

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXV.—NO. 17

SUNDAY, APRIL 25, 1915

PRICE TWOPENCE

It is the duty of the inquirer to ascertain the truth, and then to state it as decisively and as clearly as he can.—WINWOOD READE.

A Great Victory.

THERE is only one expression that adequately describes the decision of Mr. Justice Joyce in the Bowman case, and that is the one placed at the head of this article. For nearly a century, organised Freethought in this country has been more or less crippled by the fact that bequests for propagandist purposes were of either doubtful validity or decisively illegal. Judge after judge had held to the latter view, and so eminent an authority as the late Charles Bradlaugh, only a few months before his death, confessed that he saw no way of Freethought organisations becoming assured of bequests save by the total repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. On this point practically the whole of the Freethought party and the world of pietists—the latter joyfully, the former sorrowfully—were in agreement. Meanwhile, very large sums of money had been lost to the Freethought cause, and other sums were yearly being lost.

So matters stood until 1898. That year saw the birth of the Secular Society, Limited. The causes that led to its formation have already been explained in these columns, and need not now be again detailed. So far as the Christian world is concerned, the Secular Society, Limited, may be described as the nemesis of the blasphemy prosecution of 1883. Triumphant bigotry sent three men to prison in that year for blasphemy. But as a result of that act of persecution, and of the famous ruling of Lord Chief Justice Coleridge, one of these three—the Editor of this paper—saw a way to overcome the financial disability under which the Freethought cause had always labored. How that could be done was shown in the formation of the Secular Society, Limited. Once again the honors of the day rested with the fighting wing of the Freethought movement; for the Society has not only benefited the more advanced section of the Freethought movement, but its example inspired the more "respectable" section to follow along the same lines. As Mr. Foote well expressed it, the Secular Society, Limited, was the "financial charter" of English Freethought.

By the death of the widow of the late Charles Bowman, the Secular Society became entitled to the residue of his estate, representing a gross sum of about £10,000, but from which a number of specific legacies were to be deducted. The sum involved was tempting enough to invite litigation, and the payment of the bequest was opposed on the ground that it was illegal and contrary to public policy. There are several other aspects of the case that might at this point be introduced, but for various reasons they are best avoided for the present. On April 15, after a preliminary hearing in chambers, the case came before Mr. Justice Joyce; Mr. Cave, K.C., and Mr. Price appearing for the heir-at-law and next-of-kin; Mr. Hughes, K.C., and Mr. Byrne for the trustees; while the Society was represented by Mr. Tomlin, K.C., and Mr. Macnaghten.

Practically the whole of the day's proceedings were taken up with the speech of Mr. Cave. Our own counsel—very wisely, I think—restricted his speech in the opening of the case to an outline of the nature of the will of Mr. Bowman, a statement of the character of the Secular Society, Limited; and the Judge agreeing that *prima facie* the Society was entitled to the estate, it was decided to hear the opposing counsel, and discover what valid reasons there were, if any, against the executors proceeding to administration in favor of the Secular Society.

Mr. Cave cannot be called a very inspiring speaker, although it must be admitted that he had a very difficult task to perform. Briefly, this was to prove that a legally incorporated Society, whose Articles of Association contained nothing that was not completely covered by the Coleridge ruling, and by the rulings of every judge since 1883, was an illegal association. To effect this purpose he relied upon two arguments. First, the legacy was in the nature of a trust, and sought to create a perpetuity. But a perpetuity can only be created provided that a capital sum is locked up, the interest of which is to be spent on specific objects. This argument, however, as the Judge pointed out, was disposed of by the fact that there was nothing in the Articles of Association to prevent the Society spending the whole of its capital—of course, within the limits of its Articles. Mr. Cave fought this point very doggedly, and with characteristic persistence, but it was overruled.

The second argument was of a different, and apparently more involved, character. But it was being argued before a Judge with a very decided capacity for keeping the essential point before his own mind, and before the minds of others; and the quiet smile that stole over the face of Mr. Justice Joyce at certain parts of the pleading proved that he was quite alive to all the attempts to divert attention from the essential question at issue.

Mr. Cave, in short, asked Mr. Justice Joyce to declare the bequest invalid on the grounds that the money was to be devoted to an attack on religion, which he declared to be quite illegal, and that the Secular Society, Limited, was a "dummy Society" formed to receive gifts which could not be made to the National Secular Society, which he rather curiously called the "parent Society." But with this the Judge firmly declined to have anything to do. Over and over again he declared that all he was there to consider was the Articles of Association. Was there anything illegal in them? "Do you wish me to hold that the Society is a fraud?" he bluntly asked Mr. Cave. "Certainly," replied the counsel. "Well," was the answer, "I will not do it. You can go on arguing something else." If, he said, on another occasion, there is any misuse of the money acquired, let someone else move; that is not the question now before me. And, still more emphatically, even though these people had in view an illegal object, that would not make the Society illegal. And, again, "if these people have infringed the statute, prosecute them." But with the utmost emphasis he said that he was not going to even consider whether any publications of the Society came within the law of blasphemous libel or not. That had nothing to do with the case. His Lordship's view was, evidently, that a society, like

SIANS

ed

an individual, must bear the legal responsibility for, and consequences of, its actions, but that the fact of some of its actions being illegal could not deprive the Society of its legal character. That, to a layman, sounds like good law, and it is certainly good sense. To say that an association is illegal because it *might* do something criminal, sounds like midsummer madness. That possibility is before every association in the country. It is a possibility that confronts even the Convocation of Canterbury, or the trustees of the City Temple. And, as a matter of fact, one of the purposes of giving an association of persons a legal status is that it may be brought before a court and punished if it commits an illegal act. In other words, the possibility of a society doing something illegal is allowed for by the law which gives it a status. And yet, it was precisely because of this possibility that Mr. Cave was asking an administrator of the law to declare the Society a fraud.

The other portion of Mr. Cave's address was taken up with a review of the law of Blasphemous Libel, from the seventeenth century up to Lord Coleridge's time. It was easy to see why Mr. Cave stopped there, and easy to see why he omitted some foreshadowings of Lord Coleridge's decision in earlier blasphemy trials. He pursued the now old-fashioned, certainly narrow plan of arguing that Christianity was a part of the law of England, and that an attack upon religion, he said, although he obviously meant Christianity, was illegal. "Our law may be right or wrong, but it starts with a State religion," was one of his deliverances. This is very clearly wrong. Our law does not start with a State religion. It includes one, which is a very different thing. And prior to Protestant times there was actually no State Church, although there was a Church favored, protected, and supported by the State.

Mr. Cave's great standby was the ferocious Act of William III.—an Act under which there has never, I think, been a prosecution, and which has been taken only as enforcing and amending the Common Law on the subject. To enforce his point, Mr. Cave was driven to some curiously narrow inferences. His principal assault was upon Article (a) of the Memorandum of Association:—

"To promote in such way as may from time to time be determined, the principle that human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief, and that human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action."

This, said Mr. Cave, is Atheism—overlooking the fact that Atheism is not an indictable offence at English law. The judge failed to see it. Well, retorted the counsel, the title of the Society, "Secular," proves it. Secular is anti-religion. Again the judge demurred—"You can't expect me to accept that, it involves the question of what religion is." It is against all morality, said Mr. Cave. Not so, corrected the judge, "the Society merely attempts to put morality on a different foundation." But, urged Mr. Cave, it takes no note of any other world than this, and with one of his humorous and very human smiles, Mr. Justice Joyce remarked that the law itself only applied to this world, and then, more seriously, "What are we considering? Surely, if the thing is reverently done, there is no harm?" Lord Coleridge's view, he said, was a very sensible one, and he was not going to form any other. And, indeed, it was that judgment that beset Mr. Cave during the whole of his speech. He had to combat the declarations of judge after judge that an attack on Christian belief—either on a part or on the whole, could no longer be construed an offence in English law. It was really that file Mr. Cave was biting, and it broke his teeth.

When Mr. Cave had concluded, Mr. Tomlin rose to reply, but the judge met him with, "I do not wish to hear you." His own judgment was brief, but clear. The question before him was one of law simply. Were the objects of the Society as set forth in the Memorandum of Association legal? That was the only question before him. He found nothing in the Memorandum that was subversive of morality,

contrary to law, or which contravened any statute. The legacy, therefore, was a perfectly valid one.

The verdict was really, as I have already said, a great victory for the Freethought movement in Great Britain. There was only one feature lacking to make the day complete. This was the presence of Mr. Foote, the creator of the Secular Society, Limited, the one man in Britain who saw how a great and age-long disability might be removed without waiting for the repeal of Acts of Parliament that ought long since to have been consigned to the waste paper basket. Every Freethinker in court regretted his absence; so also did the solicitors and counsel. It was deeply to be regretted that, at such a time, illness should have prevented his being present, and thus rob him of the pleasure of seeing his judgment confirmed by a judge of one of the High Courts of Justice.

For my part, I left the court more than ever impressed with the sound judgment of Mr. Foote in connection with this affair. From the very formation of the Society, his opinion of it had never altered. He did not question that an attempt might be made to upset a bequest, but he was always confident that such an attempt would fail. At numerous Board Meetings and interviews with counsel and solicitors, he had indicated the attitude that a judge would be likely to take, and had marked out the lines upon which the Society's defence should proceed. His foresight has been justified to the letter. Like the spirit of Cæsar in Shakespeare's play which pervades the whole of the action of the tragedy even after the death of the great Roman, the influence of G. W. Foote was supreme in Chancery Court No. III. on April 15. It was a victory for the Secular Society, Limited; that was the impersonal aspect of the case. But it was a personal triumph for the creator of that Society. And there was something grimly appropriate in the fact that the man whose trial for blasphemy had brought forth from a Lord Chief Justice a ruling that vitally changed the attitude of judges towards the artificial offence of blasphemous libel, should, as a result of that trial, have seen a way to remove from British Freethought a disability that had crippled its energies for at least a century.

C. COHEN.

Agnosticism and the War.

AT the beginning of the War the clergy of all denominations rejoiced exceedingly because churches and chapels were crowded. It was exultantly contended the people were returning to God, that religion was rapidly coming into its own, and that the triumph of the Church was secured. Even Sir Oliver Lodge assured a Brotherhood audience that one effect of the War would be the flocking of penitent sinners to the all-loving Savior. The War is now in its ninth month, and churches and chapels are as empty as they were before it began, and some of them emptier. Dr. Campbell Morgan has just delivered a sermon in which he said "that he feared that in the presence of tragedy and cataclysm many gave way to a facile, resentful Agnosticism." On the very day he preached it he conversed with people who had lost their faith because of the War. In his estimation, naturally, the abandonment of faith is a great sin—an infinite, inexcusable blunder. As reported in the *Christian World*, Dr. Morgan argued that "if a man abandoned his faith he would not escape the tragedy, while he would lose his only possible place of rest, and, more than that, he would lose the power to help others." It is true that the tragedy confronts the Atheist as well as the Theist, but with what immeasurable difference! The Theist is logically and ethically bound to justify the War somehow, either by representing it as a judgment for some great fault or by claiming that it is a redemptive visitation. Of course, if there really is a God of justice and love upon the throne of the Universe, it can be neither. The very existence of tragedy and cataclysm in a

God-made and God-governed world is inconceivable; and apprehending this, a thoughtful Theist of necessity becomes an Atheist. But the Atheist is face-to-face with life's awful problems, the reverend gentleman tells us. True; but he ignores the fact that to the Atheist they are at once conceivable and explicable, while they thrust the Theist upon the horns of a dilemma. Some time ago Dr. Morgan made desperate attempts to explain the War, but they turned out miserable failures, and the character of the world's supreme Sovereign suffered greatly at his hands.

Dr. Morgan betrays the grossest ignorance concerning conscientious unbelievers. He affirms that they have lost "the only possible place of rest." As a matter of fact, they have found a satisfactory resting-place within themselves. The majority of believers do not know what rest means. They are tossed about from pillar to post, their faith failing them at every turn, and their minds being constantly disturbed by their unavoidable forgetfulness of God on the one hand, and by their craven fear of the Devil on the other. How few people are absolutely certain of the supernatural. Doubts often assail the brightest saints. The most devout person frequently catches himself wistfully crying out, "If I only knew that it is all true!" At best, belief is difficult, and causes restlessness. We maintain that to lose supernatural belief is to find natural rest, and consequently Atheists are happier than Theists. Dr. Morgan does not admit this because he has no experimental knowledge of the mental state of a convinced unbeliever. We were on terms of intimacy with a man to whom the word "peace" conveyed no intelligible significance until he succeeded in releasing himself from the galling yoke of supernaturalism. He is now completely at rest under the sovereignty of his own reason. How can a believer in God be at rest while the unspeakable horrors of the War meet him at every point, mocking his faith?

Unbelief is also held responsible for the loss of the power to help others. Dr. Morgan declared that "the chief trouble of faithlessness engendered by tragedy was that there was another man near you in exactly the same condition, and you were unable to help him." What the reverend gentleman understands by helping others is not at all clear. If two men have abandoned their faith on account of the War, what prevents them from helping each other? Of course, they cannot help each other to regain their lost faith; but most certainly they can comfort each other in their unbelief, and so acquire greater intellectual clarity. It is beyond all dispute that unbelievers do considerably help one another from day to day. Dr. Morgan alludes to the popularisation by Moody and Sankey of the song, "Go, bury thy sorrows; the world hath its share," which contains "possibly not much poetry, but a great deal of Christian philosophy." According to the report in the *Christian World*, the reverend gentleman expressed the philosophy thus:—

"If a man was to help others in their sorrows, his own sorrows must be buried in the heart of Jesus Christ. For Dr. Morgan did not believe that anyone was ever saved from panic or confusion of soul by faith in principles or in an abstraction; he was saved by faith in a Person. And God was an abstraction, save as we saw him in Jesus Christ, contracted to a span so that man might understand. 'Keep your faith,' said Dr. Morgan, 'and while you will not escape the tragedy or the problem, you will lay hold of life in the larger sense, and gain the power to help others.'"

To "bury one's sorrows in the heart of Jesus Christ" would be an absurd thing to do, if possible, and it is possible only in imagination. If Jesus ever lived at all, he has been dead nineteen hundred years, and his heart is not accessible. It is beyond all controversy that the Christ of theology is a wholly impossible being. This is frankly admitted by many divines. He is a theological creation simply. His love, his power, his reign, have been fabricated by the fancy while monarch Reason slept, and the moment we look

at them through the eye of intelligence, they are seen to be nothing but shadows. The same thing is true of God and his sovereignty. His government of the world is an illusion, and there is nothing of which we can honestly say that it is his work. How on earth, then, can faith in Christ or God enable anyone to help others? It is the possession of a sympathetic disposition that renders one a source of comfort to one's neighbors; and such a disposition is a gift of Nature, which we can improve by practice.

Dr. Morgan admits that "God is an abstraction, save as we see him in Jesus Christ, contracted to a span." That is to say, to all non-Christians throughout the world God is an abstraction, possessing no personal reality whatever. When we first see him as a person in Jesus Christ, he is "contracted to a span," reduced, diminished, made less, so that we can understand him. Thus the Incarnation signified the diminution of the Deity, his contraction to a span in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Such is the God who is said to be responsible for the War—an abstraction "contracted to a span." Is it any wonder that men and women are renouncing all faith in him? Dr. Morgan's own discourses on the War, published some months ago, were of such a character as to make the Supreme Being appear the most ridiculous and monstrous person imaginable, and have helped more than one reader to become an Atheist.

J. T. LLOYD.

Shakespeare's Scepticism.

"In religion
What damned error but some sober brow
Will bless it and approve it with a text."
—*All's Well that Ends Well.*

SOME people, not wholly illiterate, have been known to admit that they could only regard Miss Marie Corelli's tremendous popularity with wonder and amazement. The genius of Thomas Hardy and George Meredith, as of Shelley and Keats before them, dawned slowly on the general reader. But Miss Corelli is a writer of novels whose books run into new editions as fast as the fashions change. Like Messrs. Charles Garvice and William Le Queux, she has succeeded in winning the hearts of the middle-class reader. What these stern realists are to the worldly minded, Miss Corelli is to the other-worldly minded.

Miss Corelli does not lack courage of a kind. Whole pages of her books are devoted to tirades against things she dislikes, and recently she has deluged Dr. Lyttelton, the headmaster of Eton College, with a Niagara of vituperation concerning his views on Shakespeare. Writing in the *Sunday Herald*, Miss Corelli complains that Dr. Lyttelton has uttered what she calls a "Shakespeare slander" in declaring that the great poet was "not a Christian," and that Dr. Lyttelton stands indicted "before God and man for uttering an unfounded libel against the greatest poet of the world." Miss Corelli adds that:—

"Scores of beautiful and impressive allusions to the saving grace of the Christian faith can be found throughout all Shakespeare's works, and, to quote the judgment of that learned divine, Bishop Charles Wordsworth, 'Take the entire range of English literature; put together our best authors who have written upon subjects not professedly religious or theological, and we shall not find in them all united so much evidence of the Bible having been read and used as in Shakespeare alone. I cannot but remark that while most of the great laymen of that great Elizabethan age—Lord Bacon, Raleigh, Spenser, Lord Burleigh, Ben Jonson—have paid homage to Christianity, none of them has done this so fully and effectively as Shakespeare.'"

Dr. Lyttelton's statement was made in a sermon at Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-on-Avon, and Miss Corelli goes on to say:—

"Dr. Lyttelton's sermon aroused the keenest indignation, and had I been alone instead of being accompanied by a man 'afraid of offences,' as so many men

are, I should have left the church. I have since been assured that had I done so, half at least of those assembled would have followed my example, and I have often regretted that I was hindered from initiating this public protest against the wrong done to the name of Shakespeare by one who had been specially invited to do honor to his memory. That a preacher and teacher should thus attempt to belittle the fame of England's national poet, in his own burial place, was simply scandalous."

Bishop Wordsworth's assertion has been dealt with before; but it is well, in view of Miss Corelli's statements in a widely circulated newspaper, to recount some of the reasons for regarding Shakespeare as a Freethinker.

There have been many guesses, founded mainly on isolated passages from his plays, concerning the religious opinions of Shakespeare. Credulity has represented him as an evangelical Christian; a Churchman of the type of that buffoon, James I.; as a Protestant bigot; as a Spiritualist; and even as a member of what Carlyle calls "the great, lying Catholic Church."

The fact is, that Shakespeare was a world too wide for any theology. He never fretted and fussed about the salvation of his soul, and he was no more a Christian than Lucretius, or Omar Khayyam, Montaigne, or Rabelais. Dealing in his masterpieces with the deepest issues of life and conduct, he never points to the Cross as a solution. Writing in an age when religious wars and schisms were convulsing Europe, and in England, where the old faith was in its death-struggle with Protestantism, it is remarkable that Shakespeare turned his back on Christianity. Often as his questionings turn to the riddle of the universe, he leaves it an enigma to the last, disdaining the common theological solutions.

In that sceptical play, *Hamlet*, Shakespeare introduces a ghost, and the Prince talks with his father's spirit, "piping hot from purgatory." That ghost does not represent Shakespeare's belief, but was put in for dramatic effect, for, when Hamlet dies, his last words are, "The rest is silence." Take *King Lear*, the tragedy "too deep for tears," touching the root-springs of human nature. The whole play is an impeachment of Providence, and is summed up in the biting lines:—

"As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods—
They kill us for their sport."

Shakespeare never hesitates to make his characters jest on Biblical subjects, or to treat with irreverence the most sacred features of Christianity. Note Sir John Falstaff's blasphemies. Bardolph's face reminds him of hell fire, and of the Devil's kitchen. Then Sir John ridicules eternal torment: "I think the Devil will not have me damned, lest the oil that is in me should set hell on fire." King Richard, too, compares himself to Christ, and even exalts his own misery above that of the second person of the Trinity. He has "three Judases, each one thrice worse than Judas." So Judas did to Jesus, "he, in twelve, found truth in all but one; I, in twelve thousand, none." In *Twelfth Night*, when Olivia says of her brother, "I know his soul is in heaven, fool," like a bayonet-thrust comes the rude answer, "The more fool you, madonna, to mourn for your brother being in heaven."

In *Timon of Athens*, we are told gold "will knit and break religions"; and elsewhere Shakespeare warns us, in lines of Lucretian bitterness:—

"Our remedies oft in themselves do lie
Which we ascribe to heaven."

The same iconoclastic note sounds in *The Tempest*, when Miranda says, while viewing the shipwreck:—

"Had I been any God of power, I would
Have sunk the sea within the earth, or e'er
It should the good ship so have swallowed, and
The freighting souls within her."

Serenely the great dramatist leaves human nature to expound in its own being the mystery of existence. His philosophy is taken from the heart of life:—

"Nature is made better by no mean
But nature makes that mean."

There are scores of passages which prove Shakespeare's heterodoxy to the discerning reader. Had we only his plays to refer to, it were sufficient. Fortunately, we have another source from which his views may be drawn. In the sonnets the Master unlocks his heart. Throughout the whole, in which love strong as death, and the bitter irony of destiny are treated with fullness, allusions to Christianity are absent, and orthodoxy is thrown to the winds. Listen to the following lines:—

"When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate."

Who but a Freethinker could have written "deaf" before "heaven"? The epitaph on Shakespeare's eldest daughter clearly implies that the Master's life had not been one of piety:—

"Witty above her sense, but that's not all,
Wise to salvation was good Mistris Hall;
Something of Shakespeare was in that, but this
Wholly of him with whom she's now in blisse."

Shakespeare took the beliefs and superstitions around him as material for his works. Ghosts, fairies, witches, gods and goddesses, the mythology of the Ancients, and the *dramatis personae* of the Christian religion, are but the machinery for appealing to the popular sentiment. When they have served their purpose, they appear no more. The permanent direction of his mind was towards Secularism. Dr. Lyttelton is right in his statement that Shakespeare was "not a Christian." The greatest of authors banished religion from literature. It was well, for his mind is the horizon beyond which, at present, we do not see.

MIMNERMUS.

The Evolution of Mammalian Life.

OUR planetary home has been the theatre of many strange scenes of life and death in the course of its varied career. An insignificant member of a solar system, itself only tenth-rate in importance when compared with the giant systems such as that which revolves around Sirius, the earth's history is, nevertheless, of no little moment to those who dwell upon its crust.

As the primitive heat of our planet declined in intensity, conditions became favorable for the genesis of life. From primitive protoplasmic specks were developed the lowliest organic things. The term "Protobion"—the first living being—has been given to the earliest form of living matter. This must have been a carbonaceous structure of the simplest kind; but as all organic substance is endowed with extensive capacities for variation, organic differentiation was merely a matter of time. Unfortunately, all traces of primordial life have been obliterated. The soft and delicate materials of which elementary life was entirely composed, fully account for this. Only those organisms which evolve hard and enduring structures, such as shells and bones, are able to leave any records in the rocks of their former existence.

The palæontologist is to a great degree dependent upon the remains left by invertebrate animals in the different geological deposits. This is especially true of the earlier fossil-bearing strata which have, so far, failed to reveal the slightest evidence of the more advanced vertebrate forms of life. In the Palæozoic Era, the chief groups of the extant marine invertebrates were all represented by less developed forms, and their existence at this highly retarded period necessarily presupposes a long anterior process of evolution, the direct evidences of which, have passed away, never to return.

In the later Silurian Period, the first backboneed animals put in their appearance, and as we approach nearer and nearer to our own times, the story of the evolution of vertebrate life becomes clearer and clearer to us. Fish-like animals first appear, and from these arose amphibians, whose puny descend-

ants, the frogs and toads, are but the pigmy survivors of an order that has left in the rocks the fossils of its titanic representatives who lorded the land in the days of the great coal-forests—the Carboniferous Period. From some of the more enterprising amphibians proceeded the reptiles, who succeeded to the earth's sovereignty and developed a multitudinous array of life. On land, in the waters, and even in the air, the reign of the reptiles was long unchallenged. The deposed amphibians had either transformed themselves into reptiles or succumbed to their more up-to-date competitors. But further changes were being prepared. Some of the reptiles began to assume a mammalian appearance, thus clearing the path for the coming kings of life, while others departed in another direction from the main reptilian type and became the begetters of the earliest toothed and long-tailed birds. Thus from cold-blooded reptiles arose that animal order which ultimately produced monkeys and men, as well as that winged and feathered family whose nidification, plumage, and song are to be treasured as among the wonders and glories of our planet.

From reptiles zoologically known as Theromorphs, many of which so closely resemble mammals that the great majority of visitors to a natural history museum would at once assume them to be such, unless otherwise informed, were developed true mammalian organisms. For the truth of this, the paleontological, apart from the anatomical testimony, is overwhelmingly conclusive. One of the chief centres of mammalian evolution seems to have been the once great, but now largely sunken continent, Gondwanaland, which, in long departed days, probably stretched eastward from Brazil, across South Africa, on to Australia. At all events, fossils discovered in South Africa have furnished the strongest evidence concerning the gradual transformation of reptiles into mammals.

All reptiles are cold-blooded, while all the mammals, as they exist to-day, are hot-blooded. And just as the scales of reptiles were, in some instances, transformed into the feathers of birds, so the scaly armor of these animals was slowly changed into the more pliable hide or skin, which is usually covered with hair in their mammalian descendants. Other modifications occurred in the skull and mouth, and the egg-laying reptile gave place to the more advanced organism which brings forth its young alive. Very probably, the still surviving Echidna and the duck-bill Platypus, still present some of the stages which link up reptilian with mammalian life.

The primitive mammalian fossils discovered in the South African beds have furnished a rich scientific feast. All honor must be accorded to Dr. Broom for the masterly manner in which he has marshalled his facts. He and his co-workers have shown us that in the Lower Permian Period, and on the ancient continent of Gondwanaland, there lived reptilian creatures whose teeth had departed from the original reptilian type and had become distinctly mammalian in structure. Some of these modified reptiles were carnivorous animals.

The earliest of these changing creatures were very small and inactive, and they failed to secure a firm footing in the living arena. They appear to have been one of Nature's unsuccessful experiments, as they were soon driven to extinction. The struggle for existence at this period appears to have been extremely keen, more especially to the reptile-mammals that preyed on their herb-eating cousins. Further development was thus made imperative, and we find that the Cynodonts of the Triassic Period began to modify their single joint-surface, by which the head is moved on the backbone in true reptiles. This joint-surface became divided into a double attachment just as we see it mammals. This constituted an important advance, as the cranium of the Cynodonts was much more usefully and conveniently united to the body than in the case of the reptiles. The carnivorous Cynodonts devoured their weaker neighbors and increased rapidly in number. But as the more poorly endowed vegetarian reptilian mam-

mals that served for their food steadily declined, they were compelled to attack fleetier and less defenceless animals.

"The necessity for speed, endurance, and skill in this chase led to their evolution through a series of stages which converted them into mammals; but the process was so gradual that it is not yet known where to draw the line between mammal-like reptiles and reptile-like mammals. They dropped their scaly armor, which was replaced by a plastic skin; their active life led to the blood becoming warmer, and this change required the alteration of the three-chambered heart of the reptiles into the four-chambered heart of the mammals, and as protection against cold was then necessary, this change was accompanied by the growth of a hairy fur. The constant need for careful observation and alertness in action, by which alone the Cynodonts could obtain an adequate supply of their fleet prey, stimulated their intelligence, and led to a great development in the size of the brain."

Egg-laying mammals and pouched animals similar to the monotremes and marsupials now restricted to Australia, at one time lived side by side with the reptiles when these were the world's leading organisms. But these primitive mammals were not capable of competing successfully with the huge saurians, and they never appear to have reached the high stage of development which they afterwards attained in Australia and America. But that they once enjoyed a wide distribution is demonstrated by the discovery of marsupial remains in the Triassic deposits of England, Germany, and South Africa. The Jurassic rocks have yielded the richest remains of these primitive animals. In the succeeding Cretaceous Period, however, their fossils become very scarce, and although the deposits of this period have been very diligently searched for them, the results obtained are extremely meagre. On the whole, it would appear as if these organisms had been practically eliminated from the chief centres of life by their sanguinary reptilian antagonists.

At the commencement of the Cainozoic Era the marsupials of Europe, Asia, and Africa had been blotted out. The higher mammalian fauna of the Old World continents, however, was making progress, while the marsupials were now strongly entrenched in Australia. That large island continent was now isolated from the Eurasian and African land areas, and in consequence of this, its pouched animals were protected from that pitiless life-struggle which had become the rule of existence elsewhere. In these circumstances, marsupial life reached, in Australia, a high stage of development. The pouched mammals produced an immense variety of forms, among which were arboreal opossums, flying foxes, and squirrels. Numerous herbivorous marsupials flourished, and these of many kinds. As time went on some of these vegetarian animals acquired a liking for flesh foods and began to prey on their gentler herb-eating neighbors. One of these herbivorous marsupials grew to giant proportions. This creature, the Diprotodon, was as large as a rhinoceros, and it is thought to have dwelt on the margins of the lakes which at that period existed in Australia. Among other extinct forms was a huge kangaroo quite double the size of the largest kangaroo now living. There was likewise a powerful marsupial wolf who dined at his neighbor's expense. The extinction of these titanic organisms has so far received no universally accepted explanation. But it is to be observed that as soon as the limits of growth have been reached organisms of all orders appear to tend toward extinction. We find that over and over again in the course of animal evolution, among the amphibia, reptilia, aves and mammalia, to mention the highest forms only, there are many remarkable examples of these various orders having developed giant representatives which soon succumbed, geologically speaking, to the hand of death. Pestilence may have aided in their extinction, while another contributory cause was probably related to climatal changes, which brought about important modifications in that plant world upon which all organisms, whether carnivorous or herbivorous, ultimately de-

pend for their sustenance. But so far as these giant marsupials are concerned they unquestionably survived until the arrival of the dingo, and these truculent and hungry animals assisted in hastening their end.

During the period which witnessed the rise of the marsupials of Australia, a superior type of mammalian fauna was developing in the northern districts of the world. We are now in the Eocene Period, the dawning days of modern life. At this epoch of the earth's history appeared the ancestors of the numerous extant groups of higher mammalian organisms. These Eocene animals were much less specialised, and were, therefore, more alike in general character than the markedly diverse forms that exist to-day. The clawed and fanged beast of prey is very different to the mild-eyed vegetable feeder that serves for the former's meals. Yet, despite these differences, both types of animal have been evolved from a common ancestor. This more generalised mammal was related by close ties to the long-extinct Phenacodus, whose remains have been found both in Europe and America. This ancestral organism possessed a long head that was furnished with a very little brain; it bore five toes on each of its broad feet, it travelled on its toes, and its heels were raised above the ground. Shortly afterwards there lived a related animal, the Hyracotherium, whose limbs were longer and fleeter, and this animal moved on the tips of its toes. Nor was this all. This greater facility in the use of the toes was accompanied by a decrease in number. Each fore-leg bore four toes and each hind-leg three only.

This reduction was carried still further in the descendants of the Hyracotherium, until in the Meshippus, which appeared in the Miocene Period, there were only three toes to each foot. The succeeding stage of development showed a dwindling in the size of the two outer toes, until we discover in the Hipparion, of the Pliocene Period, that these outer toes barely touched the ground. They only reached the earth when the animal stood in soft soil, sand, or snow. When standing on firm ground the Hipparion's weight was borne by the middle toe of each foot. This mammal was the direct ancestor of the horse whose foot has been so modified that one toe only remains. The foot of the modern horse is made up of a single bone, and all comparative anatomists are agreed that the smaller toes of Hipparion are to be detected in the thin splint-bones which are still attached to the sole remaining functional toe.

"The leg of the horse corresponds to the greatly elongated middle finger or middle toe of man and other mammals. The joint, which in the horse is called the knee, corresponds to our ankle and wrist. This arrangement is the result of the horse having been adapted to fast running over open ground, and to defending itself from carnivorous animals by the strength of its kick; and the hind-leg of the horse, judged simply as kicking machinery, is an excellent piece of apparatus. This arrangement has now been traced backward, through a long succession of ancestors, into animals which had the normal five toes and walked on a flat foot."

The earliest fossil horse is known from the lower Pliocene rocks of Hindostan, while the animal appears in Europe at a later date. Early in the following period the noble quadruped reached America, and soon acclimatised itself in both the Northern and Southern continents. Here, again, we are confronted with a startling example of sudden extinction, for when the New World was discovered in the fifteenth century, the horse had entirely vanished from the scene. And so long had the animal been extinct that, so far as the writer is aware, no myth or legend connected with its past existence had survived among any of the native races of America.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

As soon as a religion triumphs it has for its enemies all those who would have been its first disciples.—Nietzsche.

Acid Drops

There is at least one clergyman in England who is disillusioned concerning the increase of religion owing to the War. Rev. C. Simmonds, Vicar of Exhall, said, in his Easter message: "In the early months of the War there was an appreciable increase in the Sunday congregations, an increase which has not been maintained. In fact, during the solemn season of Lent the attendance at most of the services has been lamentable. I regret having to say this but it is unavoidable." The Vicar, by way of inciting his parishioners to more regular devotions, reminds them that the issue of the War is in the Lord's hands, and that our strength lies in prayer and confidence in the Divine Power. Evidently the people of Exhall are of a different opinion; and so, we imagine, is General French. He is reported to have told a recent interviewer that his great need is more ammunition. As there is a talk of closing the "pubs" to hasten its production, perhaps some are thinking that going to church is also waste of time.

First of all, there was said to be a great increase of religion in consequence of the War. No one saw this increase except the preachers, who see exactly what they want. Then there began to appear admissions that this increase was not, after all, very great—some even said that the increase had been greatly exaggerated. Now Dr. Campbell Morgan fears that there is a certain amount of unbelief arising in consequence of the War. Many, he says, give way to a "fierce, resentful Agnosticism." We do not know why the Agnosticism should be fierce or resentful—probably that is only the preacher's way of suggesting that rejection of religion must be due to passion, or temporary loss of balance. But we can quite realise that many who have hitherto accepted the stock teachings of religion in a thoroughly uncritical manner will have their perception of its incongruities and falsities quickened by this European catastrophe. And that is what has occurred in very many cases. The War has put a note of interrogation at the end of many beliefs, both secular and religious.

Consider the situation. Everybody professes to be horrified at the War. There are none who would not stop if they could, and if possible make future wars impossible. And, quite naturally, some people ask themselves, What is the value of the "providential" government of the world? Such things are allowed to transpire? Could things be worse without a God? Would they be very different without one? At home, preachers are still voicing their cant about the love of God, the power of Christ to save the world, the overpowering strength of the Christian gospel of brotherhood. And on the Continent millions of men are using their best endeavors, with all the assistance that the most scientific appliances can give them, to wipe each other off the face of the earth. On one side of the North Sea, seventy millions of people—the vast majority Christians—calmly propose starving into submission forty-five millions of the other side. And on this side, forty-five millions—again, the vast majority Christians—with equal calmness propose starving seventy millions. And all the time the cant of Christian love and brotherhood goes on. Is it any wonder that thoughtful men and women begin to realise the difference between theory and fact, and in a way they have never realised it before? The War does not alter facts, but it helps many to realise their nature and significance.

A congregation of South African Boers recently gave their pastor notice to quit because he had been preaching something like Darwinism. They have earned the admiration of Dr. Dixon, of Spurgeon's Tabernacle, who believes that they have brains and dare to think. We can only suggest that Dr. Dixon should offer himself to these intellectual Boers as their preacher. He would certainly suit such a congregation, and we believe England would survive his departure. Really, the fact of a man who counts himself a public teacher rejecting Evolution, lock, stock, and barrel, is enough to remind one of how much educative work still remains to be done. Dr. Dixon doesn't appear to know that Evolution isn't a theory, but a demonstrated fact. There is no more doubt to properly informed minds that there is about the revolution of the earth round the sun.

We have said, jestingly, that the Bishop of London was a sunshine soldier. In a recent issue of the *Sunday Morning Post* there was a picture of his lordship preaching to the soldiers in France, and the descriptive letterpress adds, "The

sign of war was the Army wagons in the square of the old-world village."

As a result of the bitterness engendered by the War, the clergy in Germany have determined to eliminate words derived from the Greek and Latin Churches. Hymns translated from English are to be banned also. By whatever name they choose to call it, the alms-dish will be retained.

Millions of prayers have been offered at the Throne of Grace for peace, but the Pope is dissatisfied at the result. He has issued a prayer, composed by himself, which Catholics, the world over, will be asked to recite during May. Surely Providence will listen to Papa.

"Hell Chamber of Commerce" was a delightful misprint in a provincial paper. Of course, it should have been "Hull"; but if there are streets in heaven, there might be tradesmen in hell.

Although the Rev. F. B. Meyer has written many books, few would be disposed to consider him a man of letters. However, he is doing his best, for recently he sent out 10,000 letters suggesting that a certain Sunday should be observed as "King's Pledge Sunday."

The Vicar of Weston, near Otley, is a remarkably well-informed gentleman—in just those subjects on which it is impossible to possess positive knowledge. Addressing his congregation the other Sunday, the Vicar said that it was a mistake to suppose that the dead remained asleep waiting for the resurrection. On the contrary, they passed through three stages, the first of which was near earth, and they were able to whisper to their friends. This is where all our soldiers who have been killed are now. The Vicar clinched the matter by saying that he "had the highest testimony for this, and Sir Oliver Lodge had proved it as a scientific fact that converse with departed friends was possible."

We can assure the Vicar that he has been misled. Sir Oliver Lodge has not proved converse with the dead as "a scientific fact." All he has done is to say that he believes in such a possibility, and that he has had evidence enough to satisfy him. But that does not make it a scientific fact. Scientific facts are not the property of a select "occult" circle—they belong to everybody; and Sir Oliver has been challenged over and over again to table the "facts" that convinced him, and see how far they will go to convince others. And it is notorious that they do not convince others. Many people beside Sir Oliver Lodge have examined these alleged facts, and remained unconvinced. More; we believe that many who have examined these alleged facts have not shared his belief. The truth is that Sir Oliver's testimony is no more than a statement of personal conviction. As such, it is interesting; but it is of no greater value than the testimony of many hundreds of spiritualists made before Sir Oliver Lodge ever dabbled with the subject.

One of the curates at a Southend-on-Sea church had an attack of German measles. A local paper suggests that he should be awarded an iron cross.

In an article on "Patriotism of the Flirt," the London *Daily Chronicle* speaks of the way "flappers" can help the Army. Girls might as well help a real army as assist the Salvation and Church Armies.

The realities of war, declares the Bishop of London, have melted away the surface shyness of men about religion. Presumably, the girls are not shy.

Writing on our soldiers, a popular novelist gets lyrical in the columns of a contemporary. He speaks of them as "Our boys, Christs all." A million and a half Christs are sufficient to appal the stoutest Freethinker.

Billy Sunday, the Yankee evangelist, who is trying to defend Christianity against the assaults of the wicked infidels, receives many press notices, but it was unkind of an American reporter to describe the soul-saver's voice as "a cross between a cyclone and the screech of a locomotive."

While all the talk is going on about restriction of the drink traffic, it may be as well to point out that non-Chris-

tian cults have already done what so many Christians profess to aim at doing—that is, create a sober population. Mohammedanism is free from the curse of drink. So is Buddhism. There is, in fact, no distinctive virtue that can be said to have been raised to a greater degree of excellence under Christian auspices than is found existing elsewhere. It is true, we have a number of temperance societies; we have also societies for the prevention of cruelty to children and the prevention of cruelty to animals. These are excellent so far as they go. But they are not intended for use in non-Christian countries, but for a Christian population. And the strength of the movements for reform are themselves evidence of the strength of the evils they combat.

"A Week-End Marriage" is a delicious headline in a daily paper. It sounds like an exploit of the Jewish King Solomon.

Two beautiful Irish potato rings were sold at a Red Cross Auction at Christie's Sale-room recently for 500 guineas each, to Lord Newlands. Who would imagine that people worshipped a carpenter-god who had not where to lay his head?

We take the following from the *Salt Lake Telegram* of March 19:—

"St. Louis, March 19—Rev. Dr. M. L. Birkhead, pastor of Wagoner Memorial Methodist Church, announces that he would resign from the Methodist ministry because his principles required him to be honest to his convictions, and his convictions were incompatible with the tenets of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Dr. Birkhead summed up his reasons as follows:—

'I do not believe—

That any miracles were ever performed;

That Moses was given two tablets of stone on which were chiseled the decalogue;

That Moses wrote the first five books in the Old Testament;

Any definite prophecy was made of the coming of Christ;

In the immaculate conception;

There was any resurrection;

That the Apostle John wrote the book in the Bible that bears his name;

That Paul wrote any letters to anybody that afterward were gathered up and assembled into the New Testament;

In making religion a volcanic spasm;

In making Christianity a "fire escape" from hell;

Therefore, I cannot be true to myself and honest in my convictions and remain a minister in the Methodist Church.'

Dr. Birkhead was educated in McKendree College, Drew Theological Institute, Union Theological College, and Columbia University."

We congratulate Dr. Birkhead on his straightforward conduct, and we feel that if every clergyman who doubted the doctrines he is paid to preach followed his example, there would be a pretty considerable exodus from the Christian Churches.

A reward of £1,000 is offered for the marriage registers in the parish of Cawdor, Nairnshire, between the years 1779—1783. Such a sum ought to produce the marriage certificate of Adam and Eve, witnessed by the serpent.

The Rev. A. J. Waldron, Vicar of Brixton, is engaged in delivering recruiting speeches, and recently appeared at the Palace Music Hall, Bath. We hope that the clerical garb did not suggest the get-up of George Robey too forcibly.

The military censors are very strict. A soldier recently wrote a forcible letter home in which he stated that he had felt that he had been "in hell." The censor deleted the second word, thinking apparently that the locality mentioned might be of service to the Germans.

The Southend-on-Sea National Guards print a text upon their periodical order paper. "When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace" (Luke xi. 21). Tut, tut! Not if the strong man owes the landlord his rent.

"Who was Shylock, Aunt Ethel?" "My dear! And you go to Sunday-school, and don't know that!"

The *Church Times* records a letter from one of its own staff with the Army in France, in which it is stated that, although "all over France there are shrines and crucifixes, in no case have I seen them damaged by shells or fire." Of course, the intended moral is pretty obvious; but one is left marvelling at the type of mind that can take such things seriously. For our part, the moral we draw, if the statement be one of fact, is that "Providence" thinks much

more of crucifixes than it does of human life. Thousands upon thousands of human beings killed and wounded, and some people raise their voices in thankfulness to "Providence" for protecting a few painted pieces of wood!

The pious injunction, "Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder," is falling into disrepute. There are 353 divorce cases down for hearing during the forthcoming term at the Law Courts, London. Orthodox ideas are in the melting-pot.

Sir W. Robertson Nicoll says, "We shall be in a new world when the War is ended." Christians, reading the casualty lists, will think that many are there already.

Admiral W. J. Anstey, R.N., occupied the pulpits at the Kingston-on-Thames Wesleyan Church and the Surbiton Hill Church recently. There is no room for surprise, for Christian preachers are all at sea, as a rule.

The Bishop of Salisbury is another cleric who fails to find any strengthening of religion in consequence of the War. At the Diocesan Conference the other day, he said that he had been asked could he see any "spiritual" gain from the War, and his reply was:—

"I wish I could answer that question as I would desire to be able to answer it. I can see no trace of it. The splendid outburst of heroism and self-sacrifice—the courage of the men—the no less but recognised courage of the women—the closing up of differences—the common aim and purpose—the calmness and quiet determination which are characteristics of the nation as a whole, and the absence, in all but some portions of the Press, of bombastic and boastful language—it all has a grandeur of its own, and to some it is an unlooked-for revelation of what the British people really are. But of the spiritual effect one can see but little. Our churches are not better attended, but worse. Confirmation candidates are sparsely forthcoming. There is really very little of the vituperation and spirit of retaliation and revenge of which we are hearing, I think, too much, but there is very little sign of the nation's turning to God—of a great people on its knees—of a conviction that it is all meant to call us as a people back into the old paths from which we have strayed too far."

We appreciate the bishop's disappointment, but it is worth noting that this high level of courage and behavior has been achieved without any increase of religious devotion—it would almost seem, in its absence.

Providence doeth all things well, but sometimes the things are done on a very generous scale. At an inquest on a Hackney woman recently, a doctor stated that the woman's heart weighed thirty ounces. Defenders of the Design Argument will kindly note.

Mr. Horatio Bottomley warns people against "fussing about the Kaiser as if he were a tin deity." Freethinkers do not worry about gods, tin or otherwise.

Professor Eliot, of Harvard University, has some remarkably "elim" ideas on the question of prayer and the War. In a lecture on "The Christian Minister and the War," he said that no one was warranted in praying for peace while Germany was placed as she is now. The time to pray for peace, he says, is when Germany has been beaten back on to her own territory. In other words, it is no use praying for peace now, because neither side would listen. The time to pray for peace is when one side is decisively beaten. But we imagine that by that time peace will come without prayers. Professor Eliot's counsel reminds one of the farmer's advice, Never pray for rain while the wind is in the wrong direction.

Naturally, as we prophesied, the Bishop of London found everybody intensely religious at the Front. If we may trust the report of his Easter visit to the Front, it was the one thing for which the Army was waiting. Before each service, the Bishop says, he told the soldiers to imagine that their mothers and wives and sweethearts had sent their love through him, and that the whole nation was "thinking and praying for them day and night." "Thinking" is all right; but *praying!* The whole nation at it day and night! Now, if it was not the Bishop who said this, we should have felt inclined to say that the statement was not true. But Bishop Ingram is noted for the extreme accuracy of his statements. He never exaggerates, and never misrepresents—well, hardly ever.

Quite appropriately, *Cassell's Magazine of Fiction* devotes several pages of its April number to a discussion of the

question, "Do Miracles Happen?" Among the contributors is Mr. G. K. Chesterton, who, as usual, quite succeeds in missing the point at issue. For the essential question is not whether miracles happen, but under what conditions, psychological and historical, do people believe they happen? We know that the belief in miracle is not local, but universal at one stage of social culture. We know with equal clarity that the belief in miracle dies out under other conditions of social life. And inquiry shows that the being or non being of belief in the miraculous is not a question of evidence; it is entirely a question of social and individual development.

People do not accept miracles because of evidence in their favor, nor do they often reject them because of evidence tendered in their disproof. They outgrow them; and when that is said, nearly all is said. If anyone doubts this, we need only appeal to the argument of which Christians profess to be so fond—namely, personal experience. How many of us ever gave up belief in the miraculous—accepted it—because we had previously weighed the evidence for and against? At one date we believed, at another we disbelieved; and the distance between the two stages represents the distance between the semi-animistic universe of mental childhood and the scientific world of the developed man.

The Gate of Heaven.

WHEN it was the German Emperor's turn to die he naturally applied for admission into heaven. Of course, there could be no difficulty in his case.....

But the last War had sent to heaven about two million good Germans, who never behaved improperly with property and hardly ever with persons. The Almighty had been quite satisfied that Termonde had been burnt by the retreating Belgians, that Rheims Cathedral had been shelled by French artillery, and that no blood had been shed in the affair of Louvain (except by the Kaiser's heart).

The two million Germans had no difficulty in entering heaven by force, because heaven, in spite of its well-known preference for Germans, was officially a neutral country.... But once they were in, and had settled down to their duties, there arose a difficulty. It was not about the angels, for the angels were good and submissive, and saluted the German officers, and humbly stepped off the pavements into the golden gutters of the New Jerusalem so as to leave the pavements for the proud officers. So the angels were treated kindly.

The difficulty was that, though all the Germans praised the Lord with regular, unquestioning, and unthinking devotion, yet, quite without meaning to be disrespectful, they were so. In fact, they all followed Lutheran habits, and never knelt, but stood to pray and sat to sing.... Now the Lord was rather spoilt by the attitudes of exaggerated respect which Russians and French, and even some of the English, get into when praying; and so the Master of the Celestial Ceremonies passed word to St. Peter that he really mustn't let any more Germans in; it was as much as the cherubim and seraphim could do to hide the Germans from the good Lord.

So, when the German Emperor knocked at heaven's gate, he was brusquely told by St. Peter that there was only a kneeling room.

"But I was appointed vice-regent by God himself!" exclaimed the Emperor.

"Indeed," said St. Peter, in a mocking tone of voice; "he never told me that himself. I seem to remember newspaper reports of your speeches, though.... However, don't you think it's a little bit ungenerous on your part to insist on that now? We all of us make mistakes, you know, and gods are only human."

St. Peter felt strongly that by-gones ought to be by-gones. It was not quite gentlemanly, that trick of Bismarck's.... You know that years ago he forced St. Peter's hand to open the gate of heaven to him by whispering "Cock-a-doodle-do" into St. Peter's ear.....

"I had looked upon the War as a holy war...." the Emperor began to bluster.

"Wait a minute," said St. Peter. "Was it in this War that German warships got near to Yarmouth?"

"Ah, yes; God was with us. But we did no damage!"

A new and sentimentally reminiscent note came into St. Peter's voice, "And you spared some fishing-boats...." Then tears and a furtive look sprang into St. Peter's eyes. Looking hastily round and seeing that nobody was about, he whispered, "Come in!"

NOTICE.

The business of the "FREETHINKER" and of THE PIONEER PRESS, formerly of 2 Newcastle-st., has been transferred to 61 FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

To Correspondents.

PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND, 1915.—Received from March 15: Previously acknowledged, £23 18s. 1d. Received since:— Alfred Delve, £1 1s.; F. Marschel, 10s. 6d.

W. J. KING.—Received, and shall appear shortly.

CHRISTOPHER GAY.—Sorry the addition to your article did not reach us in time to be inserted as desired.

W. DEWITT.—Received, and forwarded to the proper address.

G. F. McCLOSKEY.—Thanks for congratulations. Mr. Foote is steadily getting better, and we hope that your desire to see him once more in the fighting line will soon be gratified.

W. MANN.—Your congratulations are very welcome. The full importance of the victory has yet to be realised.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY, LIMITED, office is at 62 Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S office is at 62 Farringdon-street, London, 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, giving as long notice as possible.

Letters for the Editor of the *Freethinker* should be addressed to 61 Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon-street, London, 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, 61 Farringdon-street, London, 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 CANNOT write yet about the great victory won for the Freethought cause in the Court of Chancery on Thursday, April 15. I much prefer that others should speak for the present. My turn (I hope) will come by and by, when my health and strength, which are improving, will enable me to wield my own pen in the old way.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

In another portion of the issue we reprint the very excellent report of the Bowman Case, which appeared in the *Daily Telegraph*. It is one that our readers would do well to keep by them, and, if possible, hand or send an extra copy to a friend. The report is not only interesting as a report, it is useful as indicating a landmark in the history of British Freethought. The judge's decision is one which, we venture to say, will have an almost historic value.

A well-known Freethinker writes:— "Hearty congratulations on the result of the 'Bowman Bequest' litigation.....It is a clincher, and places the 'Secular Society, Limited,' and, incidentally, the whole Freethought Movement, on a stronger foundation than ever. I trust it will not make us too respectable. Is there any danger?"

We can safely say, none at all, so long as affairs remain in the hands of those who now control them. "Respectability" is a disease from which we feel ourselves immune. At least, we have failed to detect any symptoms of the complaint up to the present.

We have said in another part of this issue that we regard the verdict in the Bowman case as, from one point of view,

a personal triumph for Mr. Foote. The following, from a letter sent to Mr. Foote by the Society's solicitors the day preceding the hearing of the case, will bear this out:—

"The line taken on behalf of the Society was that which we had discussed with you, viz., that the Secular Society, Ltd., is a legal entity, and therefore entitled to the legacy as much as any private person, and counsel did not enter into any side issues, leaving that for the counsel representing the next-of-kin, our counsel entering a formal objection. We must say that the Secretary and the other Directors of the Society left the matter entirely in our hands, and did not suggest any variations in the course of the proceedings."

Some of our correspondents, however, appear to be under the impression that in some way the *Freethinker* is financially interested in the Bowman Case. Here is one, for example:—

"I must congratulate you on your £10,000 victory. To the Freethought cause this must be a veritable 'godsend.' I hope that you will be now able to largely increase the sale of the *Freethinker*, and put it on a profitable commercial basis."

We accept the congratulations with pleasure, but the writer is quite mistaken in thinking that the *Freethinker* derives any financial benefit from the bequest. The *Freethinker* has never received anything from the Secular Society, Limited, either in the shape of grants or as payment for advertisement of its existence. We are not saying this in any spirit of complaint or reproach, but as a mere statement of fact. The proprietor of the *Freethinker*, Mr. Foote, remains, as hitherto, solely responsible for its continuance, and for all monetary obligations connected therewith. We should like to see the *Freethinker* on a profitable financial basis, and with the cordial co-operation of our readers we do not despair of seeing even that accomplished one day.

Many well-known Freethinkers have written or wired Mr. Foote congratulating him on the outcome of the litigation. The Glasgow Branch of the National Secular Society sent the following telegram:—

"Congratulations from the Glasgow Secular Society re Bowman Case. Good news travels fast."

"An obscure paper," was one of Mr. Justice Joyce's references to the *Freethinker*. Perhaps, from his point of view, the statement was justified. The *Freethinker* cannot boast of a circulation of the *Daily Mail*, and from that point of view may be called obscure. Yet, in all probability, and in proportion to circulation, there is no paper in England that wields a deeper influence than this one. Its readers are found among all classes—we know that from our subscription list and from our correspondence. And it is bought to be read. Moreover, we have a shrewd suspicion that many of those who affect to be ignorant of its existence, or try to ignore its existence, are not above borrowing from its pages. Two things are certain. The *Freethinker* has always possessed a staff of real live writers, who have said boldly what they have to say, and have never made the vulgar mistake of taking obscurity for profundity, or stodgy writing as a proof of culture. And its hold on its readers is such that not even the European War could seriously affect its circulation. For our part, we would sooner be writing for the "obscure" *Freethinker* than for any other paper in Great Britain.

It is, unfortunately, true that the *Freethinker* is not so well known as it might be, or, we venture to say, as it deserves to be. Whatever its position is, it has been achieved without adventitious aids of any kind. It has never been able to indulge in extensive advertising, and it has never stooped to sensationalism. It has relied solely upon the merit of its pages and upon the enthusiasm of its readers. And this latter has been a real help. New readers are constantly being obtained by their help, and once we secure a new reader, we generally keep him, or her, for our lady readers are not behindhand in their affection for the paper. We were, we should say, not at all annoyed at Mr. Justice Joyce's remark. It was amusing and suggestive. And we hope it will suggest to our present readers that they can all do something towards making the *Freethinker* more widely known than it is at present.

Obscure, so far as the general world is concerned, the *Freethinker* may be, but it was well in evidence in Mr. Justice Joyce's Court. Each of the counsel engaged had copies of the paper before him, so, too, had the judge. At one time the place looked like a *Freethinker* reading-room, and one or two of the counsel seemed to enjoy reading some of the paragraphs. We felt rather like handing round subscription forms to all the gentlemen of the wig and gown.

The weather is not yet very summery, but the open-air work in London will be well under weigh in the course of a week or so. The Bethnal Green Branch commences its open-air work in Victoria Park on Sunday, May 2, and it is hoped that East-end Freethinkers will be present in force to give the propaganda a good start. We presume there will be many other London Branches that will start their work about the same date, but information to that effect has not yet reached this office.

Mr. Ralph Chapman, Secretary of the South Shields Branch of the N. S. S., writes *apropos* of our paragraph in last week's "Sugar Plums":—

"Among the Tyneside Freethinkers who foregathered with the South Shields friends in response to your notice last week, the most conspicuous figure was a native of India, who retailed some of his experiences as a propagandist since he abandoned Mohammedanism nearly six years ago. Curiously enough, he had identified another pilgrim, a promising Newcastle recruit, by seeing him reading this paper while they travelled in the South Shields train. Truly the power of the *Freethinker*, if not quite supernatural, is more wonderful than its readers imagine."

There have been a very large number of editions of the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam, but the issue of a new variorum edition is worth noting. This one gives the four editions published from 1859 to 1879, and, of course, contains the following quatrain, which appears in the second edition only:—

"Nay, but for terror of his wrathful Face,
I swear I will not call Injustice Grace;
Not one Good Fellow of the Tavern but
Would kick so poor a Coward from the place."

The heresy here is open, bold, and uncompromising. It is, best of all, manly. Many thousands of people must have felt all that the great heretic here says, but it requires courage and ability to say it in the face of a world so full of cant and cowardice as is ours.

Missionary Converts.

"A vast majority of Tongans and Fijians embraced Christianity because, for political reasons, it suited their chiefs to do so. One who was present at the conversion of an entire tribe in Fiji once gave me an account of the ceremony. A great feast was made for the missionary, who took his seat by the side of the chief. The heathen priest, taking a kava root in his hand, thus addressed the ancestor-gods: 'This is the paltry feast which we, your poverty-stricken children, have made for you. It is our farewell to you: do not be angry with us that we are going to leave you for a time. We are your children, but for the time we are going to worship the god of the foreigners: nevertheless, be not angry with us!' Then the gods consumed the spiritual essence of the meat, and the missionary and his suite ate its grosser material fibre and enjoyed it very much. To the converted native the heathen gods are not always false gods; they continue to exist, but they have been deserted for a time in favor of the gods of the foreigners. This is why relapses into heathenism on the part of the most promising converts will always be so dangerously easy."—BASIL THOMSON (some-time British Representative at Tonga), *The Diversions of a Prime Minister* (1894), pp. 217-18.

CHRISTIANS boast that we spend two millions a year in Foreign Missions to civilise the heathen by converting them to Christianity. We read, in the January number of an Anti-Infidel publication:—

"During the last 1900 years, who has ever heard of the Atheistic societies uniting together with the object of sending Infidel missionaries abroad to humanise the savage, civilise the barbarian, or turn the idolator from his loathsome vices and degrading superstitions?"

And this was written while millions of Christians were, and are now, engaged in blowing one another's brains out; while they are endeavoring to starve the wives and children not engaged in the fighting by cutting off the food supply by mutual blockade!

Would it not be as well to import some Buddhist missionaries into Europe to civilise the Christians and convert them to the mild and beneficent tenets of Buddhism, with its abhorrence of bloodshed, even of animals?

Although Christians will freely admit that, in spite of the experience of 1900 years of Christian faith, there is much room for improvement—to put it

mildly—in the conduct of Christian nations, yet they have a pathetic faith in its power to civilise other nations and tribes in distant parts of the earth; and that not altogether from its moral teaching, but from the supernatural influence of the Holy Spirit, which descends on the convert, and causes what is known as a "change of heart"; which leads him, almost mechanically or automatically, into the paths of virtue and righteousness, and to the casting away of his idolatry and evil superstitions.

Let us now examine the effect of missionary conversion on the minds and morals of the lower races, not as recorded in the glowing pages of missionary magazines, but by the independent and impartial testimony of a thoroughly qualified man of science, an anthropologist and ethnologist, thoroughly acquainted with all the facts, who knew the people intimately, both in their primitive condition before their conversion to Christianity and after they had accepted that belief, and who has faithfully recorded the results; one, moreover, who had no personal prejudice against the missionaries, for he was the friend and intimate of one of the best of them, and endeavored to help him undo some of the mischief wrought by the introduction of the new faith, but which only resulted in their discomfiture, and a petition from the natives to headquarters complaining of the missionary, and asking for a substitute.

We refer to the account published by Vilhjalmur Stefansson, in his book, *My Life with the Eskimo*. In this valuable work we get behind the scenes of missionary labors, and some very necessary light is thrown upon the operations and results of missionary teaching.

Mr. Stefansson—who is of Scandinavian descent but of American nationality—graduated at the State University, Iowa, studied at Harvard, and was one of the leaders of the American expedition to the Arctic seas, 1905-1912.

So far as missionary statistics are concerned, says Mr. Stefansson, "when in their sabbatical years the missionaries return to tell us about their work and its results"—

"If they say that twenty-five have been baptised, you may take it for granted that twenty-five have been baptised. There is no reason to undertake an inquiry into these statistics. What we shall undertake—a series which the missionary seldom attempts—is to examine the minds of the twenty-five converts and see just how much of a spiritual transformation the baptism has wrought, and under what form the teachings of the missionaries are now being treasured in their simple hearts.

"I have lived with the Eskimo until they have become as my own people. I pass my winters in their houses and my summers in their tents; I dress as they dress, eat what they eat, and follow the game across the tundra to get my food exactly as they do, and I have come to feel that I understand them as well as I do my own people. My footing among them is as good as that of the missionary—he comes to teach, but I to learn. He tells them, 'Don't do this' and 'Don't do that,' and the people soon learn what it is he approves and of what he disapproves; but I merely look and listen, with interest, but without comment. They will show him the characteristics which they know are likely to win his approbation, and they will keep from his knowledge the things he considers reprehensible; with me they take it for granted that I know as they do—which in fact I do in many cases. In dealing with the missionary the Eskimo say 'Aye, aye' and 'Nay, nay,' and they watch him out of the corners of their eyes to see whether they said 'Aye' and 'Nay' at the right time. The footing of the scientific student is also different from that of the whaler or trader. He is not interested in their language or their lore. He laughs at their beliefs and calls them silly, exactly as the missionary frowns over them and calls them wise. His are in fur and in whalebone, as the missionary's are in the teaching of doctrine and the enforcement of Sabbath observances, and the habits of the former are of greater interest to him than the habits of the latter."*

* Vilhjalmur Stefansson, *My Life with the Eskimo* (1913), pp. 409-10.

The only way to learn the beliefs and habits of thought of these primitive people is to live with them, learn their language, become identified with them, and in fact, become—for the time being—one of them.

As Stefansson truly observes, when Christianity came to Rome the temples of the gods became the churches of God, and the feasts of the heathen became the feasts of the Church. The heathen gods did not cease to exist, but became evil spirits or devils, and still to be feared.

"Just so among the Eskimo the missionary becomes in the minds of the people a shaman. His prohibitions become taboos; and as miracles could be wrought under the old system by formulæ and charms, so the Christian religion among them becomes not one of 'works,' but of ritual, and prayers are expected to have their immediate and material effect as the charms did formerly" (p. 410).

The religion of the Eskimo—if it can be termed a religion—consisted of an extraordinarily complicated system of taboos. For instance, among the Eskimo of the Alaskan mountains and on the head-waters of the Colville river, "the prohibitions," says Stevansson,

"which applied to the eating of the flesh of the mountain sheep alone were as extensive as the entire dietary section of the Mosaic law. A young girl, for instance, might eat only certain ribs; but when she was full grown she would for a time have to abstain from eating the ribs which had been allowed to her up to then. After a woman had had her first child, she might eat certain other ribs, after her second child still others, and only after bearing five children might she eat all the ribs; but even then she must not eat the membranes on the inside of the rib. If her child was sick, she must not eat certain ribs, and if two of her children were sick, she might not eat certain other ribs" (pp. 410-11).

There were more prohibitions as to sheep if her brother's child was sick, or if her brother's wife died there were still different prohibitions. And so on in amazing complications. And when all the compulsory taboos were complied with, there were still optional ones. If she wanted her daughter to be a good seamstress, there were other sheep taboos to be observed, and still others if she wanted her son to be a hunter, and so on in endless ramifications.

When people of different districts met at a meal, taboos she knew which were appropriate to that meal; she would then ask one of the guests whether he knew of any more; and when all the taboos which all those present knew of had been called to mind, the meal would proceed. Then, says Stefansson,—

"Then the next day, if one of them had a headache, or if the cousin of another broke a leg, they would say to one another, 'What taboo could it have been that we broke?' Some wise old man's advice would be called upon, and he would be told of all the taboos which were observed, and then he would say, 'How did you break your marrow-bone?' Someone would volunteer, 'I broke mine with a stone.' 'Yes, and which hand did you hold the stone in when you broke it?' 'My right hand.' 'Ah yes, that explains it; you should have held the stone in your left hand. That is why your cousin's leg got broken. You broke the marrow-bone the wrong way.'

"It may be a little difficult for the average white man to enter into the frame of mind of those who live under such a complicated taboo system, but it is also difficult for us to sympathise with some of the beliefs held by our immediate ancestors; and if it is a little difficult for us to understand the frame of mind of these people, may it not be a little difficult for them to understand ours? Is it not likely that an elaborate and ingrained system such as this will affect their conception of our rather abstract teachings? A people brought up in the thought habits of a taboo system such as this are likely to continue thinking in the terms of that system after they have been baptised. They will fit the instruction of their teachers, be they schoolmasters or missionaries, into the moulds of their ancestral lore" (pp. 411-12).

And this is exactly what not only the Eskimo, but every other primitive race does, whether in Africa,

Asia, or America. They simply graft the new European or American superstition on to the superstitions they already possess. The missionary merely adds some more taboos to the already staggering burden these primitive people carry, as Stefansson clearly shows.

Among the Eskimo, the expression "a wise man," being translated, means "a man who knows a large number of taboos." He is an honored member of the community, for it is very important to know these things; "if a taboo be broken—no matter how innocently and unknowingly—the inevitable penalty follows in the form of an epidemic or a famine, or an accident or illness affecting some relative of the breaker of the taboo" (p. 412).

Now, says Stefansson, to understand the facts he records, two things of main importance must be kept in sight—

"namely, first, that the ideas which the Eskimo has of the new religion are dictated by his environment and colored by the habits of thought developed under the old religion; and second (and most important) that he looks upon the missionary as the mouthpiece of God, exactly as the shaman was the mouthpiece of the spirits. Bearing these things in mind, we shall glance at the history of the spread of Christianity in Alaska" (p. 413).

Stefansson continues:—

"The Christianity which exists in the minds of the missionaries being as essentially incomprehensible to the Eskimo as our abstract political and scientific ideas and complex social organisation, the missionaries at first naturally accomplished little. At the mouth of the Mackenzie River, for instance, when I was there first in the winter of 1906-7, the missionaries of the Church of England had been there already for more than a decade without making a convert. The people were still unconverted in September, 1907, when I left the district. When I returned in June, 1908, they had been Christianised to the last man" (pp. 414-15).

No doubt the missionaries represented this triumph as due to a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit and the missionary-boxes were rattled more vigorously than ever—the subscribers, of course, never having the faintest suspicion but that the Christianity adopted by the Eskimo was identical with their own; whereas the truth is, says Stefansson, "there grew up among them what might be called an Eskimoised Christianity; in other words, Christianity comprehensible to the Eskimo. The real Christianity had great difficulty in taking root, but this new form spread like the measles" (p. 415). What this new faith consisted of we shall consider in our next.

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

Religion and the Masses.—II.

(Continued from p. 253.)

THERE are three outstanding events in life in which people seem to be distinctly religious—birth, marriage, and death. Probably the great majority of infants are baptised, usually in the rites of the Church of England. But there are other than religious reasons. Long-established custom, the influence of neighbors and relations, and of the women, who are notoriously more conservative and religious than the men, together with a liking for public ceremony, "it looks well," and the pleasures of a family gathering, help to preserve christening against the general decay which is undermining things religious, though it is doubtful if anyone believes in its spiritual efficacy. God-parents are often unbelievers or Nonconformists, and the thought of any after-responsibility to the child never enters their heads. The chief duties of god-parents are to make a present to the child, and to be agreeable afterwards at a merry tea-party. The number of unbaptised and unconfirmed children increases.

For marriages actual figures are available as follows. These are per thousand:—

FORM OF CEREMONY.	YEAR 1851.	YEAR 1910.
Anglican.....	842	616
Nonconformist	62	130*
Roman Catholic	48	42
Jewish	1.7	6.8
All denominations ...	954	795
Civil	48	205

* 132 in 1901; 132 in 1906.

Over the fifty-nine years from 1851 to 1910 the decrease of religious and the increase of civil marriages have gone on steadily.

Marriage celebrations in church owe their popularity to much the same social influences as baptisms. For some strange reason, civil marriage has been looked upon as something undignified and sinister among a section of people. They are only slowly realising that marriage is a civil contract, without which all the religious ceremony would avail nothing. To-day civil marriages are gaining in favor, and could they be accompanied by a public ceremonial, say, in the Town Hall, before the Mayor, they would soon oust religious marriages from popularity. The working classes certainly do not look upon it as a sacrament.

The clergyman is called in less now to death-beds than he formerly was. People are valuing more the practical attentions of the doctor and nurse. Funerals are shorter and simpler, and a kindness would be done to friends and relatives by the abolition of any public ceremonial at the burying of the dead. But old customs die hard, particularly in domestic affairs, and the religious atmosphere surrounding births, marriages, and deaths is strong evidence of this.

The working classes are at variance with organised Christianity on the subject of divorce.

(The Deceased Wife's Sister Act was a relief to many, and legalised numerous unions, but the bishops have always opposed.)

A demand, as well as a necessity, for divorce facilities is growing, and there is a desire for this relief, though not actively expressed. The working classes endure a lot before crying out for reform. Men and women treat a separation as divorce, and marry again, or go to live with others. Estimable clergymen and other good people would be greatly shocked if they knew the number of illegal unions there are among their poorer brethren. The Women's Co-operative Guild, with thirty-two thousand members, mostly in the industrial areas, is making a strong demand for simpler and easier divorce. Recently, the Salford Diocesan Executive of the Roman Catholic Federation protested to the Co-operative Union against this, and Convocations of the Church of England oppose all Divorce Laws. Thus do the Catholic and Apostolic Churches keep in communion with the working class.

Sabbath observance was a stronghold of religiosity in Britain, especially of the Paritanical Christians. Now the masses are not Sabbatarian. There is more amateur gardening done on the Sunday than any other day in the week. Pigeon-flying, fowl-keeping, bee-keeping, dog-fancying, and walking in the country, are popular pursuits practised on Sunday. Angling clubs, with memberships of thousands, hold their competitions on the Lord's Day. Sunday travelling, Sunday sports, Sunday in the parks, museums, on the river, at the cinema-palace, and all possible places of resort and amusement are hugely popular. Public-houses do a good trade on Sunday. All this, be it remembered, in the face of the most active opposition and discouragement from the Churches. The opportunities for Sunday pleasure are immensely restricted, but they are taken eagerly. Were the restrictions removed, the whole population of our islands would enjoy a Bank Holiday every week. Many Trade Unions meet on Sunday, and popular politics are expounded on that day. The circulation of Sunday papers runs to millions of copies. The bicycle and motor-cycle get most use on Sunday. The working class attitude towards Sunday is unmistakable—they consider it a day of rest and recreation, for pleasure and enjoyment,

a time to throw off the shackles of labor and break loose. The tendency towards a free Sunday grows apace. A People's Theatre has been mooted in London. It is proposed to open it on Sunday. If so, it will take, as do all places of amusement that open on the Sabbath. The chief fault that the masses have to find with Sunday is the insufficiency of occupations for that day, other than Church-going. This last they sedulously avoid.

The ancient veneration for the Bible is rapidly disappearing. The Bible is read less than it formerly was. Among the people one finds all sorts of attitudes towards the Bible, except reverence. Indifference, contempt, unbelief, ignorance, sneers, wit, and cynicism, but no respect for sacred writ. The Bible has been deposed. In many homes no Bible is to be found. In many others where it does exist, it is never opened. A small one the children play with, scribble in, and tear up. A big one makes an excellent stand for an aspidistra or bird-cage in the window, or serves as a table-top on which to display ornaments and photographs. The Book of Genesis is frankly disbelieved by all. Of the miracles they are smilingly incredulous. The workers have a vague half-belief in a God, a very amorphous Deism, but they never attribute to him any active interference in human affairs, and they credit him with few virtues and much indifference. Heaven has receded into nothingness, and Hell has become an absurdity. Where are they? asks the working man, and discusses both with critical impartiality. "Devil" has become merely a mild expletive, whose use is permitted even to children. Jokes, stories, and humor, often of a coarse kind, are acceptable on Biblical and religious topics, and never fail to raise a laugh. But nothing in Christianity has declined so much in popular estimation as Christ himself. The miraculous part of him is bluntly scorned, his death for sinners provokes ridicule. Jesus as a man makes no appeal to working men. They are quick to say that Jesus knew nothing at all about life as it is. He never earned his living under industrial conditions; he never married; he argues the toiler. Most objectionable of all is his humility and gentleness. To turn the other cheek to the smiter is to win contempt as a poltroon. All men like "grit" in a man, and the working man loves anyone who shows fight. To be called a "gentle Jesus," or, as often put, a "jumping Jesus," is to be placed in the lowest grade of fools, and to hear it come from a working man's lips is a lesson in scornful emphasis.

This sounds very dreadful no doubt, but it is true. Go among the masses of the great industrial centres and hear how they treat sacred things and the sacred names, always with ribaldry, disdain, and contempt.

The saying of family or any other sort of prayer, and of grace at table, is becoming extinct in most homes.

ALFRED ROWBERRY WILLIAMS.
(To be concluded.)

Secular Society, Limited, v. Bowman.

CHANCERY DIVISION.

BEFORE MR. JUSTICE JOYCE.

(From the "Daily Telegraph" of April 16.)

INTERESTING argument took place on the point raised in this case whether a bequest of £10,000 made by the late Chas. Bowman, of Ventnor, Isle of Wight, to the Secular Society (Limited) was void, on the ground that it was against law and public policy. The gift was opposed by testatrix's heir-at-law and next-of-kin on this ground. The Secular Society (Limited) is a registered company, formed, as counsel stated, to give legal security to the funds of the parent Society, which is styled the National Secular Society. Mr. Tomlin, K.C., and Mr. Macnaghten (instructed by Harper and Co.) for the Society; Mr. Cave, K.C., and Mr. J. A. Price (instructed by Calder, Woods, and Potchick) for the heir-at-law and next-of-kin; Mr. Hughes, K.C., and Mr. L. W. Byrne (instructed by Calder, Woods, and Potchick) for the trustees.

Mr. Cave stated that the plaintiff Society was really a dummy Society formed to receive gifts which could not be legally made to the parent Society, because its propaganda was subversive of the Christian religion and morality.

His Lordship: Do you want me to hold that the Society is something different from what the Memorandum of Association makes it?

Mr. Cave: Yes.

His Lordship: I will not do it. You can go on arguing something else. It is a simple question whether the trust is good or bad.

Mr. Cave read an affidavit by Mr. Foote, President of the parent Society, to the effect that advances were made to it by the plaintiff Society for the furtherance of its propaganda. He also quoted the Principles and Objects of the parent Society, including the following:—

"The Society knows nothing of divine guidance or interference.

"Human welfare in this world is the proper end of all thought and action, and your conduct is not to be based on supernatural belief."

"Theology is condemned by reason of superstition and by experience.

"Utility is man's moral guide."

DISESTABLISHMENT OF RELIGION.

To put it plainly, he submitted this meant the disestablishment of religion. Secularism meant anti-religion.

His Lordship: You must not expect me to accept that.

Mr. Cave: "Utility is man's moral guide" is contrary to religion and morality, as we understand them.

His Lordship: Not contrary to. It is trying to put morality upon a different foundation to the Christian religion.

Mr. Cave thought the Court would not shut its eyes to the fact that the plaintiff Society was a stalking-horse for the National Society.

His Lordship: What do you mean by the stalking-horse? Even if it were proved that those who founded it had an object in view which was illegal, that would not make the Society illegal.

Mr. Cave said some of the publications of the Society were blasphemous libels. Blasphemous libels were indictable, and a legacy to be applied to such publications was void as being contrary to law and public policy.

Mr. Tomlin: I object to the publications being brought into this matter at all.

His Lordship: I allow the objection. I am not going into that.

Mr. Cave, in order to preserve his right to deal with the nature of the publications if the case goes to appeal, drew his lordship's attention to a number of decisions bearing on the point.

THE SUPERNATURAL.

His Lordship: There is no Atheism in the Memorandum of Association of this Company, is there?

Mr. Cave: It says the object is to promote the principle of human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge and not the supernatural.

His Lordship: That is not denying the existence of a Supreme Being.

Mr. Cave: I do not think it will be denied that the object of this Society is to combat and subvert religion as the basis of action.

His Lordship: Their religion is a different one.

Mr. Cave: Although no indictable offence is put forward as their object, what they are doing is unlawful.

His Lordship: Is it unlawful to say that the principle of human knowledge should be based upon natural knowledge?

Mr. Cave: Our law has a history, and in old times that contention would subject a man to prosecution. The law has been modified from time to time, and Dissenters, Roman Catholics, Jews, and Unitarians have been relieved; but there is no change in the law which removes disabilities from those who propagate doctrines which combat religion, and this Society clearly aims at that.

His Lordship: The meaning of religion raises a difficult question. Is not this a religion?

ANTI-RELIGIOUS MOTIVES.

Mr. Cave: No, it is the absence of religion. It teaches people not to be directed by Divine guidance at all, but by their own happiness and inclinations. There is no religious motive. The motive is anti-religious. There is statutory prohibition of the denial of Godhead.

His Lordship: I do not see that in the Memorandum. It is that conduct should be based on something, and it relates only to this world, and not to the world to come.

Mr. Cave: They teach people not to base themselves upon religious belief.

His Lordship: There may be such a thing as natural religion, may there not?

Mr. Cave: It is a very vague definition indeed. This is a Secular Society.

His Lordship: The name does not say you should not believe in religion. There is such a thing as Secular Education.

Mr. Cave: That is education without religion.

Counsel proceeded to cite a number of decisions. In one a contract to hire rooms for Secularist purposes was held to be unenforceable. In another a gift for the purposes of an essay on natural theology was voided on the ground that it was inconsistent with Christian religion.

His Lordship: Natural theology is not inconsistent with Christian religion. I once read a book with that title, with a preface by Lord Brougham, and it certainly was not an atheistical book.

Mr. Cave: It may be that a book on the subject would not be held to be an infringement of the law. The printing and propagating of the teachings and writings of Johanna Southcote was held to be good.

His Lordship: Although there was a great deal that is inconsistent with what we call Christian religion.

PUBLIC POLICY.

Mr. Cave further cited a case in which the custody of a child was taken from the mother and given to the father, on the ground that the mother declined to have it taught Christianity. As to public policy, he said it was a hard horse to ride. A gift for superstitious uses was not contrary to public statutes, but it had been declared void on the ground of public policy. So, also, although it was not forbidden by statute, a gift was held void because it was made to Roman Catholic priests, with the express injunction, "whatever I have left, it is my wish that the sums may be paid as soon as possible, that I may have the benefit of their prayers and masses." Counsel referred to the case of gifts to pay the fines of convicted poachers.

His Lordship pointed out that those were the fines of poachers already fined, and not of potential poachers, and added: There is no harm in paying the fines of persons who have been convicted. I am afraid I have done it myself—but not of poachers. (Laughter.)

Mr. Cave finally submitted with regard to the precept "Human conduct should be based upon natural knowledge, and not upon supernatural belief," that it could not be followed without denying God.

His Lordship: Really!

Mr. Cave: Is there anything more contrary to Christian religion than denying Christian religion to be true? It is impossible to carry out the main object of this Society without encouraging people to infringe the statutory religion. The Company is infringing the statutes by its publications.

His Lordship: I shall not listen to that.

Mr. Cave: Then I say, on the authority of the cases, that this legacy, being for purposes against the law and public policy, cannot stand.

His Lordship, giving judgment, said he had not the smallest sympathy with the objects of the Society, but the question raised was difficult to decide according to the law, and the law only. The Memorandum of the Society described how the money going to them should be expended. He found nothing in the Memorandum or the Articles of Association subversive of morality, contrary to law, or contravening any statute. That being so, the legacy was a perfectly good one, unless it could be made out that, according to the constitution of the Society, the rule against perpetuities had been infringed. He held that it had not been infringed, and that the gift was a good one.

Obituary.

We regret to report the death of Mr. Joseph Barry, of Balham, which occurred on Sunday, April 11, in the sixty-sixth year of his age. Mr. Barry was a Vice-President of the National Secular Society and a Director of the Secular Society, Limited. For forty years he was an earnest, zealous, and unremitting worker in the glorious cause of freedom of thought. Both on sea and land he availed himself of every opportunity to disseminate the principles of Freethought, which were dearer to him than life itself. He was noted and respected for his deep sincerity, transparent honesty, and undaunted courage. His loyalty to conviction endeared him to all his friends, and made his life a power for good in the community in which he lived. The fidelity with which he followed such great leaders as Charles Bradlaugh and G. W. Foote was worthy of all praise. He was interred on Saturday, April 17, at the Streatham Cemetery, Tooting, in the presence of a large number of friends and admirers, including Miss A. Stanley, Dr. R. T. Nichols, Mr. W. Baker and two daughters, Mr. and Mrs. Brandes, Messrs. Victor Roger, S. Samuels, T. Saunders, T. Shore, and F. Wood, all of whom came forward to express their sympathy with Mrs. Barry in her loss, thereby affording her a great consolation. A Secular Service was conducted at the graveside.—J. T. L.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.
OUTDOOR.

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

COUNTRY.
INDOOR.

FAIRSWORTH (Secular School, Pole-lane): E. Morris Young, 2 45, "The Passing of the Hun"; 6.30, "Peace, or Armistice, Our Purpose?"

PROPAGANDIST LEAFLETS. New Issue. 1. *Christianity a Stupendous Failure*, J. T. Lloyd; 2. *Bible and Teetotalism*, J. M. Wheeler; 3. *Principles of Secularism*, C. Watts; 4. *Where Are Your Hospitals?* R. Ingersoll. 5. *Because the Bible Tells Me So*, W. P. Ball; 6. *Why Be Good?* by G. W. Foote. *The Parson's Creed*. Often the means of arresting attention and making new members. Price 6d. per hundred, post free 7d. Special rates for larger quantities. Samples on receipt of stamped addressed envelope.—Miss E. M. VANCE, N. S. S. Secretary, 62 Farringdon-street, London, E.C.



LATEST N. S. S. BADGE.—A single Pansy flower, size as shown; artistic and neat design in enamel and silver; permanent in color; has been the means of making many pleasant introductions. Brooch or Stud fastening, 6d. Scarf-pin, 8d. Postage in Great Britain 1d. Small reduction on not less than one dozen. Exceptional value.—From Miss E. M. VANCE, General Secretary, N. S. S., 62 Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

THE LATE CHARLES BRADLAUGH, M.P.

A Statuette Bust,

Modelled by Burvill in 1881. An excellent likeness of the great Freethinker. Highly approved of by his daughter and intimate colleagues. Size, 6½ ins. by 8½ ins. by 4½ ins.

Plaster (Ivory Finish) 3/-
Extra by post (British Isles): One Bust, 1/-; two, 1/6.

THE PIONEER PRESS 61 Farringdon-street, London, E.C.; or, Miss E. M. VANCE, Secretary, N. S. S.

All Profits to be devoted to the N. S. S. Benevolent Fund.

America's Freethought Newspaper.

THE TRUTH SEEKER.

FOUNDED BY D. M. BENNETT, 1873.
CONTINUED BY E. M. MACDONALD, 1883-1909.
G. E. MACDONALD Editor
L. K. WASHBURN EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTOR

SUBSCRIPTION RATES.
Single subscription in advance 3.00
Two new subscribers 5.00
One subscription two years in advance 5.00
To all foreign countries, except Mexico, 50 cents per annum extra
Subscriptions for any length of time under a year, at the rate of 25 cents per month, may be begun at any time.
Freethinkers everywhere are invited to send for specimen copies which are free.

THE TRUTH SEEKER COMPANY,
Publishers, Dealers in Freethought Books,
62 VESRY STREET, NEW YORK, U.S.A.

Determinism or Free Will?

By C. COHEN.

Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.

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

CONTENTS.

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

PRICE ONE SHILLING NET.
(POSTAGE 2d.)

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

THE SECULAR SOCIETY (LIMITED)

Company Limited by Guarantees.

Registered Office—62 FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

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

Secretary—Miss E. M. VANCE.

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

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

The liability of members is limited to £1, in case the Society should ever be wound up and the assets were insufficient to cover liabilities—a most unlikely contingency.

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

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

The Society's affairs are managed by an elected Board of Directors, consisting of not less than five and not more than twelve members, one-third of whom retire (by ballot) each year,

but are capable of re-election. An Annual General Meeting of members must be held in London, to receive the Report, elect new Directors, and transact any other business that may arise.

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

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

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

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

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President: G. W. FOOTE.

Secretary: Miss E. M. VANCE, 62 Farringdon-st., London, E.C.

Principles and Objects.

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

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

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

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

Membership.

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

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

Name.....
Address.....
Occupation.....
Dated this..... day of..... 190.....

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

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

Immediate Practical Objects.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

An Extension of the moral law to animals, so as to secure them humane treatment and legal protection against cruelty.

The Promotion of Peace between nations, and the substitution of Arbitration for War in the settlement of international disputes.

FREETHOUGHT PUBLICATIONS.

LIBERTY AND NECESSITY. An argument against Free Will and in favor of Moral Causation. By David Hume. 82 pages, price 2d., postage 1d.

THE MORTALITY OF THE SOUL. By David Hume. With an Introduction by G. W. Foote. 16 pages, price 1d., postage 1/2d.

AN ESSAY ON SUICIDE. By David Hume. With an Historical and Critical Introduction by G. W. Foote. price 1d., postage 1/2d.

FROM CHRISTIAN PULPIT TO SECULAR PLATFORM. By J. T. Lloyd. A History of his Mental Development. 60 pages, price 1d., postage 1d.

THE MARTYRDOM OF HYPATIA. By M. M. Mangasarian (Chicago). 16 pages, price 1d., postage 1/2d.

THE WISDOM OF THE ANCIENTS. By Lord Bacon. A beautiful and suggestive composition. 86 pages, reduced from 1s. to 3d., postage 1d.

A REFUTATION OF DEISM. By Percy Bysshe Shelley. With an Introduction by G. W. Foote. 82 pages, price 1d., postage 1/2d.

LIFE, DEATH, AND IMMORTALITY. By Percy Bysshe Shelley. 16 pages, price 1d., postage 1/2d.

WHY AM I AN AGNOSTIC? By Col. R. G. Ingersoll. 24 pages, price 2d., postage 1/2d.

BIBLE STUDIES AND PHALMIC WORSHIP. By J. M. Wheeler. 136 pages, price 1s. 6d., postage 2d.

UTILITARIANISM. By Jeremy Bentham. An Important Work. 82 pages, price 1d., postage 1/2d.

THE MISTAKES OF MOSES. By Col. R. G. Ingersoll. Only Complete Edition. Beautifully printed on fine paper. 136 pages. Reduced to 6d., postage 2 1/2d.

THE ESSENCE OF RELIGION. By Ludwig Feuerbach. "All theology is anthropology." Büchner said that "no one has demonstrated and explained the purely human origin of the idea of God better than Ludwig Feuerbach." 78 pages, price 6d., postage 1d.

THE CODE OF NATURE. By Denis Diderot. Powerful and eloquent. 16 pages, price 1d., postage 1/2d.

BIOGRAPHICAL DICTIONARY OF FREETHINKERS— Of All Ages and Nations. By Joseph Mazzini Wheeler, 355 pages, price (reduced from 7s. 6d.) 3s., postage 4d.

A PHILOSOPHICAL INQUIRY CONCERNING HUMAN LIBERTY. By Anthony Collins. With Preface and Annotations by G. W. Foote and Biographical Introduction by J. M. Wheeler. One of the strongest defences of Determinism ever written. Cloth, 1s.; paper, 6d., post 1d.

DEFENCE OF FREETHOUGHT. By Col. R. G. Ingersoll. 64 pages, price 2d., postage 1d.

ROME OR REASON? A Reply to Cardinal Manning By Col. R. G. Ingersoll. 48 pages, price 1d., postage 1d.

PAMPHLETS BY C. COHEN.

AN OUTLINE OF EVOLUTIONARY ETHICS. Price 6d. postage 1d.

SOCIALISM, ATHEISM, AND CHRISTIANITY. Price 1d., postage 1/2d.

CHRISTIANITY AND SOCIAL ETHICS. Price 1d., postage 1/2d.

PAIN AND PROVIDENCE. Price 1d., postage 1/2d.

THE PIONEER PRESS,
61 Farringdon-street, London, E.C.

THE BIBLE HANDBOOK

FOR FREETHINKERS AND ENQUIRING CHRISTIANS.

BY

G. W. FOOTE and W. P. BALL.

NEW AND CHEAPER EDITION

Issued by the Secular Society, Ltd.

WELL PRINTED ON GOOD PAPER AND WELL BOUND.

In Paper Covers, SIXPENCE—Net.

(POSTAGE 1½d.)

In Cloth Covers, ONE SHILLING—Net.

(POSTAGE 2d.)

ONE OF THE MOST USEFUL BOOKS EVER PUBLISHED.

INVALUABLE TO FREETHINKERS ANSWERING CHRISTIANS

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.

PIONEER PAMPHLETS.

Now being issued by the Secular Society Ltd

No. I.—BIBLE AND BEER. By G. W. Foote.

FORTY PAGES—ONE PENNY.

Postage: single copy, ½d.; 6 copies, 1½d.; 18 copies, 3d.; 26 copies 4d. (parcel post).

No. II.—DEITY AND DESIGN. By C. Cohen.

(A Reply to Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace.)

THIRTY-TWO PAGES—ONE PENNY.

Postage: Single copy, ½d.; 6 copies, 1½d.; 18 copies, 2½d.; 26 copies, 4d. (parcel post).

No. III.—MISTAKES OF MOSES. By Colonel Ingersoll.

THIRTY-TWO PAGES—ONE PENNY.

Postage: Single copy, ½d.; 6 copies, 1½d.; 18 copies 2½d.; 26 copies, 4d. (parcel post).

IN PREPARATION.

No. IV.—CHRISTIANITY AND PROGRESS. By G. W. Foote.

No. V.—MODERN MATERIALISM. By W. Mann.

Special Terms for Quantities for Free Distribution or to Advanced Societies.

THE PIONEER PRESS, 61 FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E.C.