of the Christian religion; and they would simply be endeavoring to force what God in Jesus Christ commanded his children to perform. But if their morality is slave morality so also is their spirit slave-spirit; and Christianity and Christians are afforded assistance to escape from their God-imposed burden, and are indignant when we unhesitatingly brand them cowards.

Moreover, these poor, miserable women are enduring pain because their husbands, their fathers, and sons are fighting Britain's battles. According to repute, their soldier-men are preserving Britain's greatness. Rumor has it they are safeguarding the excellence of British religion and the freedom that emanates from the soul-inspiring teachings of Christ. We are gravely informed that our Christianity is at stake, and that the soldiers of the King have become the soldiers of God. All kinds of hitherto undreamt-of

evils assail us, and the male relatives of these women are our noble defenders. And the eyes of the women are heavy with a dread fear; their hearts—poor downtrodden hearts they are—crushed and bruised and broken on the wheels of heredity and environment, and, mocked by those whose lives move through airy regions apportioned them by similar forces, are full of care and anxiety; and their weak, ill-nourished bodies and brains feel dimly only approaching calamity.

One of them was weeping sorely. Information had been given her but a little ago that her husband had been killed in battle. She refused to be comforted. At last, exasperated by the continuous crying, a companion upbraided her, saying, "Shut up! You know where *your* man is; we don't."

There was a hardness in the words that made them grievous to the ears. Born, no doubt, from prolooged strain in a nature too crude for any nuance of more delicate feelings, they epitomised the whole ghastly tragedy. It was not knowledge these women craved; nor was it the satisfaction it would give them. Each knew they would suffer just as much as the more fortunate possessor of the official intelligence. Each knew that, despite any news, before them lay travail and stress, and that relief of any satisfactory kind would only be found in the hardships of industrialism into which more of them would be drawn.

Never did it dawn upon the attenuated minds of these women to demand the justice that springs from the thousand-and-one compliments paid to the men on whom they were more or less dependent. Never did it enter their thoughts to imagine the honor that should be theirs. Never did they dream of a time when the wealthy portion of the Christian nation would honestly recognise the duty they owed to the mothers, the wives, the children of the men upon whom they lavished so much inordinate praise. These women never imagined that the people who had most to lose should, honorably, in justice even to themselves, be decent enough to materialise their thankfulness.

And so in their misery there was no ray of hope. Theirs was the weariness of the slave. Slave consideration they got: it was the charity of the Lord's children, the charity that negates mammonism, and becomes a passport to paradise; the charity that eases the burden of divine commandments, that cancels Christian responsibilities, the charity that turns our Lord Jesus Christ into a laughing-stock, and if God did exist, and had interested himself sufficiently in modern knowledge to the extent, perhaps, of conquering Eastern prejudices, would stink in his nostrils and turn his face purple with righteous rage.

One does not need the art of oscinomanicy to discover God's feelings at the present time. But maybe he is too busy turning up the books of life and ticking off the Christians Christians have murdered for the glory of God and the safety of the various Fatherlands!

In the balance against this charity, the detestable sweepings of the streets of Christian morality, there swings a heavy weight, compounded of the "fine fellows" who are the relatives of these living, slum-dwelling ghouls of female humanity, and the innumerable enjoyments that spring from British freedom, and all the other terrible losses we would suffer if the enemy were successful.

It is a lesson in the hollow farce of the religion of love. It is a light shed on the damnable hypocrisy of the children of Jesus Christ. Their cowardliness is the low type—the sneaky, twisting, treacherous type—that crawls sickeningly round its burden, and away from it. They know what the joyful task is, and they hedge it. Every one of them tells us the words of the Lord can be obeyed, and in the doing of them there comes peace and happiness beyond all understanding; and the burden of the commands of God is lying the while on an unused side-track, awaiting the never-coming of those who should shoulder it. Every day the burden increases in size and adds weight. Every day it becomes more tragic

and grotesque. Every day Christian cowardice and Christian disobedience to the heavenly commander-in-chief are accumulating more self-manufactured opprobrium. Every day there is another plague-spot on the white flesh of Christ.

The moanings of these women rise to heaven, and fall like stones. Their miseries spread through generations yet unborn, doing, even now, in the lightless recesses of convoluting matter, the death-in-life work of a devilish civilisation. And the reward for their unheroic suffering is beautifully wrapped in the silver cloud lining of celestial promises.

Christianity, if it be true, if it be a thing of social value, if it be founded—as we are told—upon the most glorious teachings of the most glorious man who ever lived, if it would save itself from the contempt of every rationally minded man, if it would shield its Christ from contempt and its God from ridicule, must shoulder its burden. It has power—social, financial, and organising power; its arms reach to the lowliest hamlet; it probably has brains. The burden awaits its coming. We Freethinkers are pessimistic; but we are interested.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Acid Drops.

A very interesting experiment is suggested by the Mayor-Elect of Blackpool—Councillor William Cartledge. He proposes to democratise the Mayoral Sunday by not favoring any particular church, but inviting representative citizens to accompany him to a specially organised service held in one of the large theatres. Will this catch on? We must wait and see. But we must confess, in common justice, that many Christians may object to this experiment on principle, without being bigoted or ill-natured. Let us be fair, even to the enemy.

Talking about being fair, even to the enemy, we venture to warn our readers once more against the moral danger of a false patriotism which follows so easily from a state of war, and from the partisan news which appears in all our daily papers. The Kaiser may be a criminal lunatic—we have already stated our belief that he is; the Germans have undoubtedly introduced shocking brutality into their conduct of the war; and the only principle they seem to acknowledge is their own interest and convenience. Nevertheless, we are sure that there are good Germans as well as good Englishmen, and the policy that nations descend to in war—when they are ashamed of themselves and things are going against them—must not always be taken as typical of conduct in peaceful civil life. Everybody has seen some of the clever Berlin caricatures. They make many Englishmen angry—which, of course, is their object; they make other Englishmen laugh, for, after all, the world is too dull a place to lose a good joke in, even at our own expense. Now there are Germans, as well as Englishmen, who are angry about these caricatures. Here is a letter from a German officer to the *Cologne Gazette* on this matter—reaching us through the *Westminster Gazette* :—

"In distributing the post to the troops I have again and again noticed postcards which, in vulgar fashion, exhibited contempt of the French, English, and Russians, whom we have beaten. The effect of these postcards upon our men is very remarkable. Practically all of them expressed their disgust, and I have even seen a soldier with tears in his eyes. We see how victories are won, and with what enormous sacrifices. We see the unspeakable misery of the battlefield. We rejoice indeed over the victories, but our joy is mitigated by the memory of the sad pictures which we have almost every day before our eyes. Our enemies, moreover, have, in truth, not earned such ridicule. If they had not fought so bravely we should not have had such losses."

Now, that is a very manly writer. In spite of twenty wars one could shake the hand of the man who wrote it. And if all the details be true, there are other soldiers in the German Army than those whose exploits get into the English papers. The censorship lets all that sort of thing pass; the wrong as well as the right, the false as well as the true. What it does not let pass (until it is too late to be useful and too stale to be interesting) is the real news that all the world knows before it is allowed to reach the ears of the people it most concerns.

Dr. Fitchett, a Methodist preacher, who is author of one

or two "War" books, enlightens the general public as to Europe's greatest need. He says:—

"A little more of religion would simply revolutionise Europe. What all the Great Powers need is a sense of the relationship to a Power above them—the Power that rules the world in righteousness—a God, to use Mr. Balfour's phrase, that actually does things, that takes sides—the side of right against wrong, of justice against injustice."

Dr. Fitchett is evidently a believer in the old prescription, "Take a hair of the dog that bit you." Otherwise, we should imagine that a little more religion, added to what there is already, would precious near be the end of all things. And if there is one thing that all the Great Powers—except France—are convinced of, it is their nearness to a great "Power." They have all said so. They are all convinced that he is inspiring them. And each one is certain that he is the one for whom this "Power" is reserving his choicest favors. We suppose, however, that Dr. Fitchett, being what he is, could not well say anything different from what he does say. When we have been for years repeating the same stupid phrases these acquire a specific value from mere repetition.

The advertising effrontery of the Salvation Army almost passes belief. Its latest exploit is to announce that since the outbreak of the War 130 men had enlisted from a single "shelter." As these were more or less casual visitors, driven there by sheer poverty, we are at a loss to see in what way the "Army" deserves credit for the enlistment.

Mr. R. J. Campbell professes to be a very liberal-minded theologian, and prides himself on the City Temple being a liberal institution. But it is very hard for a theologian to rid himself of his theological prejudices, as the following from a speech of Mr. Campbell's shows:—

"When Mr. Bernard Shaw came last to this society, he addressed a meeting in the City Temple which got me into no end of trouble afterwards. The opening words of his address were something like these: 'Although addressing an audience which meets in a Christian edifice, I have to confess frankly at the outset of our proceedings this evening that I am not a Christian.' I remember the shock which these words gave me; a chill was instantly cast over the assembly. I think the feeling was that if Mr. Shaw was not able to profess himself to be a Christian, he might, at least, have been silent on the subject and respected the feelings of his audience."

Now, we do not think that Mr. Campbell could have been under very strong delusions concerning Mr. Shaw's religious opinions, although we admit that he had been playing some queer antics in that direction. Moreover, Mr. Campbell, as a liberal theologian and a professed lover of freedom, ought to have been less susceptible to shock, and the City Temple audience to chills. Shocks and chills because a man says he is not a Christian does not indicate a very robust love of freedom. A mediæval inquisitor could only have been shocked at such a confession, although we admit that the one who made it would not have complained of "chill" afterwards.

It is to be observed that this liberal assemblage would not have felt aggrieved had Mr. Shaw kept his opinion to himself, and so probably deluded some of his hearers. And it was certainly not the nature of the language that gave shocks and chills. That was as mild as mild could be. No, they did not mind so much a man not being a Christian; what they objected to was his saying so. As usual, heresy plus hypocrisy may pass. Heresy plus honesty must be condemned. Mr. Campbell was shocked, the audience was chilled, its feelings outraged, all because a man said plainly that he was not a Christian. Mr. Campbell and his followers ought to have known better; had they not been Christians they would have known better. No member of the gathering would have hesitated to avow himself a Christian. He would not stop to think that, perhaps, the speaker's feelings might be wounded. Of course, we do not believe they would have been; but what is sauce for the goose ought to be sauce for the gander. Perhaps, though, they placed the non-Christian on a higher level than themselves by recognising that he would be the first to claim that everyone present possessed the right to say what he believed without troubling about the shocks and chills to which unemancipated minds are subject.

The *Christian World* falls foul of Rev. Conrad Noel for saying that Protestantism has made no distinctive contribution to the Christian religion, and that Protestantism "tends invariably either to complete Atheism or the Catholic Faith." It strikes us that both of these statements contain no more than the truth. There is nothing in Protestantism that is not in Catholicism, and all over Europe it is precisely

Atheism on the one side and Roman Catholicism on the other that is eating into Protestantism. The *Christian World* says that the whole movement of Foreign Missions owes its impulse to Protestantism. We should have thought that the *Christian World* was well aware of the fact that missionary effort has been part of the regular work of the Catholic Church ever since it existed. India, China, North and South America, were blessed—or otherwise—with Catholic missionaries long before Protestantism existed.

The *Christian World* is equally wide of the truth in saying that Protestantism contributed to Christianity breadth of thought, and Catholicity of spirit, and freedom of conscience. Where? As such, Protestantism has been quite as much opposed to genuine freedom of thought as has Roman Catholicism. Look at Scotland and Geneva under Calvinism! Look at New England under the Puritans! Or look at the attitude of Protestants in this country in relation to heresy! The historic truth is that Protestantism represents a mere side-stream in a general current of European thought. In the revolt against Christian mediævalism, and the return to the healthier ideals of antiquity, we see this working itself out in art, in literature, and in sociology. Protestantism was a mere offshoot from this general tendency. And it narrowed the tendency instead of broadening it.

Lecturing at the Memorial Hall, Farringdon-street. Professor Adams Brown said that "a nation in agony was a proof, not of God's indifference, but of his interest." We hope that those Belgians who are in England in consequence of the devastation of their country will be properly appreciative of God's interest in them. But in this case it is evident that the Kaiser was right, after all. He is God's instrument. For it is the German army that is responsible for the agony of Belgium, and that agony is a proof of "God's interest." Well, we have always said that the less people have to do with the gods the better.

The English papers gleefully relate that German soldiers carry charms and mascots to protect them against bullets. What do they expect? Are there not twenty millions of Catholics in Germany, besides followers of other fancy religions?

The late Monsignor Hugh Benson commended smoking among ladies, and some of his co-religionists were shocked at his attitude. They might have remembered that the Catholic Church teaches that unregenerate men and women will smoke for ever—in the next world.

Archdeacon Holmes, preaching at St. Paul's Cathedral, said "God is my puzzle." Just so! And when the reverend gentleman has solved that jig-saw, he might try the tangle of the Trinity.

The "blood and fire" of the Salvation Army is popularly supposed to be confined to the jerseys and flags of these non-military warriors. Mr. Harold Begbie, however, appears to think otherwise, and in some exquisite lines in a recent "poem," he says:

"Ho, a bloke can stand some slaughter
When he knows he's born agen."

The new lighting regulations have transformed London into A City of Dreadful Night, and the police, particularly at Deptford and Camberwell, have great difficulty in preventing disorder and looting. Piety is not a restraining influence without the assistance of some big "hobbies."

The Bishop of Sheffield attributes the European War to a decline in the belief of the "teaching of revelation." Why is this? The German and Austrian peoples believe in the Bible-God as much as the Bishop, and the worst excesses of the troops of the two Kaisers can be easily paralleled in the Old Testament.

A characteristic story is told in a British soldier's letter from the War. Some artillerymen who had lost their way came across a crowd whom they suspected to be Germans. It was dark, but they heard someone sing out "Where the hell are you going to?" "Then," he says, "we knew we were with friends."

"Our fellows," another Mr. Atkins writes, "have signed the pledge because Kitchener wants them to. But they all

say, 'God help the Germans, when we get hold of them, for making us teetotal.'

According to the London Press, the King of the Belgians now wears only the French military medal and the Russian Cross of St. George. Dear, Dear! His Majesty is almost as scantily clothed as King David when he danced before the ark.

The Bishop of Chelmsford, speaking at St. Mary's Church, Prittlewell, said that "Church and State should be co-partners in elevating Southend, and in making it a holy city in reality and truth." There is no need for "Church" and "State" to distress themselves, for there are enough Semitic features in the town to justify that title already.

According to the truthful, if not thoughtful, newspapers, the Czar of all the Russias has forbidden the drinking of alcohol in his dominions "for ever." "For ever" is a big phrase. We thought eternity was in the hands of "God." It now appears that Czars can handle it too. But we would back the vodka. Read the Bible. Man was made of dust—it was a dry job—and he's been thirsty ever since.

The *Daily Mail* has, with its customary restraint, given its readers some of its ideas on "damned German culture." Apart from the filmy-eyed innocence of confusing militarism with culture, it is a pity that the *Mail* is so provincial. Goethe said, "How can I hate, unless I am myself filled with hatred?" We commend this awful remark to the urbane leader-writer on the *Mail*.

"Have a War Wedding" runs a bold advertisement in the daily papers. It sounds like an invitation to emulate the Old Testament ideal of polygamy.

The old "infidel" deathbed story is played out now except to the intellectually lowest of the low amongst the very dregs of Christianity. No journal but a *Christian Herald* or a *War Cry* would venture to print one, yet thirty or forty years ago, not to go back farther, it was a popular form of Christian delectation. Soldier and sailor letters during the present War contain little reference to religious ideas of any kind by fatally wounded men who are approaching the "great beyond"—just as we hear no more of the Bible that stopped the bullet which would have gone through Jack's or Tommy's heart. The men who were saved by the aid of a raft from the torpedoed *Hawks*, and only picked up the next day a long way from the catastrophe, huddled round the fittest of their number all night and cheered themselves up with unheavenly songs like "'Tis a Long, Long Way to Tipperary" and "They All Love Jack." Not much piety in this, but it helped to pull them through all right.

There is a better, a more poetical, a subtler story in Dr. Haden Guest's "Among the Wounded" in last week's *Reynolds*. Dr. Guest is conducting a hospital for the wounded in France. They have all sorts of patients and all sorts of attendants in the place. The common fight for the country has brought them all to a democratic level. The motor-car placed at the service of the hospital by the Government is driven by a Marquis—a *live* Marquis—who is a "full private" in the army. Another attendant, looking after bedpans, being asked by Dr. Guest what was the price of electric light in Paris, paused in his work to say he didn't know,—his valet always paid his electric light bill! These pleasant stories are followed by some dreadful accounts of the injuries and sufferings of the wounded, and then comes the following paragraph, which ends the article:—

"I do not want to create the impression that the work has only its gruesome and its gloomy aspects. There are many cheering incidents, prominent among which I must place the bravery of the French lady who stayed behind at Brayn to nurse the wounded after the town had been evacuated. The demeanor of the wounded, too, is wonderfully cheerful. One case will remain in the memory of all the party. It is that of a French soldier, from whom we had amputated his two legs and one arm. The other arm would have been taken off, but death forestalled us. The only words one heard from that soldier were apologies for the trouble he was giving. The only words, save for one grim joke. As he lay in bed with his solitary limb, he remarked to his attendant: 'A pity I have not another arm! We might play cards!' That man had the face of a saint."

"We might play cards!" We might make the best of what life I have left, and mitigate your *ennui*, and save myself from the boredom of merely awaiting the executioner. So

fine, and so French! And the man had the face of a saint. And why not?

Yone Noguchi, a Japanese poet, has been recording his impressions of Western life, gathered as the result of a rather lengthy visit to Europe and America. He says that the belief that Western civilisation was built on a higher and sounder footing than Japanese is now "knocked down and killed." He points out that "during forty long years the Western poets, preachers, and philosophers have been singing and writing on the general peace and brotherhood, and every church striking its holy bell on every Sunday and Christmas Eve." With what result? "When they preached peace, it was only at the time when they could not practise [their] barbarous policy; those forty years of peace were only a sort of truce. It was never a peace for peace's sake, but the time of preparation or suspension of hostilities in the interim between one war and another."

Mr. Noguchi comments on the fact that for fighting two wars in twenty years the Japanese have earned the name of a warlike nation, have been labelled dangerous, and commented on as the "Yellow Peril." He retorts that the schools of the West are far more dangerous than the East, "where Confucius's analects are not a dead language."

"Confucius's teaching is that we should recompense injury with justice, and kindness with kindness; and his doctrine is to be true to the principles of our nature, and the benevolent exercise of them to others. Even when we, as a people or nation, could not strictly observe his teaching, we believe that we have never acted aggressively.....It was the German Emperor who drew a picture calling us Yellow Peril, when we won a fight from China; if we had been a yellow peril, as he said, it meant only against the white race of the West. But what the German Emperor is doing now is, certainly, a mighty peril against all the humanities of the whole world."

He asks what would happen if any second or third-rate countries in the East were to imitate the Western example. His conclusion is that Japanese should be glad that they have a country in the far-away East, that contact has robbed him of respect for Western civilisation, and that the "immediate and most important determination should be a refusal to the Western invasion."

A book has been published with the ironic title, *The Unpetitioned Heavens*. It is appropriate that such a volume should be a work of fiction.

Mr. Fergus Hume, the author of the sensational novel, *The Mystery of a Hansom Cab*, is an ardent Theosophist, and frequently lectures on occult subjects. His admirers have always preferred his exciting cab-rides to his wanderings after the Mahatmas.

Southend-on-Sea, which a year ago attained the dignity of a County Borough, has adopted a new coat of arms, which is distinctly ecclesiastical. A critic in a local paper says, "I doubt if it is wise to place on permanent record an emblem of torture, the gridiron, often used by one Christian sect towards another (doubtless with the best intention), even though it is placed in sinister." A palpable hit!

The dear clergy will note with pleasure that Providence is as lively as ever. About 3,000 people were killed by the earthquake on October 3 at Burdur and Isbarta, Asia Minor. This piece of playfulness is in no way connected with the pernicious writings of Nietzsche.

"Wife Murder Over a Halfpenny" is a startling headline in a contemporary. People betray no emotion when they hear that "God" was sold for thirty shillings.

The provincial police have been very busy "rounding-up" foreigners. If they were still living, Christ and his twelve disciples would be "roped in" by the boys in blue.

Mr. Harold Begbie, writing in the *Daily Chronicle*, says Americans have small respect for traditions. Great Scott! Are all the churches and tin tabernacles erected to the memory of George Washington?

Heinrich von Treitschke, the Berlin professor who has so excited the spleen of the English parsons, was a Lutheran. That fact will never prevent the theologians telling tarra-diddles, and they will continue to call the Herr Professor "an Atheist."

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914.—Previously acknowledged, £219 18s. 9d. Received since:—H. T. C., £1 1s.; Robert Stirton and Friends, Dundee (quarterly), £1 3s.; S. Valentine Caunter, £1 1s.

Cape Town (per F. Silke): F. W. R. Silke, 12s. 6d.; G. A. Chisnell, 2s. 6d.; H. K. Jones, 2s. 6d.; H. Pentz, 2s. 6d.; (Mrs.) H. T. C., £1 1s.; K. C. C., £1 1s.

Leicester (per J. Ainge): S. Leeson, £1; W. Leeson, 5s.; D. Winterton, 2s. 6d.; — Barolet, 2s. 6d.; A. Wade, 2s. 6d.; J. Ainge, 2s. 6d.; W. Clark, 1s.; A. Letts, 1s.

F. SILKE.—If you cannot do all you would for Freethought do what you can. You never know what opportunities may arise. The book you mention has long been out of print. Sorry we cannot supply it.

S. T. ELLIS.—We wrote an article on the Lamb story once in the *Freethinker*. It was told by Hazlitt. The pious rendering in the goody-goody book you refer to is a reckless perversion.

E. MORGAN.—Shall be sent as desired. Pleased to hear that after two years' reading, this has become the paper for you.

W. P. BALL.—Many thanks for cuttings.

K. C. C.—Much obliged for your kind letter. Fortunately, we are fairly "fit" for our work, and there is so much of it, both before and behind the scenes, that we have no time for mourning over any troubles.

J. ANGE.—Thanks for your efforts in behalf of the Fund.

H. T. C.—Sorry for the delay.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss Vance acknowledges a parcel of useful clothing from Mr. and Mrs. King (Luke x. 37).

ROBERT STIRTON.—Accept our warm thanks for your continued interest in the matter.

H. G. FARMER.—Thanks for article and letter.

T. MOSLEY.—May be our fault, but we don't see your point. Huxley certainly did make that affirmation.

T. LONSDALE.—We have never charged anything for N. S. S. advertisements, but we like to get them before Tuesday.

W. DOUGLAS.—Casuistry is a very interesting study, but it does not help us much in the practical affairs of life. Alphonse Karr (we think it was), being asked if he was opposed to capital punishment, replied, "Yes, but I want those gentlemen the murderers to begin."

E. B.—Thanks, though we can't use them till next week.

E. EDWARDS.—In our next.

MAUD CLARK.—There is much truth in your letter.

SOME correspondence stands over till next week.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Foote's first lecture this season will be delivered at the Leicester Secular Hall next Sunday evening (Nov. 8). Further details will appear in our next issue.

Mr. Sydney A. Gimson, President of the Leicester Secular Society, has been closely engaged of late as Chairman of the local Committee for helping Belgian refugees. We are glad to see that the Sunday evening meetings at the Secular Hall are still sustained. We were not sure of this until we received, for the first time, a copy of the September-December syllabus a few days ago. We note that the platform to-day (Nov. 1) is to be occupied by Mr. F. J. Gould, who should draw a good assembly to hear him on "Abraham Lincoln in Peace and War."

Mr. Mangasarian has resumed his work for the Free Religious (Rationalist) Association of Chicago. His weekly discourses are now delivered in a large building, the Garrick Theatre, which holds some 500 more people than the hall

he has been lecturing in during the last few years. This is a tribute to his powers of advocacy and to the growth of Freethought in the great central city of the United States. The Association's monthly program contains one page out of four from Mr. Mangasarian's pen, besides his addresses which are published in a monthly organ called the *Rationalist*. We are happy to reproduce Mr. Mangasarian's open letter to President Wilson from the October program, or rather the first part of it, which will arouse in most, if not all, readers a taste for more.

We congratulate two good friends of ours, and two good Freethinkers, formerly of Southend and Margate, and now of Brighton (Mr. and Mrs. S. V. Caunter), on their late narrow escape from being hung, drawn, and quartered. They were arrested in a train as German spies. An intelligent English policeman saw them looking at a map. That was enough. What did it matter that both have a very un-German appearance, and talked what the schoolboy called "English English"? The map did it. They were liberated, however, after about four hours' detention. And we dare say they have had enough of intelligent English policemen for one lifetime.

Our veteran friend, Mr. J. W. de Caux, J.P., of Great Yarmouth, in a recent letter says: "I have never read the *Freethinker* with greater pleasure than I have recently. I am at one with you regarding the war." Mr. de Caux tells a humorous story, which is not altogether humorous. One of his premises is let to a merchant who lives at Ostend, and of course the poor landlord gets no rent, but the Yarmouth Corporation demand their ground-rent from the unfortunate Englishman all the same. He suggests that they should send the bill to the National Relief Fund, but they want their pound of flesh from him—as of course he expected, for it was only one of his apposite little jokes, after all.

Glasgow N. S. S. Branch members hold a meeting to-day (Sunday, Nov. 1) at 12 noon in the Good Templars' Hall, 122 Ingram-street.

We are happy to state that the *Freethinker's* circulation keeps up fairly well. But all the weight of the drop there is falls upon the poor Editor and proprietor. This is one of those cases in which the Editor works for the proprietor whatever happens, and the proprietor pays the Editor—when he can. At other times they weep together. Up to the present, however, contributors have not been called upon to join the melancholy concert. Will our friends do their best to give the paper an advertisement by introducing it, as far as possible, to their friends and acquaintances? This is the most effective form of advertising, and it is also the cheapest.

We are still ready, and more than ready, to send six consecutive copies of the *Freethinker* post free to any name and address that our readers may send us as of persons likely to be interested and perhaps to become regular subscribers. We have gained a good many readers, first and last, in this way.

Mr. Foote will probably have an important statement to make next week on matters arising out of the death of Mrs. C. Bowman, which is referred to elsewhere. A meeting of the Directors of the Secular Society, Ltd., must be held first.

Some idea of Mr. Foote's work behind the scenes may be gathered from the statement referred to in the previous paragraph, and why there is not always an article of his in the *Freethinker*, although his pen is always represented.

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

In the education of children and in the leading of nations there is nothing more stupid and barbaric than prohibitory laws and regulations. In my circles I would rather endure faults and weaknesses until they had made room for better qualities than merely get rid of the faults, and leave nothing sensible to take their places. Man naturally loves to do that which is good and practical, if he only can.....He does vicious things only when kept in idleness from *ennui*. It displeases me to see children repeat the Ten Commandments. There is the sixth, for instance: "Thou shalt do no murder." As though men had the least desire to kill one another. But is it not a barbarous thing to forbid children to commit murder? If it read: "Take care of the life of others; remove what might be injurious to them; help the other, and save him at risk of your own life! If you do him harm, think that you harm yourself."—*Goethe*.

God's Views on Women.

GERTRUDE ATHERTON, an American authoress, says of men: "They admire God because he made himself of their gender, and knew what he was about when he invented woman." According to the Bible, however, woman was merely an afterthought of creation, and "brought sin into the world and all our woe," shortly after her appearance on the scene. She owes to man the rib for her manufacture. Eve, says Paul, was in the transgression. She had the curse which involves most suffering, and "He shall rule over thee" was a prophetic portion thereof. From first to last the Bible is a he-book. God is masculine, and his only begotten child is a son. Why did he not beget a daughter to right the wrong Mother Eve is said to have committed? The Roman Catholics have endeavored to supply this omission by elevating Mary to a position of more importance than God the Father himself.

Throughout the Bible women are treated with contempt. All God's favorites were polygamists. Women were bought and sold in the same way as other merchandise. Rebekah was virtually bought by Abraham's servant for Isaac. In the Ten Commandments a man's wife is classed with his ox, his ass, or anything which is his. In the chapter following the Decalogue permission is given to fathers to sell their daughters into slavery. Sarah gave Hagar, her female slave, "to her husband, Abraham, to be his wife," and when he was tired of her he cast her with her child into the desert. "And God said unto Abraham, Let it not be grievous in thy sight because of the lad, and because of thy bond-woman."

The patriarchal system had long been established when the Bible was compiled, although there are traces in the Old Testament records of a far earlier matriarchal stage, when kinship was traced through mothers, fathers being uncertain. The power of the father was supreme, extending, as in the case of Abraham, to life and death. He never thought of consulting Sarah as to whether he should sacrifice her only son. According to the divine laws dictated by God to Moses, all that a husband had to do if his wife found no favor in his eyes was to "write her a bill of divorcement, give it in her hand, and send her out of his house" (Deut. xxiv. 1). The woman had no power of appeal. Her husband was accuser, judge, and jury. No remedy is offered to the woman if her husband finds no favor in her eyes. A female child was held to be an extra defilement to a woman, and an additional atonement was required.

Painters depict angels as feminine, but the Bible angels are all males. The three who appeared to Abraham were mistaken for men. The one who wrestled with Jacob is called a man. The angel that announced a child to Manoah's wife was "a man of God." The angel that announced to Zachariah the birth of John was a male, and so was the one who appeared to Mary. It is curious how often angelic visits were followed by births.

The preacher who writes in the name of the sensual sultan Solomon declares: "One man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found." This is put forward as God's word, and his opinion of his handiwork. Burns made God a better compliment when he wrote of Nature:—

"Her prentice han' she tried on man,
And then she made the lasses, O!"

The women most praised in the Bible are Rahab, the harlot, who betrayed her own people, and Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite, who basely assassinated a man who took refuge in her tent. If women had written the Bible, they would not have selected such heroines as these. No wonder some of them desire a revised Woman's Bible of their own!

God surely never meant women to read his holy volume, or he would have expunged the many shameless stories and filthy words which it contains. A decent Deltly would hardly have had the effrontery

to inspire such narratives as those of Lot and his daughters, Tamar, the Levite's concubine, Bathsheba, Abishag, Aholah and Abolibah, and the details of Ezekiel, Hosea, and the Song of Solomon, if he had expected feminine readers. Had the Bible been written by women, be sure we should have had a different representation of them. Perhaps we might have read that it was Adam, not Eve, who was in the transgression.

The New Testament regards woman in much the same light as the Old. Paul says, "But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man" (1 Corin. xi. 3). In his Epistle to the Ephesians v. 22, he commands, "Wives submit yourselves unto your husbands as unto the Lord." That is to say, the submission must be unquestioning and complete. "For," he repeats, "the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church..... Therefore, as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." No despot could require a larger charter than granted by Paul. Again, he says, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection" (1. Tim. ii. 7). He affirms, in the most pronounced terms, that the position of woman is a subordinate and servile one. "I suffer not a woman to teach" he exclaims with masculine arrogance (1 Tim. ii. 12).

In the seventh chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, where Paul deals with the marriage relation, he puts that institution on a purely bestial basis, and says, "He that giveth a virgin in marriage doeth well, but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better." Not a word as to the possibility of a girl having a will of her own in the matter. In a succeeding chapter (xi. 6-10) he insists that "the woman" must either be covered (wear a veil, as they do in the East) or "let her also be shorn." "For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man." The verse which follows, "For this cause ought the woman to have power on her head because of the angels," has puzzled the commentators. It is illustrated by similar precepts in the Koran. Paul, like Mohammed, thought that even the angels might fall into the snares of female beauty. A little further on (xiv. 34, 35) Paul again says, "Let your women keep silence in the churches, for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law." Paul well knew that the whole tenor and spirit of the Bible touching the status of woman is that her main mission is but to minister to man—his inferior, not his equal.

Our "great exemplar" was a male, who never married. The references of Jesus to the sex are entirely of a monkish character. "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" he brutally exclaims to his mother. His chosen disciples were men, though he let women minister unto him. He taught that marriage was an inferior state, praising those who made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake (Matt. xix. 12). In the Apocalypse we find the elect of heaven are those "not defiled with women" (Rev. xiv. 4). The Catholic Church has always taught that unnatural celibacy is the higher state of life, and the early Christian Fathers unite in contemning the characters of women. Tertullian calls her "the gateway of hell." Through the ages when Christianity was predominant she was regarded emphatically as the temptress, the agent of Satan, to lead men from the holy life. Of the nine millions who, it has been computed, were slaughtered in the persecution of witchcraft, probably only one in five hundred was a male.

The teachings of the Bible have contributed to make slaves of women and tyrants of men. There are abundant signs that this old teaching will not suit the present day. Women, who desire the emancipation of their sex, should cease to work for the

religion, which has built its churches on their prostration, and have the courage to affirm that Paul's authority has no influence with them.

(The late) J. M. WHEELER.

The Design Argument.

IN THE LIGHT OF ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY.

[We have long meant to introduce this essay to our readers. It was written a good many years ago by a learned Hindu resident in America and published by the Truthseeker Publishing Co., and is perhaps the best popular reply to the Design Argument in existence.—EDITOR.]

THE design argument, that is, that there is a special design, particular intention, in Nature, for the good of all creatures, and especially for the good of man, who is made, as the religionists assert, to praise and glorify the Creator, has long been presented by the theologians to prove the personal being of God; his omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence, which, in plain words, means his infinite power, his infinite knowledge, and his presence everywhere; so also, to prove his infinite love and merciful kindness, his infinite skill, wisdom, justice, holiness, unchangeableness, his eternity, and all the infinitely fine attributes that imagination can invent and manufacture in a language—attributes having meanings or no meanings at all, and of which one can form an idea or no idea whatsoever. And upon this false understanding and this absurd belief rests the whole fabric of the various religions in the world, with numberless creeds and castes, sects and factions, all of which divide man from man, poisoning the minds of one toward another, and creating dissensions and quarrels, wars and persecutions. This illogical, this unscientific and unreasonable understanding, this false belief in God and his so-called attributes, is the cause, as I have just said, of all the religions and their sects with all their infinitely evil consequences—curses, lies, falsehoods, pride, hypocrisy, hatred, and miseries under various forms and names.

This huge tree of evil, of monstrous dimensions, has spread its branches far and wide, from hemisphere to hemisphere, devastating human happiness by creating, enforcing, and encouraging falsehoods, narrow-mindedness, hate, and intolerance in the extreme, and thus desecrating the otherwise most tolerant, the purest, and the noblest of souls.

I wish to strike at the very root of this tree of evil, instead of chopping off its tender foliage and twigs.

I assert that Medical Science, viewed impartially and with an unbiased mind, shatters the very foundation of this fabric of false belief and deception practised upon the mind of man, by the ignorant and the cunning, for many ages past and from time immemorial.

I wish to consider the design argument anatomically and physiologically, that is to say, in relation to our body, in relation to its structure and to its functions. It is quite clear, however, that in a single discourse, like to-day's, we can consider only a few points of the subject.

The theologians aver that the body of man—both in its structure and its functions—points out to us a great and perfect designer, a kind and wise father, an almighty and all-merciful creator. They prove their assertions by statements like these:—

1. The total or utter helplessness of the child, say they, is well-known. And, therefore, in order that it may not break its limbs by falls and accidents, God has, through his infinite mercy and forethought, formed the bones of its body so elastic and pliable that even by a severe blow or an accidental fall, which would break the limbs of the strongest of men, those of the child go unhurt. There is the mercy of the great loving Father exhibited, in protecting the helpless child of his.

2. Not only that, but the proof of his infinite loving kindness is much more extraordinarily shown by the provision he makes for the child,

in the breast of its mother, even long before the child is born. This provision is milk—the food which contains all the ingredients necessary to sustain the life of man—and admirably fitted for the nourishment of infants. This milk is being created along with the child, which is gradually developing in the mother's womb. How wonderful!

3. Then, again, the child can suck the milk out of its mother's breasts without any teaching on the part of man. Who teaches the child to suckle then? It is God, the merciful, the benevolent and the most tender-hearted Father and Mother of the child. He is far kinder than the child's earthly parents.

4. Now, the fourth point that they want to force upon the attention of the people is the thickness and the strength of the skull in which the brain—the most important of the organs of the body—is lodged. The skull instead of being formed of one bone only, is formed of twenty-two bones, of which eight form the head and fourteen form the face. Although the bones, especially of the head, are soft and separate from each other in infancy, they grow firmer and thicker, and join together as the age of the child advances. Why did God form the skull of several bones and not of only one bone? Certainly to make the skull stronger, like the stones of an arch. Another purpose is to enable it to bear even a severe blow—an external shock—that the brain inside may not be easily hurt.

5. Now, about articulations, which in ordinary language mean joints. There are two hundred bones in our body, and these bones are joined together by ligaments, which serve as binders. Ligaments are strong, tough, white, and shining skins. Joining of bones is called articulation. God, out of his infinite wisdom and mercy, has managed the joints in a very wonderful manner. He has joined these bones together, more or less firmly, and supplied them with more or less ligaments, and given more or less elasticity to them, according to the purposes he has intended them to serve. One bone is exactly fitted to the other, and ligaments hold the ends of the bones together.

6. God has not only made joints, but in order that they may work well, has also oiled them, as we do wheel and axle of a carriage. There is a bag-shaped skin, called synovial membrane, around the joints. These membranes secrete a liquid substance which answers the purpose of oil and keeps the joints always soft. Some vessels give out this oil; others take it up when it has become unfit for use. What a marvellous contrivance is this! We have not to oil our joints. This oil is made when it is wanted, and supplied without any help from man. No man does it or can ever do it. It is God—the only most skilled mechanic—that does it, and who alone can do it. None else.

7. I shall now direct your attention to a very ingenious contrivance in the throat. We all know we breathe. The air goes down into the lungs and out again through the windpipe which lies in front of the gullet. To keep food from going into the windpipe, God has put there a kind of little door, technically called the epiglottis, which is intended to cover it (the windpipe) when we swallow food. But in case any particle of food should fall into the windpipe, the lungs contract and force the air through the passage to drive it out. What wonderful contrivance again!

8. The eighth point to which I shall draw your attention is the eye. The eye is the most important of all the organs of sense. To effect the movements of the eye in every direction there are seven muscles. We have two eyes to enable us to see better, and if we should lose the one, by an accident or disease, we have the other. The eye is placed in the front of the head, where it is most useful. It is carefully guarded by the bones which jut out all around it. The eye is protected by two shutters—the eyelids. They keep out the light of the sun when it is too powerful. The eyelids, as well as the eyelashes, keep off small bodies like dust and flies. The eye is wonderfully made by

God of three coats called tunics, which are opaque, except the middle portion through which we see, and three transparent substances through which refraction of the rays of light takes place. Of these three transparent substances, which are called media, two are aqueous (watery), and the third which is called the crystalline lens, is in substance like half-melted gum. In shape it is like two watch-glasses with their hollow sides placed together. Had these aqueous humors or the lens been opaque, we could not have seen anything at all. So how wise and kind of God—the Father in heaven—to keep these things transparent, and enable us to see the glory of his creation, and to marvel at it.

9. The ninth point is about the processes of the healing of our body in case of wounds caused by cuts, burns, etc. This proves how God has designed means for the cure of his injured creatures. Take, for instance, the process called cicatrisation. In this, the wound is healed by the raw surface gradually becoming smooth and varnished over with a thin bluish-white layer. This is the first indication of the new skin. This process of healing spreads from the edges, or from any islands of skin that may have been left, or that may have been grafted by the surgeon. As it goes on, it draws the margins together by concentric contraction. After the whole has been skinned over, other important changes are gradually developed. The cicatricial tissue, which was at first thin, blue, and shining, becomes thicker, of a natural color, and covered over by a layer of epithelium; in fact, it approaches, though it may not attain, the character of true skin.

From this we can clearly see how God, through his infinite mercy, ingeniously endeavors to heal up wounds.

10. The tenth and the last, but not the least, point is about bodily pain. Pain, which man tries to avoid with all his power, which he hates and fears, proves, above all things, great wisdom of God, his great mercy, his perfect design for the good of man and man's happiness. Pain, is a very salutary provision; inasmuch as it teaches vigilance and caution, it gives notice of danger, and excites those endeavors which may be necessary for the preservation of self. It is the unmistakable and the true monitor. It points out to us exactly where disease is, where destruction of the tissue or the mismanagement of the functions is going on, and calls our immediate attention to the remedies. It gives us real signals of danger. It is decidedly intended—by that loving Almighty Father, from whom nothing is hid—for our good. Suppose our hand is on fire; if there were no pain, our hand would be burnt to ashes. Pain in a broken bone makes us keep it still, without which it could not heal. The evil consequence which sometimes arises from the want of that timely intimation of danger which pain gives is known to the inhabitants of cold countries by the effect of frost-bitten limbs. Some people have lost toes and fingers by this cause. They were totally unconscious of any local uneasiness at the time. Then, by this, it is emphatically proved that there is a great use of pain, though we don't like it, and that it is intended and appointed by the great and kind Father for our good, through his unbounded, unabating, and fathomless mercy.

I have, quite impartially, and as clearly as possible, tried to place before you some of the arguments that the theologians generally bring forward in relation to the structure and functions of our body, to prove the special design of God for the welfare and happiness of man.

Now, let us see how these ten points, these ten arguments of the theologians, stand the test of scrutiny, and whether they really serve to prove the design of some personal, benevolent being—God—for the good of man. Let us examine how far these points, these facts, stand before other facts, counteracting their influence. Let us impartially examine them, and see if they really prove that there is a God to design these things for the good of man or none at all; or, if there be one,

whether he is not a great malevolent being, rather than a really benevolent one, or both—which is evidently a contradiction in terms.

Let us now try to take one point after another and examine it carefully.

The first point is with regard to the pliability, the quality of yielding to pressure, in the bones of children. Were the bones hard, like those of adults, they would be more easily broken by accidents.

In answer to this, I say that it is not true that God, out of his protecting care for infants and children, has made the bones pliable in order that they may not be broken, but they are not so easily broken because they are pliable. To be able to comprehend the subject properly, let us look at the composition of bones. The bone is composed of one-third organic or animal matter and two-thirds inorganic or earthy matter. The organic or animal matter gives to the bone elasticity or toughness, while inorganic or earthy matter gives the bone its hardness and solidity. This proportion of the chemical composition of bone is found in the bones of the adult. In the bones of the young people, animal matter predominates, and, therefore, although the bones don't easily break, they are less strong, and liable to be bent under the pressure of the body; while in old people, earthy matter predominates, and, therefore, the bones become brittle and are easily broken. Now, I ask, if God, through his infinite kindness, protects the bones of children from being broken, why does he not protect the bones of old people? Does he not see the necessity of protecting the old, in whom the bones are very liable to be easily fractured? I say, in their case, in point of bones, there is the real necessity of God's intervention and protection. Again, if one says, because the child's bone may not be easily broken, that God, out of his merciful kindness and love, has made it elastic and pliable, he will have to admit that because the old person's limb may be easily broken, God, out of his infinite wickedness and hate, has made the bone of the aged brittle and friable. If the designist is ready to admit the conclusion of the first argument, he cannot but admit, whether he wish it or not, the conclusion of the second also, which is mortally against him.

One might say that the aged person's bone breaks because, as age advances, earthy matter predominates over the animal matter, rendering the bone more and more liable to break, and, in old age, it is actually brittle. What wonder is there that it should break, then!

I say this is the very thing that I hold; in old age the bone easily breaks because it is brittle, for earthy matter predominates; so also in childhood it does not so easily break, because it is pliable, owing to the animal matter predominating. There is no interference of God or anybody in the matter. This is merely the course Nature takes.

Now, again, if it is admitted for a moment that God specially cares for children and protects them, how is it that he does not protect children from falls from windows and from burns by fire, by which so many of them die, and the reports of which we read in our dailies? Is it that he is unable to protect them if the falls are above a few feet in height? Then, again, it is not that the children are not at all injured by ordinary falls. They are often very seriously injured by them. Again, also, children die by a variety of other accidents, and by climatic influences and epidemics. Where is God's special providence for the protection of children then? Has God guaranteed himself only against the breaking of bones and not against any injury by cuts and burns and climate and what not?

The whole truth with regard to bones is that the bones are not already formed in infancy. They are, in the commencement, cartilages and membranes, and, as age advances, these cartilages and membranes go on ossifying—forming into bones. This process goes on from infancy to manhood, say up to the twenty-fifth year. As the process of ossification goes on, from day to day, the animal matter in the bone

becomes less and less, while earthy matter increases more and more. Well, then, it is clear that as animal matter lessens and earthy matter increases, the bones get less and less soft and pliable, and more and more hard and strong, until the bones fully grow or are completely ossified, as it is technically called, when the technical composition of bone comes to be one-third animal matter and two-thirds earthy matter, as I have already mentioned. After this chemical proportion is completed, the turn of ossification is on the reverse. The bone then goes on losing animal matter and adding to it more of the earthy, thus rendering it less pliable and more brittle, and, therefore, more easily breakable.

This is the whole fact, the whole truth. No God loves and protects the child, and no Devil hates and destroys the old man. All this is only blind and unfeeling Nature's course, through which all the stages of animal existence must go, such as the embryonic state, infancy, childhood, manhood, old age, and final decay.

The second point is about the provision in the shape of milk for the nourishment of the child in its mother's breasts.

If, I say, God out of his mercy and protecting care creates milk for the child even before it is born, how is it that many thousands and millions of mothers have not milk enough for the proper nourishment of the child, and many of them, both rich and poor, have no milk at all? Want of milk in mothers is the general and the loudest complaint throughout the world. Hence these millions of infant feeding bottles and tins and pots of condensed milk. Then, again, it oftentimes happens that when the child is living, there is, in fact, a very small quantity of milk, quite insufficient for its support, but immediately after the death of the poor child, there begins such a large secretion, and such an overflow of milk that the breasts are over-distended and rendered extremely painful. This state of distention sometimes brings on a high fever and makes the poor, lamenting mother ill. Why, I ask, is there so much milk in the mother after the child's death, after the poor, innocent suckling has gone, when it wants no more of it, while it was actually scanty and insufficient when the child was living? This provision, I say, is a provision of an insane being, if it is of any being at all. It is the wickedest of all the wickedness that even the wickedest man on earth can ever conceive of, if you can only bring the lamenting mother's grief to your mind's eye.

(To be continued.)

LUNAR POLITICS.

If a man asks me what the politics of the inhabitants of the moon are, and I reply that I do not know; that neither I, nor anyone else, have any means of knowing; and that, under these circumstances, I decline to trouble myself about the subject at all, I do not think he has any right to call me a sceptic. On the contrary, in replying thus, I conceive that I am simply honest and truthful, and show a proper regard for the economy of time. So Hume's strong and subtle intellect takes up a great many problems about which we are naturally curious, and shows us that they are essentially questions of lunar politics, in their essence incapable of being answered, and therefore not worth the attention of men who have work to do in the world. And he thus ends one of his essays:—"If we take in hand any volume of Divinity, or school metaphysics, for instance, let us ask, Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or matter? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact or existence? No. Commit it, then, to the flames; for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion."

Permit me to enforce this most wise advice. Why trouble ourselves about matters of which, however important they may be, we do know nothing, and can know nothing? We live in a world which is full of misery and ignorance, and the plain duty of each and all of us is to try to make the little corner he can influence somewhat less miserable and somewhat less ignorant than it was before he entered it. To do this effectually it is necessary to be fully possessed of only two beliefs: the first, that the order of nature is ascertainable by our faculties to an extent which is practically unlimited; the second, that our volition counts for something as a condition of the course of events.—Huxley.

A Retort on the Spiritist.

You think of me as seeing no essential difference between mind and the material properties of the brain. As well might I think of you as seeing no essential difference between music and the material properties of the piano from which it is evoked. Because you assert that music is produced from the piano, do you, therefore, assert any kinship in nature between a piano-string and the aerial pulse it generates when struck? Or do you, therefore, assert an identity between such pulses and the relations among them which constitute cadences and harmonies? No more, then, do I, in asserting the dependence of mind on nervous structure, assert any kinship in nature between the matter of a nerve-cell and the actions that arise from it, or between these actions and those relations among them which constitute thought. Do you object to the parallel because the piano remains silent till touched, while the brain acts without external help? I reply that in either case the power is derived from without, and that the effect of the structure is simply that of transforming it. As the motion given to an automatic musical instrument passes through its specialised structure and comes out in the form of particular combinations of aerial pulses, simultaneous and successive; so the motion locked up in a man's food, added to that directly received through his senses, is transformed while passing through the nervous system into those combinations of nervous actions which, on their subjective faces, are thoughts and feelings.

But this analogy is far too rude to convey a true conception. Not with sensible motion, even though it be that of the invisible air, has mind any direct kinship; but only with insensible motions of kinds inconceivably more subtle and immeasurably more rapid. Not to combined undulations of ponderable substance, however rare, is mind to be assimilated; but only to combined undulations of the all-pervading imponderable substance which we know of only by inference from their effects. The activities of this imponderable substance, though far simpler, and in that respect far lower, than the activities we call mind, are at the same time far higher than those we call mind in respect of their intensity, their velocity, their subtlety. What has been gained in adaptability has been lost in vivacity. Though mind brings into adjustment the apparatus by which certain ethereal undulations emanating from the sun are brought to a focus, yet mind cannot, like these concentrated undulations, dissipate the diamond placed in that focus. Though mind is capable of devising an electric telegraph, yet it remains wholly insensible to those slight molecular agitations on the other side of the earth which transform themselves into sensible motions on this side. And now that the rates and volitions of our ideas have been measured, we learn that, though thought is quick, light is many millions of times quicker.

Your conception, O Spiritualist, is far too gross for me. I know not what may be the extent to which you have refined this creed which you inherit from aboriginal man. Disembodied spirit was conceived by your remote ancestors (as it is still conceived by various existing savages) as material enough to take part in battle, and even to be killed over again. Becoming less concrete and definite as knowledge increased, the idea of a ghost continued, till quite modern days, to be that of a being which could cause alarming noises and utter words. Even your quite recent ancestors, transparent as they supposed the substance of a ghost to be, nevertheless supposed it visible. Possibly you have still further purified their belief. But, whether you confess it or not, you cannot think of disembodied spirit without thinking of it as occupying a separate place in space—as having position and limits, and such materiality as is implied by limits. This idea, not commended to me by its genealogy, quite unsatisfactory in its nature and wholly unsupported by evidence, I cannot accept.—Herbert Spencer.

Obituary.

We have to announce the death of Mrs. Elizabeth Bowman, wife of Charles Bowman, late of Tower Hill, London, at West End Cottage, Ventnor, October 18, 1914, in the 87th year of her age. Mrs. Bowman's figure was familiar to the regular attendants at the Hall of Science and Athenæum Hall meetings.—E. M. VANCE.

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.

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Determinism or Free Will?

By C. COHEN.

Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.

A clear and able exposition of the subject in the only adequate light—the light of evolution.

CONTENTS.

I. The Question Stated.—II. "Freedom" and "Will."—III. Consciousness, Deliberation, and Choice.—IV. Some Alleged Consequences of Determinism.—V. Professor James on "The Dilemma of Determinism."—VI. The Nature and Implications of Responsibility.—VII. Determinism and Character.—VIII. A Problem in Determinism.—IX. Environment.

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