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There is no fight worth making—no struggle worth the while—save the struggle for freedom.

—ELBERT HUBBARD.

Christian Atrocities.

THE horror of the just-issued Government Report on German atrocities almost passes belief. Many had hoped, myself amongst the number, that the reports in circulation had been exaggerated—not intentionally, perhaps, but still exaggerated—under the pressure of an unexpected invasion, and by an enemy whom it was known was never troubled by a scrupulous concern for a conquered people. Unfortunately for the credit of common humanity, the worst accounts have received justification. The names of some members of the Commission provide sufficient proof that the evidence published has been sifted, and that all care has been taken to sift from reliable report. The result is a ghastly document. It holds one with the fascination of unmitigated horror. It almost makes one ashamed of being a member of the same species as those guilty of the crimes recorded.

Ill-treatment of men during times of war one is prepared for. Every able-bodied native of a civilized country is a potential enemy, and must run the risk of stern treatment. Isolated cases of ill-treatment of women during war one is also prepared for. These occur during all wars, and among all peoples. But no one, I imagine, anticipated a story of brutality, rape, violence, and murder on so large, and apparently systematic, a scale. Infancy and old age, men and women, combatants and non-combatants, have been exposed to a series of outrages for which no adequate excuse can be offered. Nothing can atone for or palliate such deeds. Neither can anything Germany may have to pay, and pay heavily, in both money and blood; and that may satisfy the coarser authority of the Bishop of London—may wake up presently, and punish for what it should have been his business to prevent. *That* may comfort those whose minds are bemused and to some extent brutalised by theology. But the crime of it all remains, the suffering remains, though everyone concerned in these crimes were wiped off the face of the earth.

But I am not writing merely to express my horror of these things. Among decent people that may be taken for granted. Neither am I writing for the purpose of indulging in wild and useless shrieks for revenge. My purpose is to draw attention to one or two aspects of these outrages that are not likely to be dwelt on in ordinary papers—and the *Freethinker* is certainly not an ordinary paper. In the first place, it is to be hoped that the report, taken with other things, will have at least the effect of stripping from war some of its artificial glitter and false glamor. To that extent these outrages will have served one useful end. And to set war in its true light—moral, mental, and social, is one of the most urgent tasks before all who desire the abolition of war and the securing of orderly and peaceful pro-

gress. Dwelling upon the financial cost of war, or upon the loss of life through war, will never secure its cessation. It will never do this, because it never has done so. A whole people do not make war for the sake of mere gain. Such a motive would never hold an army together for a month, still less would it inspire continuous sacrifice at home for the maintenance of a campaign. It is the idealism, the glitter, the assumed greatness and glory of war that has kept the spirit of militarism alive, and which continues to make it so great a menace of the world.

This glamor and idealism has always been overdone, but so much of it as was genuine and had its basis in fact is derived from a time when men fought foot to foot and hand to hand, and when warfare really was a test—however rough and ready—of individual skill and strength and judgment. To-day, war offers little or nothing of this. By no stretch of imagination can we convert soldiers advancing under cover of a poisonous gas, or others put out of action by its operation, into a test of skill or strength. What kind of test is it that is provided by guns which, fired by an invisible enemy, kills an unseen defender? For all practical purposes that kind of warfare might as well be waged by two opponents sitting at a table playing a game, and then ordering the destruction of so many hundreds of people after certain moves have been made. It is sheer butchery, without a single redeeming feature. The issue is decided not by the best man, but by the largest number, by which side has the most deadly machinery, the most numerous guns, the most noxious gases, or which can more effectually starve the other into submission. It is slaughter by machinery, destruction by mere mass. It settles no important question, it solves no important problem. Even the instrument of "frightfulness" breaks in the hands of those who use it. For beyond a certain point human nature fails to give way before it. A reaction sets in; revolt takes place; and the method that was intended to subdue becomes an active agent in creating bitter resistance.

This is one aspect of the Atrocities Report. Another is that the people of whom these brutalities are told are Christian. That point must never be overlooked. They are not "heathen," or "Pagan," or "savages," waiting for the invigorating and moralising Gospel of Christianity. They have had that Gospel for centuries. Its churches cover the land. They are in every town and village. Its preachers are numbered by the thousand. The nation sends its missionaries to convert the poor "heathen." Its ruler is a Christian of a most pronounced type. All of them together are convinced of the moralising power of the Christian faith, and to them all one need only reply, "Look at Belgium and Northern France." What evidence do these places offer of the coercive moral power, or the civilising influence, of Christianity? Would the German troops have behaved worse had they never heard of Christianity? Could they have behaved more horribly had they come from some non-Christian country outside Europe? What influence for good has so many centuries of Christianity had upon them? It is a Christian nation that not only bends all its energies on war, drills its manhood for war, and makes war the supreme test of a nation's virility, but which accom-

panies its warfare with every circumstance of calculated brutality.

This is not all. A number of witnesses in the Atrocities Report assert that the Germans were specially hard on priests. I have seen this fact referred to before, and it has been cited as evidence of *anti-Christian* feeling. It is nothing of the kind. Freethinkers are not given to torturing opponents. All the weight of tradition and custom in this direction is on the side of Christianity. It is, in fact, evidence that, with the thoroughgoing nature of German organisation, the military authorities were not blind to the fact that for their policy of "frightfulness" nothing was so useful as religion; nothing could so steel men against the call of ordinary human feeling. Bad as these men might have been without religion, they were worse with it. Writing in the *Weekly Dispatch* of May 16, Mr. Will Irwin, the American newspaper correspondent, says:—

"There is another feature about that cold-blooded campaign of violence which has escaped general notice. Except for South Ireland alone, Belgium is the most intensely Roman Catholic country in Europe. Now I am very much mistaken if a single Catholic battalion was sent through Belgium in that first instance. I may be mistaken in this, but I doubt it. I saw the whole Von Kluck army from the first vidette to the last baggage wagon pass through Louvain. I did not see a single man from Bavaria or Württemberg or any other recognised Roman Catholic district. They were all from Prussia, Saxony, or the like—from districts where, if the people profess Christianity at all, they cling to the militant Lutheranism which holds Catholicism in angry scorn.

"This further fact stands out among the scattered bits of information which I know about Belgium: however much outrage against women there was the proportion of outrage against nuns was unduly large. Now this is exactly the way that an army of inflamed Protestants from a region where the religious prejudice is bitter might be expected to act. And this sending Protestant regiments to 'pacify by terror' a fervently Catholic region goes exactly with the general methods of the German General Staff."

There it is! A soldiery inflamed with militarism and inspired by religious antipathy. These outraged people were not only national enemies, that were a pardonable offence. But they were religious enemies, and the history of the world proves that to religious hatred there is no crime that may not receive justification, and even sanctification. It is not the first time that this part of Europe has felt the brunt of a Christian soldiery lost to all decency and humanity; one can only hope that it will be the last. "There has been no such day of God for a thousand years," cries the Bishop of London. Nay, not so long as that, my Lord Bishop. It is less than half that period since Belgium had its last "Day of God" at the hands of the Spanish soldiery, or since Franco had its "Night of God" on the eve of St. Bartholomew. God acted then as he acts over the murder of women and children to-day. He sat aloft then, and did nothing. He sits aloft now, and does as much. These crimes, says the Bishop, call to God for vengeance. Once more, my Lord, Nay. They do not call to God for vengeance, they call to man for redress. Still more do they call to him for prevention. We have had God and the world for long enough. The product is all around us. Is it not time that we tried the experiment of organising a world in the interests of man alone? Even that may fail to quite expel the brute from the nature of man. Injustice and crime and brutality may still be with us, but they will be shorn of the driving power of religious fanaticism.

C. COHEN.

Religious Fallacies.

THERE are people who, while doubting the truth of the Christian religion, disapprove of all attacks upon it, because they are under a vague impression that, although intellectually false, it may be morally of

great use to the bulk of mankind. We know of clergymen to whom the ordinary Christian evidence are wholly unconvincing, and who consequently belong to the category of unbelievers; but they justify themselves for being preachers of the Gospel on the ground that to the "common people" religion is both necessary and profitable. According to this teaching, error is more serviceable than truth for the majority of people—at least for the so-called "lower orders." To the higher grades of mind Christianity is palpably untrue; but belief in it is saving grace to the ignorant and servile classes. Now, is it not really beyond controversy that a false religion cannot possibly be a channel of good to any body, high or low, great or small? Is not truth infinitely better than error for all alike? Of course Christian teachers aver that for all the good in the world to-day we are entirely indebted to Christianity; but they forget to mention that practically all the reforms carried through in the past were at first bitterly denounced and opposed by the Christian Church. Slavery, in its worst forms, flourished in Christendom for many centuries. Less than a hundred years ago it had its champions in our British Parliament who succeeded in securing the rejection of several abolition measures, and it was not until that our Christian legislators resolved to put an end to the traffic in human flesh. Sixty years ago the Churches of America were passing resolutions in which slavery was declared to be a Divine institution, in opposition to which was condemned as rank impiety. With this persistent attitude of the Church towards slavery in mind, it should be remembered that the Stoic philosophers had denounced the evil in the strongest terms, and that its abolition was in contemplation before Christianity was ever heard of. These are stubborn facts which cannot be gainsaid by any honest student of history. Again, what has Christianity ever done for the peace of the world? Is it not undeniable that the Church has always been a thoroughly warlike institution, often waging war in the name of Christ? Mr. R. J. Campbell said one other day that "were the Gospel completely victorious there would be an end of war"; but he was bound to acknowledge that "on the way to universal peace it had been forced upon the Christian to draw his sword." Six Christian nations are now engaged in the bloodiest and most savage war in all history; they are all appealing for help to the same God in Battles.

Nothing can be more soundly established than the fact that Christianity has been of no benefit to society, the War being the last and most conclusive witness. But we are solemnly assured that it has exerted the most wholesome and regenerating influence over individuals in all ages. Some of those who have lost their own faith are still convinced that religion is of inestimable value to multitudes. One writes thus:—

"Old superstitions die hard, and I am not quite sure that it is a good thing to try to upset the religious views of those who can believe in them. After all, it must be a great comfort to them in many ways, and it seems to me that the wise old Priests who taught these things may have done a good deal towards holding society together. If you take away entirely the religious belief of the masses, I am afraid there is not much to hold them back from going ahead their own way and getting just as much fun out of life as they possibly can. It is very largely the fear of hell-fire that keeps a great many people from kicking over the traces. Human nature being what it is, it seems to me that the majority of people need a check of some kind—over and over again, it is only a bogey."

If the Christian religion is a superstition, it surely ought to die, and it is the bounden duty of those who so regard it to do their utmost to hasten its end. If any man is the slave of superstition, the kindest thing a friend can do is to help to emancipate him. We are surrounded by tens of thousands of thoroughly sincere believers, men and women who imagine that they are being helped to resist evil and to do right by some supernatural being or beings. For many Divines aid they pray night and day, and are joyful

or sad just in proportion as they think their prayers are answered or not answered. Now, if their belief has for its object only a superstition, and no real assistance ever comes to them from beyond the clouds, would it not be a good thing to open their eyes and undeceive them? It is a great pity that they can believe a lie through ignorance, and whatever comfort they derive from so doing ministers nothing but harm to them. If there be no God, to believe that there is, and that he helps those who trust in him, is to injure one's nature by suppressing the instinct of self-reliance. To take away such a belief entirely is the truest service that one man can render another, and not to render it whenever possible would be the worst form of cruelty. The writer of the foregoing extract does not seem to realise that religions belief very seldom keeps people morally straight. Does he not know that the worst people on earth to-day are nearly all firm believers in God, and that among the criminals in our prisons unbelievers are conspicuous only by their absence? If he came more in contact with his fellow-beings, he would soon learn that the fear of hell-fire does not prevent those who have it from "kicking over the traces."

It is impossible to make this point too emphatic. It is an acknowledged fact that Buddhists, who, to say the least, are fully as numerous as Christians, are distinguished for their nobility of character and uprightness of conduct, though they have no God in whom to trust, and no fear of hell-fire to keep them from "kicking over the traces." The same thing is true of the Chinese, which is frankly admitted by all but foreign missionaries, and Confucianism, like Buddhism, is an Atheistical philosophy of life, with no hell-fire to frighten the simple-minded into nominal virtue. These people live nobly and well without the inspiration said to issue from supernatural belief. They have no need of any external check whatever to prevent them from straying into the broad way that leadeth to destruction. They are guided alone by their social instinct and enlightened reason. They are a law unto themselves. The truth is that human nature is not half so weak and shiftless and resourceless as Christian teachers represent it to be. Given fair play, its trend is upwards, and obedience to its laws yieldeth blissful life. What it requires is to be trusted and followed. No man has ever gone astray by being true to himself. "Trust thyself," says Emerson, "every heart vibrates to that iron string." Religion tells us that self-reliance spells self-destruction, trust in God alone being the one condition of true life. The moment a man gets religion he loses hold of himself, and his nature deteriorates, gradually becoming untrustworthy as the inevitable result of not being trusted. A deeply religious person is the weakest of mortals, because his trust in God has rendered him unworthy of self-reliance. Trustworthiness is the reward of habitual self-trust.

Our only possible conclusion, therefore, is that there is no half-way house, in which a man can feel safe and at home, between full religious belief and Atheism. Superstitions die hard, we are told; but once they begin to die, we shall have no happiness until they are all dead. There are people who continually mourn the loss of their faith, saying that they have not experienced one happy day since they ceased to believe. As a matter of fact, they have not lost their faith; it is still, more or less, active within them; and it is its dead-and-alive presence, not its entire absence, that makes them miserable. If they became convinced and thoroughgoing Freethinkers the disappearance of faith would be not a loss, but a gain, and the result would be mental peace and happiness. Genuine Freethinkers are the happiest of people, because in giving up God they found themselves, and in themselves is a never-failing fount of joy. Self-respect breeds self-confidence, and self-confidence engenders strength, without which egannimity is impossible. The only needed check is furnished by their own nature. If they are true to themselves, they cannot go astray, and

the more they trust themselves the more worthy of trust they become.

Far be it from us to sit in judgment upon the old priests who taught their followers to believe in the supernatural. Most of them, no doubt, verily believed in it themselves, and were real friends and well-wishers of their fellow-beings; but it cannot be denied that they made supernatural belief a source of enormous profit to themselves, playing most ingeniously upon the credulity of ignorant disciples, with the result that the Church became one of the richest and most powerful corporations. They did not really benefit society at all by their strange doctrines. They rather did it an incalculable harm, by robbing it of much useful knowledge, and by training it to neglect the life that now is in contemplation of and preparation for that which was to come. For a millennium and a quarter they decried knowledge and eulogised faith, and utilised heaven and hell to hold the intellect in subjection. Inconceivably great was the power they wielded for many centuries; but their day is at an end, the science they once crushed is at last crushing them, and their dupes are slowly recovering their independence. Priestcraft is at a discount, and growing knowledge is discrediting faith. Already, society ignores the priest, and shows an increasing disinclination to heed the appeals of religion.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Great Poet's Love Story.

"In black ink my love may still shine bright."

—SHAKESPEARE, *Sonnets*.

ALGERNON SWINBURNE, who often wrote extravagantly, but never at random, has proclaimed, with all his splendid and unrivalled eloquence, that Victor Hugo was the greatest of his contemporaries. Few writers, indeed, were more the summary of their age and country. To read Hugo's life is to follow the movement of almost the whole of the nineteenth century in France, during which he had, to use his own language, swung in the centre of things, like a ringing crystal.

Victor Hugo's chief works in prose and verse possess that hold upon the reader which is the distinguishing mark of every book that deserves to be called a literary masterpiece; but Hugo's life was as attractive and as dramatic as anything that he wrote. His long and chequered career was filled with experiences of the most diverse kind. He mixed with princes, he knew the men and women of the streets, he was well known in the political arena, the wide worlds of literature and the theatre were open to him. He knew the extremes of triumph and exile; at one time the popular idol, and at another eating the bitter bread of banishment.

The story of his exile gives dignity to a stormy life. Like Tolstoi and Dante, he triumphed in disgrace. The poet became a prophet. For the books he wrote during those years in the Channel Islands are *Les Miserables*, *Les Contemplations*, *Les Chatiments*, *La Legende des Siecles*, veritable poems in prose and verse, whose epic magnificence are to France what the plays of Shakespeare are to England. These works are, in truth, the finest jewels in Hugo's magnificent coronal. They were written by a poet often in want of money, amid anxiety, far from his books, his friends, and the voices of the "intellectuals" of Paris. Mdme. Drouet has left us a picture of the poet, striding along the rocky coast like a caged lion. Thus, out of the most unpromising conditions of social isolation, the great poet built up great poems. The rock of Guernsey is henceforth as honorable as Saint Helena, and as dear to lovers of literature as the magic island of Prospero.

A volume published recently, *Juliette Drouet's Love-Letters to Victor Hugo*, sheds a revealing searchlight upon the poet's life. M. Guimbaud, whose work has been crowned by the French Academy, has sorted and

edited these 15,000 love-letters, and has unfolded a curious and pathetic story, well worth re-telling.

Juliette Drouet was Hugo's mistress, whilst his wife was then just the "spouse of his soul," for, after a few years of married life, Mme. Hugo plainly told her husband that she did not desire continual maternity. Henceforth it seems that Mme. Hugo continued a platonic friendship, still surrounded with all attention and devotion.

When Hugo first met Juliette Drouet she was simply a chorus-girl with several adorers, beautiful frocks, expensive tastes. She was a vision of loveliness,

"just twenty-five, a beautiful and fairy-like creature, who shone and dazzled especially by her all-conquering air of youth and ingenuousness. Neither luxury, pleasure, nor flattery was able to satisfy the dearest desire of her heart from the age of sixteen, which was to become the passionate companion of an honest man."

Hugo was a needy poet, full of romantic ideals, who believed in the redemption, through love, of fallen women. He paid all Juliette's debts to the last farthing, and made, in every sense but one, an honest woman of her.

"The first condition of redemption was poverty, voluntarily, almost joyously accepted. The furniture of the Rue de l'Echiquier must be sold and the beautiful rooms given up. A tiny apartment consisting of two rooms and a kitchen was taken for Juliette at a yearly rental of 400 fr. There she shivered through the winter, and spent part of her days in bed to economise her fuel; but at least she proved that she loved truly, and was deserving of love."

Few wives, indeed, have loved more devotedly than this mistress, who had her reward. When the last account had been receipted, she and the poet fled to the country, and entered on a period of happiness, which the lady called "the marriage of escaped birds." Eighteen years passed, and after the *Coup d'Etat* of 1851 she followed Hugo into exile. She was lodged in a small cottage at the foot of Hauteville House, and the poet's family regarded Mme. Drouet as a dear friend. Her abundant love, the fresh eggs from her fowls, the miracles of her needle, her proud devotion to her poet, right or wrong, did more perhaps than anything else to turn the rock of Guernsey into a Mount of Parnassus.

The same quiet, undemonstrative devotion covered the poet, as with a shield, through all the later years in Paris. Death had taken the lazy, indulgent wife; and the mistress, now grown old, white-haired, stout, but with a sweet face still and a happy smile, as may still be seen in Bastien Le Page's masterly portrait, still tended the poet's cushions, and was his faithful comrade.

With the foresight of love, Mme. Drouet dreaded the end of the years of exile. In a flash of presentiment she divined those latter days in Paris when Hugo should no longer be chained to a rock, like Prometheus, but transformed into the idol of democracy. But she sacrificed herself on the altar of her love, and recreated in the capital "the right atmosphere for her adored poet to work in." She had made the great discovery:—

"Love's not time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom."

Juliette died two years before her adored poet, and her last wish was for an epitaph taken from one of the poems Hugo had addressed to her. For some reason this was not done, for her grave is nameless. It matters not, however, for she is seated for ever beside her Olympian lover, one of the greatest among poets and among men:—

"Our glorious century gone
Beheld no head that shone
More clear across the storm, above the foam,
More steadfast in the fight
Of warring night and light,
True to the truth whose star leads heroes home."

MIMNERMUS.

Missionary Converts.—V.

(Concluded from p. 309.)

"The story of these events, as told by the missionary historians, lacks cohesion. The finger of Providence, it is true, is pointed in every page. We are invited to shudder at the dark-mindedness of the heathen who reject the proffered salvation; to thrill at the virtue of the Christian troops fighting in a holy crusade; to feel a glow of triumph as we read of the fall of each heathen town; to pity the peace-loving missionaries forced into war's alarms, but enduring all things for compassion of their erring flock; and yet, when we have read it all, there is a sense of something kept back. Missionary records are unfortunately never remarkable for lucidity. They were not penned for the eye of an unympathetic public, nor should we expect them to be impartial histories of public events. They were written with a purpose, by men who viewed all things by the light of their appointed task; who classed all events, all native customs and ceremonies, as helping or retarding 'the work'; who revelled in iconoclasm, destroying recklessly with that narrowness of vision which is the characteristic of all human evangelists; who saw divine interposition in the most trivial occurrences of their lives. To advance their cause money was necessary, and to win money from a cold and indifferent public, compassion for their hardships and sympathy with their self-sacrifice had to be aroused. It is an ungrateful and even a dangerous task to read behind the lines of these records; yet, since they are our only published sources of information, I may be acquitted of a wish to detract from a really great work if I submit them to the tests from which even sacred history is no longer exempt."—BASTIEN LE PAGE, (sometime British Representative at Tonga), *The Diversion of a Prime Minister* (1894), pp. 196-7.

LIFE in the polar regions is hard; it is only by adapting themselves to their environment that the inhabitants are enabled to exist. It is a common saying that "one man will make a fortune where another man will starve"; so it is with the Eskimo. European explorers—like Franklin's expedition—starved to death because they were unable to adapt themselves to conditions under which the Eskimo habitually live. But they only exist under condition that they do not change their mode of living; when they attempt to adopt the European way of living they die off like flies.

As Stefansson truly observes: "These natives have, through the evolution of centuries, been ground into such perfect adjustment to their environment that the more you disturb this adjustment the more disastrous the result will be to the physical welfare of the native."* The missionaries—Roman Catholic and Protestant—are conscientiously and laboriously teaching the natives to read and write; "but nevertheless," says Stefansson,—

"it seems to most observers that the labor and expenditure are scarcely justified by the results. You have everywhere the Indians of the old type, who are ignorant of book learning but who still retain some of the integrity and self-respect of their ancestors. These men on the whole seem to be more self-confident and self-reliant than the educated ones, and are more likely to be making not only a living, but also an honest living. Somehow it seems that one of the first things an Indian learns in school is contempt for the ways of his ancestors; but after all, the ways of his ancestors are the only ways that can prevail in that country. Hunting and fishing are the necessary occupations of every man, and the sewing of clothes and the preparation of food are equally the inevitable work of the women. When a man who has no occupation other than that of hunter open to him gets to feel that he is above that occupation, the community has lost much and no one has gained anything" (pp. 25-26).

All the natives on the Mackenzie River have been Christianised, with the exception of one small tribe in the mountains west of Fort Providence, and "it is a remarkable thing," says Stefansson,—

"that this one tribe keep with jealousy, the customs, religion, and language of their ancestors. They come down to Fort Providence to trade every summer, but they have nothing to do with the Christianised Indians, nor with the white men, except in so far as they are compelled to in the mere matter of trading. These Indians are said by the Hudson's Bay men to differ strikingly from the rest of the natives in being more enterprising, more honorable, and thoroughly self-respecting" (p. 21).

* Stefansson, *My Life with the Eskimo*, p. 25.

But if the educational efforts of the missionaries are ruinous, their interference with the native mode of living is absolutely fatal. "Few things," says Stefansson,—

"are more common in missionary conferences than to have those who have just returned from work in the distant fields show with pride the photographs of the native communities at the time of the coming of the missionaries, and again a few years later. Typically the first picture shows a group of tents or wigwams, while twenty years later the missionary is able to point with pride how, year by year, the number of cabins increased until now the last tipi has gone and a village of huts has replaced them. They do these things and we listen and applaud, in spite of the fact that we ourselves have come to realise that the way to deal with tuberculosis, which is deadly among us but far more deadly among the primitive peoples, is to drive the affected out of the house and into tents in the open air; and while charitable organisations in New York are gathering money to send the invalids of the city into the open air, there are also in New York missionary organisations gathering money to be used in herding the open-air people into houses. While the missionary shows on the one hand a series of pictures indicating the growth of his village of civilised-looking dwellings, it would be interesting to ask him if he happens to have also a series of photographs illustrating the growth of the graveyard during the same period" (p. 23).

The Eskimo houses—before the advent of the missionaries—were both comfortable and healthy. The wooden frames of which they were constructed were covered with such a thickness of earth that they were practically cold-proof. These houses were entered by a long alleyway, the door of which was never closed, and the ventilating hole in the roof was always open, so that a current of air circulated through the house at all times. In these houses two or three seal-oil lamps were amply sufficient to keep the temperature at from 60° to 70° Fahrenheit the winter through. But in the houses introduced by the missionaries, says Stefansson,—

"The flimsy walls of these new dwellings admitted cold by conduction, so that the seal-oil lamps were no longer sufficient for keeping them warm, and even the sheet-iron stoves in which driftwood could be burned had difficulty in keeping at a comfortable temperature. Instead of the comfortable, well-ventilated, and therefore healthful dwellings of a few years ago, we now have hoarfrost-coated and unventilated frame houses which look well in photographs to those used to frame houses in temperate climates, but which are among the chief causes of the high death-rate among the Eskimo, through their encouragement of pulmonary consumption and other diseases that flourish in filth and foul air" (pp. 86-87).

When one family has been exterminated by the scourge, another family moves in; for, says Stefansson, "the building of a house is hard work, and it is a convenient thing to find one ready for your occupancy; and so it is not only the family that built the house that suffers, but there is also through the house a procession of other families moving from the wigwam to the graveyard" (p. 23). He also remarks that the white man's clothing and diet, which many have adopted, are no more suited for the natives than the white man's houses.

Another dangerous feature, and one that has been the cause of much bloodshed in other countries, is the claim of the Eskimo to have their own revelations. As Stefansson remarks, those who have had no experience of these people are liable to think that their errors and mistaken ideas "can be easily eradicated by a missionary who understands the situation"; but this is not so. "Fundamentally, the Eskimo consider themselves better men than we are." They concede that we introduced Christianity, but they do not concede that we know more about it than they do; just as Protestants concede that Christianity spread from Rome, but do not concede that Rome is now the highest authority in matters of faith. Says Stefansson:—

"A striking way in which this shows itself is in the belief in special revelations which come directly to the Eskimo, and the belief in the rebirth of the Savior among them. Both in Alaska and in Greenland there

have been, since the coming of Christianity, many cases of Immaculate Conception and the birth of heralded saviors of the race. In some cases the thing has been nipped in the bud through the fact that the child born happened to be a female, which was not according to the predictions.....There were also in every community Eskimo who are in the habit of visiting heaven and conferring there with Christ Himself, with Saint Peter and others, quite in the manner in which they used to visit the moon while still heathen and have discussions with the man in the moon. The man in the moon used to teach the shamans songs and speels, and now St. Peter teaches the deacons of the Eskimo church hymns and chants" (pp. 429),

which are, curiously enough, generally in the jargon language which the whalers use in dealing with the Eskimo. "There are also," says Stefansson, "frequent and weighty relations in the matter of doctrine." But as they have found that the missionaries do not approve of these revelations, they keep them secret. If, however, the missionary should hear of them and object to them, the Eskimo are respectful and polite to his face,—

"but among themselves they would say that while they had no doubt that the Lord spoke unto Moses, neither did they doubt that he also spoke unto this and that countryman of theirs; and if what God said to the Hebrews seems to disagree with what he has said more recently, then evidently it is only reasonable to accept the latter version" (p. 430).

Dr. Marsh told Stefansson that every summer, after members of his congregation visited the Colville River, they brought back with them many new doctrines. At first he thought—

"he could disabuse the minds of his congregation of these new beliefs; later he realised that he could not, and the net result of all his efforts was that the Eskimo became thoroughly dissatisfied with him as a religious teacher, and asked to have him replaced by another."

In spite of their conversion to Christianity,—

"Gratitude for services or gifts is practically unknown among the younger generation of the Alaskan Eskimo, but it was not so formerly, and, as I now found out, there are a few men still left at Point Barrow whose ideas in such matters are still those of their ancestors" (p. 94).

For instance, an Eskimo he had once helped with provisions now provided him with seal-meat for his dogs when he heard that Stefansson was short of food for them. But "Such incidents," remarks Stefansson,—

"are, in my experience, typical only of the men of the older generation, whose characters were thoroughly formed under the system of their own people before civilisation had wrought the distressing changes which are now everywhere apparent. In this my experience does not differ from that of any white man whom I know whose experience with the Eskimo is sufficient to entitle him to an opinion" (p. 95).

In spite of this, the Eskimo of late years, observes Stefansson, are—

"rather prone to assert that they are better men than their ancestors. To quote my man Ilavinirk again, he said to me one day: 'The people of Kotzebue Sound were formerly very bad, but they are all good now. In my father's time and when I was young they used to lie and to steal and to work on Sunday.' 'But,' I asked him, 'don't they, as a matter of fact, tell lies now occasionally?' 'Oh yes, they sometimes do.' 'Well, don't they really, as a matter of fact, tell about as many lies now as they ever did?' 'Well, yes, perhaps they do.' 'And don't they, as a matter of fact, steal about as frequently as ever?' 'Well, possibly. But they don't work on Sunday'" (p. 35).

In the face of all this failure, and worse than failure, Christians impudently boast of the civilising influence of Christianity on barbarians and savages, and ask, Where are the "infidel" missions to the heathen? Our mission is to the heathen in our own towns, and to let a little necessary light into the operations of Christian missionaries is a small part of that mission.

We cannot conclude without giving expression to the admiration we feel for Stefansson's book, *My Life with the Eskimo*, through which there breathes an air of sincerity and truth, with a fearlessness of expres-

sion not always found in the works of English travellers in these regions, they not caring to offend the wealthy and powerful missionary societies, knowing how bitterly they resent any criticism of their methods and results.

Stefansson is now conducting another expedition, but we are sorry to say that it is feared he has met with disaster, as nothing has been heard of him for several months, the worst being feared. We sincerely hope these fears will not be realised, and that he will return to his friends and admirers, among the last of whom I place myself.

W. MANN.

Famous Freethinkers I Have Known.—IV.

CHARLES WATTS.

A Great Exponent of Secularism.

THE rising generation of Freethinkers unhappily know very little of the strenuous careers of the great pioneers of the Freethought movement. They may have heard of the names of George Jacob Holyoake and Charles Bradlaugh, whose fame as advocates and warriors in the cause of human emancipation still linger in the memories of men, who themselves have become veterans in the cause, but of men like Charles Southwell, Robert Cooper, or even Charles Watts, they know comparatively little, unless they have had access to old volumes of the *Reasoner*, the *National Reformer*, the *Secular Review*, or other similar publications, to form an opinion as to what brilliant mettle some of the early advocates of Freethought were made. Charles Watts was one of the first Freethought advocates that I had the pleasure of hearing at the Hall of Science, Old-street, City-road. It was shortly after the death of Austin Holyoake in April, 1874, when Mr. Watts delivered a Memorial Address on his old friend and colleague, referring specially to the last words spoken by Austin Holyoake in his sick-room when he knew that the hand of death was upon him.

Austin Holyoake had got rid of the nightmare of superstition, and he said:—

"My mind being free from any doubts on these bewildering matters of speculation, I have experienced for twenty years the most perfect mental repose. I now find that the near approach of death, 'the grim king of terrors,' gives me not the slightest alarm. I have suffered, and I am suffering most intensely by night and day, and this has not produced the least symptom of change of opinion. No amount of bodily torture can alter a mental conviction."

Mr. Charles Watts, in one of the most logical and powerful addresses I have ever heard, demonstrated the practical value of the teachings of Secularism, not only in everyday life, but in the last dread hour of all—in the presence of death.

It may seem strange, but it is nevertheless true, that nearly all the famous Freethinkers I have met were born of Christian parents. Charles Watts was no exception to the rule. He was born at Bristol on February 27, 1836, and was the son of a Wesleyan minister. Only those who have gone through similar mental torture can understand the sufferings that accompany giving up the friendship of parents and loved ones to come into the open and proclaim themselves Freethinkers. Charles Watts had the requisite firmness of character and earnestness of conviction to enable him to take such a course. Not only did he satisfy himself that Christianity was not true, but by patient study and diligent research, he soon convinced himself that the Christian theology was false and mischievous. He was able also to satisfy his brother, John Watts, of the soundness of his reasoning, and both of them soon found themselves taking an active part in the Freethought movement.

Early in his career, Charles made the acquaintance of George Jacob Holyoake, and later, he associated himself with the illustrious Charles Bradlaugh, thus soon finding himself taking an active share in propagandist work. In 1864, he joined his elder brother

John in the printing business, and became sub-editor of the *National Reformer*, of which his brother at that time was editor.

John Watts died in 1866, and Charles Bradlaugh became editor of the *National Reformer*, with Charles Watts still remaining at his post as sub-editor. In 1874, Mr. Watts acquired the printing and publishing business previously carried on by Austin Holyoake, and in 1877 he opened premises in Fleet-street for the sale of Freethought literature. It was in 1878 that I first made the acquaintance of Charles Watts. I went to hear him lecture frequently, and on several occasions I had the pleasure of taking the chair at his meetings. When I first met Charles he was a fine, handsome, well-built man of forty-two years of age, with a fine head and a mass of flowing, black, curly hair. Unlike other lecturers, he did not adopt the professional style of a clean-shaven face, but wore a black moustache and side whiskers.

As a lecturer he was very attractive and popular. Every lecture he delivered was most carefully prepared, and he adopted the Gladstonian method of dividing his subject into three parts; these again he would sub-divide, piling up the evidence against Christianity until he had accumulated such a mass that no rational mind could resist its force; then he would work up to a most elaborately thought out peroration, delivered with great dramatic power and eloquence, and sit down amidst the most enthusiastic plaudits of his audience.

He was a great exponent of Secularism—he loved the subject and studied it in all its details—indeed, he lectured so frequently upon it, that it became part of his very being. Not only was he a very able lecturer, he was also a most accomplished debater. In his time he debated with Dr. A. J. Harrison, the Rev. Brewin Grant, Mr. B. H. Cowper, Dr. Sexton, the Rev. A. J. Waldron, and many others. On many occasions he met Dr. Sexton in debate both in this country and in America. They were pretty evenly matched as far as dialectical skill was concerned; they both knew how to score their points without introducing any personalities or ill-feeling. To my mind Charles Watts always had the advantage of his opponent, because the case for Freethought, on the face of it, was so much more reasonable than that of Christianity or any other form of superstition.

I heard Mr. Watts in a debate with Mr. Frank Hugh O'Donnell, M.P., at the Hall of Science. The subject was "Christianity and Secularism," and Mr. Watts, knowing his opponent was a Roman Catholic, drew up a strong indictment against Roman Catholicism from an historical point of view, and as he proceeded with his case, Mr. O'Donnell rose and begged of him not to deal with Roman Catholicism, but with Christianity itself, as embodied in the teachings of the New Testament. Mr. Watts at once, out of consideration for the feelings of his opponent, waived the whole question of Catholicism and dealt with Christianity as expressed in the orthodox creed of the English Church. I thought it was a great triumph for Freethought for Mr. Watts to concede all that his opponent asked and then show that Christianity was condemned at the bar of reason and common sense.

Mr. Watts went on a lecturing tour in America on several occasions, and once with Mr. G. W. Fiske, the Editor of this journal. On that occasion, they had the unspeakable pleasure of meeting the famous American Freethought orator, Colonel R. G. Ingersoll.

Charles Watts possessed the dramatic instinct in no small degree. As a youth he developed histrionic qualities which he was able to use to some advantage when he grew into manhood. On many occasions he appeared in dramatic performances, and once he played Othello at the Elephant and Castle Theatre to the Iago of that fine actor and Freethinker, the late Tom Mead.

Mr. Watts and I also had the good fortune to make the acquaintance of James Bennett, the eminent tragedian, who frequently attended our lectures at Claremont Hall, Pentonville, and who gave us some

sound advice as to the use of elocution as an aid to platform work.

As a writer, Mr. Watts did very useful service to the Freethought cause. His series of articles in answer to the Christian Evidence Society were extremely able and well informed, and his numerous propagandist pamphlets give evidence of wide reading and ability in the statement of his views.

As a man, I always found him genial, kind, and just in his dealings with his fellows, and in every way worthy of the admiration and esteem of all with whom he came in contact. In short, Charles Watts was an admirable champion of the cause of Freethought. Whatever faults he may have had, and I was never able to discover them, are buried with him for ever in the silent grave, but his work in the cause of intellectual freedom will live because it was given freely and ungrudgingly for the emancipation of mankind from the fetters of a cruel and persecuting superstition that held the sons of men in its iron grasp for untold ages.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Acid Drops

From acting as the chief agents in disseminating stories as to the large number of "War babies" likely to be born, the clergy have suddenly veered right-about-face, and are now being grossly engaged assuring everybody that the matter has been grossly exaggerated, and that the number of illegitimate births will this year show little or no increase. The truth, in all probability, lies between the two extremes. But it is not difficult to explain the conduct of the clergy. In the first instance, talk about the immorality of the camps, etc., gave the clergy the opportunity of taking their favorite pose as the moral guides and counsellors of the nation. To that end, the greater the evil was made to appear, the greater the profit to the clergy. But then the unexpected happened. Instead of appealing to the clergy, a large number of people said that if the evil was really as great as we said, something ought to be done to legitimise the number of children born, and not make them suffer for this committed during so abnormal a time as the present. This interlored with what the clergy call the "sanctity of marriage"—in plain English, it meant a decrease of the influence and an increase of the secular influence on marriage. And this, of course, meant a weakening of clerical influence. So the clergy found out that there had been great exaggerations—which they had made; that there was nothing after all, to be alarmed about; and that it would be wiser to leave things as they are. In other words, the nation is advised to do nothing that will weaken the influence of the "Black Army."

Meanwhile, numbers of self-satisfied, smugly respectable women write to the papers endorsing the utterances of certain bishops, and protesting against placing "these women" on "our level," etc., etc. We quite fail to see how any married woman is going to suffer because other women, who are not so fortunately situated, are not made to feel the full social consequences of their fault. It is the smugness of it all that is peculiarly disgusting. As one of our correspondents writes: "Self-righteousness is had enough in the upper and middle classes; as to these, 'respectability' is the soul of their being, but pious smugness in the working classes is hateful."

The Bishop of Chelmsford says that "all this talk about war-babies is an abominable slur on our English girls and on our soldiers." Just so! But it is religious folk who will say those silly things.

The Church of England has resolved, by a vote of the House of Convocation, to add King Charles I. to the Church's Calendar of Saints. The King lost his head, and this looks as if the Church was losing her's.

The canonisation of King Charles the First has caused some humorous remarks in the press. One of the best was that in the *Westminster Gazette*, which said, "A little schoolgirl wrote, 'King Charles was both dishonest and cowardly; he would have been better suited for the life of a cherrymann.' Perhaps this throws some light on the decision of the House of Convocation that he ought to be added to the English saints."

The unconscious egotism of religious people is almost irrepressible. Rev. F. B. Meyer announced at his Sunday morning service that one of the leading members of his church had escaped from the *Lusitania* wreck "by a miracle." It is a pity that the miracle was not extensive enough to cover the unfortunate men and women and children who were drowned. Perhaps Mr. Meyer thinks that the saving of this particular person was due to his belonging to Christ Church, Westminster. He is narrow-minded enough for even that. Really the incurable stupidity of religious people is enough to cause a marble image to open its eyes in surprise.

Rev. Dr. Jowett said the sinking of the *Lusitania* was "a colossal sin against God." Why? So far as one can judge he was quite unaffected by it. And he permitted, to use the jargon of theology, the submarine that committed this wholesale murder to get away unharmed. Rev. Dr. Black assured the congregation of the City Temple that there would "surely be judgment" for the crime. That is, after all, very poor consolation to children who have lost their parents, or parents their children, or husband or wife each other. Things are not remedied by "judgment." Life is not something that can be replaced by cash, or even by the taking of other life. Either form of penalty may be necessary and justifiable. Evil done cannot be undone. If God can punish for what has been done, on the same theory he can prevent the evil being perpetrated. And his activity in securing punishment cannot atone for his negligence in committing the crime. Religious people, if they were wise, would leave God out of the question altogether.

The *Christian World* announces that ten Protestant preachers in Russia have been arrested for preaching doctrinal doctrines, and sent to Siberia. Evidently Holy Russia still maintains its own peculiar notions concerning freedom.

The *Evening News* says that "our Tommies and the Frenchmen are teaching each other the swear words of their respective tongues." Perhaps it is this pleasant trait which makes the clergy think the troops are getting pious.

A portion of the manuscript of Carlyle's *Frederic the Great* was sold recently at Christie's Sale Rooms. The book took Carlyle ten years to write, which the author described as "good hard drudgery, for of all the nations the German lie with the most scrupulosity and detail." We should imagine that the authors of the Bible would be hard to beat at the art of romancing.

"The Devil is very busy in the world," the Rev. D. Ewart James, of Southend-on-Sea, says. Working overtime, some people think.

We see there is some prospect of a debate between Mr. M. Mangasarian and William Jennings Bryan, the United States Secretary of State. It seems that Mr. Bryan challenged Freethinkers to produce a better book than the Bible. Some unnamed person brought pressure to bear upon Mr. Bryan, and Mr. Mangasarian thinks there is now a probability of the debate coming off. We confess to a feeling of scepticism about it, but we sincerely hope our doubts are ill-founded. Nothing could please us better than to hear that a debate has been arranged. It would give Mr. Mangasarian a chance of placing the Freethought case before a large number of people who would not go to a Freethought lecture—and that always means converts. The debate, if it is arranged, will take place in Madison Square Gardens, where there is accommodation we believe, for a really large audience.

There is a lively correspondence appearing in the *Church Times* on "The Mutilation of the National Anthem." The writer protests vigorously against the disuse of the second stanza of the famous hymn, which is as follows:—

O Lord our God arise,
Scatter his enemies,
And make them fall;
Confound their politics,
Frustrate their knavish tricks;
On thee our hopes we fix,
God save us all."

In the *English Hymnal* that stanza is omitted, and two "blandly amiable verses, suitable, perhaps, for use at a Pacifist meeting," are put in its place. The *Church Times* pronounces the omission a great mistake, as no reasonable objection can be made to the original stanza. One correspondent declares that the expression "knavish tricks," for example, is "far too mild." He would prefer the adjective "devilish," or even "hellish," either of which would be

stronger and more accurate than "knavish." It should be borne in mind that the National Anthem is a prayer addressed to our loving Heavenly Father, who, in the second verse, is deliberately asked to destroy all the foes of Great Britain, whoever they may be. Are we not quite right in describing the Christian Church as the most ferociously warlike institution the world has ever seen?

The Rev. Hugh A. Chapman, one of the Royal Chaplains, says he never smiles when he looks at the "flapper." Other gentlemen in the same line of business are not so scrupulous.

Dr. Werner, of Munich University, a well-known authority on Old Testament exegesis, has been lecturing on "The World-War and the Old Testament." The learned professor considers that the Bible contains much that is edifying for modern soldiers. We hope that he did not suggest imitating the wholesale massacre and rape mentioned in the earlier books of the Bible.

What optimists the clergy can be on occasion! Here is the Rev. Dr. R. F. Horton telling us that "the day is coming when a great revival of Christianity will take place." His co-religionists will hope that the day is not far distant, for so many Christians are being killed daily.

The Rev. R. J. Campbell naively admits that "war is anti-Christian and finds no countenance in the New Testament," but claims that the teachings of Scripture should be looked at "as interpreted by the practice of the Christian Church during nineteen centuries." What a monstrous position for a man to occupy, to be sure. The "letter" of the New Testament is incontrovertibly against any appeal to armed force; but Mr. Campbell instructs us to regard the "letter" of Scripture as of no importance apart from the practice of the Church. That is to say, the words of the Lord are to be explained only by the deeds of his people in all ages. The Lord insists upon the duty of non-resistance; but the Church has systematically practised resistance, often of the most violent form. It is true, Mr. Campbell acknowledges, that the Master says, "Resist not evil"; but he exhorts us to interpret that saying by "the practice of the Christian Church during nineteen centuries." How thankful the Churches ought to be for such an original and luminous expounder of the Christian Faith!

There is nothing new in the statement, "from the first the right of the State to make use of force, even to the shedding of blood, was admitted by the Church, and that from that admission she has never swerved"; but Mr. Campbell displays superb originality when he adds that, in making such an admission, "the Apostolic Church knew the mind of her Lord." Yes, the War must be reconciled with Christian principles at whatever cost to common sense; and the minister of the City Temple succeeds in accomplishing the task with a vengeance. He contemptuously flings reason and logic down the wind.

Journalists have made fun of dustwomen being employed in the streets in the place of dustmen. There is nothing novel in the idea, for the Bible states that the first woman was made from the rib of a dust-man.

The Rev. Dr. Workman says it is futile to call men to "parish pump religion." Unless, perhaps, they have water on the brain.

Dr. King Brown, speaking at the Institute of Hygiene, said "the only good fly is the dead fly, and he should be burned." It sounds like a paragraph from the Athanasian Creed.

According to the papers, General Mackensen, who defeated the Russians in the Carpathians, is known as "hymn-singing Mackensen." He is very devout, and insists on religious services in the field whenever possible. Probably the "frightfulness" of General Joshua is a favorite part of the Bible for the modern Christian soldier.

That distinguished Christian soldier, the Bishop of London, recently attended a patriotic rally of the Ministering Children's League at Westminster. We hope the little people were impressed with his lordship's khaki uniform.

We have several times called attention to the falsifications of Ruskin's views on war by preachers and writers, and now

we have to add Mr. R. J. Campbell to the list of those who misrepresent a great teacher. Mr. Campbell quotes, in a passage about all great nations being nourished and developed by war, and declining to destruction during peace—which, as it stands, is almost enough to justify millions of the Prussian or of any other variety. But Ruskin is careful to point out that the warfare which had elements of goodness about it was that in which man met man face to face and foot to foot, and where the issue depended on individual clearness of eye, sanity of brain, and strength of hand. But having said this, Ruskin heaped up a scathing condemnation on modern war waged by millions of men, fought with chemical and mechanical appliances, and which was determined by the country that had the most numerous army, the finest machinery, and the most deadly chemicals. That, he said, settled nothing, and only added iniquity to slaughter. Mr. Campbell cannot have missed reading Ruskin's opinions on modern war, and misapprehensions that are so gross and so inexcusable are surely iniquitous. Mr. Campbell owes an apology to the memory of a great man, and to the congregation that listens to his

The levity of ladies during the War has roused the indignation of Miss Marie Corelli, the novelist, who complains of the fashions in dress, and uses some warning words of the prophet Isaiah in order to rebuke her erring sisters. Doubtless the Hebrew prophet's denunciation, Englishwomen will not be easily induced to adopt the costume of Eve in the Garden of Eden.

The Bishop of Chelmsford has the making of an ingenuously in the palmy days of the ages of faith. He says that respondents in divorce cases should be "adequately punished, not merely fined £500 or £1,000." Does his Lordship suggest something with boiling oil in it?

Since prohibition, Russian savings have quadrupled, and the output of work has immensely increased, says the Rev. F. B. Meyer. And far too many men have died with their boots on, too, brother Meyer.

A writer in the *Sunday Pictorial* has been discouraged by "Ghost Babies." There was no mention of the ghost babies related in the New Testament.

There is something quite delicious in the following, from a report issued by the Missionary Press Bureau:—

"The forefathers of the men who placed themselves at the disposal of the Imperial Government were converted to Christianity until the Wesleyan Methodist missionaries managed to secure a foothold on the island. Since then they have accumulated a scale of civilisation, until now, after only two or three generations, they are considered good enough to fight with us against our enemies."

Ascended the scale of civilisation! It is quite probable that some intelligent Fijian may ask himself, before the War is over, whether he has ascended or descended? Looking at the state of Europe, the question is certainly debatable.

This editor also remarks that "every British State Dependency that has benefited by the work of missionaries came to the Mother Country with generous offers of assistance on the outbreak of hostilities." At last the secret is out. It is out of sheer gratitude to the missionaries that Canada and Australia and India, etc., have rallied to the support of Great Britain. But for the editor of the Missionary Press Bureau this illuminating truth would never have seen the light. For the Colonies and Dependencies have hitherto carefully hidden their joy at the presence of missionaries. They have not even asked for them—probably thinking that they were too precious to be parted with easily, or asked for lightly. They were bothered over with gratitude, and now this War has given them a chance of showing it. We congratulate the Press Missionary Bureau on its discovery.

What unconscious humorists religious people are! Dr. Douglas Wells, of Billericay, formerly president of the Suffolk and Essex Brotherhood Federation, says "Men who had forgotten God have found him on the devastated ruins of Belgium, and in the trenches of France." Equally frightened Christians profess to have seen the hand of the Devil in the same regions.

Some of the writers on the War are getting hysterical and others have visions of the millennium. A writer in the *Sunday Pictorial* says, "Under conscription there would be no strikers, no slackers, no shirkers, no bowlers, no harmony, no disintegrating influences at work." It sounds like an advertisement of a pill to cure earthworms.

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, £39 19s. 7d. Received since:—"Watch," £1; J. C. Vickary, £1.

A. R. WILLIAMS.—Received.

J. B. JENSEN (R.N.).—We are glad to know that you are spending your time, between hunting the Germans, in circulating the Freethinker round the Fleet. We value your wife's appreciation also, and trust that the end of the War will find you both together, and ready to enjoy your weekly dose of Freethought.

T. C. WILLIAMS.—Received, and will be forwarded to Mr. Lloyd as desired. Mr. Lloyd will appreciate your "thanks for an article, at any rate, that it is courteous and fair," though the points of view are different.

J. ASHFORD.—(1) The relieving of all Churches from payment of rates involves the extra taxation of all others to make this good. In this way everybody pays towards the upkeep of the State Church and, for the matter of that, Chapels also. Grants of money from the State to the Church are now indirect, not direct. (2) We are sorry to hear that the Secular movement at Rochdale has suffered from the person you name. It is regrettable that some Freethinkers are so lacking in a sense of responsibility as to encourage persons whose association with Secularism does more harm than good. Thanks for good wishes.

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.

MY strength is slowly but surely improving. Weakness, I am glad to say at the last, was pretty well all that was the matter with me. But such a weakness! I have been running myself down at a tremendous rate, with the aid of some strange friends, and when nature pulled me up, she did it with a tremendously heavy hand, which nearly broke me in pieces. I lost everything for the time, even consciousness; getting my signature achieved was something like digging a rusty, broken shovel into a slab of butter. All my organs appear to be sound, that is to say, quite normal. It is the shocking weakness that has been hanging over me all this time, and it is not yet lifted to the extent I desire, but it is lifting. Some hours of some days I feel quite my old self again, and I take this as a prophecy of what is coming when I have completely fought off my dreadful enemy.

The Rowman case would, I thought, have been no longer sub judice by this time, but notice of appeal against Mr. Justice Joyce's decision has been given, and to some extent my tongue is still tied, but I may say that the appeal seems to me worthy of the legal

gentleman whom I called the great procrastinator. All he expected in Mr. Justice Joyce's Court was time, and whatever else might go with it; and I should be very much surprised if he expected anything else now. The battle is practically over as far as the Secular Society, Limited, is itself concerned, but everybody knows that good causes are sometimes lost by sheer mismanagement. My care of the Secular Society, Limited, lasted from its birth to its definite establishment in the Law Courts. The battle was won on the briefs prepared by the late Mr. Thomas Harper and myself, and adopted by Messrs. Harper & Co, who are carrying on the business thrown into new hands by his decease.

This litigation, of course, entails great expense—more than I should like to say just now. Ultimately, if we win—that is to say, if Mr. Justice Joyce's decision is not upset—our costs will mainly come out of the estate; but a good time may elapse before that comes to pass (if ever), and, in the meanwhile, someone may have to uphold the Society financially, as I did for a considerable time with actual cash out of pocket. I at least, believed in the Secular Society, Ltd., from first to last.

I am writing this on Monday evening. There is no Zeppelin in this "Personal," but I am in it myself, and, no doubt, many old friends and some newer ones will find me still a little interesting, even in this awkward sort of way. I cannot go farther at present. The N. S. S. Agenda definitely announces that I shall take the chair. I never authorised anyone to do this, but I do not see what else the officers, who prepared the Agenda, could do. Even now I can only repeat what I have said already on this point.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

The Annual Conference of the National Secular Society takes place to-day (May 23) in the Queen's (Minor) Hall, Langham-place, W., morning and afternoon. The evening meeting will be a public one, and we hope that London Freethinkers will do their best to make this successful. The list of speakers as published is a good one, and it is possible that additions may yet be made to it. The Secretary of the N. S. S. has a number of slips advertising the meeting, and will be glad to supply them to anyone who will undertake their distribution. The absence of indoor lectures in London since the War commenced should make Freethinkers eager for the meeting, and they might do a little useful work by bringing a Christian friend with them. A glance at the "Personal" printed on this page will show that the present is a rather critical period in the history of Freethought in this country, and a really large muster of Freethinkers would be an encouraging sign that the old fighting spirit of the party is still alive. Admission to the hall is free, but there are some reserved seats which may be obtained on application at the box office on the evening of the meeting.

Next Sunday (May 30) Mr. Cohen lectures at Abertillery, under the auspices of the New Era Union. The afternoon lecture (at 3 o'clock) is on "Christianity and the War," and that in the evening (at 6) on "God and Man." Mr. Cohen has visited Abertillery on previous occasions, and we have no doubt that there will be good audiences to meet him. The town is the centre of a very busy district, and providing the weather be fine, there are sure to be the usual number of visitors from the surrounding neighborhood.

One of our subscribers at the Front writes:—

"My being a Freethinker makes a shocking waste of good copy. Were I a Christian I could claim providential escapes innumerable. On my first visiting the trenches I had my tea shot out of my hands without the smallest injury to myself, and on Wednesday I was struck by a fragment of a 'coal-box' shell without inconvenience, and later by a bullet in the collar bone, which glanced off and simply made holes in my jacket; of course, it left its mark, but did not hinder me performing my duties. If the Freethinker were a Christian paper I could write gushing columns about this. I don't like the gases someone is using. I was simply on their fringe and it was awful."

The Evolution of the Solar System.

EVER since the time when the famous Laplace propounded his celebrated Nebular Hypothesis, the problem of the genesis of stars and planets has exercised a profound influence over the minds and imaginations of mathematicians, astronomers, physicists, and philosophers alike. In one form or another the Nebular Hypothesis continues to command the assent of the vast majority of the best scientific intellects, although it is no longer necessary to accept the theory in the precise form in which it was first put forward by Laplace. The eminent astronomer, the younger Herschel, and his successors, did much towards strengthening its evidences, and the mightiest of all modern philosophers, Herbert Spencer, made the hypothesis the foundation of his universal doctrine of Evolution.

It may not be inopportune, therefore, to survey the problem of the origin and development of celestial systems as it is approached in the light of the newer knowledge of our own generation. Like all other human speculations relating to the wondrous phenomena of the Universe, the Nebular Hypothesis had its own special mode of development. The ancient Greeks certainly, and the early Egyptians and Chaldeans probably, puzzled over the genesis of the cosmos. But in its more recent form the Nebular Theory finds its first ascertained advocate in the philosopher Descartes. In Descartes' *Principles of Philosophy*, which appeared in 1644, the hypothesis occurs in embryo. According to this pioneer's opinion, our sun and his satellites were represented by vortices "in a primitive chaos of matter," which subsequently formed the nuclei for the latter evolution of the solar system. In 1734, nearly a century afterwards, the mystic Swedenborg elaborated a similar theory, and in 1750, Thomas Wright, of Durham, wrote a dull and dreary work on the same subject. Still, despite his literary shortcomings, Wright played his part in the development of the great theory, as Immanuel Kant acknowledges his indebtedness to him.

With the name of Laplace the Nebular Hypothesis is almost invariably associated, but the immortal Frenchman was in some respects anticipated by the German thinker, Kant, whose scheme has come down to us under the name of the "Cosmic Gas Theory." But it would be preposterous to accuse Laplace of plagiarism. There is no ground for suspecting that he had any knowledge of Kant's writings. Moreover, it has repeatedly happened that at a certain stage of scientific or philosophical evolution ideas of a kindred nature have simultaneously or slightly subsequently, arisen independently in the minds of men of superior mental power.

Whatever view of the mode of development of the solar system ultimately wins universal assent, some process of evolutionary growth is certain to obtain the undivided suffrages of men of science. As Sir George Howard Darwin puts it: "A scheme of evolution for the solar system, with at least some general resemblance to that described in the Nebular Hypothesis, is almost certainly true."* And as Sir Robert Ball states: "Even after the omission of all cometary objects, we can still count in the solar system upwards of five hundred bodies, almost every one of which pronounces distinctly, though with varying emphasis, in favor of the Nebular theory."

According to the superb conception of Laplace, the material bodies which have since assumed the forms of our central luminary, the planets, moons, and planetoids, existed many millions of years ago as a highly attenuated glowing gas which extended beyond the borders of the planet most distant from the sun. He also assumed that the immense nebulous mass "rotated slowly about an axis perpendicular to the present orbits of the planets." As the nebula cooled and contracted, circular masses of matter

were successively detached from the main body, until finally these ruptured rings resolved themselves into planets, while the remaining central body became the star we call the sun.

This magnificent hypothesis is admittedly a splendid speculation. As Ball remarks:—

"It cannot be demonstrated by observation or established by mathematical calculation. Yet the boldness and splendor of the Nebular Hypothesis have always given it a dignity not usually attached to a doctrine which from the very nature of the case can have but little direct evidence in its favor."

As already said, Laplace formulated a uniform movement for the entire nebulous mass. Now, it is significant that every one of the planets revolves around the solar orb in the same direction. Not merely do the larger planets—Mercury, Venus, the Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune—conform to this rule, but the little army of minor planets, which numbers over five hundred smaller bodies, also obeys the same law. It is likewise remarkable that all the major planets, and a large number of the little ones, move in orbits that are practically in the same plane, and almost circular in form. That five hundred bodies in a small system such as ours should pursue practically identical paths round their central orb undoubtedly has some causal explanation. In terms of "chance," the improbability of these remarkable arrangements is so great as to be almost inconceivable.

Laplace's theory finds further support when we study the movements of the satellites as a whole. Apart from the moons of Uranus, "in which the orbits of the satellites are highly inclined to the ecliptic," and of those other retrograde moons whose special modes of movement some undetermined causes appear to have contributed, nearly all the attendants of the various planets revolve around their primaries in the same path. Another powerful argument in favor of the theory resides in the circumstance that the planets apparently rotate on their axes in a uniform manner.

No explanation save that here advanced offers any solution of these most striking phenomena. It is essential to note that, in terms of the Nebular theory, the primeval fire-mist originally filled all the space now occupied by the solar system. This intensely rarefied nebulous haze, of which the core—which was ultimately to become the sun—formed the somewhat more condensed part, was regarded as the seat of a power of axial rotation. This postulate is fully warranted by well-determined physical laws. Again, while allowing that the nebulous mass may have possessed local movements of varying power, there is little in this to invalidate the view that the nebula as a whole was endowed with a movement of rotation. Irrespective of the causes which brought the nebula into existence, it is infinity to one that a multitudinous mass of incandescent matter scattered through millions of miles of space must have possessed some mode of motion. As the original nebula inconceivably high temperature of the glowing nebula slowly declined, the nebulous mass not only contracted towards the centre, but it must also have turned on its axis with enormously increased rapidity. The laws that govern heated bodies determined the former phenomenon, while the latter was necessitated by the laws of dynamics. As the centuries sped on, a stage of nebular development would be reached, during which centrifugal force would overcome that of the attractive power exercised by the central mass, and thus, as the major part of the nebula shrank towards the centre, the outer layer would be left as a ring. The main mass would continue to radiate its heat into space, and go on contracting until centrifugal force would again prove more potent than centripetal force, and a second ring would be evolved. Thus we picture the original almost homogeneous nebula becoming separated into a series of rings, all revolving in the precise direction pursued by the immense central mass of which it originally formed part, and from which it derived its initial momentum.

* *The Tides and Kindred Phenomena of the Solar System*, p. 407.

The Real Conflict.—II.

(Concluded from p. 317.)

TAKE, again, the question of religious versus Secular Education. The conservative attitude on this takes two distinct shapes. The old view, that it is the duty of the State to inculcate religion, because religion is God's "revelation," is held probably to this day by the majority of the Roman and Anglican clergy, though it is not ventilated very much on political platforms. A more insidious argument, because of its appeal to the amour propre of the average father and mother, is that it is the duty of the State to see that children are taught the religion of their parents. Now, apart from the fact that this privilege appears to be claimed exclusively for Christian and Jewish parents—for whoever heard it insisted upon for Freethinkers, Theosophists, or Mormons?—it is traceable, in the last resort, to the Christian dogma of the divine authority of the family. This appears as soon as the point is raised of the rights of the child. If we ask why the child is to have his or her mind biased in infancy in favor of a particular view of the universe, and still more why the State is called upon to assist? we are told that "parental authority is final," "the family, and not the individual, is the unit of the State," and so forth. This, of course, is simply the old ecclesiastical dogma again. The commonsense view is that the family must be judged by the needs of individuals, not the individual moulded to fit the family, and that, if it is to be permissible at all to teach children religious dogmas which will probably deprive them for the rest of their lives of the faculty of impartial thinking, at least parents and clergy should be required to do the thing for themselves without publicly afforded facilities.

The attitude taken by typical representatives of these opposing schools to the phenomenon of social unrest presents an interesting contrast. The Catholic attitude on questions of property is naturally, as a rule, conservative; property, like the family, is an ordinance of God, and the attack upon it is immoral. Accordingly, among the older representatives of this school, Socialism, Syndicalism, and the like doctrines are met with denunciation of the ordinary conservative sort. A certain number of intelligent Catholics, however, of whom Messrs. Belloc and Chesterton are representative, realise that social injustice cannot be defended on religions, any more than on secular grounds; and, so far as negative criticism goes, their attack on plutocracy somewhat resembles that of the Socialists. The difference appears, however, not only in the remedy they advocate (small individual proprietorship), but in the very phraseology of their attack on capitalism. The revolutionary Socialist draws the broad contrast between the "capitalist" and the "worker," the person who lives on rent, interest, and profit on the one hand, and the wage-earner on the other. The contrast is always avoided by the Catholic pseudo-revolutionaries. With them, the opposition is invariably between "rich" and "poor," which is not by any means the same distinction as that between "capitalist" and "worker," though it coincides with it sufficiently to cause the desired confusion among revolutionaries who are not very clear-headed. The distinction between "capitalist" and "worker" is one of economic function; that between "rich" and "poor" is merely one of personal affluence or necessity. The one relates to production, the other to consumption. In aping the Socialist phraseology, therefore, Messrs. Belloc and Chesterton carefully eliminate from it the economic content which, in the appeal of the Socialist, supplies it with potency and sting. By further associating "riches," not very scrupulously, with the ideas of superior education and of Jewish nationality, and "poverty" with the ideas of ignorance and immobility, Messrs. Belloc and Chesterton succeed in turning the Socialist phraseology to the purposes of Catholicism and anti-Semitism. We are given

Another transformation would at this phase occur. The matter of which the detached rings consist would become steadily cooler, and the rings contract until they ceased to be gaseous, and began to assume the liquid state. The planets were thus born. "If the consolidation took place with comparative uniformity," writes Ball,—

"we might then anticipate the formation of a vast multitude of small planets such as those we actually do find in the region between the orbit of Mars and that of Jupiter. More usually, however, the ring might be expected not to be uniform, and therefore to condense in some parts more rapidly than in others. The effect of such contraction would be to draw the materials of the ring into a single mass, and thus we should have a planet formed, while the satellites of that planet would be developed from the still nascent planet in the same way as the planet itself originated from the sun. In this way we account most simply for the uniformity in the direction in which the planets revolve and for the mutual proximity of the planes in which their orbits are contained."

The foregoing is an exposition of the Nebular Hypothesis as originally advanced. Minor difficulties have, however, been raised by mathematicians and astrophysicists, both with reference to the fact that Laplace and his followers postulated an annular nebula as the starting point of solar evolution, and to the seeming improbability that rings would be left behind at definite intervals as the main body of the nebula continued to contract. The great majority of nebulae are not annular, but spiral, in structure, and the most recent studies amply prove. The telescopic observations upon which the earlier astronomers were dependent have now in large measure been superseded by the rise of stellar photography. The half million or so of nebulae are constantly compelled to register and record themselves on the photographic plate. The results thus obtained serve to demonstrate the spiral character of the nebulae in general.

This, however, is comparatively of small moment. All that is necessary is to postulate a spiral nebula in place of a circular one to account for the phenomena of the solar system. And in addition to the orbital motions of the planets already dealt with, their axial rotation is also accounted for if we accept the Nebular explanation. For at that immensely remote period when the planets were formed, they must have shared in the general movement of the nebula as a whole; and as these newly fashioned worlds afterwards contracted, their axial rotation must have greatly increased.

We will conclude the first part of our article with a quotation from the Presidential Address to the British Association in 1907 by Sir David Gill. This distinguished astronomer's utterance ran as follows: "Huggins's spectroscope has shown that many nebulae are not stars at all; that many well-condensed nebulae, as well as vast patches of nebulous light in the sky, are but inchoate masses of luminous gas. Evidence upon evidence has accumulated to show that such nebulae consist of matter out of which stars (i.e., suns) have been and are being evolved. The different types of star spectra form such a complete and gradual sequence (from simple spectra resembling those of nebulae onwards through types of gradually increasing complexity) as to suggest that we have before us, written in the cryptograms of these spectra, the complete story of the evolution of suns from the inchoate nebula onwards to the most active sun (like our own), and then downward to the almost heatless and invisible ball. The period during which human life has existed upon our globe is probably too short—even if our first parents had begun the work—to afford observational proof of such a cycle of change in any particular star; but the fact of such evolution, with the evidence before us, can hardly be doubted."

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

The best way to begin a day well is to think, on awakening, whether we cannot give pleasure during the day to at least one person. If this could become a substitute for the religious habit of prayer, our fellow-men would benefit by the change.—Nietzsche.

the picture of a wealthy German Jew, who disbelieves in God and is interested in eugenics and social reform, lording it over the unsophisticated and unwashed English laborer and reducing him, insensibly, to slavery.

This picture is intended to make us believe that the whole Catholic hierarchy, from the Pope to the least known parish priest, are burning to deliver the aforesaid unsophisticated laborer from his dreadful doom, and would speedily do so if only he would be converted and live. Unfortunately, it does not accord with what we know of the Catholic Church in history. If we leave the concepts of "rich" and "poor" with their vague ethical and religious associations, and come back to the historical conflict between "capitalist" and "worker," we do not, as a matter of fact, find that the Catholic Church has thrown in her lot with the proletariat. On the contrary, we find that the Church has always insisted strongly on the rights of capital and the value of law and order, and boasted of her efficiency as an aid to the military and police in keeping society "stable." On the Continent there is no dissimulation whatever about this; but in this country, where Catholicism is less prominent, it is the duty of the genuine revolutionist to expose the fraudulent pretence of certain Catholics to be democratic.

It may be objected that the Catholic Church has, in this discussion, been treated as if it were the only representative of Christianity, and that other forms, such as Anglicanism, more or less "broad," and Non-conformity, have been ignored. If this is so, it is only because Catholicism says coherently and in full what other denominations say illogically and by halves. It is the fashion, for example, among non-Catholic Christians, to slur over and even repudiate the doctrine of eternal punishment, and even to defend this repudiation as consistent with Christianity, by explaining away the New Testament passages on the subject. How the same word can be rendered in English as "eternal" when applied to future felicity, and as merely "lasting for an age" when applied to punishment, is a question for liberal theologians to answer. It is sufficient to say here that, if eternal punishment is repudiated, the doctrine of atonement ceases to have a basis, and the core of historical Christianity is cut out. Moreover, if we are allowed flatly to contradict the teaching of Christ and his disciples on eternal punishment, there appears no reason why we should credit it on other points to which impartial reason demurs, *e.g.*, on the question of divorce, submission to authority, and the subjection of women. In short, there is no half-way house between Catholicism and Freethought which does not crumble at the touch of the hammer of logic.

This polemic might have been considered somewhat as flogging a dead horse, were it not that we live at a time when we are assured, rightly or wrongly, that religion is reviving, that scientific rationalism is discredited, and that we are well on the way back to a new "age of faith." These claims are, doubtless, exaggerated, and intended rather to appeal to weak intellects who tend to shout with the largest crowd, than to state accurately the facts of the case. But it is just in the appeal of such statements to weak intellects that the danger lies. We see on many sides what appears to be a flood of irrationalism surging. Side by side with the attempt to discredit science goes the attempt to discredit representative democracy, largely prosecuted by the same set of people. Outside the pale of the Churches, the vacant seat of religion is, in many minds, occupied by Theosophy and Spiritualism, which, with a pretence to be the latest thing in enlightenment, seek to re-establish the same doctrines which Materialism attacks. These are so many weeds growing in the path of progress, and equally, in their way, serve the ends of reaction.

The progress of social and political change will in time produce its own effect on the general ideas of the community. For the present, it is desirable that those who are revolutionary Freethinkers, and are

not tied by political exigencies, should combat the current attempt to boom supernaturalism, by an emphatic assertion of the following principles:

1. That there is no external divine authority which man owes submission, and, consequently, that opposition to practical reforms, on the ground that they are forbidden by divine authority, is to be treated with contempt.
2. That the justification of the State and of the laws laid down by it, whether as to property, marriage, or anything else, is, and must be, solely that they satisfy the felt needs of the individuals composing the State, and do not override more imperatively felt needs.
3. That the unit of society, whose needs are to be considered, is not the family or the Church, but the individual.
4. That the needs of the individual require consideration in the following order—material necessities *first*; education *second*; the amenities of life *third*; and alleged, but disputed, spiritual benefits last.

ROBERT ARCE

God and Man.

THIS is not an easy world to live in, but, so far as we know, it is the only world we have to live in, and it strikes me that the best thing we can do while here is to live in such a manner as to make life as most enjoyable for ourselves and others.

We are surrounded by enemies. Nature in every form ever menaces our existence. The frost bites though it hated man, and the heat burns with mercy for human beings. Only those who are intelligent enough or strong enough to take advantage of nature and compel her to obedience can live and make life a blessing.

Nature is afraid of brains. Left to herself she degenerates. It is only when whipped into obedience by human intelligence that she produces what is good. Nature must be conquered before man can ride her to victory.

The tendency of nature is downward. No field grows to wheat or corn or potatoes. Weeds are the natural products of the earth. Only by mixing brains with dirt has farming become successful.

Nature has no hand to stretch to man; no ear to listen to his prayers; no eye to see his sufferings; no heart to weep over his misfortunes. Nature is a Providence. She is a cold, hard foe; the coldest and the hardest foe that man has to fight. She kills human beings as she kills flies. She has a dozen ways of taking human life, and shows no remorse for the killing. In the sea the big fish eat the little ones; in the jungle the strong beasts kill the weak ones; in the air the fleet of wing overtake and slay the feeble. So with man; the white man drove the red man from the soil; the cunning man has raised the stupid and the dull.

Go where we will, nature is master, up to man. Man, nature finds opposition and a determination to conquer, to civilise, to uplift and bless.

Cultivation everywhere and in everything comes from the application of human brains. Man without brains is a fool, and a man who allows another to use his brains is the biggest fool in existence. The human intellect has won from nature all the blessings that mankind enjoy.

The highest work of man has been, and is to-day, to free the brain, to give liberty to men and women, to add to human life the joy, the satisfaction which comes from the exercise of freedom.

Nature has a thousand swords to slay man, and is to-day found on the shores of the sea, under the trees of the forest, in the homes wrecked by the storm, everywhere, where the cruel forces of nature are stronger than man.

Man escapes the blows aimed at him by nature only by the use of his intellect. Ever larger and

stronger is built the ship; ever more carefully is constructed the home; ever is the brain of man studying how to protect himself from the storm, the wind, the flood, and the drought.

Man's home came from man's brain, every bit of it. Nature never built a log cabin for human habitation, never gave to man the rudest shelter from the blast, the heat, the cold. Nature never made a fire for man, nor a stove, nor a weapon for him to defend himself from the savage beast. All has come from man's brain that makes man a civilised being.

Nature may have the credit of bringing man into the world naked. But what a world to come into. The first man was a naked man. How long he went round without a rag on him, no one can tell. But think of man absolutely naked in a world like this, and then think of the mighty work of the human brain in making for humanity all that our civilisation stands for to-day!

What a task confronted primitive man! But he went to work to better his condition. It wasn't prayer that helped him. It wasn't miracle that made his first home, rude and crude though it was. It was human labor that did it all. It was the human brain, that spark of fire in the human body that found the way and the means to protect him from heat and cold, from claws of beasts, and fangs of serpents.

Nature gave man life and being; gave him a body and a brain; gave him hands and feet; he has done the rest. From a magnificent creature man has become a magnificent creator. The whole world, from the poverty of human nakedness to the glory of the twentieth century, is the triumph of the human brain, the result of the free thought of man.

Take any of the characteristics of our age, our cities, our railroads, our inventions, our manufactures, our telephone and telegraph, and tell me where they came from. None of them came from heaven. Not one came from God. They were not revealed by any divine power. Every single one of the glorious characteristics of this age came from the human intellect. They were all born in the human brain, and every one had man for its author and its builder. I want to impress upon you the fact that everything that makes our life comfortable, enjoyable, tolerable, came from the brain of man. It did not come from revelation, but from human thought and human industry.

Another world, besides the one we see and live in, has been imposed upon man—the world of the supernatural. Man has conquered and is conquering nature, and taking from life its sufferings, its hardships, its fears, but the world of the supernatural, the world of unreal things, created by the ruling class for the purposes of slavery, of subjection, of exploitation, surrounds him, although its circumference is growing narrower, and its power becoming weaker.

Man has been afraid of the supernatural, afraid of the unknown, afraid of the dark. But when the searchlight of the brain was turned on these places, which held superior beings who controlled the destinies of man, the places were found empty, and the beings had retreated to other strongholds. The air about us was once filled with angels, the earth over which man roamed was peopled with fairies, the homes in which they lived were occupied by ghosts. To-day all the angels are gone, all the fairies have fled, all the ghosts have vanished, the Devil is dead, and God cannot be found.

No one ever saw an angel, alive or dead, and yet human beings believed in angels. No one ever saw a fairy, alive or dead, and yet men and women yet believed in fairies. No one ever saw a ghost, and yet human beings believed in ghosts. No one ever saw the Devil, and yet men and women believed in him. No one ever saw a god, and yet mankind believed in God and worshiped him. To the enlightened brain of man there is no supernatural. Nature is all in all. Whether there is anything good in the earth or in the heavens, that man has not yet discovered, I do not pretend to know; but I will say this: the man who is engaged in a search

for God will have a winter's job at least. I do not know what man will find in future years, but he will never find the Holy Ghost. I do not know where man will find the truth, when the truth is found, but he will never find it in the Bible—that book of a thousand lies. I do not know when man will be free from industrial bondage, but he will never feel the thrill of emancipation in his veins until he abolishes the priest. Men fight for what supports them, and religion will be defended as long as it gives honor and wealth to so many human beings.

Always and everywhere in front of man's progress stands, with uplifted hands, the priest, to forbid human advancement. Worse than frost, deadlier than the heat, more pitiless than the blast of the storm, is the work of the Church against the attempts of man to better the conditions of living. The cry of labor for bread, for justice, is not heard by the dead ears of the Church, but that cry will be heard by the living ears of man, and, when justice is given to those who toil, the home will no longer be sacrificed to the greed of the Church, and the pockets of the poor will be sacred from the sordid fingers of the priest.

I want to see men honest; I want to see them industrious; but I want to see them sensible. To save the working man, it is necessary to free his mind from the power of witchcraft; to tell him that his soul is his own, that no person on this earth has the right to forbid him to go where he will, to eat what he likes, to read what pleases him, and to do with his days and nights what brings to him the highest enjoyment.

—*Truthseeker* (New York). L. K. WASHBURN.

(To be continued.)

God to the Pope.

The best part of Europe is bleeding to death. Worse than that is the international hatred which is black enough to darken the sun. I only wish that the Pope, instead of falling upon his knees at the eleventh hour, as it were, and begging for help, had had the courage and the power, the tact and the diplomacy to prevent the War. Surely that ought not to have been too much for a Vicar of Christ!

But if the Holy Father believes that his new prayer, which ends with a piteous appeal to the Virgin, will bring an answer, why, we ask again, did he wait until the twenty-first day of March—seven months after the first shot was fired—before addressing it to heaven? If, however, he has been praying quietly all the time, but without success, what leads him to think that a new or a louder prayer will overcome heaven's indifference? And is it complimentary to the Deity to represent him as one who must be importuned before he will act?

Suppose heaven replied as follows:

"Holy Father, my vicar on earth, you call me 'Almighty,' but I cannot prevent causes from having consequences. If I could, my own throne would not last a day. If your Holiness had taken care of the causes, I could have looked after the consequences. Only a few years ago Italy seized Tripoli by force of arms. You had an opportunity then to protest against such thieving aggression, but instead you blessed the aggressor, prayed for his victory, and shared the spoils with him. You never thought then of praying for the Turks, for their orphaned children and widowed women!

"One other thing, your holiness: The belligerent nations have thrown international law, civilisation, and humanity overboard. Crimes have been committed to cause even a sphinx to break into speech. The English are trying to starve non-combatants—children, even; the Germans are sinking neutral ships and merchantmen, with no care for the lives on board. But while Secular newspapers and laymen have protested against these relapses into barbarism, the Pope, the infallible teacher, the moral conscience of the world, my sole mouthpiece on earth, has not had the courage to utter a single syllable against either English or German wrongs! How is that? When the world is in most need of a teacher and a prophet, you keep your lips sealed, or speak only ambiguities, and offer vain prayers! Is your silence on the crimes that are being committed by the powers induced by fear, by policy, or by ignorance? Infallibility and fear! Infallibility and policy! Infallibility and ignorance! The ungodly have called the papacy a sham. Prove that it is not! Please have this message read in all my churches."

M. M. MANGASARIAN.

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THE SECULAR SOCIETY (LIMITED)

Company Limited by Guarantee.

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

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

Secretary—MISS E. M. VANCE.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A Form of Bequest.—The following is a sufficient form of bequest for insertion in the wills of testators:—"I give, devise, and bequeath to the Secular Society, Limited, the sum of £100, free from Legacy Duty, and I direct that a receipt be given to two members of the Board of the said Society and the Secretary thereof shall be a good discharge to my Executors of said Legacy."

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

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President: G. W. FOOTE.

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

Principles and Objects.

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

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

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

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

Membership.

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—
"I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects."

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

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

Immediate Practical Objects.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Annual Conference of the National Secular Society,

ON

Whit—Sunday Evening, May 23, 1915.

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Speakers: Messrs. C. COHEN, J. T. LLOYD, A. B. MOSS, R. H. ROSETTI, HARRY SNELL, and WALLACE NELSON.

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