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For the one enemy we have in this universe is stupidity, darkness of mind.—CARLYLE.

Thanking God for the War.

PASTOR RUSSELL is, in himself, a totally negligible personage, who possesses no qualities whatever that differentiate him from the great bulk of theologians. In common with the whole school, he is a blind Bibliolater, though as an interpreter of Scripture he is more sensible than most of his brethren. For one thing, he is a vigorous denier of the doctrine of everlasting punishment; but he denies it merely because he cannot find it in the Bible. While thus worshipping God's Book, he is in revolt against God's Churches, which he characterises as hopelessly corrupt, and concerning which his insistent exhortation to his hearers and readers is, "Come out of them." But had Pastor Russell been simply the minister of a church, he would not have deserved any notice in these columns, for then the religious public would never have heard of him. The fact is, however, that he has the command of apparently unlimited funds, which enable him to flood Christendom with leaflets, pamphlets, and books, by means of which his propaganda becomes a source of public danger. His *Boie Students' Monthly*, for example, is scattered broadcast in all communities. People find it in their letter-boxes, under their doors, and down their areas. It seems to be published for gratuitous distribution. Number 7 of volume vi. is now before us, which contains an exceptionally mischievous article, entitled "Giving Thanks for War or for Peace." Comical in the extreme is the teaching of this strange article, although to those who verily believe it, it must be terribly tragical. In the pre-Christian world only the Jews enjoyed the right and privilege of approaching the Throne of Grace, because they alone, of all the nations on earth, were in covenant relationship with God. Ever since the Incarnation, only "the followers of Jesus, who accept the Divine arrangement of the Gospel Age, are privileged thus to come into relationship with the Creator through him." All the Pagans of the world, who are overwhelmingly in the majority, are cruelly denied the right to pray. They, poor things, dare not approach the Throne of Grace because they are not in covenant relationship with God, the good Creator himself having deliberately left them out in the cold. All they are allowed to do is to give thanks for whatever the Supreme Being sees fit, in his infinite wisdom, to send them. "Only a limited number may enjoy the privileges of prayer or expect answers to their prayers," but all alike "may worship and bow down," for doing which they "will surely receive a reflex blessing." All may kneel before the Lord their Maker, but only a few, comparatively, may pray and reasonably expect answers to their prayers. And thus we are brought to the subject of the War. At the very outset we are confronted with this extraordinary paragraph:—

"Very evidently the majority of mankind have an insufficiency of knowledge of God, of the Bible, and of the Divine Plan therein set forth, to thank God for the present state of war. But to the Church, whose eyes

of understanding have been opened to see the lengths and the breadths, the heights and the depths, of God's love in the message of the Bible, St. Paul writes: 'In everything give thanks.'"

That is thoroughly Biblical, we admit; but blind obedience to the commands of Scripture is an unmistakable mark of degeneracy. All adversities are things to be avoided, if possible; and if not, to be so endured as to be overcome at the earliest practicable moment. If God there be, he has no right to derive glory to his name through the direst calamities that befall his people. Such a Deity would be the quint-essence of immorality, whom to worship would be a crime. It is sheer nonsense to say that all things work together for good to anybody, whether God be loved or not. Now take the following:—

"In respect to the great European War now in progress, its casualties, desolations, and wounds, only the well-instructed of God's people may understand the Divine plans and arrangements so thoroughly as to be able to give thanks in respect to the War, and able to exercise confident faith that the outcome of it will mean blessings of instruction and preparation for future blessings."

That, again, is truly Scriptural, but touches the highest point of unreason. Many Christians there are who are not afraid to say that the War is not from above, but from below. Months ago, Principal Whyte, of Edinburgh, affirmed, in unambiguous terms, that we owed it to the fact that the German Emperor had sold himself to the Devil, in which case our thanks are due, if at all, to his Majesty of the Lower Regions. Pastor Russell, however, asserts, not only that God permits the War, but that he had "foreseen it and had made provision for its results before permitting it." What unmixed, intolerable balderdash! Were the War to result in the complete triumph of Prussian militarism, would the reverend gentleman thank God for that, or would he regard that as a fulfilment of the Divine plans and arrangements?

The article proceeds to describe the War as "merely the outgrowth of human selfishness, ignorance, superstition, and false doctrine," and assures us, on the vague authority of the Bible, "that, although it will lead on to revolution, anarchy, and utter wreck of the present order of things—the present civilisation—nevertheless God is prepared for the emergency. 'Man's extremity will be God's opportunity.'" The next paragraph is so deliciously simple that we must give it in the writer's own words:—

"The hour having come for Messiah to take the reins of government, he will stand forth in power and majesty at the proper moment, and exclaim to the raging elements of the restless human sea, 'Peace, be still!' And there will be a grand calm. The lesson learned in this trouble will be a lasting one; and the blessed opportunities of Messiah's kingdom, which will be built upon the ashes of present institutions, will bring life and joy to all the willing and obedient."

Could anything be more ludicrous than the way in which the divines deal with their imaginary Christ? Now they tell us that he has conquered Europe, and sits on his throne as king for ever; now that Christendom has rebelled against him, and for the time being thwarted his holy purposes; and now that his blessed reign in righteousness and love will only begin at the end of the War. These contradictory

statements have been persistently repeated and discredited in every Christian century. Messiah's hour is always on the eve of striking, but has never yet actually struck. Theoretically, he has been on the throne as actual Lord of life ever since the days of the Apostles, and his followers speak of him as the all-conquering Christ; but, practically, he is only about to assume the reins of government. Not long ago, Dr. Horton mournfully admitted that as yet Christianity has never even been tried, but, the Word of God being unbreakable, its day of glorious triumph must be close at hand. "At the proper moment," which never is the present moment, every knee shall bow in the name of Jesus, and every tongue confess that he is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. "At the proper moment," which is ever predicted to be on the verge of appearing, but which has never once risen above the horizon! What does Pastor Russell know about God's times and seasons? If the Christ of theology were a living reality, his proper moment to exclaim "Peace, be still" would have been the one before the War began. Because he did not allay the tumult of warlike passions before the sword was unsheathed, it is taken for granted that "the proper moment" had not arrived, but when it *does* arrive there will instantly be "a grand calm." Do the men of God really imagine that they will always succeed in throwing dust in people's eyes in so clumsy a manner? Do they seriously believe that sane men and women can be so easily hoodwinked with empty words? Hitherto, all Christian prophecies have been wholly belied by the events, and we have no hesitation in declaring that those indulged in just now are certain to share the same fate. Is it possible to conceive that an all-loving Heavenly Father, or an all-compassionate Redeemer, would allow millions of his own children to be brutally butchered on battlefields simply because the proper moment to interfere had not yet come? Why, the proper moment for such a Being to intervene is the moment of sore need, the moment when his sons begin to quarrel and to threaten one another.

We candidly confess and glory in our utter inability to see the War from Pastor Russell's viewpoint; and, consequently, we cannot possibly give thanks for it. If there be a Devil behind this bloody conflict, we can discover no intelligible indication that he is about to be bound over for a twelvemonth, much less for a thousand years. This is by no means a war to end war. Religious journalists are positive that when the War ends we shall find ourselves in an entirely new world; but we are equally positive that they are wholly mistaken. No war has ever recreated society, nor even improved the conditions of life in the countries concerned. The natural tendency of war is to cheapen life and lower the standards of conduct. While it may awaken into noble activity a few fine virtues, it brings into being many counterbalancing vices, which cling to the character long after it is over. How, then, can we give thanks to either God or Devil for the present savage struggle?

As already hinted, we frankly admit the thoroughly Biblical character of Pastor Russell's teaching; but it is none the less to be condemned on that account. Is it reasonable to suppose that a just and good God permits the worst of all evils, and converts it into a seed, out of which shall spring up a vast harvest of wholesome grain? The Gospel Jesus himself exposes the infinite absurdity of such a supposition when he says, "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but the corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit." Even if we believed in God, we could not feel grateful to him for the War, for our conviction would then be that he ought to have adopted some humaner means of destroying Prussian militarism. For our part, we hope that our arms will be victorious, because we are convinced that British militarism at its worst is preferable to the German brand at its best.

J. T. LLOYD.

The Sign of the Cross.

A FEW weeks ago one of the religious weeklies called attention to the fact that in many of the villages in France and Belgium that had been shelled by either the Germans or the Allies, the church, or one of the many crucifixes that abound in the country districts, remained uninjured. Since then several other papers have drawn attention to the same fact, although I have no doubt that other things besides crucifixes and churches also escaped destruction. A few years back, when St. Pierre was destroyed by an earthquake, one of the few places, if not the only place, that escaped destruction was the prison. Of course, we were not asked to draw any moral from that. It would not have looked well to have pointed out that while "Providence" smashed the churches, it spared the prison. In the case of the villages of France and Belgium, however, the moral was supposed to be clear. It was the sacred character of these things that preserved them. In some way, God had his protecting hand over the village church or the wayside crucifix. It strengthened the faith of some. Others might be just as likely to reflect that a Deity who could save a wooden post from destruction while he permitted the smashing up of hundreds of homes, laid himself open to very drastic criticism.

A further stage of this surreptitious appeal to superstition was reached in a recent issue of the *Daily Mail*. This paper published an alleged photograph of Neuve Chapelle, showing the place after its bombardment by the British. Everything was depicted in ruins except a huge cross bearing the effigy of Christ, and underneath the picture was the legend: "The village was reduced to ruins, but out of the wreckage stands this—the lonely symbol of Christianity." The moral is not stated, but it is implied, and I have no doubt that Christians, at all events, will regard the picture as impressive and the moral as inevitable.

To me, also, the moral is a plain one. It is not quite identical with that which Christians will draw, but it is an obvious one for all that. I believe that no more fitting symbol could be found to place above the devastated ruins of Belgium and Northern France than that gigantic crucifix. If its preservation is due to the interposition of Deity, one can only credit him with a power of satire such as he is not ordinarily thought of as possessing. If, to put the matter paradoxically, he were a Freethinker, it is exactly the kind of symbol he would have selected to place there. As a Freethinker, it is the kind of symbol I should have been delighted to have suggested. And had I the power, nothing would please me better than to have painted on huge canvases pictures of the ruined homes of the Continent, and above the pyramidal mounds of dead bodies a gleaming cross. It would serve to convey to future generations one of the real and one of the most valuable lessons of the conflict.

The belligerent nations are all Christian by tradition. That is a fact of which one should never lose sight. The titular heads of the nations—except France—are more or less related by marriage. Bishops on either side of the fighting lines bless the armies and encourage them by appeals to Christian conviction. Elaborate preparations have been made to provide the soldiers with religion. The warships on both sides, are solemnly consecrated to their work. There is only one non-Christian nation engaged, and that is regarded—by one side—as an interloper. Turkey is treated as the mere tool of Christian Germany, and is being told, in substance, that this is a Christian quarrel, and it would have been wiser to have allowed the Christians to fight it out between themselves. It would obviously spoil the picture to show the Cross and the Crescent in friendly alliance as a symbol of the "great War." Centuries of Christian training, of Christian tradition, and of Christian example have resulted in setting the Christian nations in the world at each other's throats, animated with a ferocity unequalled in civilised and

in uncivilised times, and prostituting the fruits of man's intellectual conquest to a wholesale destruction of human life and property.

What more fitting symbol, then, could be found than the cross? Has there been a great war for centuries in which religious feelings have not played their part? Have not some of the worst of wars, and usually the most ferocious ones, been mainly inspired by religion? What of the thousands upon thousands of Jews who have been brutally murdered by Christian ferocity, from the mediæval massacres to present-day Russian pogroms? What of the many thousands of people put to a brutal death for the offence of witchcraft? When two civilisations were destroyed in South America, under what symbol was it done? The cross. When Spain robbed some, outraged or murdered others, and expelled thousands of Moors and Jews from their homes, what, again, was the symbol employed? The cross. When the streets of Paris ran red with blood on the night of St. Bartholomew, what, again, was the symbol held aloft by the murderers? The cross. What has been among the most powerful causes of the bitterness and brutalities in Ireland for three centuries? The cross. There is nothing new, nothing unusual, in the *Daily Mail* pictograph. It is the most fitting symbol that could be found. One would, indeed, congratulate the *Mail* on publishing it if love of truth had been responsible for its appearance. As it is, one can only appreciate its stupidity.

We have all been horrified by the destruction and the brutalities of the present War. But in sober truth these are nothing to what has occurred to almost the same lands during those times when the power of the cross was unchecked by the spirit of Freethought. Nearly six centuries ago the banner of the cross was carried into Foulure and Piedmont to correct the spread of heresy. It was a religious crusade pure and simple. Christian bishops were among its generals, and one of its chief engineers was an archdeacon, the whole army was solemnly blessed by the Pope. And the consequences were such as to make, by contrast, the worst of the present happenings insignificant. In one town 20,000 men and women and children were butchered. In another 400 were burned in one pile, and the Christian chronicler remarks that "they made a wonderful blaze and went to burn everlastingly in hell." And over their charred bodies there might have been fittingly erected the same symbol that we are told was left standing after the bombardment of Neuve Chapelle.

Nearer still to the present events was the coming of Christian Spain to the Netherlands—Spain the ultra-pious, so Christian that it preferred the economic ruin of the country rather than harbor Jews and Mohammedans—Spain whose piety became a by-word amongst all the nations of the earth. The Netherlands was wealthy, progressive, prosperous, and peaceful. On that land the sign of the cross fell like a horrible blight. For long the people were robbed, ill-treated, and oppressed. Driven wild by oppression, the Netherlands decided that even death in arms was preferable to continuous robbery and ill-treatment under the Christian government of Spain. The aim here was avowedly to make the Netherlands Christian—in the Spanish sense—and to keep it so. Many towns and cities felt the full weight of the Spanish fury; I have space now for only a couple of instances. St. Quentin, one of the cities that has felt the brunt of fighting in the present War, was captured in 1557. I pass over the carnage of the actual fighting. But after the city was taken, says Motley:—

"In every house entered during the first day, every human being was butchered. The sack lasted all that day and the whole of the following.....The women were not generally outraged, but they were stripped naked lest they should conceal treasure which belonged to their conquerors, and they were slashed in the face with knives, partly in sport, partly as a punishment for not giving up property which was not in their possession. The soldiers even cut off the arms of many of these women, and then turned them loose,

maimed and naked, into the blazing streets.....Human heads, limbs, and trunks were mingled amongst the bricks and rafters of the houses which were falling on every side.....The remains of nearly all the able-bodied male population, dismembered, gnawed by dogs, or blackened by fire, polluted the midsummer air."

At the taking of Antwerp nearly six thousand Spanish soldiers took part in the capture of the city. Before commencing work they fell upon their knees and solemnly asked the blessing of God on their work, and carried before them a standard, one side of which was emblazoned with the picture of the crucified Christ, the other side with that of the Virgin Mary. They entered the city calling upon the aid of St. James and other saints. The city was soon taken, and the massacre and work of destruction commenced. At least 8,000 people were put to death. Six millions of property was destroyed by the fire. There was not a single species of crime that a brutal soldiery could commit that was lacking. Antwerp, one of the richest and most prosperous cities of Europe, was placed in ruins—not altogether so, for then, as now, "the lonely symbol of Christianity" remained. Above all the butchering and burning the Cathedral remained unharmed. Its bells chimed the half-quarters right through the massacre. The sign of the cross remained suspended high in air, as though to consecrate the work that was going on below.

I thank the *Daily Mail* for its pictorial lesson in Freethought. The service is none the less real because it is performed unknowingly. The picture of the cross unharmed amidst the ruins of Neuve Chapelle is symbolical of much that has taken place during Christianity's long reign. In the Old World and in the New it has witnessed the destruction of cities and civilised nations. It has been held aloft over the horror of black slavery, the fiendish work of the Inquisition, the insensate brutality of a St. Bartholomew massacre, the burning of witches and heretics, the ruins of thousands of homes, and the destruction of myriads of human lives. It is the symbol that was planted over the ruins of the Old Roman civilisation. It waved over that of the grave of Mohammedan culture some centuries later, and it would only be in line with its past record were it to remain aloft over the ruins of the civilisation of to-day.

C. COHEN.

Animals in War Time.

The Dogs of War, and Other Sketches. By George Bedborough. Illustrated. Letchworth Garden City Press; 1915. 2s. net.

MR. GEORGE BEDBOROUGH is an accomplished writer who has written on humanitarian and sociological subjects for many years. When a young man, he edited the *Adult*, a periodical that is still treasured by collectors, and now he is approaching middle-age he is writing charming stories for children. When a known writer like Mr. Bedborough publishes a collection of such sketches, one naturally expects a good deal of them. In a novel it is easy to tolerate occasional lapses, but the short story, even at a moderate level, should be nearer perfection. Even in plain narrative, the telling of curious and amusing events demand considerable qualities of artistry.

In writing these delightful sketches of animal life, Mr. Bedborough's avowed object is to awaken our sympathies, and he has done well in drawing our attention to an aspect of war which is often overlooked. All readily think of the sufferings of the soldiers in the fighting line, but few think of the sufferings of the war-horse, which also goes to battle and suffers and dies in a quarrel which is not his, and for causes he cannot understand. It is not hardness of heart, but lack of imagination, which prevents so many from sympathising with the woes of animals in war. Says Mr. Bedborough in one of these sketches:—

"Let those who write for all to read tell of the men whose deaths fill the earth with tears. A war means

blood and tears for man and those who love him. What does war mean for the horse and the dog whose brave deeds none sings? These beasts live and work, and feel pain, and die of wounds on the field just like men."

This is well and truly said, and loses nothing by being addressed to children. Here is a poignant description of a battlefield:—

"There was a horse which lay in pain with one leg crushed by a big gun, whose weight still held the horse as in a vice. In all of those hours till the sun set the horse lay still. At times the pain was so keen that his groans were loud and deep. More than one horse far off in the same great field heard the cry, and gave back the same call for help. What help could come there? The men who fought had all their work to do to keep the foe at bay. All the host of men who lay dead on the field could not help. There were those, too, who lived, but these were worse off than the dead, for the dead were at rest. Some men had wounds in the head, the side, or the limbs. Some had lost arms or legs, or both. One man close by turned his head to the horse as if he would give up all he had of life to aid the horse; then he, too, died, and the horse was still left in his pain."

Mr. Bedborough does not confine himself to the subject of war, but writes against all forms of cruelty. He describes the tortures of the hunted stag, the miseries of the Arab's camel, and the troubles of the coster's donkey. The traffic in old horses rouses his honest indignation:—

"These horses on the road to the sea are doomed to a long, dreary walk, to a longer, drearier, bitter sea journey, and a clumsy butchery when that is survived. Many die on the journey, especially at sea, where the confined space, the cramped limbs, the irritating rope-bonds, the economies in food, light, and air, combine to swell the tale of mortality.....Can we not be chivalrous enough to give the noblest beast in the world the right to a quiet, untormented old age, and immunity from the horrors of that road to the sea, with its vista of torture and murder as the end and crown of its useful life in our service?"

The praise of the horse has been sung in many languages, and it is, indeed, a noble creature, and one of the most beautiful in the animal world. An Arab steed or a thoroughbred racehorse reaches, amongst animals, the highest point of physical perfection. Yet, in spite of this knowledge, it is usual to use animal terms in a derogatory sense. "Let loose the dogs of war," wrote the poet, meaning, as Mr. Bedborough points out, that in war the beast in man is allowed to come to the top. This is a libel on animals. We speak of a man as being "beastly" drunk, but beasts do not get drunk. We call a treacherous man a "hound," when we know that most hounds are faithful. We deride a spiteful woman as a cat, whilst most cats are affectionate. Even wolves are not always "wolfish," nor tigers "tigerish." Indeed, it is customary to speak of everything outside the human species in terms of depreciation. But students of animal life are beginning to understand their psychology. When strychnine had almost exterminated the wolves in the North-West of America, it was noticed that the survivors taught the rising generation to avoid the new and deadly peril.

Indifference to the sufferings of others, even if those others be but animals, has far-reaching consequences. For indifference so often merges into callousness. Christians are, in the mass, as indifferent to the sufferings of animals as they are to the sufferings of children, and the societies which have been formed in England for the protection of both show annually terrible lists of gross cruelty. How could it be otherwise when Christian ethics are bound up with such a volume of savagery and ignorance as the Jewish Bible? "Is thy servant a dog?" asks, contemptuously, one of the Old Testament characters. "Doth God care for oxen," says Saint Paul in the New Testament. It is useless to rely on the humanity of men who worship an inhuman god. It is absurd to expect a sane knowledge of animals from people who believe the Bible, where most of the animals are freaks or monsters. What balanced judgment can be expected from people who believe

in a talking snake, a lodging-house whale, a pig as co-respondent? What sobriety can be imputed to credulous folk who give credence to stories of be-devilled pigs, four-legged fowls, unicorns, cherubim, dragons, and Balaam's talking ass?

We do well to ask these questions. There are many causes of cruelty to animals, but one of them certainly is ignorance. If Christians did but forget these lying legends, and cultivated the quality of pity for dumb animals, perhaps that same quality, transferred to human beings, would make them less ready to "let loose the dogs of war."

Many centuries ago, Francois Rabelais told us that "wisdom cannot enter an unquiet spirit, and knowledge without conscience is rain." Seldom has better advice been given, words like himself—strong, generous, and serene. The true task of the teacher of humanism is to show the great pulse of pity in the world, and to discard old ideas when they have served their turn. That such comparisons even suggest themselves in reading Mr. Bedborough's paper is flattering tribute, for, doubtless, the author does not wish to be taken more seriously than he has intended. He is secure enough on his own ground as one of the most charming and delightful writers for children working to-day.

MIMNERMES.

Christian Apologetics.

MARCION THE HERESIARCH.

BEFORE proceeding further with modern Christian apologetics, I must devote a paper to the arch-heretic Marcion, whom I overlooked when dealing with the worthies of the second century. This is the more necessary because it has been shown that the Gospel of Marcion had some connection with the Gospel of Luke—a matter which present-day apologists scarcely ever refer to.

The writer of the Third Gospel, it will be remembered, commences by saying:—

"Forasmuch as many took in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been faithfully believed among us, even as they, who from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, delivered them unto us, it seemed good to me, having been acquainted with all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, Most excellent Theophilus; that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed (Luke i. 1—4).

This is the only paragraph in the New Testament which throws any light upon the origin of the canonical Gospels, and such being the case, Christian commentators have tried their hardest to explain it away. Moreover, not one of those commentators has been able to identify the "Most excellent Theophilus," and for the simple reason that they have only looked for him in the first century, Luke being assumed by them to have lived in apostolic times, and to have been a companion of Paul—assumptions which I have twice shown to be baseless. When, however, Luke is put in his proper position, we soon find his Theophilus.

Luke, as well as the other three canonical evangelists, lived in the second quarter of the second century. Eusebius tells us that Luke, according to tradition, was a native of Antioch, to which we may add the historical fact that Theophilus became bishop of the church in that city in the year A. D. 168. It was for this Theophilus (some years before he was made bishop that Luke wrote his Gospel. Theophilus was a Pagan, well educated and of literary tastes, who, towards middle age, became a convert to Christianity. After the Christian Church had become firmly established (in the second century) a rule was made that all new converts were to receive instruction in the Christian religion for a certain period, at the end of which they were baptised and allowed to join in the services with the other members. These probationers were called *catechumens*, and the instruction they received—which was oral, and by question

and answer—was called "catechising." Theophilus had been through this preparatory course; for the word in Luke's Preface, which is translated "instructed," is in the Greek "catechised." Hence, it is evident that neither Luke nor his Theophilus lived in apostolic times: their place in history was about the middle of the second century.

Next, Luke says that "many" had already written Gospels such as that which he himself was about to write. Here the question arises, Why should certain men connected with Christian churches conceive the idea of writing out a new Gospel—and should actually do so? The answer to this query cannot, I think, be doubtful. There was in existence a primitive Gospel, written some time after the destruction of Jerusalem (A. D. 70), which had emanated from the earliest Jewish Christian church—"the sect of the Nazarenes." This was in use in all the Christian churches, both Jewish and Gentile, during (say) the last two decades of the first century and the first three decades of the second century. But by the time the fourth decade of the last-named century had arrived, there had sprung up a large number of apocryphal writings, one effect of which was that the majority of the Christians of that period did not know what they ought to believe. This was the time when a new Gospel, containing what the best-informed Christians of that period considered historical, became absolutely necessary, and, as Luke states, several Christian teachers had written one. This will account for these new Gospels having been called that "according to" the new compilers, so that the names Matthew, Mark, Luke, etc., are undoubtedly historical. The new Gospels contained nearly the whole of the older Gospel, with such selections from the apocryphal writings as the compilers chose to add—the Gospel thus formed being regarded merely as a revised edition of the old. The new compilations were the Gospels "according to" Mark, Matthew, Marcion, Luke, John, and probably some others. Of these, the Gospel of Matthew, if we omit the first two chapters, was the nearest to the primitive Gospel, which commenced, like that of Mark, with the preaching of the Baptist. The Gospel of Marcion was a small one, like that of Mark. These newly written Gospels were compiled for the use of Gentile Christians who believed their Savior to be a divine being: the Jewish Christians, who regarded Jesus merely as a prophet like Moses, rejected all the later apocryphal stories.

We come now to the point to which I wished to draw attention. It appears to be an undoubted fact, either that Marcion formed his Gospel by cutting out a large number of paragraphs from the Gospel of Luke, or that Luke made up his Gospel by adding a number of new paragraphs to the Gospel of Marcion. All orthodox critics maintain that the former was the case. Leaving this point for the present, we will first see what is known of Marcion.

This heresiarch (A. D. 140—150) was a Gentile Christian, a native of Sinope in Asia Minor, of which place his father was bishop. He was an able and distinguished leader, and an earnest and powerful teacher—a man of strong individuality like Paul. His doctrine spread rapidly, and soon he had proselytes in Rome, Egypt, Syria, and many other places. Later on, the Marcionites became so numerous in the Roman empire that the first Christian emperor, Constantine, found it necessary, in the interest of the orthodox Christians, to publish an edict against them.

With regard to the opinions held by Marcion, that heretic taught that the god of the Jews, as portrayed in the Old Testament, was changeable, unjust, inhuman, and subject to all human passions; while the god of the Christians—who had sent Jesus to save mankind, and whom he believed to be a different Being from the Hebrew deity—was good and holy, wise and beneficent, and devoid of passion. Marcion could not conceive that an almighty, all-wise, and beneficent Being would allow evil to enter the world, or that such a deity should create a Devil and permit him to tempt mankind, or that any deity after

performing various actions should repent of doing so.

Marcion denied that any of the so-called "prophecies" of the Old Testament which were cited by Judaising teachers, or were found in some of the Christian writings then in existence, applied in any way to Jesus Christ—and he would have none of them in his Gospel. As to Jesus himself, Marcion held that that personage was not of human substance at all; that his body, though visible, was not composed of flesh and blood, but was a mere semblance of such, being in fact a kind of phantom. That heretic further held that Jesus was not born of a woman like other human beings, as related in some of the stories in circulation in his time, but that he came straight down from heaven in a man-like form. The divine nature, he considered, would be degraded by being born of a woman—and no such story should find a place in his Gospel. Marcion was one of those who might be called a Pauline Christian, and though he would not admit anything like a Virgin birth, he followed Paul in regarding Jesus as divine.

Besides his Gospel, Marcion received ten of Paul's Epistles, which he formed into another book that he called the "Apostolicon." Those which he rejected as not written by Paul, are rejected by rational critics for the same reason now. These are: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy, Titus, and Hebrews—the last being also rejected in the early centuries as too Jewish.

Origen tells us that Marcion, in his Apostolicon, had omitted the last two chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. Now, there is evidence to show that these two chapters were wanting in many ancient MSS., and that the last three verses (Rom. xvi. 25—27) were placed at the end of chapter xiv.—a fact which is noted in the English Revised Version. Moreover, one of the two chapters rejected by Marcion (Rom. xvi.) could not have been written by Paul; for in it the writer sends salutations to no less than twenty-six persons by name. The latter, according to the Epistle, were then living in Rome, and Paul is represented as knowing them intimately. But from Rom. i. 13 and 15, we find that that self-constituted apostle had never been to Rome up to that time, and could not therefore be acquainted with all the persons named. Marcion, then, showed a wise discretion in rejecting the last two chapters of the Epistle to the Romans. Having been brought up in the Christian religion, and his father being a believer before him, Marcion would probably know what additions had been made to the Pauline Epistles during the last thirty or forty years—and the same reason holds good with regard to the appearance of new apocryphal writings, which he also rejected.

Marcion did not, however, himself excogitate all the new doctrines he taught; nor did he give up the orthodox religion in which he had been brought up until he had listened for a considerable time to the teaching of a well-known heretic named Cerdo. Upon this subject Irenæus says (Her. i. 27):—

"Cerdo was one who took his system of religion from the followers of Simon Magnus, and came to live in Rome in the time of Bishop Hyginus, who held the ninth place in the episcopal succession from the apostles..... Marcion of Pontus succeeded him, and developed his doctrine."

Irenæus also speaks of a meeting between the orthodox Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna and the heretic Marcion, on the occasion of the former's visit to Rome. He says:—

"And Polycarp himself replied to Marcion, who met him on one occasion in Rome, and said, 'Dost thou know me?' 'I do know thee,' replied Polycarp, 'thou art the first-born of Satan.'"

Another orthodox writer, Justin, who wrote in A. D. 150, says (1 Apol. 26):—

"And there is Marcion, a man of Pontus, who is now living and teaching his disciples to believe in some other god greater than the Creator. And he by the aid of demons has caused many of every nation to speak blasphemies."

It will be seen that the same kindness of feeling, the same brotherly love, animated the members of the different sects of Christians in the second century

as at the present day. What a blessing, truly, is religion.

I must leave the Gospel of Marcion and that of Luke to the next paper.

ABRACADABRA.

The Kaiser in Heaven.—II.

THE REINSTATEMENT OF ST. PETER.

THE next day the Kaiser went to inspect the new arrivals in heaven from the ranks of the German Army. It was certainly rather odd that the Kaiser's Great Ally should intern German soldiers, for it might seem to those who had not faith enough to believe what the Kaiser said, that the Great Ally was only neutral after all. This would have to be looked into. Yet it was obviously the Kaiser's duty to see that the Great Ally treated his Germans well.

There had been so many arrivals from the German Army that the authorities in heaven had had to erect a large temporary building for their accommodation, near the gate of heaven. Here they were fairly happy on the whole; they soon developed a liking for ambrosia, and most of them grew to prefer it to earthly drinks. There was one exception: a certain Bavarian was very homesick and declared that ambrosia was not to be compared with Münchener. But, as a rule, the Germans were fairly quiet, except when they were actually eating, and often held religious services when they had quite finished drinking.

As the Kaiser came along, he passed the gate and saw St. Peter back again in his old place. "You see that I've made them understand who you are, your Majesty," said St. Peter with an obeisance; "and, of course, they had to let me return here after that!"

"Ah, yes," said the Kaiser in a satisfied sort of way. "By the way, there are just one or two things I wanted to ask you about."

"Certainly," said St. Peter; "it is rather a slack time during this luncheon hour. People don't usually kill each other during mealtimes. Sit down, won't you?"

"Well, what did you mean by saying that that wink was stage-managed?" said the Kaiser.

"H'm, you see," said St. Peter, looking round him and lowering his voice, "we have had to reconstitute heaven within the last few thousand years. It really wouldn't do at all to let the Almighty have too much power. Look at the awful barbarities that used to be practised in Old Testament times. Still, there are a very large number of uneducated angels in heaven, and we should lose our influence over them if they began to doubt God's omnipotence. So we have to manage things in the way you saw, and prevent our newspapers from saying too much. Our newspapers are a very good institution now that we have a strict press censorship. It wouldn't do to let the angels know too much. It was very hard to find editors for them, but we did it at last. They were.....," and St. Peter checked himself hurriedly, for he was on the point of revealing a heavenly secret.

"But that remark about victory being foreordained for the victor," said the Kaiser in a puzzled way, "it told me nothing that I didn't know before—rather less, in fact!"

"Oh! that's another thing we got from you and the British," said St. Peter. "God always makes sure of the truth of any solemn statement of his by taking care that it is an identical proposition. You remember that Moses was told by God to reply to people who asked what was the name of whoever sent him, that it was 'I am that I am.' And, of course, the most sacred beliefs of English politicians are identities: five pounds are five pounds, men are men, women are women, and so on. All the Briton's practical ethics are dominated by such beliefs as business is business, and that boys will be boys; his intellectual ambitions are to know what's what; and even the language of many is governed by the principle that a spade must always be called a spade. In fact, identity justifieth all things. You will remember, too, that good and polite German sailors always excused themselves for torpedoing a cargo-steamer by saying that war is war. And the Roman Catholic Church, too, is founded on identical propositions....."

St. Peter broke off in some confusion. Evidently some unpleasant memory came into his mind. Just then there sounded a discordant chuckle from behind them, and the Kaiser, looking round, saw a short, stout, bowlegged figure, with a dark beard, brows close together, a prominent nose, and a bald head. In spite of all this, it gave a strong impression of gracefulness.

The Kaiser looked towards St. Peter as though expecting St. Peter to present this person to him, but the dark-bearded man broke in: "Never mind *him*, he won't speak to me; you remember our quarrel? I spoke of it in my Epistle

to the Galatians. I'm Paul of Tarsus. I heard you talking about the Roman Catholic Church. Ha, ha! Peter nearly let the cat out of the bag; but, of course, he found it a rather delicate subject. Well, I'll tell you about it." And St. Paul rubbed his hands in glee, then began mentally to arrange his discourse in proper logical order. He loved that, for he was a philosopher. He professed to despise philosophy and science, but nowadays cultivated Christians have proved that he was a philosopher "in the best sense of the word." Besides, he was going to have a sly dig or two at St. Peter. Even philosophers are human. At last he began:—

"One day, Christ told the disciples that Satan wanted to have the whole twelve—that was in the days before he got one of them—that he might sift them as wheat. 'But, said Christ to Peter, 'I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.' At least, that's what Luke says in the Authorized Version—Matthew, Mark, and John did not say anything about *that*. But all four evangelists put in, with very fair agreement to one another, what Christ said on the top of it. This is Luke's account. Peter said: 'Lord, I am ready to go with thee both into prison and to death.' Christ replied: 'I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow.....'"

St. Paul broke off. The blood had rushed to St. Peter's face, and he wore an expression of such acute misery that the Kaiser's heart was touched. After what we heard about the Kaiser's heart when he heard of the affair of Louvain, this cannot surprise us; what is really surprising is that the Kaiser was galvanised into a sort of tact.

"Well," he said to St. Paul, "there are very few of you whose pasts will bear looking into. Though you are rightly honored by our Lutheran Church, especially for your admirable precepts on the behavior of women, we cannot but remember that....."

"I know what you are going to say," said St. Paul, quite unabashed; but I have never tried to hide *that* and aspire to be the chief of the Apostles!"

This irritated St. Peter beyond endurance and he burst out:—

"It is mere jealousy on Paul's part. He can't bear the idea that I was made the head of the Church, while he is content with the good word of Protestants. The fact that he never made any secret of his past—sometimes he seemed to be proud of it—is no credit to him; it is merely because he has no sense of shame. In a way, he is better known than I am, because I wrote so little—was much too busy—and he wrote such a lot. When I had occasion to mention him, I spoke of him with affection; but he took good care to tell people what, quite unjustifiably, he thought about me. I call it....."

"One moment," interrupted St. Paul; "you referred to your being made the head of the Church. Have you not yet realised that Christ was only making a pun on your name 'Cephas,' when, as you think, he gave you this appointment? Mark, Luke, and John naturally did not like to record this pun. It was not a very dignified thing to do, this punning. It was only Matthew who recorded it; he couldn't see that such things are better left unmentioned, and even the simple-minded Mark saw that."

Then St. Paul returned to his argument with hardly a pause:

"I had got as far as Christ's prayer for Peter, followed by his prediction of Peter's denial. Now, we can have no doubt that this denial was a 'failure of faith'—neither Christ nor Peter had any doubt of that. Nor surely can believers doubt that Christ had knowledge of what was to be, or that he never prayed in vain. Hence, we must conclude that Christ really prayed that Peter's faith should not fail except when it should happen to do so. Christ must have prayed in general terms like that unless he excepted each particular case where Peter's faith was to fail in the future, by mentioning it. Now, he didn't say that he mentioned any one out of the many cases of failure that happened after that. There are many cases, you know. Besides the denial, there is that story about 'Domine gredis vadis?'"

"That is an apochryphal story!" snapped St. Peter sulkily.

"Very well, then," said St. Paul, promptly, "there is that other little matter which I mentioned in the second chapter of my Epistle to the Galatians."

St. Paul paused for an instant, but St. Peter made no reply this time. "Consequently," continued St. Paul, "part of the 'deposit of truth' which was committed to the Church at the beginning, is Christ's prayer, which the Church was logically forced to believe was an identity. Further, the Vatican Council of 1870 made it clear that the See of St. Peter was always known by learned men to be free from all error, so that there is no escape from the deduction that the See always implied that, as the proposition that Peter's faith did not fail after a certain time obviously cannot be deduced from the above identity, this proposition

was assumed before the Church deduced it from its assumptions."

Two German soldiers came out of their temporary barracks and, in German, asked St. Peter for some eggs for cooking purposes. St. Peter shook his head; "I do not speak German," he said. One of the soldiers tried to make the meaning plain in a neutral language. He flapped his arms up and down and crowed, "Ki-ka-ri-ki!"

St. Peter's rage boiled over. Before St. Paul or the Kaiser could interfere, he opened the gate of heaven and kicked the soldier out into infinite space.

P.

Acid Drops.

We hope that Rear-Admiral Fleet displays more intelligence as a seaman than as a speaker—although he may be already on the retired list. The other day he told a Working audience that "the present War might be attributed to our national sins, and one of these sins was the increasing disregard of Sunday." After reading that, we have no doubt that many will hope that Rear-Admiral Fleet is already on the retired list—unless they happen to be pro-Germans.

What a thing religion is! Catholics and High Churchmen will not eat meat on Fridays, and Jewish people do not eat pork. But the vagaries of religion concerning diet are seen best with the Oriental troops in the British Army. Some castes won't eat beef, and have to have mutton. Others will not eat mutton, and must have goat's flesh. Others do not care about meat at all. Then, again, different castes require to have their meat killed in certain ways. It is safe to say, however, that few would have cared to dine with the prophet Ezekiel.

Nearly two and a half years ago the Rev. F. B. Meyer, speaking at Newcastle-on-Tyne, prophesied in the most oracular manner that there was going to be a great revival of religion in England. We are happy to be able to recall his very words:—

"I know it is coming, before many months are gone, and our nets will be so full of fish that they will burst." Twenty-seven months have come and gone since that confident prediction was made, and there is not the least indication yet that the revival is at hand. Indeed, it seems to be a great deal farther off now than it was then. Consequently, Dr. Meyer has his place among the false prophets.

The *Christian World* for April 29 records another optimistic prophecy indulged in, this time by Dr. Horton, one of the most extravagant and irresponsible pulpiteers in our land to-day. According to this man of God, after this War we shall have the millennium forthwith. He foresees that, perhaps in twenty years, his church will be crowded out. "I shall never believe," he exclaims, "that the Gospel of Jesus is intrinsically less attractive to men and women than the cinematograph." He believes that, "after a while," the masses will return to the Bible as to a new book, when Christianity is dead, but it shall be revived; at present the Gospel of Jesus is eclipsed by the cinematograph, but that Church is abandoned, but to-morrow it will triumph over all obstacles, and dominate the whole life, as it did once before. Such is the prophecy, and it is on such vain and power is gone for ever; but they delude their followers into believing that their prospect is ahead, not behind. We believe that Dr. Horton is doomed to the same disappointment as has overtaken his dear brother, Dr. Meyer.

It is, of course, only natural that Dr. Horton should paint the prospects of Christianity as rosy as possible. But we have read much of this kind of prophesy before. Preachers are always pointing to what a great power Christianity was, and to what a great power it will be. Its greatness and its purity is always a long way behind or a long way ahead. This kind of talk is not only going on now; it has always been going on, more or less. And it is such an easy game to play. The past is forgotten, and attention has not arrived. And so the game is to divert the future from the disconcerting present by creating a mythical past or dwelling upon a very doubtful future.

Billy Sunday, the Yankee baseball revivalist, is anxious to take part in the anti-alcohol campaign, and says he wishes

"to take a whack at the booze devil." Is Billy tired of dodging the Bible Devil?

The threatened invasion of England by Billy Sunday, brings to our mind the great sensation caused by Moody and Sankey some forty years ago. Sankey's songs were the attraction, but Moody was a genial mountebank. In one of his sermons he likened heaven to a bank, and God to a banker, who bullied men for drawing a penny when they might have a pound. Even Billy Sunday could hardly beat that record.

Billy Sunday's pet aversion in England seems to be the Unitarians. He says that he is coming to England "to give the Unitarians the Devil." Billy had better take a return ticket for Mr. Satan, for the Unitarians may not appreciate the gift.

"Prince of Wales as a Boy" was a headline in the *Daily Graphic*. We are glad to hear it, for the halfpenny papers represent him as a demigod.

An East Ham laborer cut his throat because he misread the word "furunculosis"—the medical term for a boil—as tuberculosis, the term for consumption. The coroner described the death as a "tragedy of misunderstanding." How many tragedies of misunderstanding have been caused by the misuse of theological terms?

One of the recruits of the famous Black Watch regiment is a parson. The great majority of clergymen prefer to remain in the Black Army.

The reverend editor of a parish magazine boasts that he is "sending thirty copies to soldiers at the Front every month," and, naturally, asks for financial aid in the great enterprise. Thirty copies divided amongst the 750,000 British troops in France will not set the Seine alight.

In his own particular line he is simply unapproachable—the Bishop of London, we mean. According to the *Daily Mail* report, this episcopal Solomon said the other day that while at the Front—not, of course, the very Front—he was told by "general after general" that "If we could keep down the enemy's fire it would reduce the mortality of our young men immensely." Now, at last, the secret is out; although we marvel at our generals giving away such valuable information. If the Germans would not shoot, there would be fewer of our men killed. And from that we may infer that if our men would not shoot, there would be fewer Germans killed. The Bishop has made the situation quite clear, and we feel that an intelligence of so high an order richly deserves its £10,000 a year and two palaces.

Bibles are certainly not having it all their own way in this War. Perhaps it is an evidence of the secularising spirit of the age, but instead of the invariable Bible that stopped the bullet taking a soldier's life, it is now notebooks, buttons, and other mundane accessories. The last to hand is the case of Sergeant Reed, of the Royal Field Artillery. His life was saved by a tobacco-tin intercepting the bullet. It did just as well as a Bible, and the sergeant seems just as thankful. But it does not attract much attention in the pulpit or in the religious press. That is the only difference.

That pious, Liberal newspaper, the *Westminster Gazette*, which omitted all reference to the Bowman Case, recently devoted the choicest position in the middle pages of the paper to an account of the opening of a Young Men's Christian Association recreation hut in the Euston-road.

"There is no book like the Bible that gives the answer to the events of to-day," says the Rev. Alfred Waller, of West-cliff-on-Sea. Has he been comparing the Old Testament war-horrors with the accounts of German "frightfulness"?

The Bishop of Birmingham has been boasting that he has a son in the fighting lines in France. This recalls Mark Twain's story of an application for a pension from the United States Government on the ground that the petitioner had sacrificed a brother, two uncles, and three nephews in the Civil War.

Fearfully and wonderfully made is the clerical mind. Canon Macnutt was asked the other day, "How do you manage, in view of all that is taking place, to maintain your faith in God?" Without the least hesitation he re-

plied, "Never in my lifetime have I watched anything that has confirmed it more." From a discourse he delivered in Southwark Cathedral, we legitimately infer that the reverend gentleman regards the War as a Divine judgment upon the countries concerned for their lack of loyalty to "the revelation of God in Christ." He declared that most certainly Christ is not king in Germany, and he was almost equally convinced that Christ is not king even in England. And to punish these nations for their rejection of Christ's rule, God ordained or permitted this calamitous War, as if by slaying so many millions of brave men he would redeem the remnant that escaped. Such a theory of the War represents God as a heartless friend, and is in the highest degree contemptible. Canon Macnutt is a servant of whom a God of love would have every reason to feel profoundly ashamed. Moreover, it might occur to the Canon that if the state of Europe is what it is because the people are not sufficiently influenced by Christianity, that in itself is a monumental proof of how complete its failure has been, and is. And when a religion with so long a history, and with such unexampled opportunities for making its influence felt, is driven to confess that people do not heed its teachings, the only sane conclusion is that the sooner we put it on one side and try something else the better.

To remind people that there is still an overruling Providence, an earthquake took place at Potenza, Italy, recently. The journalists, fully occupied with the War records, in which 21,000,000 Christians are trying to kill one another, dismissed the earthquake in five lines of small type.

Lord Kitchener says that Germany has stooped to acts which would "vie for barbarous savagery with the behavior of Dervishes in the Sudan." Curiously, many of the German acts of cruelty may be paralleled in the earlier books of the Bible.

Some of the students at the universities are insistent that Alien professors should be withdrawn from the teaching staffs. This is interesting, for those students may recollect that the Bible is an Alien book.

"After the War," declares a well-known clergyman, "we shall find time for the ornaments and graces of life." Presumably, some of the ornaments are in the Churches.

The *Church Times* suggests that as "human intervention appears to be impossible" on behalf of our men who are prisoners in the hands of the Germans, we had better "implore the All-merciful God to show His pity to all prisoners and captives." We should have thought it more sensible to have prayed that they might not be captured. That would, so to speak, have ended the trouble before it began. But if the Lord cannot, or will not, prevent the Germans taking our men prisoners, we hardly see what he is likely to do afterwards.

Scotsmen are said to require a surgical operation before they can see a joke. There are exceptions, for a humorous Highlander, writing from the Front to a daily paper, said the "only damage done by the German guns was when they broke the Sabbath."

Under Mr. Foote's leadership of the Freethought Party the press boycott is breaking down, and, curiously, it is the best papers who are setting the fashion. The *Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* gave lengthy notices of the Bowman Case, and a number of other papers shorter ones. The definitely Nonconformist periodicals, such as the *Daily News* and the *Westminster Gazette*, said nothing. After all, it does not signify much what the Chadbands and Stiggins think.

"Quite a number of supposedly orthodox ministers," says the Rev. H. S. McClelland, "have given up all belief in a literal acceptance of the Virgin birth stories, of the physical resurrection of Jesus, of his ascension (which, of course, must go with the belief in the physical resurrection), his power to work 'cosmic' miracles (which is equivalent to the denial of his power to work any miracles that set him apart from other men), his omniscience—in fact, of everything that distinguishes Jesus from the human nature which they declare he died to save." We quite believe that a large number of clergymen are in this state of mind as regards Christian doctrines, but Mr. McClelland does not appear to realise all that his statement involves. In substance it is a charge of mental dishonesty against large numbers of clergymen. They do not believe in these things; but, in spite of that, they go on preaching them, or if they

do not actually preach, they take payment for doing so. Mr. McClelland's statement is a very apt comment upon the intellectual ethic current in the Christian Church.

Owing to a printer's error, a provincial newspaper recently stated that a wanted man was "about 230 years of age, and has dark brown hair." Methuselah did not boast of silver threads among the gold so early as that.

What pleasant humorists provincial editors are! In an Essex paper, recently, following the death notices, there appeared an advertisement, commencing, "Insure against fire."

The clergy can always be trusted to talk unctuously of the obvious, and Canon Swallow is no exception. Speaking to young lady pupils at a Snaresbrook (Essex) school, he said that "when the War is ended, it will then fall to lots of women to fill up the gaps which the slaughter of men will make." It would be more to the purpose if the clergy could recall the wonderful Gospel days when a man could have two funerals.

"We had a horrible accident with our portable communion service," wrote a chaplain from the back of the Front. "The cork came out and we lost it all."

Now that so many prominent people are talking of prohibition, the clergy are preaching sermons on "Gospel Temperance." It is a pity that a copy of *Bible and Beer* cannot be sent to each of them.

Owing to a printer's error, a newspaper stated that at a meeting of the Thames Conservancy, Lord Desborough said that a scheme had been drawn up for the removal of the Thames in the event of invasion. Christian readers might have been misled, for they are taught to believe that the Red Sea was divided for military purposes.

Columns have been written in the press concerning the career of Mrs. Mary Edmond, a Scottish lady who died recently at the age of 106. At that age some of the Bible patriarchs were playing leapfrog.

The "War Babies" are rapidly disappearing, and, ere long, there will be scarcely any left. In one community, where it had been reported that two hundred unmarried girls were about to become mothers, it was discovered, on careful investigation, that there was only one. No greater nonsense was ever indulged on any subject than on this, for fools always rush in where angels fear to tread. Fancy a dignitary of the Church treating a question of such importance with nothing but cruel sarcasm, and afterwards glorying in the act.

The Archbishop of Canterbury warns people not to be thrown off their balance by the problem of war babies. Christians keep their balance whilst reading the Biblical story of the Virgin Birth, so there is no need for any worry.

My Books.

BY MIDDLEAGE.

A PERFUME waits in the pages still,
The hint of an old-time atmosphere,
I feel as I used to feel the thrill
Divinely sweet in their pages dear.
But sad I turn to the dear old books,
Tho' scene and story are still the same,
As read in those old-time quiet nooks
They're visioned now in a misty frame:
Say, Bret Harte's tale, or the Treasure Isle;
Tom Brown at school, or Tom Cringle's log;
Or whose was the wistful wizard's wife?
Anon or Ibid or shy Incog?
Voices and forms in the books I read:
The dead do live and the living die;
Alas for those lost, the long since dead,
But a memory now and an imagery.

The ultimate lethal weapon for every form of stupidity is ridicule.—H. G. Wells.

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, £36 14s. 7d. Received since:—Per Miss Vance—Robert Stirton and Friends, Dundee, Quarterly Subscription, £1 3s.

A. R. WILLIAMS.—The price of the variorum edition of Omar Khayyam, recently noted in these columns, is 10s. 6d. net.

E. B.—Cuttings received, and very useful.

W. H. DEAKIN.—It is hard to say how much any particular advertisement helps to maintain or extend the circulation of the *Freethinker*. Doubtless, all help more or less; and perhaps the best thing is that we are alive and holding our own in spite of a war that has proved fatal to so many publications. Mr. Foote, as you will see, is getting better, but he has been very ill, and complete recovery is a matter of time.

F. LAWRENCE.—We suspect you are making the discovery that so many make sooner or later, namely, that between Christian theory and Christian practice there is a very wide gap. We do not know what pamphlets to recommend, as you do not say on what subject you require information. Probably a glance at the titles of pamphlets advertised in these pages will be a sufficient guide for the present.

G. GROVE.—Glad you find the *Freethinker* a "sweet, fresh, sea-summer breeze." This comes—if we may be allowed to say it—from keeping a level head during a peculiarly trying time.

H. JORTAN.—Thanks for congratulations. You say there are "too few great leaders"—which is true enough, but it is only part of the general truth that there are few men capable of clear thinking and with the courage to speak and tenacity to fight for an unpopular and—financially—unprofitable cause.

L. CHAMBERS.—We have no intention, at least for the present, of raising a special fund for advertising the *Freethinker*. We have, naturally, always in mind the desirability of advertising, and you may depend upon it that we shall seize the first opportunity that presents itself.

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 CAN add but little to what I said last week as to my possible attendance at the National Secular Society's Conference. I have made improvement in my health and may make more, but it is impossible to say without making the wish father to the thought. It will be impossible, so far as I can see, for me to come to any decision until the last moment. If I should run a serious risk by doing such a heavy day's work as the Conference entails, I shall not attempt the task. You see it is a chapter of ifs from beginning to end, and I am sorry I cannot alter its character.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

There is only a fortnight between the date of this paper and the N. S. S. Conference, and we hope to see a good muster of delegates present on that occasion. The meetings are to be held in the Queen's (Minor) Hall, and the assembly should be worthy of the meeting-place. The morning and afternoon meetings will be restricted to members, but the evening meeting will be a public one. Admission to this will be quite free. A goodly list of speakers is being arranged, and Freethinkers would do well to induce a Christian friend or two to attend. We hope to announce the names of all the speakers next week. For the present this notice must suffice.

Visitors to the Conference who desire to be present at the luncheon on Whit Sunday, should write to the Secretary as early as possible. Only those luncheons ordered in advance will be provided. Miss Vance will also be pleased to do what she can to assist visitors from the provinces in obtaining suitable accommodation while in London, provided they write promptly stating their exact needs. It may be possible to arrange for a Whit Monday excursion for the delegates. An announcement on that head may be made at the morning meeting of the Conference.

Mr. Cohen has practically given up open-air speaking, but he will address two meetings in Victoria Park to-day (May 9). If the weather is favorable we have no doubt there will be a good muster of Freethinkers to welcome him. His subjects are sure to be of topical interest.

Under the heading of "A Broad-Minded Judge," *John Bull*, for May 1, publishes the following:—

"Mr. Justice Joyce has held that a legacy of £10,000 to the Secular Society, Limited, is not void on the ground of public policy, in the sense of being subversive of religion. Erudite lawyer as he is, his Lordship declined to define the legal meaning of the word 'religion,' and thinks it might properly be applied to a system of natural ethics. Wherefore is there re-Joyceing in secularist camps; and we hope the good news will cheer up Mr. Foote, the President of the parent society (N. S. S.), regarding whose health we have heard sad accounts lately. In these days the world can spare no honest teacher."

Among the publications of the Secular Society, Limited, which Mr. George Cave, K.C., had before him in the Bowman case, and with which he intended to horrify the Court, was Mr. Foote's *Bible and Beer*. Those of our readers who have not already a copy of this pamphlet would do well to secure one; and, at the present moment, with so much talk of the evils of drinking, some very effective propagandist work might be accomplished by its circulation. To most Christians it would prove a veritable "eye-opener," and to others it would be very useful. As the price of the pamphlet is only one penny, a very moderate outlay will enable our friends to put the pamphlet into the hands of new readers.

A verbatim report of the Bowman case was taken, but we have not yet decided whether we shall publish it in these columns or not. As the counsel for the Secular Society, Ltd., was not called upon to reply, the report really consists of Mr. Cave's speech, with the Judge's comments; and in view of the very excellent summary published by the *Daily Telegraph*, which we reproduced in our issue for April 25, there seems no special urgency for its publication. Meanwhile, our shop-manager reports that he has still a few copies left of the issue containing the *Daily Telegraph* report, and those who would like to secure an extra copy for future reference would do well to make application at once.

Obituary.

I have to record the death, in his eighty-sixth year, of Wm. Hy. Hawkins, of Devonport. He was for many years an active worker of the Plymouth Branch of the N. S. S., and frequently took the chair at public Freethought lectures delivered by Mr. Bradlaugh, Mr. Foote, and others, in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, and he was always ready to uphold in friendly discussions the principles that sustained him throughout the greater part of his life, right to the end. He was interred at the Plymouth Cemetery on April 27, the present writer conducting a brief Secular Burial Service at the graveside at the request of the family.

—G. F. H. McCLUSKEY.

Missionary Converts.—III.

(Continued from p. 277.)

"In order to understand these [Christian] dogmas, they [the Eskimo] had first to transpose them into their own key of thought, or, in other words, they had to make them more or less heathen before they could really grasp them at all. It is useless to imagine that a people can suddenly, at a word of command, begin to think in an entirely new manner. This transmutation has cost them much labor, and though they are still heathen at bottom, and believe in their old legends, yet the new doctrine has introduced confusion into their ideas....."

"But if the Greenlanders nominally went over to Christianity, they held, and still hold in a greater or less degree, to their old faith as well."—FRIDTJOF NANSEN, *Eskimo Life* (1894), pp. 301-9).

"Just as in Rome the priests of the new religion took the place of the priests of the old, so among the Eskimo the missionary under the new dispensation takes the place of of the ancient shaman of the old régime. When he speaks as a missionary, he speaks as the mouthpiece of God, exactly as the shaman was the mouthpiece of the spirits. The commands he issues at that time are the commands of God, as the commands of the shaman were not his own but those of the spirits which possessed him. And as in the old days the evilly disposed shamans were the most feared, similarly that one of all the missionaries known to me who is personally the most unpopular among his Eskimo congregation is also the one whose word is the most absolute law, and whom none would cross under any circumstances. 'For,' think the Eskimo, 'being a bad man, he may pray to God to make us sick or do us some harm.'"—VILHJALMUR STEFANSSON, *My Life with the Eskimo* (1913), p. 413.

AN Eskimo, a great admirer of white people—and some of them are not, says Stefansson, and with very good reason, as we shall see—remarked to Stefansson—

"that some Eskimo foolishly maintained that white men were less intelligent than Eskimo were. But he said that he had a crushing reply to those who made this statement. He would say to them: 'Our wise men have taboos on food and drink, they have taboos on clothing and methods of travel, on words and thoughts; but until the white man came, did we ever hear of Sunday? Did the wisest of us ever think of the fact that a day might be taboo?'"*

The Sunday taboo achieved a great success among the Eskimo; its rigid and cast-iron observance would have gladdened the heart of the frostiest Scotch elder or of a let-us-shut-up-everything-on-Sunday Nonconformist ranter. "Our first experience of the Sunday taboo," says Stefansson, was at Shingle Point, on the way to Herschel Island to meet the whaling fleet, which on their yearly visit put into there for a day. Unfortunately, the morning after they reached Shingle Point and for several days after that, it blew a steady head-wind, and we were unable to proceed. Each day found the party worried and impatient to be off; for the wind that was foul to them was fair to the whaling-ships, and would bring them in and take them past before the party could arrive.

At last, after their impatience had grown to a high pitch, they awoke early on a Sunday morning to find the required change of wind and everything propitious for travel. Says Stefansson:—

"After our breakfast was over I said to our Eskimo that now we would start, but they replied that they could not do so unless someone started off first, in which case we could follow. Considerably astonished, I asked them why that should be so. They replied it was Sunday, and a person who led off in Sabbath-breaking would receive punishment. Accordingly, they said, if anyone was found who was willing to start, they were willing to follow; but they would not lead off, for then the sin would be on their heads, and they or their relatives would be punished. As many of the Eskimo boats were already boarded, I at first thought it would be a question of but a few moments until someone would start, for these people had all been heathen when I had lived with them the previous autumn, and I could not at once grasp the fact of the new sacredness of the Sabbath, which had been a neglected institution half a year before. But it turned out that of all our impatient party no one dared to start.

* Vilhjalmur Stefansson, *My Life with the Eskimo*, p. 412.

"The good wind blew all day, and there we all of us eager to reach Herschel Island, and each of us unwilling to be the first to break the divine law. Toward sundown the situation was changed by the arrival from the east of a whale-boat manned by the North-West Mounted Police, a party of whom went on their way from Fort McPherson to Herschel Island. We signalled them to come ashore, and they had to wait with us. Afterward, when they set sail, all of us allowed them, for by landing and taking tea with us they had joined themselves to our party, and it was therefore they and not we who broke the Sabbath when they started off, with our boats close behind. By the time we finally got off the fair wind had nearly spent itself, and most of us had a good deal of trouble in getting to Herschel Island by beating and rowing, which is a detail" (pp. 426-7).

If this was all the trouble resulting from the Sunday taboo, it might be regarded as an unfortunate accident; but as a matter of fact it had very serious consequences for the Eskimo besides this. To properly understand the matter, it must be explained that the whaling season at Port Barrow, in the spring, lasts about six weeks, beginning generally the first of May, when the north-easterly winds open up a lead, or channel, through the ice, normally between half a mile to five miles from the shore. This lead extends south-west along the coast to the Bering Straits, forming a path of open water along which the whales come in the spring on their annual migration from the Pacific to the Beaufort Sea. Whether the distance from the land to the edge of the ice be half a mile or five miles, the whalers must go to the outer edge with their boats and whaling gear, and wait there for the coming of the whales; and, as there is no regularity in the migration of the whales, they may be encamped for a week at a time without seeing any; "and then," says Stefansson,—

"all in one day, scores of whales may come along and pass on to the eastward. This day of opportunity according to our modern way of thinking, as likely as not to be a Sunday. When the Eskimo learned that God had forbidden work upon the Sabbath, they took the point of view that it does not profit a man that he gain the whole world if he lose his own soul, and although the catching of whales was the one thing in the world which all of them most desired, nevertheless they agreed that the loss of one's soul was too great a price to pay for even a bow-head whale. Accordingly, they would commence on Saturday to pull back their boats from the ice and get everything ready for the Sabbath observance. Saturday evening the men themselves would abandon temporarily their boats and go on the outer edge of the shore ice, to go ashore and remain all day Sunday. It usually took them half a Monday to get everything ready for work again. In this manner they lost two days out of every seven in a harvest season of only six weeks in the year. It was in vain that Dr. Marsh expostulated with the Eskimo and pointed out that not only were they losing the chance of getting whales but that they also ran a serious risk of losing their boats and whaling gear in case a strong north-easter should happen all of a sudden while they were ashore. This would carry all of their belongings out to sea in the break-up of the ice. 'You was sure to occur under a strong off-shore wind. 'Can't you see to it,' they asked him, 'that the wind do not come on Sunday, and that a north-easter do not blow too hard while we are away from our boats? God controls the winds and the movements of the whales; can't you ask Him to have the whales come weekdays only, and can't you ask Him to keep our boats and gear safe?' Dr. Marsh explained to them that, according to his view, the Lord governed the earth by certain laws, with the operation of which He was not likely to interfere even in response to the most fervent prayers. He explained further in the most plain way the subjective efficacy of prayer, and how, if they prayed rightly and sincerely, a balm would descend upon their souls and make them stronger and braver men. But they did not want a balm—they wanted a change of wind, and they began to mutter among themselves that this was a fine sort of missionary to have, who was unable to control the winds and direct them in whaling. They reminded themselves that their own medicine-men had been not only able to control the comings and goings of the whales, but had even been able to make the whales willing to be killed.

They also inquired from their countrymen in other districts, who reported that the missionaries whom they had assured them that if they prayed to God in the right way, He would do for them whatever they asked Him. That was the kind of missionary to have, and why could not they, too, have such a missionary? And so they formulated charges, which were written down by the scholars among them and forwarded to the Board of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church, in New York. There were a good many counts in the charges, but the ones of the greatest importance to the Eskimo mind were these: that Dr. Marsh encourages Sabbath-breaking; that Dr. Marsh teaches that prayers are of no avail; and that Dr. Marsh encourages immodesty by taking off his coat in the Eskimo houses" (pp. 91-92).

In vain Dr. Marsh—who appears to have been a broad-minded man, far above the ordinary missionary—tried to undo the mischief caused by the introduction of these new beliefs. As Stefansson points out, under the old religion it was believed that sickness, famine, and death were caused by such trivial things as the breaking of a marrow-bone with the wrong kind of hammer, or the sewing of deer-skin clothing before enough days had elapsed from the killing of the last whale or walrus. To avoid breaking these taboos meant prosperity and an escape from the penalties attached to them. Therefore, the prohibitions of Christianity were, of all the "new" teachings, the most readily understood; and "now," says Stefansson, "that they know about salvation and damnation, it seems but logical to them that one may be gained and the other avoided by the mere observance of such simple prohibitions as that against working on Sunday" (p. 89).

Dr. Marsh preached again and again from the text of how our Lord gathered the ears of corn on the Sabbath, "but failed completely in getting them to see the matter from his point of view." Stefansson then suggested that possibly his example would do more good than his preaching in showing the Eskimo how Sunday might safely be treated. Accordingly, they travelled on two occasions upon Sunday. "But," says Stefansson,—

"the example availed nothing except further to lose Dr. Marsh his standing in the community. I heard many comments, most of which were to the effect that if Dr. Marsh was willing to endanger his temporal and eternal welfare, they nevertheless were not. They knew of old how dangerous it was to break taboos; they could see now that undoubtedly many of the past misfortunes and accidents of their people were no doubt due to the fact that they had broken the Sabbath taboo before they knew of its existence. Now that they knew it, no man who took thought of his own interests or those of the community would break the taboo. Possibly Dr. Marsh and I had some charm by which we could evade the effect of our transgression, but the punishment would surely fall on someone. It has been true in Greenland, and wherever Christianity has long had root among the Eskimo, that it has taken upon itself developments such as those just indicated, which are strange to our European ideas, and which the European missionaries are entirely powerless to check. So it was with Dr. Marsh at Point Barrow. He tried to combat certain doctrines, which to his mind were narrow minded and which were certainly of local growth, with the result that his own congregation judged him a man who was opposed to the Kingdom of God and one whom they did not desire to have as a missionary" (pp. 89-90).

Stefansson blames himself "for urging Dr. Marsh into a conflict in which I might have known he was sure to be defeated." For Dr. Marsh was removed from his position, but whether in consequence of the Eskimo petition for his removal, Stefansson had no information. Most probably it was.

(To be continued.) W. MANN.

The Evolution of Mammalian Life.—III.

(Concluded from p. 284.)

THERE is considerable indirect evidence that the continent of Africa has been linked with Eastern South America by means of a land connection at

different periods of the earth's career. As already indicated, the primitive mammals of Southern Africa betrayed the closest affinities to those of the South American continent. This seems to warrant the assumption that these two now widely sundered land surfaces were united during early Cainozoic times. At a subsequent period much of this land had disappeared beneath the waves, a few archipelagos alone remaining.

This is held to account for the fact that the elephant failed to reach South America, although it wandered into North America across a land-bridge which joined Europe with that continent. South America was at this period—about the middle part of the Cainozoic—cut off, not merely from Africa, but from the neighboring New World continent as well. This helps to explain the fact that the mammalian fauna of South America struck out an independent line of evolution. Its leading animal forms were the Edentates—a group of mammals destitute of front teeth.

The ant-eaters, sloths, and armadillos are typical representatives of the Edentate order. Many marsupials, most of which have long since become extinct outside Australia, were also characteristic features of the fauna of South America at this time. But the Edentates were the real rulers of life, and they prospered exceedingly, and developed various colossal forms. The sloths are members of this group, but the living animals are puny creatures, driven to seek shelter in trees. But the extinct representatives of the sloth family were much too massive for arboreal life, and were distinctly terrestrial in habit. Megatherium, the Giant Ground Sloth, was elephantine in proportions. It dwelt in the Argentine plains and, doubtless, fed, as it is represented in the Natural History Museum as feeding, on the broken off branches of trees or, rather, on their foliage.

Another Edentate of this era was that immense armadillo, the Glyptodon, an animal which lived on until the appearance of man in the Western World. This strange and ugly creature carried an armored covering, similar to the shell of a turtle. Some of these monsters grew to a length of fifteen feet, and were several times heavier than the most titanic living, or recently extinct, tortoises. More diminutive ground sloths were also protected by a bony armor. One of these, the Neomylodon, lingered until after the advent of man. Parts of the skin, the skeletons, and even the excrement of these animals have been discovered in a Southern Patagonian cave. The Neomylodon's bones show signs of having been fractured by savages in search for marrow. It therefore seems plain that the Patagonian natives valued the animal as an article of food and, probably, hastened its end.

Various causes may have conspired to eliminate these huge organisms from the South American fauna. In company with almost all animals that have risen to giant proportions, the great Edentates partly perished as a result of their having reached the limits of growth. Man was also, to a large extent, responsible for their extermination, while another important factor in their undoing must have been the coming into being, during Middle Pliocene times, of a land-bridge which reunited Northern with Southern America. This restored connection enabled the hardier and fiercer carnivorous mammals to invade the southern territories.

The flesh-eating jaguar now commenced to play havoc among the comparatively defenceless Edentates. The horse, also, entered into new possessions and occupied large tracts of South America. Indeed, it developed a distinct genus in its new home, the Onchippidium, so that these combined causes may be held amply to account for the overthrow of the Edentate dynasty. The incoming jaguar has succeeded in holding his own in tropical America ever since, but with the horses, despite the fact that for a brief space they increased and multiplied, their growth was ultimately arrested, and they declined and died out. And this in defiance of the circumstance that

these animals easily accommodate themselves to the climatal conditions of the country, as the horses reintroduced by Europeans into South America have prospered so well that countless thousands of wild horses are now to be found there.

The Camelidæ afford a further instance of mammalian evolution. The camel family, a ruminating group, embraces the Old World camels and the New World llamas and guanacos. These various organisms have arisen from a far more generalised type, alike in structure as in geographical distribution, and have become specialised in the course of their evolution. The development of the camel through the Tertiary and post-Tertiary periods has been nearly as fully traced as the ascent of the elephant or the horse. The camels—the camel and the dromedary are now confined to Central Asia and Northern Africa, while the llamas inhabit South America. Fossils of these mammals are absent in the foregoing areas, save in very recent deposits. The Tertiary rocks of North America, however, have yielded a series of organic remains which are very obviously those of the immediate ancestors of this family, and they also serve to link up the camels with the primitive ungulates of early Eocene times. The most ancient member of this series, a probable ancestor of the camel, as well as of other ruminants, is *Trigonolestes*, a mammal, says Mr. W. D. Matthew, of the American Museum of Natural History, "smaller than a cotton-tail rabbit." This animal is from the Lower Eocene, while in the Upper Eocene appears the *Protylopus*, which is as big as a jack-rabbit, with molar teeth similar to those of modern camels. The succeeding deposits—the Oligocene—have given up the fossils of camel-like creatures as large as a gazelle, while the still more recent Miocene rocks reveal in the *Procamelus* a further approach towards living forms. The Pliocene camels, as was to be anticipated, are still nearer to contemporary camels, and at this period they spread to South America and the Old World. The gradual upheaval of new land masses, which had now occurred, furnished the animals with every opportunity for easy migration. During the following Pleistocene Period the camels became extinct in their birthplace, and only survived in the new homes in which they had settled. There are reasons for concluding that the earlier camels were deer-like animals, and that their adaptation to a desert life is comparatively recent. Those camels that are still with us have proved the victors in life's battle. But precisely as in the case of the elephants and other evolving mammals side-branches were thrown off from the main line of ascent. One of these organisms was the Miocene *Alticamelus*, a giraffe-like creature, although not related to them, as the giraffes were independently developed in the Old World at about the same period. The Quaternary deposits of Algeria and the more ancient Tertiary strata of the Siwalik Hills of India have alike yielded the fossil skeletons of large camels.

Although our knowledge of early man and his immediate ancestors is steadily increasing, the pedigree of the far off begetters of the monkey group still remains very imperfect. Yet, when we remember how recent those discoveries are which have made clear the lines of descent followed by the horses, elephants, camels, and other groups, we may confidently anticipate those palæontological revelations which the future is destined to disclose. So far, the expectations based on embryological research have in some measure been verified by the fossils unearthed from the rocks. As is well known, the study of the foetal development of animal organisms rendered imperative the doctrine of recapitulation. According to this principle the embryological phases through which the unborn animal passes, repeat in general outline the successive transformations undergone by that organism in the course of its historical evolution. This comprehensive hypothesis is powerfully supported by many remarkable phenomena. As Dr. Woodward states:—

"There is no doubt, for example, that in the course of its individual development the homocercal tail of a

modern bony fish passes through the same stages as those successively exhibited by the majority of all fishes at the different geological epochs. It is evident that the family of deer (*Cervidæ*) has gradually acquired complex antlers in precisely the same manner as every modern stag acquires them during the course of its individual life. Again, the 'cloven hoof' of the existing ruminant appears in the embryo with separate metapodial bones, like those of the adult ancestral ruminants. It is also tolerably certain (though fossils have not yet provided absolute demonstration) that the rudimentary teeth and hind limbs of the existing whales are inherited from functionally toothed quadrupedal ancestors."

It has been objected that the conditions under which the embryo develops preclude a complete understanding of the various changes through which the organism has journeyed in the course of its evolving career, and that the unborn organism is modified to meet the environment in which it passes its pre-natal life. This is to some extent true, but there can be no reasonable doubt that although the past history of the organism may be to some degree blurred, its embryological development, nevertheless, indicates in main outline the forms through which its ancestors have travelled as they evolved through the ages from more generalised to more specialised modes of being. The embryo, unquestionably, exhibits ancestral features, although these may be modified into existence by the special conditions under which it reaches maturity. These are what Haeckel, who has always recognised their importance, has termed cœnogenetic characters. In the nature of the case it is often difficult to separate the cœnogenetic or adaptable features from those directly derived from ancestors in terms of heredity, and, as a consequence, various evolutionary problems as yet remain unsettled, and to the future discovery of fossil remains we must look for their ultimate solution.

So far as can be at present inferred, the Insectivora—an order of mammals of small size which includes the widely spread moles and shrews, as well as the desmans, now restricted to Russia, and which have been adapted to feed upon insects and worms—appear related to the ancestors of the lemurs. The lemurs are the humblest members of the order Primates, an order which embraces, according to Linnaeus, the races of man, the apes, monkeys, lemurs and bats. The bats are now separated as a distinct order (*Chiroptera*). Of the ancestry of these flying mammals nothing is known. The Insectivora, on the other hand, link themselves both to the ungulates and to the lemurs. Several of the fossil Insectivora are far more generalised than the living representatives of this group, and it is extremely probable that these organisms were the ancestors of the hoofed mammalia and of the order which includes apes and men.

In order of development the lemurs appear to stand between the Insectivora and the monkeys. The lemurs, the *Halb-Affen*, or half-apes of the Germans, are now confined to Madagascar, arboreal Africa, and the Orient, but their remains have come to light only in the deposits of Europe, but in those of North America. Like apes, monkeys, and men, the lemurs utilise the fore foot as a hand. The lemur's thumb is opposable, and the general anatomy of the hand resembles that of the monkeys, while in other structural features they display a relationship peculiar to themselves. The lemurs are forest dwellers, and are usually nocturnal in habit, and the large ones are creatures stealing among the trees by night, and their Latin name to their ghostly appearance, have been the generators of numerous uncanny superstitions in the Eastern World.

Although these animals are more monkey-like in general appearance than any other of the inferior mammals, there is not that haunting resemblance to the human countenance which the faces of apes and monkeys invariably suggest. The physiognomy of the lemur is more fox-like than ape-like; they are mostly gentle creatures, and are readily tamed.

some members of this once widely extended order were the ancestors of the true monkeys there can be little doubt. And when the links that bind them to the monkeys have been traced, the pedigree of the paragon of animals will have been carried from the most polished and refined of human stocks to the interesting lemur, whose existence appears to have been in turn dependent upon those Insectivores which varied towards the lemurine form.

T. F. PALMER.

National Secular Society.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE.

QUEEN'S (MINOR) HALL, LANGHAM PLACE,
London, W.

WHIT-SUNDAY, MAY 23, 1915.

Agenda.

1. Minutes of last Conference.
2. Executive's Annual Report. By PRESIDENT.
3. Reception of Report.
4. Financial Report.
5. Election of President.
Motion by Bethnal Green, North London, and Kingsland Branches:—
"That Mr. G. W. Foote be re-elected President."
6. Election of Vice-Presidents.
(a) The following are nominated by the Executive for re-election: W. Bailey, W. H. Baker, J. G. Bartram, E. Bowman, R. Chapman, Victor Charbonnel, C. Cohen, W. W. Collins, H. Cowell, W. Davey, F. A. Davies, J. G. Dobson, W. Dodd, T. H. Elstob, R. G. Fathers, T. Gorniot, John Grange, J. Hammond, W. Heaford, Eugene Hins, S. L. Hurd, Miss Kathleen B. Kough, W. Leat, J. T. Lloyd, A. B. Moss, James McGlashen, G. E. H. McCluskey, J. Neate, R. T. Nichols, J. Partridge, S. M. Peacock, C. Pegg, Mrs. M. E. Pegg, W. T. Pitt, C. G. Quinton, J. T. Ross, Miss Mary Ross, G. Roleffs, Mrs. Roleffs, Thomas Robertson, Victor Roger, S. Samuels, T. Shore, H. Silverstein, W. H. Spivey, Miss Alma Stanley, T. J. Thurlow, John H. Turnbull, Miss E. M. Vance, F. E. Willis, C. J. Whitwell, Frederick Wood, G. White.
(b) Proposed by Executive:—
"That Mr. Isaac Jackson, Mr. R. H. Rosetti, and Mr. Wallace Nelson be elected Vice-Presidents."
(c) Proposed by Edmonton Branch:—
"That Mr. W. Davidson be elected Vice-President."
7. Election of Auditors.
8. Motion by Executive:—
"This Conference desires to place on record its sense of the profound importance to British Freethought of the result of the recent lawsuit—The Secular Society, Limited, versus Bowman—and desires further to congratulate its President, Mr. G. W. Foote, upon the triumphant vindication of his foresight and skill in devising and founding a Society which has overcome the financial obstacle that has for so long retarded organised Freethought propaganda."
9. Motion by Edmonton Branch:—
"That all resolutions referred to the Executive, from the Conference, shall be dealt with at the following Executive Meeting."
10. Motion by Mr. J. Neate:—
"This Conference instructs the Executive to draw up a form of application for the use of persons desiring to found Branches of the Society, with special provision of means whereby the Executive shall be able to secure continuity of action with members and all Freethinkers in the event of Branches becoming dormant."
11. Motions by Executive:—
(a) "This Conference is of opinion that some arrangements of a more satisfactory nature than at present exist should be made, whereby the wishes of deceased Freethinkers, concerning their interment, could be carried into effect; and that the plan outlined by Mr. Tom Shaw in the *Freethinker* of March 20, 1910, should be taken as the basis of a scheme to be elaborated, printed, and distributed among Freethinkers."
(b) "That this Society should do all that lies within its power to substitute cremation for earth burial."

12. Motion by South Shields Branch:—

"That this Conference advises the holding of Public Demonstrations in places where, for various local causes, the position is considered unsatisfactory."

13. Motions by Bethnal Green and West Ham Branches:—

"That all Officers and Committees of Branches must be *bonâ fide* members of the N. S. S."

14. Motion by Mr. J. T. Lloyd:—

"That this Conference, in view of the many complaints received from Freethinkers serving in the Army and Navy concerning compulsory attendance at religious services, protests against this denial of the elementary rights of citizenship to soldiers and sailors, and submits to the authorities concerned that in a War waged in the name of freedom every respect should be paid to the conscientious convictions of men who are risking their lives in their country's service."

15. Motion by Mr. C. Cohen:—

"That this Conference calls the attention of Freethinkers to the fact that, despite the recent legal decision referred to in Motion No. 8, the Blasphemy Laws still obtain, and may still be used as an instrument of Christian bigotry to hamper freedom of expression in relation to religion; and trusts, therefore, that Freethinkers in all parts of the country will do their utmost to secure the complete repeal of these remnants of mediæval tyranny and superstition."

16. Motion by Mr. A. B. Moss:—

"That this Conference, while fully recognising the difficulties of domestic legislation during the continuance of a great European War, nevertheless reaffirms its confidence in the policy of Secular Education as applied to the nation's schools, and hopes that the Government, on the conclusion of peace, will decide to bring in a Bill that will put an end to a quarrel that has obstructed educational progress for more than a generation."

This Conference will sit in the Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, W.; the morning session lasting from 10.30 to 12.30, and the afternoon session from 2.30 to 4.30. Both are purely business meetings. Only members of the N. S. S. can speak and vote. A public meeting will be held in the evening at 7 o'clock. The President will occupy the chair on all three occasions. A luncheon for delegates and visitors has been arranged at the Café Marguerite, 171 Oxford-street, W., at 1 o'clock.

By order of the Executive,

G. W. FOOTE, *President*.

E. M. VANCE, *Secretary*.

National Secular Society.

REPORT OF MONTHLY EXECUTIVE MEETING HELD ON APRIL 29.

Present: Messrs. Baker, Bowman, Brandes, Cohen, Cowell, Cunningham, Davey, Davidson, Gorniot, Judge, Lloyd, Lazarnick, Moss, Neate, Nichols, Roger, Rosetti, Samuels, Shore, Silverstein, Schindle, Thurlow, Wood, Miss Kough and Miss Stanley; and, for the first time since his severe illness, the Executive had the pleasure of welcoming Mr. W. Heaford.

In the absence of the President, Mr. Cohen was elected to the chair.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and confirmed. New members were admitted for the Parent Society.

The sad intelligence of the death of Mr. J. Barry, one of the Vice-Presidents of the Society, was formally reported, and the Secretary was instructed to convey to Mrs. Barry the deep sympathy of the Executive with her in her bereavement, together with their appreciation of the loyal devotion of their late colleague to the cause of Freethought.

The arrangements for the Conference were then proceeded with. The Secretary reported the engagement of the Queen's (Minor) Hall both for business and public meetings. The Executive's notices of motions for the Agenda and additions to the list of Vice-Presidents were submitted. Notices of motion from the Branches were also received, and Messrs. Cohen, Lloyd, and Roger were elected as an Agenda Committee to deal with them. The list of speakers for the public meeting was also arranged.

Messrs. Roger and Samuels were elected to act with the Secretary in making preliminary arrangements for a little commemoration of Messrs. Moss and Heaford's services in the cause of Freethought.

Unanimous pleasure was expressed at the reported improvement in the President's health.

E. M. VANCE, *Secretary*.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

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KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. : 7.30, a Lecture.
NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park) : 11.15, W. Davidson, a Lecture. Parliament Hill : 3.15, L. B. Gallagher, a Lecture. Regent's Park : 3.15, W. Davidson, a Lecture.
WEST HAM BRANCH N. S. S. (outside Maryland Point Station, Stratford, E.) : 7, J. J. Darby, a Lecture.

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