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An illogical opinion only requires rope enough to hang itself.—AUGUSTINE BIRRELL.

How Lies Grow.

EVER since the days of Paul the Christians have been wonderfully fond of lying for the glory of God. The pastime has afforded what is thought a legitimate exercise of the imagination. It has also deceived millions of ignorant, indolent, and credulous people, and immensely increased the power, influence, and profits of the Church.

Colonel Ingersoll said that the truth often enters the field weak and defenceless. It meets a mature, vigorous falsehood, dressed in strong armor, and the truth gets licked. Ingersoll added that nothing on earth has as much vitality as a good, sound, healthy religious lie. A similar sentiment, at least to a certain extent, must have been in the mind of George Eliot, when she said that human beings took to the absurd as asses took to thistles, as an excellent aid to digestion. Was it not Lord Bacon who said that "A mixture of a lie doth ever add pleasure"? His lordship found in human nature "a natural, though corrupt, love of the lie itself." "Doth any man doubt," he asks, "that if there were taken out of men's minds vain opinions, flattering hopes, false valuations, imaginations as one would, and the like, but it would leave the minds of a number of men poor shrunken things, full of melancholy, and indisposition, and displeasing to themselves"?

Look at the pious stories that continue in circulation about the death-beds of great Freethinkers, like Voltaire and Thomas Paine. What is the reason of their longevity? They have been refuted every year since they originated. Long ago their death-warrant was signed by Evidence, and countersigned by Reason. But it is never executed. They flourish almost as vigorously as ever. It seems likely that they will never die except from sheer inanition. And what is the explanation of their obdurate vitality? It is not enough to say that these stories serve the turn of their inventors and perpetuators. Of course they do. But why are they so greedily swallowed by the Christian multitude? A jest's prosperity lies in the ear of the hearer, and a falsehood's prosperity must lie in the mind of its recipient. What then is it, in the mind of the orthodox Christian, which makes him welcome these ghastly stories of infidel death-beds? Why this. He has been taught, and he believes, that death is a terrible thing without Christian consolations. Men who die without those consolations *must* be miserable. That is as clear as daylight. Besides, if they *were* not, the orthodox Christian would be wrong; and that is a mortal affront to his vanity.

My object, however, at present, is not so much to show how lies prosper, but how they grow; how they career along, like a rolling snowball, gathering size as they proceed: and how the imagination which gives them birth, like the mother bear with her cubs, licks them afterwards into shape. Of course I cannot, in a single article, trace the rise, progress, and development of a dozen lies; but what I have to say about *one* story will throw light upon all the rest.

Many of my readers, I daresay, have seen a lecture on the Bible by a Yankee anti-infidel, the Rev. H. L. Hastings—a fellow who considered it a Christian duty to slander Colonel Ingersoll. In the course of this lecture he tells a story of two infidels, father and son (we believe, but we have not the lecture by us), who were travelling in the wild and woolly West. They found shelter one night in a rude dwelling, and after retiring to their room they were alarmed by sinister sounds in the next apartment. The son looked through a crevice, and saw their host reading a book. It was not the *Age of Reason*, but the Bible. That was enough. They felt quite safe, and went to sleep in peace and security. Had the host been reading Paine or Voltaire or Shelley, or any other Freethinker, the two infidels would, of course, have been obliged to sit up all night, with their hands on their revolvers.

Now I have discovered that this story is fairly ancient, although its older form is not so dramatically rounded—not having yet been *licked* into proper shape. I have been looking through an old debate, between Charles Bradlaugh ("Iconoclast") and the Rev. T. D. Matthias, held at Halifax, in October, 1859. It was a four nights' discussion on "The Credibility and Morality of the Four Gospels," conducted with excellent good temper on both sides. Mr. Matthias had quite a Sunday-school teacher's notion of debate. In his last speech he told some anecdotes, which he evidently regarded as splendid arguments. One of them was as follows:—

"I may tell you of another instance—of a sceptic who was travelling at one time, in the backwood settlements of America. Benighted, he sought a refuge in some cabin from the wolves and bears of the forest, and found it in the log hut of a lone and solitary woman, whose looks were aught but hospitable. The man of the house soon came in, and if the looks of the woman had terrified him before, the man seemed much more rough than his partner. He had a considerable amount of property about him, and dreaded sleep lest his property should be taken from him and his life lost. What was his terror to see the old man place two pistols on the table! He thought it was all up with him. He was asked to go to bed, but this he dared not do; he said he would sit up. 'Well, then,' replied the old man, 'the dame and myself generally have a chapter of the Bible and prayer together.' He was not afraid of the pistols now."

Such is the story as told many years ago by Mr. Matthias. It is more dramatic as told by Mr. Hastings. The one sceptic grows into two infidels; the old woman, as far as I recollect, is eliminated; the two infidels are in mortal terror in their own room, one looking through a crevice in the partition; and then, at the climax of fear, they see their host reading his Bible.

This is how stories grow. An inventive genius starts one, and more critical minds improve it; and at each stage it is the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Could we see the very first Christian document, and all its successors, until the settlement of the New Testament Canon, we should know exactly how the Life of Christ was manufactured. But the Christian Church was wise. It destroyed the traces of its operations, and criticism has to painfully eke out the paucity of evidence.

G. W. FOOTE.

The Wrong Way to Die.

IN one of the soldier's letters that are being published in the newspapers, I came across the following item. It is related by a sergeant of the Fifth Lancers:—

"I came on a wounded man of the Lancashire Fusiliers one day. He had two ghastly wounds in his breast, and I thought he was booked through. He was quietly reading a little edition of Ruskin's *Crown of Wild Olive*, and seemed to be enjoying it immensely. As I chatted with him for a few minutes he told me that this little book had been his companion all through and that when he died he wanted it to be buried with him. His end came next day, and we buried the book with him."

Now, this story came to me with something of a shock. It was not that I knew the wounded soldier, or was affected out of the ordinary by his death. It was that this particular soldier didn't seem to realise what was required of him. As a mere soldier he had doubtless done his duty in a most satisfactory manner. He had fought well, and the narrative shows he had taken his punishment bravely. He was not found crying or whimpering, but with two deadly wounds in his breast was spending his last hours reading. So far, as a soldier, all was well.

But there is more than this in it. He was a British soldier. A member of the greatest Empire on earth. He was an Englishman, belonging to a Christian country, which, we have often been informed, owes its greatness to the Bible and to Christianity. It was, therefore, incumbent upon him to play the part properly, to live up to the character of a Christian soldier, fighting a Christian battle.

The sergeant ought to have found him reading, not *The Crown of Wild Olive*, but a pocket Bible. He ought to have told the sergeant what a comfort that precious book had been to him, how it had soled his hours of lonely duty, inspired him when the battle was at its fiercest, and had now fallen back upon it as his only true friend in the hour of death. And, finally, he would, of course, have begged that the Bible might be buried with him. That is how it ought to have ended; that is how soldiers are often found—in the religious tracts I have read. Frankly, this Lancashire Fusilier failed in his duty as a member of so Christian a country as England. He must have known what the Christian public of England expected of him. Why was he so neglectful of his responsibilities?

The more I think about this soldier the more disappointed I am. He was probably born of pious parents, had received a religious education, and here, at death's door, was found reading mere secular essays. He must have known the proper, the orthodox way to die. He must have read scores of times how the true Christian soldier dies. He may have read the story, published *again* the other day, of how a soldier's life was saved through carrying a New Testament in a breast pocket, and how this is used to prove the value of the book. He must have known how hard a number of people at home are working to raise funds to send copies of the New Testament out to the front. He ought to have realised that churches and chapels are not praising our soldiers in order that they may advertise Ruskin and the consolatory power of his writings. If he had not been reading, but merely died; if he had made no dying request, but only whispered "Good-bye, old pal"—but to die reading *The Crown of Wild Olive*, and to ask for it to be buried with him, that is the very height of impropriety.

This Ruskin-reading "Tommy" is what the tracts call "a pernicious example." He may induce others to follow in his steps, and instead of cheering their last moments by reading the genealogies of the Old Testament, or seeking inspiration in the zoological curiosities in the Book of Revelations, they may take all sorts of literature with them into battle and ask that it shall be buried with them. Imagine the feelings of good Christians if they learn that some of the men at the front were to go to battle with

The Age of Reason in their pocket, or if wounded men were picked up reading the *Freethinker*. Of course, reports are published of soldiers who eagerly welcome copies of this or that paper, but that is for reading while they are safe and sound. It is quite another thing to have soldiers reading them in the hour of death. It is against all theory, contrary to all tradition.

I am also disappointed with the sergeant who reported the case. Clearly it was an incident that ought never to have been reported. He also manifested a certain want of a sense of responsibility. At least, he should have asked the advice of one of the Army chaplains before reporting the matter. Then, doubtless, the story would have been properly edited before being made public. And it would have been so easy to have edited it in an "edifying" manner. The alteration of one word, and the elimination of several others would have made the story quite suitable to the columns of all the religious papers, and would have secured its perpetuation in thousands of religious tracts. Thus:—

"I came on a wounded man of the Lancashire Fusiliers one day. He had two ghastly wounds in his breast, and I thought he was booked through. He was quietly reading a little book. As I chatted with him for a few minutes he told me that this little book had been his companion all through, and that when he died he wanted it to be buried with him. His end came next day, and we buried the book with him."

There it is! Substantially the same story, every word true to fact, and yet how different would have been its influence on the public mind! Told in this way there is not a religious person in the country who would have doubted what book the wounded soldier was reading. Evangelists would have repeated the story on numerous platforms. It might have formed the subject for a special tract, with an engraving of a soldier hugging a family Bible as a frontispiece. Or it might almost have run to a serial story: Chapter i., the soldier as a boy reading the Bible at his mother's knee. Chapter ii., the soldier as a youth attending Sunday-school. Chapter iii., the soldier in the barrack-yard holding up the Bible to his fellow soldiers and exhorting them to lead a Christian life. Chapter iv., the soldier in the trenches reading the Bible by candle light with shells falling all around him. Chapter v., the Christian soldier's end, dying clasping the Bible to his breast, with the whites of his eyes turned upward in the most approved fashion. It is exactly the thing that Mr. Harold Begbie would have turned into one of his religious shilling shockers. It is a sheer waste of good material. Many a report of missionary conversions has been built up on a story with less fact as a foundation. That sergeant had no imagination. He was as blind to his duty as a Christian as was the dying fusilier. Perhaps the sergeant was not a Christian, though. And that puts a different complexion on the matter. One wonders what kind of reading he has been doing during the War?

I am disappointed also at the editor of the newspaper—it was the *Sunday Chronicle*; the villain deserves the publicity—publishing such a communication. I must inform him that, judged by the ordinary standards of English newspapers, his conduct was un-English, unchristian, uneditor-like. Could he not have edited it on the lines suggested? What is to become of religion in this country if the newspapers do not play their part in keeping up those traditions about the Bible which Christians value so much? Have they not often been warned of the danger to religion of advertising, by notice, Freethought meetings, Freethought speakers, and Freethought works? And how much less real is the danger of advertising that our soldiers find comfort in a book which contains things like the following:—

"If you have to take away masses of men from all industrial employment, to feed them by the labor of others,—to provide them with destructive machines, varied daily in national rivalry of inventive cost; if you have to ravage the country which you attack,—to destroy for a score of future years its roads, its woods

its cities and its harbors; and if, finally, having brought masses of men, counted by hundreds of thousands, face to face, you tear these masses to pieces with jagged shot, and leave the living creatures, countless beyond all help of surgery, to starve and parch through days of torture, down into clots of clay—what book of accounts shall record the cost of your work;—what book of judgment sentence the guilt of it? That, I say, is modern war,—scientific war,—chemical and mechanic war,—how much worse than the savage's poisoned arrow! And yet you will tell me, perhaps, that any other war than this is impossible now. It may be so; the progress of science cannot, perhaps, be otherwise registered than by new facilities of destruction; and the brotherly love of our enlarging Christianity be only proved by multiplication of murder."

The whole matter is eminently unsatisfactory. It is an accepted maxim in English society that if you are not a Christian, if you do not believe in the Bible, the proper thing is to remain silent. English society is still largely modelled on the principle that you ought to be a Christian, or, at least, you ought to be religious, and that if you are not, the proper thing is to "respect the feelings" of Christians by saying nothing about it. Our political leaders appeal to this "Christian nation," and ignore the existence of large bodies of people who are not Christian. Ministers of religion assure us that the greatness of the nation rests on Christianity. Newspapers are run on the principle that only Christian opinion is worth bothering about. Why could not this soldier, and this sergeant, and this newspaper, have kept to the orthodox lines? It is useless pleading that as a matter of fact our soldiers care little about the Bible, and would sooner read an evening paper at any time. It is useless pointing out that the overwhelming majority of people do not, when dying, trouble their heads about the Bible, and not one in ten thousand call for it to be read to them on their death-bed. It is idle to point to the fact that people do not fly to the Bible for comfort in trouble, or for consolation in death. The fact remains that the religious tradition points otherwise. In thousands of tracts, and sermons, and evangelical reports, people die hugging the Bible, demanding that it shall be read, and depart this life with a beatific smile on their face. That is the way this Lancashire Fusilier ought to have died. That is the way he would have died had one of our professional evangelists been there. To die reading *The Crown of Wild Olive* is to fly directly in the face of all orthodox tradition.

I feel certain the story will not be very widely retailed.

C. COHEN.

Illusions.

SOME divines declare that the greatest and most precious truths in the world's possession were discovered by small nations. The reason assigned for this is that small nations which have survived must have passed through many a hard time. Such a nation occupied Palestine in olden times; and being small and weak it experienced numerous trials of the severest kind. Both Israel and Judah were perpetually in trouble, and each dark time made them think and wonder; compelled them, so to speak, to look life in the face and demand an explanation of their own existence. The Rev. John A. Hutton, of Glasgow, puts it thus: "In the depth of their historical agony, Judah and Israel—occupying territory about half the size of Scotland—came upon God. In the depth of its historical agony, Athens, with a free population only equal to that of Stirling—Athens came upon man." The contention is that "in the depth of their national disasters the children of Israel comforted themselves in God," while the Athenians, when similarly situated, found comfort in the contemplation of truth and beauty. It is quite true that the Greeks were ardent lovers of beauty, and that the products of their art have remained incomparable to this day; but it is not true that the

Israelites either "came upon God" or were loyal to him. Officially, Jehovah was their deity; it was he who was worshiped in synagogue and temple; it was he who was supposed to reward them with victories and punish them with defeats; but he was only one among many, and they often preferred some of the others. Throughout their history the chief complaint against them was that they were unfaithful to their God. Jeremiah, of course, was profoundly loyal to Jehovah; but this is how he represents Jehovah as speaking of the people generally:—

"Then shall the cities of Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem go and cry unto the gods unto whom they offer incense; but they shall not save them at all in the time of their trouble. For according to the number of thy cities are thy gods, O Judah; and according to the number of the streets of Jerusalem have ye set up altars to the shameful thing, even altars to burn incense unto Baal" (xi. 12, 13).

But Jehovah himself did not save even his loyal followers in the time of their trouble. When Job's lot was at its worst it was in vain that he sought help from the Lord, who deliberately hid his face from him and held him for his enemy. One of the Psalmists says, "Why standest thou afar off, O Lord; why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble?" Another complains thus: "Thou hidest thy face, they are troubled; thou takest away their breath, they die and return to their dust." Even the devout Isaiah wails almost out of despair, "Verily, thou art a god that hidest thyself, O God of Israel." Scores of similar quotations might be made, all showing that even they who trusted in Jehovah were frequently most disappointed in him, while to the generality of the people he was scarcely more than a name.

It is very true that in any time of national and international tragedy, like this present time, men and women who believe in God, however faintly, turn to him for succor. Multitudes go to church and chapel now who had not been inside a place of worship for years; but it should be borne in mind that their belief in God had never died. All the time it lay dormant within them, and the horrors of the War have but shocked it into newness of life for a brief season. The same thing happened at the time of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. For a while the churches of France and Germany were crowded with superstitious people momentarily frightened out of their religious indifference. As soon as the excitement caused by that sad struggle began to abate the newly awakened zeal for religion showed signs of growing drowsiness, with the result that after a few years the state of religion in those countries was much worse than it had been before that war. It will be the same now. Indeed, already places of worship are not so thronged as they were two months ago. As long as superstition is alive, however soundly it may sleep in quiet times, it naturally awakes when noisy and destructive storms begin to rage, but no sooner are the tempests lulled than it gradually falls asleep again. But they from whom superstition has been completely eradicated, they who do not know the way to any mercy seat above the clouds, being able to face the facts dispassionately and to think for themselves, are simply confirmed in their unbelief by the awful happenings of the hour. They are profoundly convinced that nothing can be more absurd, more utterly fruitless of good, or more emotionally injurious than the intercessory prayer-meetings now being held in all parts of the country. If people would but think, they would soon share that conviction and decline to have anything to do with such ludicrous performances.

Dr. Orchard admits that "God does not burn Europe to roast a pig"; but the fact remains that, according to the reverend Doctor's teaching, God *does* burn Europe for some higher purpose. On this point all the divines are agreed. As reported in the *Christian Commonwealth* for November 4, Dr. Orchard spoke thus:—

"God's judgments were not mere vengeance, they came to deliver us from something worse. Something

no less than this catastrophe was necessary to save us from the racial suicide that was threatening us, a racial suicide involved in the tendency of our civilisation to build upon the working of a competition almost as ruthless as war itself. An attitude of distrust towards each other, the quarrels between churches which created little sects in despair over the great whole of men, the irreconcilability of political parties, the militancies of our advanced reform movements, these were all signs that we had ceased to believe in the convertibility of each other, and had come to trust in some kind of thinly disguised force."

Now, if the present War is "God's operation," if it is proceeding in accordance with his omnipotent will, why not allow him to bring it to an end in his own way and time? Surely it is not possible to be guilty of more egregious disrespect towards him than by "praying with all our might for a speedy victory." The holding of intercessory services is an act of overt impiety. If Christians took Dr. Orchard's dictum to heart, that "God does not burn Europe to roast a pig," not another prayer-meeting would be held. Mr. Hutton clearly agrees with the new minister of the King's Weigh House Church, for he says that "one of the great discoveries which the good men in the Bible made is that a dark and heavy time, if we meet it properly, will soften and deepen and enlarge our soul." God has brought this War upon us for our good. And yet these very men of God lead their people in petitioning their Master that this bitter cup of European war may pass away from us before we have drunk it to the dregs. Here we have the quintessence of inconsistency.

We affirm that the God whom the Jews are erroneously said to have "come upon" is an illusion, a vision of the fancy that never objectively existed, which the divines have utilised in all sorts of ways to their own selfish advantage. For example, they assert that the tribulations of life, of whatever nature they may be, come from God as means of "deepening us." We are to endure them without a murmur of distrust, regarding them as blessings in disguise. Listen to Mr. Hutton:—

"It is one of the most common things in the Bible to hear someone saying that he is a much better man now that God has plunged him into deep waters than he used to be when he had no troubles. They even go the length of saying that God did well to let loose the dark waters upon them; that God knew them better than they knew themselves."

One of such men, we presume, was King David, whom Samuel characterised as "a man after God's own heart." This was said of him *before* he entered the throne, but *after* he had been a captain of freebooters levying blackmail on all who could pay and after he had cherished treasonable designs against Saul. It was as "a man according to God's own heart" that he committed adultery with Bathsheba, and afterwards had her husband murdered that he might possess her altogether. Principal George Adam Smith says that his "character was one of the most complex ever possessed by man," and that "his temper was not only ambitious and cruel," but also "disfigured by some of the most ferocious traits which are characteristic of his race." When he lay on his dying-bed the most horrible words ever heard fell from his lips, which are to be seen in 1 Kings ii. 2-10. Such was David, the God-trained and God-filled man. God's heart is a figment, like himself, and all talk about him and his heart is senseless jargon.

Mr. Hutton gives the case for God away when he states "that we find what we are looking for, what we in secret are confessing we need." Exactly so. It follows, then, that God is not looking for us, or he would find us, confessing that he needs us. He does not need us, nor do we need him. It is the most difficult thing in the world to convince little children that they need God; and once they have learned that lesson, they always keep forgetting it again. Even the saintliest people living acknowledge that their hold on God is in constant danger of giving way, and that one prayerless day obscures the vision of him. Let prayer be dropped altogether, and soon all thought of God vanishes from the mind. After

that has occurred we discover that war is not God's judgment, but an antiquated method of settling disputes which we ought to have outgrown long ago, and that tribulations are not things to be resigned under, but evils to be thrown off as soon as possible.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Fourpenny Wilderness.

The Holy Bible: Containing the Old and New Testaments, etc.; 1914.

THIS volume, bound in funereal black, is, without doubt, a very cheap publication. Indeed, the shiny cover bears an embossed inscription to the effect that the volume is sold "under cost," whatever that may mean precisely. There is plenty of reading matter for fourpence, and several hundred pages of small type, strongly bound, should satisfy even a Scotchman.

The contents are, however, distinctly puzzling. We have given ourselves a headache by examining this book, and, like the curate who had a doubtful egg given him, we admit that "parts of it are excellent." As for the remainder, we cannot discover any sequence in this volume of undigested tracts. The whole thing is merely a *pot-pourri*, a literary Irish stew. If the reader cares to imagine *Dod's Peerage*, *Mother Shipton's Prophecies*, *Mrs. Beeton's Cookery Book*, *Rochester's Poems*, *Tupper's Proverbial Philosophy*, *Baron Munchausen's Travels*, *The Book of Mormon*, *Every Man His Own Lawyer*, *Petronius*, and some auctioneers' catalogues, all bound in a single volume, he will get some faint idea of the incoherency and general confusion of this book. Its various divisions, too, like an awkward squad of Boy Scouts, are of all sizes, and equally open to criticism. From the first blunder in Genesis to the last absurdity in Revelation, we have discovered very little that merits praise. A few sentences in *Ecclesiastes*, *Proverbs*, and *Corinthians* make some pretence to sanity; but, like the plums in a workhouse pudding, there is a taxicab ride between each.

The author has, occasionally, a flow of language which is as painful as it is free, such as in "the Psalm of Curses," which is the strongest piece of invective we remember offhand, and might prove useful to landladies who have lodgers in arrears. The so-called "historical tracts" are utterly untrustworthy. They are anonymous, dateless, placeless, legendary Salmagundi, of no more value than the History of Cock Robin. Indeed, the search for the gems was as exasperating as the proverbial search for the needle in a bundle of hay. And, as a numerous father and respectable citizen, we must reluctantly admit that the author is very tropical and outspoken in his treatment of sex matters. He is very Oriental in his nastiness, and, as we all know, Eastern vice begins where Occidental vice leaves off. Parents keep some modern novels out of the reach of children; but this anonymous scribe writes powerfully enough to make a bronze statue blush. The dedication to King James is an anachronism; it should have been inscribed to Charles II., who would have appreciated this ordure, especially the Song of the Royal Solomon. The stories of lust, adultery, incest, and unnatural vice are sufficient to paralyse the green readers who admire the blue stories in the *Pink-un*. We do not believe in bowdlerising any volume, but, if ever there were any occasion for such drastic treatment, it certainly should be directed against such a book as this.

Unfortunately, if all the objectionable passages were deleted, the volume would be very much reduced in bulk. Further, if the vain repetitions, contradictory genealogies, and untruthful yarns were also removed, we fear the volume would be further contracted to the size of a penny novelette. So, acting on this suggestion, our fourpenny wilderness has nearly vanished. It is a thousand pities it has not really disappeared, for its circulation debases the moral

currency. The book should be published at ten guineas, and have a lock and key on it. Selling it at the price of a cigar is demoralising. Ordure is cheap when so much can be had for fourpence.

MIMNERMUS.

Invisible Helpers and Adversaries.—II.

(Continued from p. 710.)

It was long alleged that the method of purification adopted by the water authorities, which consists in the storage of water in huge reservoirs, which is afterwards filtered through sand, had little influence on the number of aquatic microbes resident in the liquid. An examination of the untreated water of the Thames, however, soon discloses the fact that whereas on an average as many as 20,000 micro-organisms may be detected in about twenty drops of water, this large number falls as low as 400 in the same quantity of water that has undergone the same purificatory processes which prepare it for human consumption. Sand filtration is consequently of considerable utility to the urban water-using population.

Extremely few micro-organisms are to be met with in deep well-water. In water raised from wells sunk into chalk an average of eighteen only has been discovered. This indicates a wide difference between artificially prepared water drawn from such rivers as the Thames and Lea and the clear liquid which has filtered naturally through immense layers of chalk. Indeed, Pasteur found some waters that arose from deep-seated wells and springs that were optically pure under the microscope; but such ideal conditions are not often encountered.

Contrary to expectation, observation has established the fact that river waters do not teem with bacteria during the summer months—the season of life and growth—to the extent anticipated. The truth is that several samples of water examined disclosed a larger microbial population during the winter months. Still, due weight must be accorded the contention that—

“in summer the rivers are principally fed by spring water, and receive comparatively little surface drainage, whilst in winter the rivers are generally more or less in flood, and are swollen by large volumes of surface water, which is naturally rich in micro-organisms.”

The powers of multiplication among microbes are strikingly illustrated by the following experiment. Water from a deep well was kept under observation at a temperature of 20° centigrade for three days. At the commencement of the investigation, seven microbes were found in twenty drops of water. At the end of the first day the number trebled, but when the water was three days old the number had increased to 495,000!

The micro-organism responsible for wool-sorter's disease in man and splenic fever in cattle—*Bacillus anthracis*—when introduced into ordinary water, soon perishes, but its hardier spores are in no way affected by immersion, and retain their virulence in the purest water for a practically indefinite period. But in contaminated water, especially sewage, the microbes themselves continue to flourish, and even multiply on a vast scale. Another malignant microbe, Koch's "comma bacillus," the generator of Asiatic cholera, soon adapts itself to a sewage environment, and has been detected in immense numbers after immersion in this fluid for eleven months. In "clear" drinking water, however, although these bacilli were discovered after nine days, they were very few in number. A far greater tendency to succumb is exhibited by the micrococcus of erysipelas, for, when placed in waters of different degrees of purity, it soon disappeared. Even in sewage its presence was not demonstrable after five days, while it perishes in clearer water in a few hours.

A study of the activities of the bacillus of tetanus or lockjaw has revealed some remarkable phenomena.

This pestilent micro-organism does not appear to part with its malign powers when placed in distilled water, but, when introduced into ordinary water in which other bacteria abound, its vitality is lessened; but it quickly recovers itself as soon as the activities of these antagonistic organisms are weakened. Sea-water depresses the tetanus microbe, but it rapidly reasserts itself when restored to more normal conditions.

Although there is evidence that there are fewer aquatic bacteria in salt than in fresh water, the organisms appear to be fairly evenly distributed at the various sea-depths studied. Observations in the Gulf of Naples showed that in the accumulated sea-mud there exists a dense mass of bacterial life, which is far more abundant than that of the overlying waters. It has also been determined that this large surplus is not the outcome of reinforcements from the neighboring land, but is to be ascribed to the genesis and development of the microbes within the mud itself. At a depth of about 400 feet the investigator demonstrated the presence of ten bacteria per cubic centimetre of water, while in the mud immediately below an army of 200,000 was met with in the same volume of sediment. The mud under the waters of Lake Geneva includes among its microbe residents various disease germs, and it is asserted that the bacillus of tetanus has been dredged from the sediment of the Dead Sea.

It is a relief to know that micro-organisms are not all maleficent, but that various beneficent bacteria exist. In nearly every region of the earth, both in ancient and modern times, man appears to have possessed the secret of converting sugar into alcohol. And there is no known race of men among whom fermented beverages are not appreciated, and, regrettably enough, abused. Still, comparatively little is known, even now, of the precise processes which transform sugar into alcohol. More than half a century since, Latour and Schwann discovered that yeast was a living substance. The celebrated studies which Pasteur subsequently pursued revealed the truth that the production of the best beverages is strictly dependent upon the use of yeast or "barm" from which alien micro-organisms have been excluded. Then Hansen's more recent researches proved that it was not only imperative to employ pure yeast, but that for every special brand of beer a particular variety of yeast is needed if the finest qualities are to be obtained. Yeasts are now specially cultivated for brewing purposes. These yeasts are elaborated under conditions of the most refined scientific skill, and several important laboratories have been erected on the Continent in connection with this industry. The yeasts thus evolved are arranged in two chief classes: the surface yeasts, which appear on the top of the liquid, and the bottom yeasts, which flourish on the floors of the vessels in which they are prepared. British and North German beers require the "top fermentation yeasts" in order to secure their prime production. The "bottom fermentation yeasts" are employed in the brewing of those Bavarian beverages, Lager and Pilsen, which are now held in high esteem throughout the world. Hansen has also devised some very ingenious tests to distinguish one form of yeast from another, as the microscope fails to reveal any material difference between them.

Although horses, dogs, cats, and monkeys will occasionally drink the cups that cheer as well as inebriate, the lower animals in general have little liking for fermented liquors. There is one organism, however, whose imbibing capacity much exceeds that of the most hardened human drunkard. This alcohol-loving organism is a tiny body which becomes conveniently visible when magnified by the microscope one thousand times. It was originally discovered and studied by Pasteur, and is commonly known as the vinegar organism. This microbe (*Mycoderma aceti*), when once established in alcohol of moderate strength, multiplies with amazing rapidity, assimilates the alcohol, and converts it at an extraordinary rate into vinegar. In a sense this organism

is a discriminating drinker, as it eschews all fermented liquors that contain more than 10 per cent. of alcohol. It is a deadly enemy to wine—at least from the vintner's point of view—as the choicest vintages, confined in carefully guarded cellars for human enjoyment, when thoroughly mature, are transformed by this mischievous microbe into the sourest vinegar in the course of a few hours.

The services supplied to the vegetable kingdom by bacteria are truly wonderful both in their nature and extent. Yet the story we are now to relate could not have been told until quite recently. It is an indisputable fact that one of the leading plant-foods resident in the soil is nitric acid. Scientific agriculturalists are agreed that in soils destitute of this chemical no root crops, corn, or grass will grow, even when the land is in all other respects of the richest quality, most favorably circumstanced as to sun and air, well tilled and adequately drained, and provided with all "the purely mineral ingredients of plant-food, such as *potash, lime, and phosphoric acid.*"

Yet despite the indispensable nature of this ingredient to floral growth, nitric acid is present in the most minute proportions only in all moderately fertile soils. This important truth was brought to light through the epoch-making experiments of Gilbert and Lawes at Rothamsted. It has since been ascertained that the minute quantities of nitric acid in average soils is to some degree due to this chemical being dissolved by the rain, and partly to the avidity with which plants absorb it for nourishment and growth.

Two enterprising chemists made the astonishing discovery that bacteria were the agents instrumental in the conversion of the nitrogen of the nitrogenous materials of the earth into nitric acid. Further facts emerged from the later labors of Warington and others, but the specific organism engaged in accomplishing this transformation continued to resist all efforts to isolate and identify it. It was only in 1890 that the bacterium was at last traced by Frankland, and only a month after this scientist had established its identity, Winogradsky, who was investigating the same problem independently, also isolated the same or a very similar nitrifying micro-organism. As this organism requires the absence of all living matter from its developing environment, it was found difficult, if not impossible, to grow it in any ordinary culture medium.

Winogradsky's researches appear to prove that nitrifying bacteria are capable of elaborating living protoplasm "in a solution from which organic matter has been rigorously excluded." This in itself constitutes an important contribution to knowledge, as it was previously thought that the power to evolve the living from the lifeless was the prerogative of green plants alone.

But at this stage of the inquiry the problem of nitrification was incompletely solved, for the bacteria discovered, although undoubtedly instrumental in changing ammonia into *nitrous acid*, were found to be incapable of evolving *nitric acid* itself. The nitrous acid, then, which exists in very small quantities in vegetable soils is therefore the product of micro-organisms. How, then, is the nitric acid prepared? Winogradsky and Warington supplied the answer by isolating another organism which "possesses the power of converting nitrous acid into nitric acid, but has no power of attacking ammonia." The nitrate which these two sets of bacteria evolve is invaluable to the soil, and the hundreds of thousands of tons of this manure exported from the nitrate fields of Chili and Peru have enormously increased the crops of Europe, while building up the fortunes of the Nitrate Kings.

The problem as to whether plants were capable of utilising the free nitrogen of the atmosphere was long debated until Lawes and Gilbert discovered that while the nitrogenous constituents of many crops unquestionably came from the chemical matters of manures and rain water, yet, in the case of several crops such as peas, beans, vetches, etc., there remains a surplus of nitrogen demonstrably

not derivable from these sources. It is now known that this excess of nitrogen in leguminous plants is obtained from the air, but that the power of these plants to assimilate free nitrogen is absolutely dependent upon the activities of bacterial organisms which attach themselves to the vegetable roots. To clench the matter, hundreds of experiments have made good the fact that in soil from which these beneficent bacteria are excluded, leguminous plants fail utterly to fix the atmospheric nitrogen. Again, the tuberosities on the roots of these and other plants are formed by microbes. These root-swelling are extremely rich in nitrogen, and simply teem with bacterial life.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

GOD IN PICCADILLY.

Poisonous paint on us, under the gas,
Smiling like spectres, we gather bereaven,
Leprosy's taint on us, ghost-like we pass,
Watched by the eyes of yon pitiless heaven!
Let the stars stare at us! God, too, may glare at us
Out of the void where He hideth so well.
Sisters of midnight, He damned us in making us,
Cast us like carrion to men, then forsaking us,
Smiles on His throne on these markets of hell!
Laugh! Those who turn from us, too, have their price.
There, for the proud, other harlots are dressing;
They too may learn from us man's old device—
Food for his lust, with some sham of a blessing!
Sons of old Adam there, buy the fine madam there,
Bid with a coronet—yea, or a crown!
Sisters, who'd envy the glory which graces them?
They, too, are sold to the lust which embraces them,
E'en in the church, with the Christ looking down.

—Robert Buchanan.

EXIT GOD AND COMPANY.

There are indications that the celestial interest in man begins to flag, that Jahweh himself is tempted to transfer his immortal energies to some other and more profitable corner of the universe. Certain misguided spirits even derive consolation from this fact. One hears an occasional impious tongue venture to affirm that, when the divine audience gets off the stage, and out of the theatre, the mortal company of players will provide a more refined entertainment. With people who permit themselves these appalling opinions we should have nothing to do. For since the high gods are weary of us, the time has surely come when we should cease to take the smallest delight or interest in ourselves. But who shall dare to say that heaven quite forgets us? Has not God's own daughter, Carnage, recently given us refreshing proof that the All Father is still remembering his children?—*Eden Phillpotts.*

THE CHURCH WHERE YOU MAY LAUGH.

A theatre to me is a place "where two or three are gathered together." The apostolic succession from Æschylus to myself is as serious and as continuously inspired as that younger institution, the apostolic succession of the Christian Church. Unfortunately, this Christian Church, founded gaily with a pun, has been so largely corrupted by rank Satanism that it has become the Church where you must not laugh, and so it is giving way to that older and greater Church to which I belong—the Church where the oftener you laugh the better, because by laughter only can you destroy evil without malice, and affirm good fellowship without mawkishness.—*Bernard Shaw.*

A CONVICT'S READING.

There is a good story in the October number of the *Sunday at Home*. A well-known Glasgow preacher was interviewed by an ex-convict, who desired help in a case of what he considered to be objectionable police surveillance. The interview was satisfactory, and in bidding the ex-convict good-bye the minister asked what had led him to consult one who was a stranger to him. "Well, you see, sir," said the visitor, "it was like this. When I was at Peterhead I read an address of yours in a weekly paper. You know what it is when ye're in prison—you'll read anything."

The Bishop was visibly moved, and many wounded soldiers sat and heard the BENEDICTINE as he poured out..... the most touching appeal I have ever heard.—*An "Evening News" misprint.*

Acid Drops

The Archbishops of Canterbury and York have decided to do something drastic to help the nation in its hour of trial. January 3, 1915, is to be observed as a "Day of Humble Prayer and Intercession." This is done with the consent of the King, who expresses his personal disinclination to the "use of any term which might plausibly be misinterpreted either at home or abroad." This looks as though King George had a little more sense in the matter than many of his advisers, but we suppose in these matters he must give way. Perhaps he thinks as Charles the Second did of the popularity of certain preachers in his time. Their nonsense suits the people's nonsense, he said, and we have no doubt that the nonsense of a Day of Intercession will suit the nonsense of many others. A number of Free Church leaders have expressed their approval of the suggestion, which is only to be expected. Anything that favors their trade will naturally meet with the support of parsons of all kinds.

Seriously, we wonder whether anyone—or how many—will believe that a general day of prayer would have any influence on the course of the War? If it will, why was prayer not resorted to three months ago? And why wait for another two months now? Will the German troops fight less effectively because people at home pray? We doubt it. Besides, we were under the impression that people had been praying—on both sides—all along. And now God Almighty is given two months' notice that unless the War is over by January 3, the whole of the nation—or that portion which calls itself Christian—will go down on its knees and howl to high heaven for "intercession." We really do not know whether this united prayer is intended as a bribe or as a threat. But whichever it is, it seems equally silly; and it is rather hard to realise the frame of mind that at this time of day thinks the course of a great war is to be influenced by adopting the intellectual attitude of a tribe of savages. Elaborate ritual and polished language may disguise that fact, but it remains.

The *Church Times* remarks on the proposed Day of Prayer that we must face the fact that "England is not a Christian country." It explains the selection of Sunday on the ground that the proclamation of a week-day to be set apart for prayer would only mean "a Bank-holiday orgy." Still, it thinks the first Sunday in January will supply a "public recognition of the Divine governance of the world," and "will give the most captious and critical occasion to think." Doubtless; but all the thinking will not be of the kind that the *Church Times* would like. The *Church Times* thinks "the curious and unbelieving may well be influenced by the spectacle of a nation on its knees." In what way? The "curious and unbelieving" are not unfamiliar with the sight of people on their knees. And it really makes no difference when a million adopt the same attitude. It is so like the religious mind to assume that an action that may be silly when performed by a few will become sensible when performed by many. It is what one may call—for want of a better term—sheep psychology; and that kind enters very largely into the religious make-up.

The late Bishop Wilkinson translated many English hymns into the Zulu tongue, but his task was not so bad as that of the missionary who had to render Sankey's pious verses into Cannibal dialects. Fancy some "Cannibal" Christians singing "There is a Fountain Filled with Blood."

The value of modern journalism, intellectually, is not great, but one of five daily papers, each claiming the largest circulation in the world, a few months ago stated that the Kaiser was "a very gallant gentleman, whose word is better than many another's bond." The paper sings a different tune to-day—for the same small bronze coin.

Thirsty ladies will not be served with intoxicants in the Metropolitan area before 11.30 in the morning. We hope prayerfully that this will not drive them to take early communion.

English sailors are cool enough when facing death. After the wreck of the cruiser *Hermes*, which was torpedoed in the Channel, a party of men went by on a raft, singing "Put Me Among the Girls." Unlike Turks, they did not mean the girls in the "next world."

Mr. G. K. Chesterton, whom the *Daily Mail* calls jocosely "a stout opponent of Germany," has been writing on "The

Barbarism of Berlin," and he states that the root-evil of the Germans is that they are "intellectual Anarchists." Including the 20,000,000 German Catholics, eh, Mr. Chesterton?

We hear a lot concerning the evil influence of German "culture," which, presumably, includes music. Many religious tunes are German, such as the Christmas favorite, "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing," whilst the Easter hymn, "Christ the Lord is Risen Again," was also made in Germany. So were the children's favorite, "O Happy Band of Pilgrims," and the harvest festival tune, "We Plough the Fields and Scatter." The oratorios, "The Messiah," "St. Paul," "Elijah," and the "Hymn of Praise," are all German. Yet the wise Mr. Hilaire Belloc and a number of clerical gentlemen are always assuring us that the Germans are Atheists, and their "culture" is responsible for the present calamitous War.

Some Free Church busybodies, whose ears are longer than their colleagues', have been discussing the question of banning German music in their tin-tabernacles and chapels. They are asking whether it is right to listen to Mendelssohn's "Wedding March" or Handel's Dead March in "Saul." Perhaps they will crucify the flesh by using ragtime music.

"The war has accomplished more for missionary efforts than a thousand missionary societies," says the Rev. A. J. Waldron, of Brixton. Maybe this is his humorous way of suggesting that it has sent more men to heaven than the missionary societies.

The Rev. W. B. Brash, writing in the *Methodist Recorder*, says that "As one wanders along the roads of modern literature, one sometimes hears the low, at other times the loud baying of the bloodhound." How sad! And it is sadder still to reflect that the Scriptures of Brother Brash's Church also teach the ethics of blood.

A new novel has been published with the quaint title, *The Man with a Double Heart*. In that better-known work of fiction, the Holy Bible, we have stranger stories of people who had two funerals.

Rev. W. Temple, who is editing a series of pamphlets—"Papers for War-Time"—says that it is easy to answer those who say that the War represents the bankruptcy of Christianity. He thinks it really represents a great advance of Christianity, because "It is only now that Europe has found out again that if nations were Christian there would be no war." Dr. Temple is simply threshing the air. Even as it stands, the case is bad enough; for if Christianity has not persuaded the European peoples to adopt it during all these centuries, and with unrivalled opportunities for asserting itself, it is hardly likely to succeed in the future, with every one of its claims contested by hosts of keen and cultured minds. But the real bankruptcy of Christianity is shown in its being deficient in that kind of social and intellectual teaching that would lead people to see the horror and ultimate futility of war. The cardinal and damning fact is that the peace of the world has been for generations threatened by Christians, and by Christians alone. Anything like common trust and honesty among Christians would have made such a War as the present one a sheer impossibility.

How far Christians are from the Freethought ideal of human brotherhood! One hears so many people killing the Austrians and Germans "with their mouths" nowadays. As Huxley wittily said, "Public opinion is often public-house opinion."

Captain Jackson, a Tooting veterau, who will be 107 shortly, was among the congregation at the recent Seafarers' Service at St. Paul's Cathedral. He was made much fuss of. What would that congregation have done had Captain Noah been present, bearing bravely the weight of eight centuries?

Ordinary soldiers are sometimes as laconic as Cæsar or Wellington. We remember an elderly warrior who used to beg, bearing a placard, "Actions seven, wounds nine, children eight." The pious public so soon forget "Mr. Atkins" when the band has stopped playing.

Mrs. Randall Davidson, the wife of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the wives of the Bishops of Rochester and Southwark, have issued an appeal "to the girls living in the neighborhood of the Crystal Palace to beware of 'the glad eye' of 'Mr. Thomas Atkins.'" What a commentary on

the assertion of the restraining influence of Christianity! And what an insult to "Mr. Atkins" and the girl he leaves behind him!

Frederick Birkett, a collier, who was sentenced at the Notts Assizes to twenty months' hard labor for house-breaking, his crimes totalling twenty-one burglaries, was a Sunday-school teacher. There is no moral; but had he been a Freethought lecturer there would have been a long one.

"May the guns ring in a new age of a wider charity, a bigger God, and a larger heaven!" says the Rev. A. J. Waldron. A bigger God. Indeed. Isn't Brother Waldron satisfied with one three times as large as that of any other religion?

Everybody is now familiar with the responsibility for the War being placed upon the shoulders of Nietzsche, Treitschke, and Bernhardi. The cultured pastor of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, Dr. Dixon, goes one better and lumps these three, Bernard Shaw, R. J. Campbell, and the late William James. We wonder why Mark Twain and Josh Billings were left out?

The New Zealand House of Representatives has rejected by 46 votes to 17, the proposal that the Bible in Schools Referendum Bill shall become law. It was hoped by the advocates of Bible teaching in State schools that by means of the Referendum the present position would be overthrown. As it is, Secular Education continues.

Mohammedan Turkey has at length joined in the march of Christian "civilisation," and will now devote herself to the study of murder as one of the fine arts.

The *Daily Telegraph*, that very Christian newspaper, has surpassed itself in its fulsome adulation of the Czar of all the Russias, whose kindness to the Jewish people will never be forgotten. Years ago the *Telegraph* gushed over the Czar's disarmament scheme, and called it the "coming millennium." As the music-hall song says, "It's a long, long way to Tipperary."

General Christian De Wet is "a dour man, convinced that God is on his side," says Mr. Robert Blatchford in the *Weekly Dispatch*. De Wet is the breeder of trouble in South Africa. Another man, who is also "God intoxicated," is the Kaiser, who is causing far more trouble in Europe. Is it not true that the negation of God is the beginning of wisdom?

The naval and military authorities agreed to a partial relaxation on November 5 of the rule prohibiting fireworks, in order that Protestants might celebrate "Guy Fawkes Day." It is a pity that this absurd celebration is not done away with, but any silly superstition is tolerated if it be even remotely associated with religion.

"The Christian faith is confidence in God in spite of anything, and no facts must be allowed to bully us out of that faith." So says Rev. John Hutton; and we agree that the faith which declines to be influenced by facts is the proper kind of faith. If facts contradict the faith, so much the worse for the facts. Only it strikes us that it is just this kind of faith that is bringing Germany to ruin. German leaders appear to have a most pronounced faith in the argument of brute force and sheer terrorism. They do not allow any fact to shake that faith. They will not realise that you cannot bully a people into taking even what is good for them, still less what is harmful. But they go their way, and, in Mr. Hutton's words, allow no facts to bully them out of that faith. We trust that Mr. Hutton renders to the German leaders the appreciation that is due to them.

The *British Weekly* announces that a representative gathering of Free Churchmen will be held at the Memorial Hall to deal with various aspects of the war. It adds that in the afternoon there will be a discussion on "The Camps—How the Free Churches can Help the Soldiers." This, we are told, "will relate to their temptations." Lord Kitchener should attend to this. There seems enough temptations about the camps already without Free Churchmen helping them to some more.

One of the wounded British soldiers at the Naval Hospital, Southend-on-Sea, has to be fed on buttermilk. That is the diet the Press Censor considers suitable for newspaper readers.

At a Bible Society meeting at Southend-on-Sea the Rev. J. H. Ritson described the operations of the Society's work among all the nations involved in the War, and also referred to a visit to South Africa. Evidently the Holy Book does not prevent the Christians following the pleasant pastime of cutting each others' throats.

"General" Booth may be full of the milk of human kindness, but the milk sold by the Salvation Army Colony at Hadleigh might be improved. At Southend recently the "General" was fined £5 and costs for selling milk from the Colony below the required standard. A witness said cows were affected by music. We wonder if he was thinking of the Salvation Army band.

The clergy of all denominations are shrewd in looking after their own interests. One result of the European War probably will be armored cathedrals and churches.

A pious writer in *T. P.'s Weekly* says that "German industrialism is materialistic to the core." So is all other. Soap, cotton, jam, clothing, and other articles are not made for any other purpose than the provision of the material basis of life. Even the bronze "gods" made at Birmingham and elsewhere are "materialistic."

A condemned man who was not sure he was going to be "jerked to Jesus" has been hanged. He deserved to have had a new trial, for the probability is that he was innocent. People who actually commit murder never seem to have any doubts about their salvation.

"It is because we are Christians that we have gone to war," says Sir Robertson Nicoll. This is not the whole truth, but there is a good deal of truth in the statement. It is partly because the world is Christian, and has been governed by Christianity for so long that such a war as the present one obtains. Can one imagine that a world in which the majority of people had been for centuries dominated by anything else but religion would be placed as Europe now is? We do not believe that any form of philosophy would have failed as completely as religion—and particularly Christianity—has done. It has failed to unite in bonds of enduring friendship two nations in any part of the world. Its failure is colossal—only equalled by its impudence in claiming that the world now needs more of it.

If all the Christian sects would support the Catholic Church in an Anti-War policy, says the *Catholic Times*, we should have a guarantee of peace upon which men might rely. Really! We should be interested to know when the Roman Catholic Church has preached an Anti-War policy, and when its whole influence has been directed to that end. We have no doubt that the Catholic Church would like all the other sects to look to it for leadership. Some weeks ago the *Catholic Times* was silly enough to hope that this might be one of the results of the War.

By the way, the *Catholic Times* does not view with any pleasure the probability of Russia occupying Constantinople. It is afraid it would mean a too great aggrandisement of Russia, and the progress of Russia means the progress of the Russian Church, which is not favorable to the Roman Church. That much is certain—until the advance of thought weakens the Russian Church, as it weakens churches elsewhere. The Russian Government looks to the Church as one of its most potent helpers, and those who know the history of Russia know the part played by the Church in dragooning the Russian people. Readers of M. Pobyedonostseff's *Reflections* will remember the emphasis he placed upon religion as an agent in keeping the people in subjection. As Procurator of the Holy Synod of Russia he was able to speak with authority, and he was, moreover, a singularly intelligent man. He saw that the first consideration for an autocracy was not the enslavement of bodies, but of minds. The other followed as a matter of course.

It was reported that information reached the authorities of Harvard University that a very large bequest would be lost unless it discharged Professor Munsterberg, the eminent psychologist. The Professor tendered his resignation rather than injure the University. The University declined to accept it, and the Professor remains at his post. The authorities of the University deserve congratulating on their decision. It is as well to teach even millionaires there are some things that are not in the market, and upon which no cash value can be placed.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1914—Previously acknowledged, £228 13s. 6d. Received since:—Pontypridd, 15s.; F. H. (Blackburn), £1 1s. Per Miss Vance: J. L. Vickery (Peckham), £1 1s.

ANDREW MILLAR.—You will see why we did not meet your young friend at Leicester. We should have been glad to shake hands, and something more.

PONTYPRIDD.—We like to acknowledge every subscription somehow. This will not disclose your identity.

ABBACADABRA.—Our readers will be glad to see your contributions resumed. There is much truth and sense in what you say with regard to the War.

T. C. (Portsmouth).—We note your opinion that the *Freethinker* articles on the War are in your opinion "almost the only ones containing reason and truthfulness." Perhaps this is due to the fact that *Freethinker* writers have no political or party axe to grind. Their object is to bring reason and good feeling to bear on *all* problems, and if the truth cannot be reached in this way, then the outlook is indeed hopeless.

E. A. PHIPSON.—You are quite mistaken as to the class of people among whom the *Freethinker* circulates. On that point, at least, we are likely to be better informed than any other individual. Nor do we think that our work would be more rapidly done by concentrating attention on what you call "modern occult and psychical theories." Reason is the great solvent of *all* superstitions, and a very large number of those who are attracted to modern occultism have never had their minds really liberated from the "old Adam" of theology. We venture to say that the attractiveness of "occultism" proves how little good is done by destroying a particular religious belief without at the same time giving the mind a—so to speak, good general cleansing.

H. W. MANN.—We do not know anything of Mr. Weatherhead, and cannot say anything concerning the nature of the letters written many years ago "against the Bible and religion in general," and which he now expresses regret for having written. If we saw the letters it is possible that we might add our regrets to those of Mr. Weatherhead.

E. B.—Much obliged for cuttings.

W. P. BALL.—Your cuttings are very welcome.

BRADFORDIAN.—We are sending specimen copies of *Freethinkers* to the address given.

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.

Personal.

I WAS very much disappointed by not being able to go to Leicester on Sunday. Neither my voice nor my breathing apparatus generally was affected. I was primarily suffering from an internal disarrangement brought on by lack of lavatory accommodation in a railway train, which set up acute diarrhoea and consequent heart disturbance, with sharp pain every now and then that nearly doubled me up. My doctor took me in hand, and soon worked an improvement. The pain is all gone, other symptoms are subsiding, and I expect to be quite well again in a few days. Anything expected from my pen this week will have to be postponed till next week's *Freethinker*. Mr. Cohen is kindly filling the editorial chair for the present issue of the paper. All's well that ends well, but I missed meeting many old friends at Leicester, and I am sorry for it.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Sydney A. Gimson, President of the Leicester Secular Society, writing on Monday morning, says: "A large crowd gathered to hear you last night. Not only from Leicester but from towns and villages round about. They were much disappointed not to hear you, and recognised that you were as disappointed not to come. Many left when they heard you were not coming, but a good audience remained and we gave them a good concert."

The *Ardrossan Herald* recently contained the following leaderette:—

"THE MOCKERY OF RIVAL PRAYERS.

"We pray to God to bless our arms. Germany is doing the same. France is doing the same, and so is Austria. What a ghastly spectacle it is! The evangelical churches of Germany issue a manifesto. The evangelical churches of England reply to it. In the manifesto of both the name of God and his Crucified Son appear, and we poor creatures must read them both—must read the comments passed upon both; and what can we do but hang our heads in shame that ever such a thing should have happened? I wish for those days, said Mr. Ramsey Macdonald, M.P., at Manchester, on Sunday, when we had no universal God at all. Then we could pray to our national God. I wish we were back in the old pagan days when every land had its own idol to which it could pray. Then we should be consistent; then we should be content and happy. But the hollow mockery of it!—that men using the same Name and worshipping the same God should, from rival battlefields and pulpits, put up rival prayers asking for rival blessings. What a curse must have come upon Europe before that sort of thing could be possible. Cannot we say this evil must pass away from us? We must go back to our Christian faith and our Christian hopes and, leaving all our fine-spun philosophies and all our political apologies upon one side, look each other in the eyes, shake hands with each other, and start Europe anew upon a basis of reason, of experience, and of Christian fellowship."

This is not a bad article for a Scotch paper on such a subject, but it contains a blunder which may as well be corrected. France is *not* praying to God for victory. The President refused to let the State be used for national prayers. He left all that to the Churches, as pertaining to their special province.

We might observe that Christian fellowship has always been a very poor basis for international peace. Christ said he came not to send peace but a sword, and he kept his word. His followers have shed more blood than the followers of all the other Prophets on earth. Why introduce "Christian" before "fellowship"? Isn't the latter good enough by itself?

Many of our readers will be glad to read the following passage in a letter from a Blackburn correspondent:—

"I gratefully acknowledge the debt I owe you—a debt so great that I can never hope to discharge in any material way. During these years of physical blindness you have been, and are still, an unfailing source of inspiration. You have enriched my life. Allow me to express also my warm appreciation of the common sense you are publishing regarding the War."

Such letters are medicinal to one who has had many troubles and as many reckless enemies as man ever had. But the friends always outnumber the enemies, and such letters as this assure us that we have not lived and toiled in vain.

It is probable that some of our readers may be acquainted with Belgian refugees in need of a home. A *Freethinker* is ready to place a small furnished cottage in the country, with food, at the disposal of, preferably, a widow with two to four children, or, failing that, an elderly couple. No questions will be raised as to religion—although preference would be given to *Freethinkers*; the only question is that they shall be necessitous. Applications for particulars must be made to Miss Vance, at this office.

We feel there would be little need for the above paragraph, but, as usual, religion is making what is at best a mournful business still more distressing. The Belgian Hospitality Committee, in making arrangements, raises so many questions of religion that *Freethinkers* have little opportunities of extending their hospitality. In addition, we are afraid that those refugees who are *Freethinkers* (and there must be many such) will be more or less victimised on account of their opinions—unless they are driven to concealment on account of their needs.

There is hope for Catholics now. The Pope has advised them that they should all keep a copy of the Bible in the house and read some of it every day. If they take his advice, as we earnestly hope they will, many of them will soon be on the high road to *Freethought*.

Undelivered.—Killed in Action.

THERE had been a dispute at the works. Foolish things had been said by both parties; and when he spoke the matter over at home his father agreed with the manager, even going further, and saying he should get the sack for impertinence and insubordination. That led to complications. His spirit, naturally a rebellious one, seethed with revolt. He felt at war with the world. So he listed.

Six crowded months passed quickly. His seditious nature was tamed into sharp recognition of obedience. He trained hard, and in the training his overpowering personality was subdued. He helped to bury an unforgiving father. A premature engagement was broken off. There was a declaration of war; a hurried farewell visit to his mother; and a hasty departure for France.

Mother suffered, as many women do, in silence and solitude; but her quiet anguish came more from her thoughts than from her heart. She often questioned the sense of bringing children into the world. And always, when she turned the pages of the book of her own life, her ideas circled this; and always they were personal. Often she wondered if it were not possible to conquer sex love to the extent of dominating the physical by the mental. Happiness she had enjoyed up to the time when she knew she was a mother; but from then the happiness gradually waned. With her baby there came something of the nature of misery, a cloud that hung heavily upon her heart, and never lifted. Her boy was the flame of a physical passion that appealed to her as a sudden weakness, and the smoke of it thickened with the years. Even now, twenty-seven years later, her cheeks would flush at the thought, and she could not be sure it was not shame.

Mental pain intensified with the gathering of thoughts and memories. As her brain found more and more avenues of ideas that led away from her conviction she felt herself drawing nearer to an imagined sore part of the heart of womankind; for she dreamed there must be many women with natures like her own, women who wished the tree of love to bear no fruit. And the sadness never left her; for her son was headstrong as a child, stubborn as a boy, and grimly determinate as a youth. Circumstance aided her attitude to strength.

Conflict between him and his father was continuous. Even in their times of apparent peace moved an animosity that kept the atmosphere charged with the elements of strife. There were periods when the tension became nearly unbearable. Only the idea of the inevitability of it all seemed to keep her mind from being destroyed. She summoned to her assistance the oriental complacency in the face of fate. Behind her son's moods, his character, his strong enmity to control, his passionate hate and disgust at everything from which his mind recoiled, and his inability to conceal his emotions, she saw the reaction of her own sex distaste. The implications of her sense of shame, of weakness, she felt convinced, had been transmitted; he had inherited them; they were working out their fated destiny in his life.

Delight came to her from one source. When the clouds lay black and heavy over the household, and her mind was being tossed upon the sea of confusions, she would turn there for such delight as it afforded. Silent, moody, and self-sufficient as her son was, his outside life practically a closed book to his parents, only an occasional trivial episode leaking out, the mother felt with a steadfast faith that her boy was straight. Nothing ever came to dim her pride. She knew his mind and body were clean, cleaner than her own, she thought. And fain would she have confided in him, seeking to ascertain his ideas; for often she wondered if he felt as she did towards the things that mattered most in her life. But his egoism forbade friendship, and her loneliness of mind acted as a barrier to the expression of her longings.

When her husband died it seemed as if the gates

were opening. She would come closer to her son. They would get to know each other. The stain of the last grievous quarrel would be wiped away by purifying chumship. And her heart rejoiced at the idea of her son's chumship. At last, it seemed, she could renounce her loneliness. She would enjoy his companionship. And her heart leaped at the prospect. But suddenly the winds of war swept across the land of her dreams. The gates were crashed together; and her son was gone.

Lines crept into her face, and grey hairs whitened into snow. Loneliness deepened under the sombre skies of her thoughts. It was too late. The few letters that came were the silver edges of her life; and when these ceased night fell.

The postoffice sorter turned the letter over and swore audibly at the officialism of which he was a part; and all day he cursed bitterly the callous, inconsiderate thing. The postman, handling the letter, wished to God someone else had been on his road that delivery.

"Any letters for me this morning, postman?"

"Yes, mother; and I wish I hadn't!"

She took the letter, looked at her own name and address as she had written it on the back, then she turned it round to read the endorsement on the face: "Undelivered—killed in action."

ROBERT MORELAND.

"The Weaker Vessel."

IN his article on "The Radical Woman," published in this periodical recently, Mr. Mangasarian gives as known truisms a number of statements in regard to female subordination which are not in accord either with my own reading or observation. He speaks of primitive times and the primitive husband, and lays down that in primitive times a mentally virile woman would have scant chance for survival. That the primitive husband wanted a dependent woman because it gave him an opportunity to play the rôle of protector. But what is "primitive"? When were "primitive" times? As far as history goes, men in all stages of development existed concurrently. The world at this instant contains races in every degree of uncivilisation. It is those which are most degraded that can be demonstrated not to be "primitive," but degenerate posterity of formerly civilised peoples. To avoid a side issue, we will take the word "primitive" in its everyday and conventional meaning in regard to the races of men, only to find that there is no fixed law in nature controlling the status of woman. It was precisely in primitive society that the "virile" woman—both or either—mentally and physically had scope. Among the earliest Hebrews, the first virile mind to conspire to emancipate the tribes was that of the woman—Deborah—and she was their recognised chief. Captain Cook found at least one of the South Sea Islands ruled by a woman. Speke and Grant found a powerful female chief in Africa. I find in Irving's *Life of Columbus* the statement that upon one occasion a canoe containing a number of men and two women came unawares upon one of their boats. While attempting to seize the savages, they resisted, and "The women fought as fiercely as the men, and one of them sent an arrow with such force that it passed through and through a buckler.....One of the women, from the obedience and deference paid to her, appeared to be their queen." The aboriginal inhabitants of the New World not only have "virile" women but women who are sacerdotal; for in Mr. Mangasarian's own city of Chicago there is, in the Field Museum, the figure of a native minister of primitive religion, in a temple of the primitive culture, and that minister is a woman.

In paragraph 318 of Herbert Spencer's *Sociology*, is the statement "that definite coherent marital relations," such as described by Mr. Mangasarian as

"primitive," wherein the man's vanity made him "play the rôle of protector," were preceded by indefinite incoherent ones, and, in many places, instead of a lordly-protector-husband admiring the quality of weakness in his wife, her dependence upon, and subordination to, him, there is the diametrical opposite—a woman with a plurality of husbands. This polyandry is found among the most primitive peoples, such as the Fuegians, the Aleutians, the Todus, the Esquimaux, and among the warlike and domineering Caribs, who, nevertheless, have among them the opposite institution of polygamy. In truth, the subordination of woman and her fixture in society as "The Weaker Vessel" is the outcome of religion, and is not a tradition surviving out of primitive times. Gods are primitive ideals and become obsolete. The Greeks were the most civilised and cultured people that has yet been evolved. They had a vital religion that was a reality and part of their national existence, yet they kept their women in harems, subordinate and uneducated, impressing beautiful female children to be reared intellectually, but to form a distinct and prostitute sex. I have not read of any Greek woman out of that caste who was otherwise than domestic, subordinate, and dependent; nevertheless, among the gods Wisdom was an old maid who was born dressed in the complete uniform of a soldier! Thelma was not merely "a mentally virile woman," but a physical warrior. The gods of the Arts and of the Chase were twins, but it was the woman who was the hunter and the man a musician. In simple truth, the subordination of women, like the class inferiority of productive toilers, is a survival of slavery and direct outcome of the military organisation of society—which is always religious. The priest and the king are always more or less synonymous. As the royal power assumes the priestly, so the status of woman lowers. In England, when it was broken up into earldoms, abbesses had great power. Hild Abbess, of Whitby, created a university, trained clergy, and nominated bishops.

At that time the patient Grissel was unheard of; but when Cardinal Beaufort usurped the protectorship of the kingdom, he degraded the intellectual wife of the Protector as a witch, burnt the woman-soldier Joan of Arc alive, and the poem of Griselda was taught to the women of the kingdom as the true description of the perfect wife. I can remember no instance of a warrior-husband killing his wife because she was not delicate, dependent, fragile, timid, leaning upon his strong arm for protection—quite contrary. Alexander married the Queen of the Amazons. Moses married Zipporah, who decidedly had a will of her own. David took the strong-willed Abigail for a supplementary wife. The wife of Brutus stuck a dagger into herself, to demonstrate her firmness. Mark Anthony married Cleopatra. In fact, such unions of kindred temperaments with warriors are the rule. I cannot go through early French and German history, but here in England every warrior-king selected a virile woman as his "better half." Henry II. married Eleanor, who poisoned his mistress, "Fair Rosamond"; Richard the First's wife went with him to the wars; Edward III. had for his queen Philippa, who, in his absence defended the country against the King of Scotland, and made him prisoner; Edward IV. married the extremely capable widow, Elizabeth Woodville; and so throughout history. Theodora, Alice Ferrars, Catherine I., Montesperan, Maintenon, Mrs. Clark, were all voluntarily taken by soldiers for their companions, and were more or less ruled by them. But, on the other hand, while soldiers, instead of killing the most individualistic woman they could find, have married them or made them their mistresses. The most notably intellectual women have been murdered by priests. The famous Phryne narrowly escaped execution as an Atheist. Hypatia was cut to pieces by monks at the instigation of Cyril, the Archbishop of Alexandria. They were so vigilant that I do not remember another intellectual woman appearing until Anne Askew, who was burnt alive by

the bishops for denying the Real Presence. While the Atheists Bentham, the Mills, Grote, Spencer, Huxley, Tyndall, Darwin, Swinburne, were extremely popular and flourished, their woman friend, the astute "George Eliot," started by writing orthodox *Scenes of Clerical Life*, and followed it by a novel, the heroine of which was a female street preacher, and she did not avow her Atheism until she resolved to write no more.

Neither the "primitive" nor the "barbarian" suppresses woman. What use is Mr. Manganarian's savage's wife, who let her husband "think for her, choose for her, and decide for her," to a man who is from home the greater part of the time. Scott knew primitive man better; and he gave his savage revert, half ourang-outang, cattle stealer, Helen Macgregor for his wife. The savage has no rule in marriage. Some consort with women of the same name wherever he finds her, as by right—others may not marry such a one. As I have shown, he sometimes has female priests, female warriors, and female chiefs. The Queen of Ethheopia came to Solomon to learn wisdom; but Queen Athaliah was murdered by the high priest. Mark Anthony made his wife a general; Olympias, wife of Philip of Macedon, and mother of Alexander, upon her husband's death, headed an army of her own. Semiramis did the same thing. Herod the Great selected his daughter Alexandra to succeed him. Henry I. gave England to his daughter Matilda. Isabella I. was co-king with her husband, and a warrior. There are four suits of her armor in the Escorial. But it is in Italy that woman is intellectually abject. It is in Rome and Poland, in France since the rule of the Cardinals of the renaissance, in Russia under a Christian quasi-god autocrat, that the effacement of woman exists. Everywhere the priest rules the active and beautiful woman is mesmerised into a convent; the land drops down to moor, debased by insane, stealthy, and deadly cotters—we get Poland, Calabria, the Campagna, Connaught—and the Highlands of the early years of the last century. Where the soldier rules, we have the female liberty of the German housewife. The educational advantages granted to females in Russia, and the very advanced rights enjoyed by women in Turkey, as described by Lady Wortley Montague, in the eighteenth century. No woman except Pope Joan, who was disguised as a man, ever seized a priestly government but the late Empress of China, a former Empress. No; two Catherine of Russia, Maria Theresa, Catherine Medici, Queen Elizabeth, and many others, have seized and ruled military empires, and been enthusiastically worshipped by soldiers; but no woman except Lucrecia Borgia and, I repeat, Pope Joan, ever exercised the office of the Pontifex Maximus of Rome.

GEORGE TREBELLS (Newfoundland).

The Design Argument.—III.

IN THE LIGHT OF ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY.

(Continued from p. 717.)

WHATEVER the designers may say about it, I can't for a moment make myself believe that God or any other being has supplied more or less ligaments, and these also of more or less strength, to the joints, according to the importance of the joints. I don't think there is a joint of greater importance in the whole body than that of the atlas and axis, the first and the second bones of the vertebral column. The dislocation of the atlas produces pressure on the spinal cord and causes instantaneous death. No dislocation of a joint or joints of the body causes so serious, so disastrous a result; and yet only six ligaments are supplied to it. These are two anterior atlo-axoid, one posterior atlo-axoid, one transverse, and two capsular. And again, of these six ligaments, properly speaking, only one ligament—the transverse—serves to retain the odontoid (of the shape of a tooth) process of the axis in connection with the

anterior arch of the atlas, and join these two bones—the atlas and the axis—that is, the first and the second bones, together.

There are several cases on record where the odontoid process has been dislocated with the result of instant death. A man went to swim, and straining himself in the act, the joint was dislocated, and instant death was the result. A lunatic in an asylum was being fed, and in his efforts to avoid the food, he jerked his head backwards, by which the joint between the atlas and the axis was dislodged, and the poor madman died instantaneously. Several such cases will be found cited in works on medical jurisprudence. If we take into consideration the fact that not even twenty per cent. of such cases come to the knowledge of the medical profession, and not even one-fourth of these are recorded, we can clearly see how disastrous results follow from the failure of the so-called God's special providence to supply the joint with ligaments strong enough and of sufficient quantity and good quality.

In children the danger of dislocation of this joint is very great, owing to the ligaments being more relaxed, and dislocation actually often takes place, causing instantaneous death. Hence, let me remark right here, that apart from God's special providence or no providence, it is essentially and absolutely necessary for us to take great care, in the handling of children, to support the head. So also in debilitated sick persons, the ligaments become relaxed and weak and we have to be very careful in supporting the head.

When we see how the most important joint of the atlas and axis is neglected, the trying to prove the special providence of God from the supply of ligaments to the joints of the human frame becomes glib talk and nothing more.

Sixth. It is urged that God not only has made joints and supplied them with ligaments, but that in order that they may work well, he has even oiled them, as we do the wheel and axle of a carriage. I admit that we do find something like that in joints. There is really a bag-shaped skin called synovial membrane around the joints. These membranes secrete a liquid substance which prevents the opposite membranes from rubbing against each other and permits gliding movements in joints. This is all true, no doubt. But to say that this is done by special providence of some kind and merciful Father in heaven is only to ignore the pathological phenomena which the human economy is subject to. If God, out of his infinite mercy, goodness, and wisdom supplies the oil in joints to make them work smoothly, and thus to enable his dear child, man, to walk and work and serve him, then why does he, every now and then, and in numberless cases, inflame the membranes and produce the disease called synovitis, by reason of which the limb cannot be moved an inch without the most excruciating pain? People prefer death rather than life, suffering this cruel pain. In cases of inflammation, God, out of his merciful profusion, produces a secretion of much more oil than is necessary and causes the same most unbearable pain just mentioned; or, on the other hand, he takes the opposite extreme—as he is often wont to do—and out of his frugal economy produces so little of the oil—why, often, in fact, he does not produce any oil at all!—that the membranes cannot glide against each other, and, of course, the joints cannot move, thus frustrating the special, kind design of the all-powerful Providence. The pain produced by this want of oil is simply unimaginable.

Now, one might say that these are pathological phenomena. They are not natural. God had made certain laws according to which the human system, as all other systems, is going on. If you break the laws you must suffer. That is the natural consequence. Who else is to blame for that? Well, so far, so good. But what's the good of God's making laws and keeping the people ignorant of them? Suppose the Parliament makes good and wise laws for the nation, but does not make them known to the people. Would it be wise on the part of the members

of the Parliament to punish the people for not keeping them? You would surely call the Parliament insane, or, at any rate, unreasonable beings. It is the same case here with regard to the so-called God's providence. For instance, how are people to know what they should do to avoid synovitis, as well as a number of other diseases? It is simply orthodoxy, fanaticism, and want of regard to truth, to attribute all the good things to God's special providence for the good of man, and acquit him of the evils produced in the world and in the complex human system (said to have been made by the loving Father himself)—a system of the correct rules for the guidance of which so much remain to be known in spite of the hundreds and thousands of noble souls that have worked since time immemorial (and many are still working for the good of man) to understand correctly the laws that govern the system; not to speak of a number of external influences over which man has no control whatever, such as excessive heat, excessive cold, snow, fog, etc., besides a number of epidemic diseases, which oftentimes, in the twinkling of an eye, upset the human system and produce diseases, the names and nature of which have filled volume after volume of thousands of pages.

Now, as regards the seventh point, the so-called most ingenious contrivance in the throat, I have simply to ask you to recall to your mind how often you have seen this contrivance of God prove futile in others, and even in your own selves, while taking food or drink. How often is suffocation produced by the lodging of food and drink in a wrong passage, the windpipe, instead of the œsophagus, the gullet? How is it, I ask, that the food goes in a wrong way if God has already designed a valve or a door to guard against the accident? It defeats God's purpose, speaks volumes of evil against him, and clearly proves the opposite of his all-powerfulness and wisdom. Perhaps, some one will say, although the food sometimes escapes to the wrong passage, the wind from the lungs drives it away. Well, my inquiry is, why should it pass into the wrong passage at all? Does it not defeat the contrivance of God, if it is a contrivance in any sense? Of course, it does defeat it. There are cases on record of death caused by suffocation induced by the passing of food and other substances into the air-passages from which they could not be dislodged by the air of the lungs. Sometimes, too, the epiglottis is paralysed, when there is a great chance of such accidents taking place. Sometimes such diseases as glottitis are produced, or tumors are formed in the breathing apparatus; in such cases, there is great danger of suffocation being produced.

The eighth point I have now to consider is about the eye. The eye is, indeed, the most important organ of the senses of our body. They say God has provided the eye with seven muscles to enable us to move it in every direction. Well, if God has kindly managed it in that way, how is it that these muscles are often paralysed and God's good intentions foiled? If the elevator muscle of the upper eyelid is paralysed, dropping of the lid is produced, when one cannot see unless the lid is lifted artificially. So also paralysis of any of the four muscles—superior, inferior, exterior, and internal—determines a permanent deviation of the pupil in the opposite direction to the muscle paralysed, whilst its shortening draws the pupil to its own side. In these cases, the subject is said to suffer from squint. This effect can be cured only by the hand of the surgeon—mind, by the hand of the surgeon and not by that of God!—by the total or partial division of the muscle which draws the pupil to its own side. Lastly, the remaining muscles are the two "oblique muscles," and are called the great and the small, or the superior and inferior. They preside over the movements of the rotation of the eye on its anteroposterior axis and tend to draw the globe forward, whilst the recti-muscles act in an opposite direction. These two opposed forces neutralise each other and tend to keep the globe of the eye in equilibrium. But paralysis of any of these muscles produces deplopia, which means

double vision, making a mess of the whole thing. Such is the special providence of God for the good of man—his favorite creature, and the noblest work of his hand!

The theologians, in praise of the Creator, say how astonishingly wonderful it is that although we have two eyes, we see only one substance when there is one substance only; but from what we have just described, in deplopia, we see two objects, though there is only one object, whether we see with two eyes or with one eye only. Here is a greater miracle still than seeing only one object with two eyes!

They say the eyes are placed in the front of the head where they are most useful. God has given us two eyes instead of one. This arrangement enables us to see better, and again, should we happen to lose one by an accident or disease, we still have the other.

In answer, I ask, should we lose the other also, why not a third and a fourth eye? Why only two eyes in the front, and not two more eyes behind, and one eye on each side? We could have seen better in that case. We could have seen vehicles and animals and everything coming behind us, and thus be saved from accidents. We could the better have detected wicked persons like assassins and pick-pockets. But no! God has given man only two eyes, and not even half-a-dozen; while such a trivial and loathsome creature as the cockchafer has 8,820 eyes, and the butterfly has 34,650 eyes!

Again, when we take into consideration the distance we can reach with our naked eye, we cannot but admit that we are very weak, neglected, and pitiable creatures.

On the point that "the eye is carefully guarded by the bones which jut out all around it," I have to say that it is not so guarded on the outer side, where it projects beyond the base of the orbit, and so exposes the eye to injury on this side very easily.

Again, they say the eye is protected by two shutters—the eyelids—to keep out the powerful light of the sun. So, also, the eyelids are supplied with lashes to keep off small bodies like dust and flies. How far the object of God to keep off small insects and particles of dust from going into the eyes is accomplished, is universally known. There cannot be found a single man on the face of the earth who is not now and then troubled with these small bodies in the eye, especially when he goes out for a walk in the open air on a windy day. So, also, the eyelid is sometimes inverted, *i. e.*, turned inwards, when the hair growing on the margin of the eyelids, which we call eyelashes, are turned inside the eye, and so the eyeball is continuously pricked, is continuously tortured, as it were, by the hair. Sometimes, although the eyelid is not inverted, the eyelashes, that ought to grow only on the anterior or cutaneous, *i. e.*, the outer, lip of the free border of the eyelid, grow on the posterior or conjunctival, *i. e.*, inner border of the lip of the eyelid and prick into the eyeball, giving the favorite creature of God incessant pain. And in this, as in hundreds of other cases, it is for no fault of his.

You see what a fuss the special providence of God is making in this manner! When the special providence of God is pleased to take such a turn, no amount of prayers and offerings, no intervention of priests and mediators, can remedy the evil. Nothing short of a surgical operation, the tying up of the eyelid, or the extermination remedy, as the case may be, can correct the whim of God's so-called special providence for the happiness and well-being of man.

(To be concluded.)

Where is Jesus Christ?

A Curious Speculation.

AN astronomer had just shown a man Jupiter in a telescope. The man was pious, the astronomer was "undevout."

"Is that a world you are showing me?" queried the man.

"Probably it is," said the astronomer.

"I wonder," added the man, "if Jesus Christ has been crucified there too?"

The astronomer, knowing much more of Jupiter than of Jesus, could venture no reply to the last query. But the incident sets me athinking in quite an original direction.

You know, according to those most truthful of records, that Jesus left the earth for heaven about 1,864 years ago, informing his followers that he would return to earth in a short time—in fact, during the course of their natural lives. He has never returned, and there is no sign or sound of his second advent. This is a very serious matter, and believers are very much exercised over it; and their hearts are wrung and lacerated terribly when the scoffing sceptic cries: "Where is the promise of his coming?" The Christian can assign no reason for the failure of J. C. to reappear, any more than the followers of Joanna Southcott can for her delay in coming back to be the mother of the Messiah.

Now, I think I am able to suggest a reason why Jesus has not returned according to promise; and my explanation ought to convey the most solid comfort to those devout souls who "love his appearing."

You see, when Jesus ascended to go to heaven, he had no knowledge at all of Jupiter—didn't know such a world as Jupiter existed. But as he travelled on through space on the back of a cherub, which snorted fire along the road, and as age after age passed by, and nearly a thousand years had run since he left the earth and no resting-place had yet been found, he saw Jupiter just in front of him, and resolved to call there for a few days' rest and change of air. So he put spurs to his cherub, and was soon landed on Jupiter.

J. C. found the planet Jupiter immensely bigger and more interesting than the earth, and the people much more numerous.

"Dear me!" he exclaimed, by-and-bye, "how came my father to commit so gross a blunder as to send me to save so trumpery a world as the Earth—that paltry speck over yonder; why, dear me, I can't see it anywhere. Why, how was it he sent me to that paltry speck and not this huge world?"

So J. C., after resting a few months on Jupiter, resolved to do a little salvation work in that huge planet on his own account. So he provided himself with a new mother; and as the period of gestation there is much longer than here—because Jupiter's year is almost twelve times the length of ours—he was not born until almost nine years after his conception.

Having been born, and slowly grown up to manhood, he found, when he had finished his work, been crucified, and having risen from the dead, that over four hundred years had passed since he had landed to rest on Jupiter; and now he thought his father might be a bit anxious about him, and resolved to make straight tracks for home.

At the present time J. C. is, according to my most devout reckoning, about half-way between Jupiter and Saturn. He does not yet know anything of the latter planet; but, should he come in contact with it, I venture to predict that he will land first on one of the rings, and then descend to the planet itself. Should he choose a mother, and be reincarnated there, gestation, work, etc., and death and resurrection will take up no less than from 900 to 1,000 years.

If Jesus should stay to perform his grand comic farce on Uranus and Neptune too, it will be some time ere he gets back to his father. In Uranus alone it will take him about 2,600 years to get through the play; while in Neptune it will take him about 5,400 years.

The reader will understand that I have given Jesus equal proportionate times in all the planets named, taking each planet's year as the standard of measurement.

If my surmise be correct—and who will venture to question it?—why, I must have been divinely inspired to write it. If I am right, the reader will understand how it is Jesus has not returned to earth. And I am confident that my explanation is the most rational yet put forward to account for Christ's long delay. Looking at all the facts of the case, I do not think Jesus will return to earth until after the year A. D. 1,000,000, and I shall feel no surprise if 100,000,000 years should pass before he comes. Would you?

(The late) JOS. SYMES.

Street Evangelist: "I've been a thief; I've been a drunkard; I've starved my children; I killed my poor wife; I've been in prison for burglary; I—"

Policeman (interrupting): "Here, you come along to the police-station and report yourself."

Knicker: "We had to discharge our pastor because he mispronounced a word."

Bocker: "For such a trifle?"

Knicker: "Yes; he said the dear departed had gone to 'the undiscovered country from whose burn no traveller returns.'"

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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