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Absolute, peremptory facts are bullies, and those who keep company with them are apt to get a bullying habit of mind.—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

Death the Democrat.

[The following article first appeared years ago in the *Freethinker*. Many eyes have closed since then and many have opened. Some of the latter may be glad to come across this article for the first time. It may cast some light even upon the present War.—EDITOR.]

"The small and great are there; and the servant is free from his master."—*Job*.

"O eloquent, just, and mighty Death! whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded; what none hath dared, thou hast done; and whom all the world hath flattered, thou hast cast out of the world and despised; thou hast drawn together all the far-stretched greatness, all the pride, all the ambition of man, and covered it all over with these two narrow words, *Hic jacet!*"—SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

"The glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armor against fate;
Death lays his icy hands on kings;
Sceptre and Crown
Must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made
With the poor crooked scythe and spade."
—SHIRLEY.

"Imperious Cæsar, dead and turned to clay,
Might stop a hole to keep the wind away."
—SHAKESPEARE, *Hamlet*.

EVERYONE has heard of the great Saladin, the Mohammedan ruler, whose humanity was such a striking contrast to the brutality of the Christian Crusaders. When the Crusaders captured Jerusalem, they turned it into a shambles; when Saladin recaptured it he did not shed a drop of gratuitous blood; on the contrary, he spent a large sum of his own money in redeeming captives, whose misery he relieved with compassion. At his death this splendid "infidel" ordered charities to be distributed to the poor, without distinction of Jew, Christian, or Mohammedan. This was a sublime act in that age and in those circumstances. But I have always more admired—if that be possible—the poetical inspiration of another death-bed act of his. "Take this cloak," he said to his servant, "show it to the faithful, and tell them that the ruler of the East would take but one garment with him into the grave." There is something in the lofty and stern monodemy of Islam more favorable to the sentiments of religion; and doubtless this was in part the inspiration of Saladin's death-bed message to the world; but another, and probably a larger, part of it was due to his own superiority of nature. He had some things of the poet in him. He saw through the shows and masks of things. He perceived their naked reality. He knew what life is, and what death is. We are all equal at birth, all senseless and helpless; when death comes the equality is once more pronounced. A husband standing beside his dead wife is just the same sad picture in a palace or a cottage. A mother weeping over her dead child reck not whether the furniture of the room be mean or sumptuous.

The accidents of life sink into nothingness when the essentials assert themselves. And then comes the final and eternal equality of the grave. All fare alike at that last supper—"not where he eats, but where he is eaten." Nay, a tall pauper inherits more earth at the finish than a shorter nobleman; and the little worm knows no distinction between king and peasant.

Death makes all odds even. Hats off, then, to Death the democrat! Death the leveller! compared with whom the most fanatical Socialist on earth is mild, and the wildest Anarchist an old-fashioned reactionary.

It must be this sentiment, however unconsciously it operates, that prompts the Frenchman to lift his hat and stand still when a funeral passes. The rougher Englishman is apt to think this theatrical, but it is nothing of the kind. France is the land of social equality. Economical and class distinctions obtain there as elsewhere, but the moral distinction between the various sections of society is comparatively slight. This is partly a legacy of the Revolution, and partly owing to the genius of the people. It is one of the best features of the French character. For my part, I think the better of my kind when I see the Frenchman's lifted hat and bent head. Let the coffin be poor or costly, death is there, and love and grief, which makes us all akin.

Nothing I have read about Bismarck has touched me like the following story told by one who knew him well. Bismarck was a good family man, and kind to his poor neighbors. Away from the turmoil of politics and the glare of high public life, he found his humanity. When his old wife died, the veteran statesman sat in his nightshirt, with naked feet, on her bedside, weeping like a child. That is a sad-sweet picture, but I like the other better. Here it is, in the very words of the narrator:—

"In the home circle he was perfectly charming, easy-going, and good-natured. He was passionately fond of children, and I have seen him over and over again have a game with the little ones of his gardener, who were very familiar with him, and would not hesitate to climb upon his knee. Once, when his gardener's little girl died, the great statesman went to condole with him. He was dreadfully upset, and, whilst holding the poor father's hand, burst into tears, for he was very fond of the child. He kissed the little corpse, and himself placed a bunch of roses in its hand."

This is true life. This is eternal. Those tears of sympathy with a poor brother man in his distress are better to think of than all the blood shed at Gravelotte and Sedan. Weaving the threads of subtle diplomacy, flashing the sword of conquest, changing frontiers and making empires, are great things in the eye of the world. But the finest thing Napoleon ever said was, "Respect the burden, madam," as he drew aside a proud lady who stood in the way of a loaded laborer; and the finest thing I have read about Bismarck is this story of his sharing the sorrow of a poor father over the corpse of his little child.

Standing out against all the bloody villainies of David is his grief over his favorite child. "O Absalom, my son, my son; would to God I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son, my son." And through all the tumultuous glories of Rome, and the shouts of her legions, and the ring of their swords on hostile helmets, pierces the musical wail of Catullus over

his dead brother—a note of immortal love and grief that will find an echo in human hearts for ever.

Walt Whitman was well inspired in singing a hymn to Death. It is the great democrat and the great leveller. And it is the great softener of the human heart, as it is the great renewer of humanity. Death removes, and birth supplies, and thus the human race is kept ductile and progressive. Death also demonstrates our common nature by proving our common mortality. How absurd are pompous inscriptions on tombstones! Great, was he? a whole hand higher than his fellows? Yet he lies here, and all his pride has dwindled to those fading lines on that crumbling stone. We turn away to memorials more in keeping with the scene; to simple words of grief and affection, of rest and peace. All sprang from Nature and had their little day of mingled pleasure and pain, and all return for their last long sleep to her bosom.

G. W. FOOTE.

Atheism.—English and French.—II.

(Concluded from p. 354.)

THERE is no denying that English people do not take intellectual matters seriously. In politics their one dread appears to be that of being thought logical. Affairs must not be thought out to their logical conclusion, conflicts must not be fought to a logical issue. A politician would as soon be accused of a criminal offence as charged with being logical, and one must admit that most do their best to escape the indictment. In religion the great plea for years has been that religious beliefs have worked well in practice, even though they may be illogical in theory. Against every appeal to logic or to reason the Englishman opposes what he calls "practical" commonsense. He does not realise that in human society to be logical is to be really practical; that to do what is clearly unreasonable is to purchase immediate ease at the expense of ultimate and heavy loss. He opposes to the thinker what he calls "a hard-headed man of business," and never realises the truth that his hard-headed man of business is of all men the most easily fooled, precisely because he is lacking in the finer qualities of intellect and imagination.

But it is one thing complaining, as does the *Times* writer, of the indifference of the public to intellectual issues, and of its readiness to practice a conformity which reacts with disastrous social consequences. It is another, and more important task to indicate the causes of this state of things. If people act a lie instead of speaking the truth, one must look for the cause outside of the individual. For people—save in abnormal cases—do not of set purpose prefer the lie. Other things equal, nearly everyone would sooner say what he believes, than profess something he does not believe. But if few people would hide their opinions from choice, there are, on the other hand, few who will express their opinions if their doing so involves punishment or privation. They will follow the course that promises the easier life. They desire to get through life with as little discomfort as is possible, and if society makes hypocrisy and conformity the prime conditions of peace and ease, then it is society that is ultimately responsible for whatever weakness or hypocrisy results.

Now consider what amount of encouragement is given in this country to freedom of thought, particularly in relation to religion. It is no more than a statement of the bare truth to say that avowed Freethought, in any branch of the public service, from Parliament downward, is an obstacle, and sometimes a fatal obstacle. In the world of letters Freethought, so long as it appears under a more or less "respectable" guise, may stand some chance of publicity. If it is open and unashamed, it is doomed. In social life the great lesson that is forced home on the rising generation is, not so much that certain opinions are false, and others true—that might be

expected—but that some opinions are respectable while others are unsafe. Young men are now taught that the greatest instrument for good that we possess is opinion, and that no other duty is of equal importance to that of carefully forming opinions and expressing them with courtesy and courage. And the not unusual result is the production of a type of character that is useless for anything except to "get on" in the world.

One may also add that the *Times* itself—with the rest of the newspaper world—is one of the instruments by means of which this general insincerity and mental cowardice is perpetuated. Look at the facts. For many years there has been an active propaganda in this country, as on the Continent, against Christianity. That propaganda has never been wanting in writers and speakers of more than average ability. This much has been admitted by its most persistent opponents. As a mere item of news a knowledge of this work is of some importance to the country at large. What has the *Times* ever done to encourage genuine freedom of discussion in religious matters? What is it doing, even to-day, in that direction? Absolutely nothing. It will fill its columns with reports of religious meetings, no matter how ridiculous the proceedings may be. But everything on the Freethought side is, more or less, completely excluded. So far as its power extends the public must be kept in the dark. It must never know that the defences of organised religion are being steadily battered down, and that inherited religious beliefs are being called into question by some of the keenest intellects of to-day. And this conspiracy of silence is made the more secure by everyone disowning its existence. Yet it is there, quite plain to everyone who cares to examine the facts. And the *Times* only emphasises the general insincerity by rating people for not entering seriously into this "War of Thought." How can they? What should they? They have never been taught to think the thinker seriously. If people are to take the conflict of ideas as one of the most serious business of life, they must be taught and trained for the war. At present they are not encouraged to take part in that fight. All they get is object lessons in dissimulation.

I agree with the *Times* that a belief—even though wrong—if it be firmly held and boldly fought for, is of greater social value than a right belief loosely held from mere motive of ease or comfort. But quite fail to see why the expression "negative Atheism" should attach to this. It almost looks as though the *Times* is playing the old religious game of connecting "Atheism" with something unpleasant or undesirable. It is true that, as I said last week, Atheists are less ready to avow themselves in England than in France. There, a man calls himself an Atheist, and the matter is settled. Here, he adopts one of a dozen aliases, and often joins in the hue and cry against a name which he ought to have adopted. No other real justification for the use of such a term as "Agnostic" has ever been given except that it was more "respectable" than Atheism. And even then it is not realised that Agnosticism has only relative respectability. It escapes some of the religious odium because Atheism is there to hear the brunt. If Atheism were out of the way, Agnosticism would be getting all the religious kicks and none of the religious ha'pence. As the *Times* says, the "positive Atheist is merely a crank because the negative Atheist is common." In other words, the negative Atheist is abused because so many other Atheists prefer to keep quiet or adopt more or less dishonourable disguises.

The *Times*, then, really appears to be laboring with the somewhat trite generalisation that whether sincerity or insincerity is the dominant character of a nation's life depends upon the general character of the social environment. And with this I quite agree. There is no reason in the nature of things why opinion in England should be more timid than opinion in France; why an Atheist in France should become an Agnostic, or a Rationalist, or an Ethical

Culturist in England. No reason, save in the intellectual traditions of the two countries and in the mental tone pervading the two societies. The French do not take their religion less seriously than we do. They take that and their non-religion more seriously. It is all a question of whether a people are brought up to realise the importance of opinion or not.

"The war of thought in which so many of us were content to be neutral, has become a war of flesh and blood." I prefer to put it the other way about, and to say that this war of flesh and blood, like other human conflicts, is ultimately a war of thought. For men and guns are ultimately symbols of the ideas and beliefs that dominate social life. It is the force of an idea that has placed millions of men in deadly hostility to each other to-day, just as it is the force of an idea alone that can ultimately make such conflicts impossible. Nothing less powerful, or more tangible, than an idea could hold masses of men together whether in warfare or in peaceful pursuits. The *Times* is only realising one of the fundamental truths upon which the Freethought movement is based; and if it were not an English newspaper, one might have some hopes that its perception of this truth would make it more hospitable to Freethought in the future. But one has doubts.

There is one other thing in the *Times* article with which I agree. This is, that neutrality in the world of thought is not less disgraceful than neutrality elsewhere, and in the end no less dangerous. That is indeed, a lesson the world needs, and Freethinkers not less than others. There is, in fact, no such thing as neutrality in intellectual matters. That is the mistake that thousands of Freethinkers make. They are doing their share. Never was there a greater world with an altogether erroneous idea as to the number of Freethinkers in the country. The world generally judges by the voices it hears, not by the number that remain silent. Second, every Freethinker who remains silent, who refrains from doing his share in the fighting, is to that extent helping the common enemy. The religious boycott is powerful, and would probably remain powerful even though all Freethinkers were to avow themselves. But it is derived from the hesitancy of those who decline to make their real opinions public. And it is this assumed neutrality that masks a real danger. It invites attack, even if it does not discourage those who are doing the actual fighting. In the world of thought, Danton's saying, "Boldness, again boldness, always boldness," is the only wise, and therefore the only profitable, policy.

C. COHEN.

The Spirit of God in Action.

ONCE upon a time it was richly worth while to have God on the side of an individual or a nation, for then he could and did perform mighty deeds as an expression of his favor. The only drawback, for thousands of years, was that there were endless numbers of deities, belonging to different families, tribes, and nations, each of whom was believed by his respective owners to be the most powerful, if he chose to make bare his arm. Prominent among these, though by no means a member of the earliest group, was Jehovah, the God of the Israelites, the record of whose amazing performances is to be found in the Bible. Of an extremely uncertain and variable temper, he had to be constantly humored, whence arose a vast system of bloody and other offerings, with the result that, in the main, he was Israel's friend and protector. Nothing won him over to their side half so successfully as the shedding of blood. That is why he became "a man of war," who delighted in leading his people to glorious victories. When in a good mood, he was a host in himself, and the leader of conquering hosts. When his people "cried to him in the battle, and he was intreated of

them, because they put their trust in him," their enemies were delivered into their hands by the hundred thousand, because then "the war was of God." Why was Joshua such a triumphant warrior, annihilating all foes, and utterly destroying all that breathed, whenever he gave battle? Because the spirit of the Lord was upon him. No sooner had Joshua's generation passed away than Israel turned their backs upon their Savior-God, and to chastise them for their defection he allowed them to be overrun and subdued by their enemies. Then they repented of their apostasy, and returned to Jehovah; whereupon he raised up men filled with his own spirit, who delivered them. Of this story there are several highly instructive repetitions in the Book of Judges. Oppression follows apostasy, and deliverance repentance, on every successive occasion. Put into a nutshell, the Book of Judges comes to this:—

"And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Astaroth. And the anger of the Lord was hot against Israel, and he delivered them into the hands of spoilers that spoiled them, and he sold them into the hands of their enemies round about, so that they could not any longer stand before their enemies. Whithersoever they went out, the hand of the Lord was against them for evil, as the Lord had said, and as the Lord had sworn unto them; and they were greatly distressed. Nevertheless the Lord raised up judges which delivered them out of the hand of those that spoiled them" (Judges ii. 6; iii. 6).

This was tit for tat on the grand scale. The moment the people forsook Jehovah and bowed down to strange gods, he forsook them and set them under the heel of cruel oppressors; but the moment they repented and came back, he also repented and appointed warrior-judges to put their enemies under their feet. Yet, according to the Bible, Jehovah, on the whole, led the armies of Israel from victory unto victory, and had a right to be known as their Warrior-God, or Supreme War-Lord. On one occasion, Judah was being invaded by Assyria, and the king of the latter openly defied the God of Judah, insolently saying:—

"Hearken not unto Hezekiah when he persuadeth you, saying, The Lord will deliver us. Hath any of the Gods of the nations ever delivered his land out of the hand of the king of Assyria? Where are the Gods of Hamath and of Arpad? Where are the Gods of Sepharvaim, of Hena and Ivvah? Have they delivered Samaria out of my hand? Who are they among all the Gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?" (2 Kings xviii. 32-35).

Such was the challenge of the Pagan king of Assyria to the king of the chosen people at Jerusalem, and Jehovah answered by threatening to put his hook in the Assyrian monarch's nose and his bridle in his lip, and, according to the Biblical narrative, the following was the form which the fulfilment of that threat took:—

"And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went forth, and smote in the camp of the Assyrians an hundred four score and five thousand [185,000]; and when men arose early in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses" (2 Kings xix. 35).

We repeat that a God who acted on such a gigantic scale, though of miraculous frightfulness, on behalf of his own people, was eminently worth believing in. He was never idle, but always acting in defence or attack, by reward or punishment. The keeper of Israel neither slumbered nor slept. But by to-day the situation has totally altered. He now does absolutely nothing but slumber and sleep. He neither sees, hears, nor heeds the happenings of the world in any other way. In Christendom he is called Father, and in Turkey Allah; but the two names mean precisely the same thing, and both Christians and Mohammedans are crying to him for his gracious help, passionately appealing to him to intervene in this savage War. He callously turns a deaf ear to them all. And after all, what on earth can he do? They are all his people and the sheep of his pasture. He must feel perfectly lost and bewildered as he looks down upon the foul welter of their selfish, greedy passions, and listens to their

equally greedy and selfish prayers. Each opposing party to the dehumanising conflict is profoundly convinced that it is wholly in the right, fighting courageously in the cause of righteousness and peace, and no self-respecting deity could possibly determine how to act for the best in circumstances so perplexing. Furthermore, it is impossible to conceive of a self-respecting divinity allowing such woeful circumstances to arise in a world over which he himself presided.

Dean Inge says, in a sermon published in the *Christian World Pulpit* for June 2, that "the Holy Spirit is God himself in action—always in action"; but he omits to tell us *where* God is in action. The reverend gentleman deals in vague generalities, in a sort of confused and confusing idealism that has its abode away up among the clouds, but he does not dare to face the solemn and solemnising facts of to-day, and conscientiously say that he can discover God in action in these. Even looking at them from his point of view, all we can see in these is God discredited, defeated, utterly overthrown. The Dean speaks of a "spiritual light that comes into the world and burns and shines more and more unto the perfect day"; but we completely fail to find any trace of the burning and shining of such a light at this sad moment. Sometimes Dr. Inge's own utterances have been of such a character as to lead to the conclusion that he almost agrees with us. On this occasion, however, his feet are not upon the earth at all, but in some undiscovered country, concerning which neither he nor we have any knowledge, and his eyes do not look upon the scenes of heart-breaking horrors which occur every day. Is God in action at the many blood-soaked Fronts where infinitely more than brutal inhumanity prevails? At the present moment the world does scarcely anything but manufacture at the greatest possible speed, and wield with the greatest possible skill, the most frightful instruments of destruction that modern science can devise. A greed of killing is the ruling passion of the day, and this a very reverend Dean has the temerity to imply is the Holy Spirit in action. Innocent men in action are being killed by the million, and the Holy Spirit in action sees and permits it. We are coolly told that some "indwelling, transforming power is still among us, still with us, visiting us and blessing us in the loneliness of our private thoughts, and in these corporate acts of worship in which the Church dispenses to its members heavenly gifts." The pulpit has been repeating that absurdity for nineteen centuries, and the world is still untransformed. The quondam dismal Dean has suddenly been converted into an unreasonably and unjustifiably bright optimist. We shall not be surprised if shortly he will join the pietistic Bishop of London, and speak of the present as the Great Day of God, that God who through the Holy Spirit is "always in action."

Another man of God has been discussing the question, "Must We Hate"? basing his discourse upon the words, "Be ye angry and sin not. Let not the sun go down on your wrath." He spoke of the retribution of Germany as having already begun. We cannot realise it, and it is too soon to paint the future. Germany has lost millions of men, but so have our Allies. Germany takes pride in everything she has hitherto done, and the pastors of all her Churches, as well as the professors of all her Universities, justify all her deeds of valor in the name of the God of justice and truth; and before our Allies set foot upon her soil, before her armies are broken and her pride is lowered, it is certainly premature to describe her punishment as already in being. Furthermore, outrages may win victories; and we must not forget that war itself is an outrage upon human nature. This reverend gentleman takes for granted that Germany is in the wrong. She may be, but we must not lose sight of the fact that the Germans themselves believe that their cause is just, quite as sincerely as we believe that ours is so. He tells us, indeed, not to hate

Germany, but rather, in the name of Christ, to cherish "holy indignation" against her.

The pulpit would act wisely if it left the War severely alone, or, at least, resolved to leave the Holy Spirit and Christ out of it. God in action by no means fits in with the fact of men in action slaughtering as many of one another as they can; and they are the very men for whom Christ is said to have died, in order to deliver them from all evil and bless them with peace. J. T. LLOYD.

The Awakening of Italy.

"Yea, let all sceptre-stricken nations lie
But live thou though they die;
Live thou and love and lift when these lie dead
The green and white and red."

—SWINBURNE, *A Song of Italy*.

"Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world."
—SHALLER.

POETS have ever been knight-errants. From the days of Lucretius, who fought a soldier's fight against embattled priestcraft, to the time when Swinburne rolled his richest thunders against the despots of Europe, the great writers have been Paladins in the cause of liberty. Hence, it is not strange that Italy's greatest living writer, Gabriele D'Annunzio, should have left his quiet study and mounted the noisy public platform to voice his country's aspirations. Italy, during the past few weeks, has rung with his passionate speeches, and the country has echoed his stirring war-songs, notably his "Song of the Dardanelles." The patriot has voiced the democratic spirit of the generous and warm-blooded Italian nation and compelled the Italian Government to break a cowardly truce, which could only serve the Austrian and German War-party that would crush the liberties of Europe, which Italy values no less than her sisters, France and Britain. Received everywhere rapturously by vast crowds, D'Annunzio modestly said, "Not me do you salute, but the spirit that guides the love that inspires me, the idea which I serve."

Gabriele D'Annunzio is an essential product of the modern Italian Renaissance, in spite of his cosmopolitan culture. He is representative of the Pagan element in the Italian character. His forerunners are Boccaccio and Benvenuto Cellini and Titian; his immediate predecessor is Carducci. All through the history of Italian literature this Pagan strain may be traced—an intimate connection with the classic literature of the past. It lay at the root of the whole great movement of the Renaissance. Nearly twenty centuries of Christianity have only crushed it over, and have never wholly eliminated it. In Gabriele D'Annunzio this old Pagan spirit has burst out afresh. He is not only an Italian, but a Roman, a passionate admirer of the city of the Caesars; and Rome, in certain aspects, is still the most Pagan city in Europe. D'Annunzio is wholly unaffected by Christian sentiment. He possesses almost as a birthright that familiarity with the classic literature of his Latin forefathers, which to men of an alien race nothing but the highest scholarship can give. He has steeped himself in the art, the literature, the atmosphere of the times of Horace and Catullus. For him beauty is the highest good, happiness the chief goal; and Christian sentimentalities do not exist.

D'Annunzio's works, from *Il Piacer* to *La Pisana*, are full of the most exquisite descriptive pages; they are aglow with the sunny Italian atmosphere. But the Italian poet does not love nature for herself, as our own Wordsworth loved her. To D'Annunzio the budding spring, the cries of the swallow in its flight, the silence of the midday heat, all whisper of human passions and human joys. He is probably one of the most acute interpreters of the sea emotions of his time. His knowledge is profound, his imagination true, his analysis unrivalled. Dispassionate as a surgeon, with the delicate perception of an artist, he

lays bare through pages of beautiful writing, the secrets of the heart. In certain directions he has carried the psychological novel as far as it is possible to go.

Before he was twenty, D'Annunzio had published two slim volumes of verse, which placed him at a bound far above all his contemporaries, the veteran Carducci alone excepted. Indeed, he is a poet first, and a novelist afterwards. His sense of rhythm is apparent in his novels, and only a real and unmistakable poet could have obtained some of his most characteristic effects of style. As in music, a motive will recur at seemingly inevitable intervals, so D'Annunzio will deliberately repeat a phrase, sometimes with variations, but often in the same words, in order to bring the reader back to a previous impression, to a recurrent train of thought. The little description of the bird in *The Triumph of Death* is repeated three times in exactly the same words. In *The Virgins of the Rocks* we find a line of magnificent description, where the color of the arid soil is compared to a lion's mane, which is woven into the narrative again and again. Precisely similar effects were used by James Thomson in his superb poem, "The City of Dreadful Night," where the reader is haunted by the recurrent phrase, "As I came through the desert thus it was."

D'Annunzio spent five years working at his novel, *The Triumph of Death*. By general consent, it has been acclaimed as his masterpiece. It was the book which gained for its author the enthusiastic support of the critics, and it was the first of his works to appear in an English version. The book consists simply of the history of a man and a woman in relation to one another. The keynote of the whole book is contained in that terrible phrase of Milton, "Lust, hard by hate." It is a theme in which the author's insight into the intricacies of human passion has full play.

D'Annunzio blows everything to melody in the golden trumpet of his genius, and his poetic dramas have revived the Italian theatre. His *Citta Morta* was written for Sara Bernhardt, and *Giaconda* and *Francesca da Rimini* were composed for the great Italian actress, "Eleonora Duse." Thus his name is linked imperishably with the greatest actresses of his time.

This is the man who is voicing the aspirations of awakened Italy. In his oration at Rome he said, "Let Rome find anew in the Forum the daring of the great Cæsar," and the poet invoked the spirit of "Garibaldi, the Liberator." D'Annunzio has done great and lasting work in literature, but he has done even better work in persuading his countrymen to cast out the Teuton influence, which would have thrust Italy into the backward abyss of barbarism.

Freethinkers will gratefully remember that Gabriele D'Annunzio has taken the torch of liberty from the hands of the dead Carducci, and to-day it once more flames over the country of the Cæsars. More enduring than marble is the action of this poet-patriot.

"Of god nor man was ever this thing said,
That he might give
Life back to her who gave him, whence his dead
Mother might live.
But this man found his mother dead and slain,
With fast-sealed eyes.
And bade the dead rise up and live again,
And she did rise."

MIMNERMUS.

The Genesis of Art.

In *The Golden Bough* Sir James Frazer sets forth in eloquent language, and with an immense wealth of illustration, the evidences for his theory that magic preceded religion in the onward course of human evolution. Professor Alessandro Della Seta, the famous Italian archæologist, on the other hand, in a recently published work, *Religion and Art: A Study in the Evolution of Sculpture, Painting, and Archi-*

ecture,* propounds the view that not only was magic the leading motive of man's primitive spells and prayers, but that it has remained throughout the ages the mainspring of his actions towards all the quite imaginary creatures his fears and his misunderstandings have conjured into being.

Professor Della Seta asserts:—

"And the means of action in every religion, even in those which seem the most elevated, is magic; it may be a spiritual magic instead of material, a magic which, instead of constraining, implores; but it is always the case of an individual bending to his own advantage all that is beneficial in his surroundings, and hindering all that may injure him. The uncultivated people that performs magic functions to make the rain fall or to keep off some misfortune, and the cultured people that prays to the Deity with a similar object, perform work not differing greatly in quality; though one acts directly, the other indirectly; the one constrains, the other causes to constrain; one thinks he is strong, the other knows he is weak; the one commands, and the other implores.

"Even when man has risen to the conception of a perfectly just and good God whose conduct will therefore not be subject to the will of man, prayer, that request for help which might seem irreverent when addressed to one who has no need for such appeal, shows its magical character and primæval origin—the persuasion inherent in the mind of man that the higher beings on whom he depends will not work unless he induces them to action."

But even among the devotees of the higher faiths it is common to find the untutored although perfectly sincere peasant, particularly in Southern and Eastern Europe, who will damn the saint or divinity should his prayers remain unanswered. And the sacred image to which his profitless petitions have been addressed may become the victim of the disappointed rustic's violence and rage.

Nor are these survivals of aboriginal superstition confined to the unlettered peasantry of so-called civilised countries. There are in England to-day thousands of "educated" people who, more or less, believe in the potency of curses. As a matter of fact, innumerable superstitions, inherited from the savage past, permeate the entire fabric of modern society. The popularity of the mascot, even among the wealthier classes, is one only of the evidences of this. The credulous members of the upper classes who patronise Bond-street crystal gazers, palmists, and other necromancers are far more numerous than is generally supposed. In all conscience, a colossal task lies before those who are striving to emancipate the people from the sombre shadows cast upon contemporary life by the baleful superstitions bequeathed by a dark past.

That supremely gifted prose writer, Cardinal Newman, once attempted to define clearly the distinction between adoration and worship. His effort can scarcely be deemed successful, for the very excellent reason that no real distinction is possible. It is immaterial whether the Russian peasant worships or adores his icon, or whether the devout Catholic worships with profound reverence or honors with extreme submission the Virgin and the holy saints. The motive is the same in either case, as the chief and, usually, the sole desire of the supplicant is to obtain protection, or to secure tangible benefits in return for value received.

The problem before us concerns the causes which induced our rude prehistoric forefathers to initiate those early art efforts which in later ages led to the marvellous achievements of the Greeks and other European races in the realms of sculpture and painting. Pragmatists and Spiritualists have pretended that the artistic powers of man must be regarded as something above and beyond his merely material life. Man's æsthetic nature, we are assured, points to his possession of an undying soul and makes him distinct, not only in degree, but in kind, from all the other products of organic evolution. But, as we shall see, human artistry is the outcome of natural growth. The highest forms of music and painting, of sculpture and architecture, are the results of steadily expanding

* *Religion and Art*. Fisher Unwin. 1914.

development. From rude beginnings, the loftiest achievements in the various arts may be as surely traced as the evolution of the modern battleship from the primitive canoe.

No single cause will explain the art of uncivilised races. Numerous factors must have co-operated to generate and develop the power of artistic expression, and one of the most important of these factors was the recognition of utility. And there is no more reason to ascribe supernatural or supernormal agency in the evolution of human artistry than to postulate spiritual influence or guidance in that discriminating appreciation of beauty, or the power to build artistically constructed nests, which is so general among the birds of the fields and forests.

With a firm, if misguided, faith in his power, by means of magic, to control the seasons and to influence the actions of the lower animals, primitive man must have early realised his powerlessness in the presence of dreams and death. These mysterious phenomena mocked at all his magical allurements and arts. Visions and the icy hand of death were seen to be beyond his control, and for that reason alone were destined to become potent instruments in the evolution of gods and ghosts and the separate life of the soul. In the uneasy dreams that accompany the sleep of the savage, the spirits of the living and the dead appear apart from the places in which the living normally dwell, and in which the dead are laid at rest. Nor is this seeming separation of soul from body peculiar to the human animal. The lower organisms, both floral and faunal, and even the inanimate forms of matter are manifested in dreams, and appear in places quite foreign to their natural surroundings. What more reasonable then than that the quick and the dead should alike be endowed in the philosophy of the savage with independent or semi-independent souls? Animism, doubtless, in part arose out of such misconceptions, and its twin-brother Theism, despite its later manifold disguises, may, and probably did, owe its origin to the gradual apotheosis of the defunct human ancestor. And when a spirit becomes credited with a power far exceeding the powers of the minor ghosts, that more potent spirit is destined ultimately to rise to the position of the most feared and revered of all the supernatural host.

As Professor Della Seta shrewdly notes:—

"The contemporaneous origin of the two theories, the animistic and the theistic, seems proved by the fact that there is no human race entirely dominated by one idea. It is a question of measuring the proportion in which one idea or the other prevails in the different social strata, but there is no uncivilised race which in its general animism does not in some small degree hold the theistic idea, if only in the cult of the heroic or the deified dead, and there is no cultured people, even of those who have risen to the heights of monotheism, which does not retain some remnant of animism."

While man remains in the animistic stage he imagines himself assailed on every side by antagonistic agencies to which he must pay due honor and regard. But as mankind advances in knowledge and power, a widening control over his surroundings serves to exalt man above his minor enemies. And when he attains to the stage of religious evolution, in which he has only to keep on good terms with the god or gods that exercise sovereign sway and mastery over all created things, his secular life begins to expand and his sacred cares to dwindle. Among contemporary uncivilised races, religious observances of one kind or another weigh with grievous heaviness on the lives of the people.

Even among the cultured races of antiquity, religion remained a heavy burden; while with the fall of the Roman Empire and the rise and triumph of the Christian Church, supernaturalism became a positive curse in Western Europe. It is in modern times, and among those nations most completely emancipated from sacerdotal influences, that the secular life has reached its fullest development. Scientists and men of letters are in our day mostly pure naturalists in their attitude towards the universe. A pinch of incense is occasionally scattered

in the temple by members of the educated classes; but the vast majority of the thoughtful are either very frigid adherents, or utter unbelievers in the popular creed. And what is of immeasurable importance is the solid circumstance that a large and ever-increasing section of the better-instructed and more reflective members of the working population in all industrial countries may be claimed as either sullenly indifferent or openly hostile to the powers and pretensions of the clerical caste. Moreover, the wand of science not only exercises a mighty influence over the completely emancipated few—its dominion is indirectly asserted over the half-emancipated many; and it has very materially modified the inarticulate feelings and opinions of countless thousands who remain nominal adherents of the hundred and one forms of the Protestant faith. Nor is this all. The Catholic Church itself has been invaded by a mild Freethought, which takes the name of Modernism. Educated Islam has also succumbed to the spirit of Rationalism, and in Northern America and Western Europe the majority of cultured Jews are far from orthodox in their views.

If we assume that Animism was at one time universal—that is to say, that every living and many lifeless modes of being were endowed with spirit forms—then possibly many of those animals, plants, and inanimate things which savages regard as their totems are the survivors from the far larger number of animistic existences which were at an earlier period credited with spirit life. Now, did man, by a process of selection, at last come to disregard those spirit-beings whose existence was in no way bound up with his happiness or misery? And did he, on the other hand, proceed to establish a covenant with those creatures which his more experienced mind now recognised as likely to be of service to him, if friendly, but which were liable to become dangerous if moved by feelings of resentment or rage?

Many extant forms of Totemism are apparently mere shadows of their former state. But all seem to display a past or present belief that the welfare of man is dependent upon the prosperity of the totem. The savage group honors and protects its totem, and looks for favor and guardianship in return. But when man has outgrown his primitive faith in the efficacy of his totem, when he has nothing to hope or fear from it, his respect for it becomes so perfunctory that it receives less and less regard. Through various causes, the ancient local totems dwindle and decay, while some more popular totems common to several savage groups may come to monopolise most of the adoration and worship of the people. Preference would probably be given to the great majority of instances to an anthropomorphic divinity—a development of the ghost of the departed ancestor. Yet the existence of so great an array of theriomorphic deities presupposes the triumph in the conflict among the totems for supremacy of a large number of animal gods.

Whatever the foregoing theory may be worth, it appears certain that every totem is, or has been, viewed either as a possible enemy or as a useful friend. Hence man's desire to exercise his spells upon his human or animal deities for man's own advantage. This brings us to the threshold of our inquiry into the origin of early savage art, and to this most interesting theme it will be necessary to devote a second article.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be concluded.)

Billy Sunday's flannel-mouthed oratory does not appeal to all Americans, and the evangelist's message is criticised by more sober Christians. A Philadelphian professor recently wrote to Billy asking him what message Christianity had concerning political corruption, unemployment, the housing of workers, and evil social conditions. Billy replied that his business was the saving of the individual soul, and he meant to stick to it. The moral should be interesting in the Benighted States.

Acid Drops.

The *Sunday Chronicle* says it has received a "shoal of letters" asking how the War "can be reconciled with the teachings of Christianity"? It thinks no good can be done by publishing them. We presume it means no good can be done to the paper—for that is what newspaper editors usually mean by the phrase. It admits that some "violent attacks" are made on Christianity in these letters, which seem to support our view of the cause of the editorial reticence. We believe that a considerable amount of good would be done if a paper with the circulation of the *Sunday Chronicle* gave scope for expressions of opinion from its readers on that question. For our own part, the reply to the question would be a brief one. The teachings of Christianity cannot be reconciled with war of any sort. The practice of Christianity, and the spirit developed by Christian doctrines always has, and, we believe, always will, sanction war. And our witness is the whole history of the Christian Church.

That pious periodical, the *Daily Chronicle*, informs its readers that the first Christian organisation to allow the equality of men and women was the Salvation Army. This shows how slow Christians can be in appreciating a most elementary idea of justice. If it takes two thousand years to obtain so slight an advance, how many millenniums will it require to civilise Christians?

Some Christians take their religion seriously, and among the select few may be mentioned Mr. W. R. Moore, of Bristol, who has resigned the chairmanship of Messrs. Moore, Ltd, the engineering firm of Yeovil, because they have undertaken to make war munitions, which he finds incompatible with his religious convictions. The clergy have more elastic consciences, and while professing to be followers of the "Prince of Peace," bless the standards of

Fit the poor clergy! St. Alphege, which has just become vacant by the death of Rev. Prebendary Nash, provides an income of £980 a year. The congregation averages six. It would need a deal of argument to persuade the incumbent of that church that there is nothing in Christianity.

How more, the poor clergy! Glancing over some recent wills we see that the Rev. Canon Carr left £3,341, Rev. A. Williams £3,890, Rev. C. King Irwin £3,958, Rev. E. Edwards £3,290, Rev. S. E. Busby £9,666, and Rev. H. C. Brewster £31,216. Business is quite as usual.

A writer in the *Cambridge Magazine*, said to be a well-known sociologist, warns the public that with the approach of the hot weather there is likely to be an invasion of Bacteria, originating in the "unclean battlefields of Europe." On this, the Editor of the *Cambridge Magazine* remarks, "Our correspondent seems to overlook the fact that most right-thinking people believe in a Friend behind Phenomena, and that will protect us against Bacteria and Germans, though not perhaps against journalists." We do not know who is the Editor of the *Cambridge Magazine*, but, if he is the "Friend" he would be hard to match for stupidity. Considering that he did nothing to prevent the War, there seems to be some room for hope in his agency checking the consequences of this quarrel amongst his faithful servants.

The Emperor Wilhelm has announced that he will punish Italy for her perfidy; but it will be remembered that he called upon "God" to punish England. Ought we to feel betrayed, or otherwise?

It is announced that Mr. George Moore is completing a novel dealing with "incidents in the New Testament." The story of the virgin birth should make a good sex novel.

Rev. A. J. Waldron has given Mr. Bottomley the sanction of his presence at meetings, as well as the praise of his voice. And praise from such a quarter must indeed be valuable. Now the Rev. A. W. Gough writes to the Editor of *John Bull*, "Your gospel comprises the best part of the Christian religion." Verily, the righteous have their reward.

Two of the victims of the London air-raid were, so it was

stated at the inquest, in the attitude of prayer when the Zeppelin bombs crashed into their house. They were just asking God to protect them through the night, when their end came. We hardly know which calls for the more severe comment—the barbarity of the German aviator or the carelessness (or callousness) of Providence. Probably the latter deserves first place.

The Bishop of Stepney, Dr. Paget, told a Christian Endeavor meeting that this War was seriously shaking people's faith. "He had evidence on this point which it would be absolutely foolish to ignore. It had affected people who had never faltered in their belief before, people of education as well as those of the lower classes." Even people of education are affected! How sad! Dr. Paget thinks the Christian Endeavor Society may save the situation. How stupid!

A Presbyterian pastor of Portland, U.S.A., has been asking the world that old religious conundrum, Why shouldn't he lie and steal, etc., if he does not believe in a God or a future life? This parson, the Rev. J. H. Boyd, seems quite convinced that it is only the belief in God and a future life that keeps him from leading a bold, bad life, and we do not see how anyone can successfully contradict him. That is, so far as he himself is concerned. If Mr. Boyd says it is only his belief that keeps him from crime, we are willing to take his word for it. But we question whether the same rule holds good for other people. The New York *Truthseeker* asks Mr. Boyd whether he would undertake to confute a "little four-page tract, entitled *Why Be Good?* by Editor Foote of the London *Freethinker?*" We venture to think he won't—nay, we are sure he won't.

A headline in the *Times*, referring to the meetings of the Scottish Assemblies, was worded, "Not By Bread Alone!" Was this a delicate insinuation that North-Britishers eat porridge?

Speaking at the Unitarian Association's Meeting, Mr. H. G. Chancellor, M.P., said that "Men were all children of the same heavenly Father." A cynic might ask why Papa does not prevent his children from murdering each other.

Christians sometimes have lucid intervals, and the *Church Times*, writing on the subject of "War Babies," makes a significant admission when it says unchastity "is a common and deplorable accompaniment of religious revivals." The remark is true enough, so far as it goes, but the Salvation and Church Armies are more concerned with "revivals" than the British Army.

A great deal has been said since the War started about the inactivity of the Pope. It has been pointed out that he who stands at the head of the Universal Church has remained practically silent amid all the horrors of the conflict. It would, of course, have been pleasing to see the Pope—merely as a man—denouncing evil wherever it occurred; but, apart from this, the Pope appears to us to have played the same game of opportunism that every Christian Church has played on all critical occasions. How could the Pope denounce Germany when Catholic Austria is fighting with her? What the Pope did was what other heads of Churches do in similar circumstances—he hoped the War would end; which everybody hopes, even the Germans. He trusted that everybody would be guided by Christian principles—which all the belligerents hope, including the Germans. The Pope ladled out the worthless commonplaces that Christians are so lavish in dispensing. Of course, they mean nothing; but, then, Christian professions seldom do mean anything.

How these Christians love one another! The Rev. F. Windley, a Devonshire vicar, has been girding at Free Churchmen, and said "he did not love the Nonconformists a bit more than he did the Germans." Perhaps this is the dear vicar's playful way of admitting that he loves his enemies.

During a thunderstorm at Gibraltar a rain of frogs took place, according to the newspapers, which add that "the ground was positively swarming with them." It must have been like the lively times in the plague days in old Egypt.

According to the leading article in the *British Weekly* for June 3, it has been found impossible to maintain in the City of London, during this terrible time of war, a daily intercessory service. All Christians profess to believe in God

and the efficacy of prayer; but so feeble is this belief that it has utterly failed to bring them together once a day to ask God to end the War speedily in our favor. This is a shocking state of affairs, since, as the writer of the article assures us, if there had been sufficient prayer, offered up with confidence, God would have given us peace long ere this. Consequently, it is entirely the fault of the Churches that fighting is still going on. God will let the savage conflict continue until he is urged, with sufficient frequency and by an adequate number of people, to put a stop to it. The wonder of wonders is, that anybody can be silly enough to believe in such a God; but there is considerable consolation to be derived from the fact that in London, at least, his so-called people are, in practice, thorough-going unbelievers in the efficacy of prayer.

In the same article, written presumably by the editor, Sir W. Robertson Nicoll, it is frankly admitted that, after two thousand years of the Christian religion, this world is so very evil, so full of sin and sorrow, that there must be another to balance it. The curious thing, however, is that both worlds, the old as well as the new, are the works of God. Now, if the old world is so very evil, so full of sin and sorrow, what guarantee is there that the new is any better? Milton created two great poems, *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*; but every literary critic is aware that the latter is much inferior to the former. Is it not possible, then, that the next life may be even worse than this, both being the creations of the same Supreme Being?

A defendant at the Southend Police Court, who was charged with stealing jewellery valued at £20, said she had been to St. John's Church and heard the sermon, which was very good. Another proof of the restraining powers of religion.

What daredevils the Y.M.C.A. officials are! They are now risking their lives in the fighting lines—at Purfleet Camp, where a large "hut" has been erected, and where "ladies and gentlemen take their turn in providing concerts."

How hazy religious folk are in their ideas. Here is Sir Francis Younghusband saying that "the religion which inspired the life of men like Nelson, Lincoln, and Roberts, must have something in it of supreme value." Sir Francis appears to have forgotten that Abraham Lincoln was a Freethinker. And a cynic might ask him if Nelson's religious inspiration was on tap when he met Lady Hamilton.

A Wesleyan minister, who has become an Army-Chaplain, has his pulpit filled by his wife. The *Daily Chronicle* adds, naively, "and must preach her sermon and make up her accounts—just like a man." Why should a minister of the Gospel be a business man? Ay, there's the rub! Judas opened the first business account of the Christian Church, and his amount was for thirty shillings.

"A Roman Catholic," writing to the *Referee*, offers a very convincing proof of the truth of Christian revelation. Man, we are told, can only invent what he can understand; but the Christian religion comes from God, and hence a great deal of it is above our comprehension. That settles it. If you could understand Christianity, that would prove it to be of human origin. As you cannot understand it—or, at least, parts of it—there is a plain proof that it came from God. And, presumably, the greater the absurdity, the clearer the proof of divinity. What a superb religion for knaves and fools.

"Ministers Resign" was a headline in the London newspapers. It referred to some politicians; the Christian ministers, belonging to the Churches, stick to their salaries like Death to a leg of mutton.

It is rumored that army chaplains are shy of mentioning hell to the troops. Maybe they think it will remind the Tommies of their absent "flames."

The obiter dicta of bishops are worth noting. The Bishop of Sheffield says "the ruthless and unscrupulous ferocity of our great enemy is the most bewildering and ominous fact in modern history." If the bishop turns to the Old Testament, he will find a remarkable parallel in "ancient history."

Owing to the high prices of meat, the newspapers have been printing columns concerning the values of vegetarian

and fancy diets. So far, no one has mentioned the example of King Nebuchadnezzar, who ate grass, nor referred to the still more illustrious personage who fed five thousand people with three sardines and a bath bun.

Now that Italy is at war, the question of the Pope's safety has been raised, and the *Daily Chronicle* (London) says that "should Benedict XV. decide to leave Italy, Spain is the most probable asylum." Sensitive Catholics may object to the use of the last word.

In a notice of a new play, the *Daily Mail* says a "Prussian general is so blatantly frightful at Rheims that when he and his staff are turned into pillars of salt by a Trappinite shell, one feels it is almost too good to be true." Despite the Biblical flavor, it reads like an account of a Dick Turpinite melodrama.

With all his folly—natural and acquired—the Bishop of London has all an ecclesiastic's readiness to make capital out of whatever looks likely to benefit his order. He is now seeking what use can be made of the state of feeling connected with the War to prevent the "de-Christianization of the Lord's Day." A new London Sunday Defence Union—of which he is President—has been formed, and the Bishop appeals for help on the ground that when our soldiers come back their faith will be "deeper than that of many of us at home," and we ought to prepare for them by creating a proper kind of Sunday. The picture of our "Tommy" receiving a shock at the way in which we spend our Sunday is quite touching. And we are quite sure that no one but our own Bishop would ever have thought of that plan. He has his impress all over it.

Of course, the Bishop of London repeats his "earnestness with which men of all ranks are turning to God" and in many cases coming back to the faith of their childhood." Now, remember, the Bishop was out in France for a few days. During that time he did conduct a number of services, but it must be obvious that the people who attended them would have attended a similar service at home. His experience of the soldiers, apart from the services, would be very small, and in his case quite useless. The idea that there is in any sense an authority upon any change of opinion created by the War is, therefore, absurd. We expect that he made up his mind what he would find before he went, and therefore found it. We feel sure of this because he was voicing the same kind of inanities before he went out. And he is still at it, even after more level-headed persons have seen the folly of the pretence, and find it wiser to insist that a revival of religion is pure bunkum.

Our excellent and humorous contemporary, *London Opinion*, has a good joke concerning the clergy. An army counsel is addressing a clergyman in the witness-box, and he says: "Now then, please, we want the truth. Remember you're not in your pulpit now."

"Quite a number of people raised their eyebrows when they saw a news photograph of a general's daughter driving in a van," says the *Daily Mail*. The halfpenny Christians do not raise their eyebrows when they read of their "god" working at a carpenter's bench.

"The Pope throws in his lot with Italy," runs a score-line in a Transatlantic paper. Papa possesses such a lot that we take the information with a grain of salt.

One result of the War is likely to be a vigorous revival of whiskers and other alterations to the hair. Let us hope prayerfully, that the increase in religiosity will not lead to a renewal of Biblical fashions. Our swells might cultivate "Piccadilly Weepers"; but few would have courage to imitate the hairdressing of the twelve disciples.

The Pope has given a number of buildings, including one of his palaces at Castel Gaudolfo, in the Alban Hills, for the use of wounded soldiers. Benedict's "god" never had a palace to live in.

War makes people religious. So the clergy would have to believe. The Vickerstown Cricket Club, whose members are war-workers at Messrs. Vickers, Barrow, have decided to play Sunday cricket. Those working men will bear down the "black army."

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, £42 17s. 7d. Received since:—W. Dodd, 10s.; James Dani, £2 8s. 6d.; Herbert King (second subscription), £2 2s.; G. L. Allward, £1 1s.; Mrs. Allward, £1 1s.; W. Bean, £1; F. C. Holden, 9s. 6d.

THE SUBSCRIPTIONS TO PRESIDENT'S HONORARIUM FUND AND TO THE N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND, acknowledged in last week's *Freethinker* as from "T. Charter" should have read "M. J. Charter."

E. B.—Thanks. The original of the anecdote you enclose was said to be a well-known English sportsman. It appears to have been transported to America and given a local coloring. We have no doubt, though, that the moral of the story is pretty general in application.

Q.—For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the Church; and he is the savior of the body. Therefore, as the Church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything" (Eph. v. 23—4).

E. R. SWIFT (Kimberley).—Sorry to hear of your father's death. We are naturally gratified to learn that his interest in this journal and in Freethought generally is shared by the rest of his family. We venture to say that his work for the cause was not the least gratifying to him in his last hours.

P.—Letter received, but not the magazine. All three articles duly appeared.

P. C. HOLDEN.—Glad to receive your "appreciation of the many blessings of the *Freethinker*."

E. LIBERT.—Will probably deal with it next week.

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.

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

ORDERS for literature should be sent to the Shop Manager of the Pioneer Press, 61 Farringdon-street, London, E.C., and not to the Editor.

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

Personal.

I HAVE already described the passage of two Zep^l pelins over my residence at Westcliff-on-Sea. They did no harm to me or my family that we could trace, but it would be very unlikely that they did us any good, and the excitement of such an experience was calculated to do some subsequent injury to a man suffering like myself from a severe nervous breakdown. How people even in ordinary health are affected by these visitors may be seen from the following facts. Hundreds of residents and health-seekers have left the town. They protest that they will go anywhere sooner than stop here. Ladies, in particular, are greatly disturbed. Thousands of the tyranny of fear. Heaps of them were roused out of their beds on the night the Zeppelins went to London. The sky was full of these devilish machines; it was their third visit, and the third visit was sure to be unlucky; they would destroy the place at last. So the rumor went. But it was all imaginary. There

was not a German airship in the town. Nobody heard one, nobody saw one. The whole thing was a dream. Some people heard the distant guns of the English machines chasing the Germans' on their way to London,—many miles at the nearest from Southend! Personally, I do not believe the Germans will visit this place again. But I am no authority from any point of view; and those who differ from me are perfectly free to do so with the utmost impunity.

* * *

We had all better be careful, though in another way. England is drifting under Military Law. What else is the new Coalition Government for? The press fares badly in the midst of such conditions. What with such treatment, and the inevitable result of economic action on the organs of opinion and publicity, how can newspapers and other periodicals hope to keep honest heads above water? One would rather not count those that have gone under. One of them has just succumbed, in spite of a circulation of two hundred thousand. It was a Labor paper too. Good old *Freethinker*! what congratulations it merits for surviving the first nine months of this awful War! May it survive all the rest, however long, with unabated vigor!

* * *

I am glad to remember that I was editing my old journal when the War broke out, just in time to give it the right direction. The *Freethinker* does not join in the game of party politics, yet it does not allow that game to blind it to the greater issues of human society.

* * *

This leads me to the President's Honorarium Fund. Little as the *Freethinker* has suffered hitherto from the War in circulation (for it has no advertisements to speak of), the whole of the loss has fallen upon myself. No one connected with the paper in any way whatsoever has had his salary diminished by a single penny; on the contrary, a considerable sum (for me) has been added to the cost of production. I begin to be reminded of the time when the President's Holiday Fund (as it was then called) brought me in little more than I was spending in the way of dead loss on the paper through all departments. Matters improved afterwards and left me a trifle for myself, but all that has been ruined by the War. There is no certain income for me at present except what I am getting from this Honorarium Fund. It will therefore be seen that I am more than ever in need of it. I trust they will lend me their support as promptly as possible, so that I may not be driven to altering the size and price of the historic *Freethinker* in the war-swept theatre of "civilisation." He gives twice who gives quickly in such a case as this. Be prompt before the necessity becomes too great, and the President's Honorarium Fund has to be used to keep the *Freethinker* alive; for things are likely to be worse ere they are better.

* * *

As I am writing on Monday (June 7) and the bulk of my readers did not get their paper till Sunday (June 6), there has been no response, of course, to acknowledge. The £5 from Mr. Collette Jones was received by me beforehand.

* * *

I see by the *Freethinker* (fancy a poor editor having to say this of his own paper—where, however, it is very rightly found) that a public dinner is to take place next Thursday (June 17) at the Boulogne Restaurant, 27 Gerrard-street, Wardour-street, London, W., in honor of Messrs. A. B. Moss and W. Heaford, who both complete their forty years' work in the Freethought cause. I wish I could be there. I have known them all that time, but my doctor forbids me to travel forty miles from home, so I must remain where I am, and dream of what others are enjoying. I hope there will be a crowd of them.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

In last week's "Personal," Mr. Foote was made to say that he had the Bowman case in hand from 1898. What he wrote was 1908, which was the date of Mr. Bowman's death. 1898 was the year in which the Secular Society, Ltd., was founded. It is a small matter, as it happens; but it is as well to be accurate. Mr. Foote did not see a proof of his "Personal"; hence the printer's error was allowed to stand.

Mr. James Dani, in enclosing cheque for the Honorarium Fund, thinks that Mr. Foote "ought to write strongly on this matter." Well, he *has* written clearly, and that ought to be enough. People must be aware that carrying on the *Freethinker* is no child's task, and that Freethought journalism can never, in any case, be a profitable venture. The plain truth is that some portion of the financial calls of a Freethought journal must always be met from outside sources. For some years now the Honorarium Fund has done this. And the need for this Fund is greater than ever to-day.

We believe that over 200 papers have ceased to exist since the War commenced. It is with great regret that we observe the *Daily Citizen* is now added to the list. There was, and is, need for a newspaper that should be a little less of a commercial venture than is the average organ of British journalism, and other papers could have been better spared. But the disappearance of so many journals in less than a year will perhaps help our readers to realise the perpetual "miracle" of maintaining a paper like the *Freethinker* for thirty-five years. Party organs are, as a rule, pretty heavily subsidised, and even then there is great difficulty in making ends meet. The *Freethinker* has never been able to look further for support than its own circle of readers, and its continuance during all these years says something for their loyalty. One day the *Freethinker* may become a financial property, but that day is not yet.

A French correspondent in renewing his subscription to the *Freethinker* writes:—

"It's always with satisfaction that I peruse such an interesting paper.....I am afraid that when the War is over we will have, in France, a religious crisis, or, to be more exact, a reactionary. For here Church business and reaction are always hand in hand, and mingle in a tendency of expression towards obscurantism and oppression of Freethought. And so I think that Freethinkers will have much to do in the defence of their opinions and liberties, and that for these future struggles your *Freethinker* will provide us with numerous weapons against religion and fanaticism."

We expect that all over Europe the forces of reaction will do all that is possible to reap advantage from the situation, and it will be well if Freethinkers bear this in mind. Indeed, the War itself is largely an expression of that general reaction which has been manifesting itself for some years, and against which we have repeatedly warned our readers.

We publish in another column an account of a rather drastic protest made by a member of the Lanark School Board against what he regarded as the surreptitious introduction of religious teaching into the ordinary school lessons. We sympathise, naturally, with Mr. Leiper's objection to religious instruction in public schools, although we are afraid that he has rendered himself technically liable for the damage done to the Board's property—in this case, a school-book. Still, Mr. Leiper had protested in a perfectly proper and formal manner against what he considered a wrong, and from his speech at the Board meeting his protest had been ignored. If his present action has the effect of bringing the authorities to realise that to many people this forcing of religion upon children is a sheer outrage, we presume that his purpose will have been accomplished. There are times and occasions when such actions as Mr. Leiper's have a moral justification even though they may be legally wrong.

Quite inadvertently, the name of Mr. W. J. Davidson was omitted from the list of Vice-Presidents who were elected at the National Secular Society's Conference on Whit-Sunday. Mr. Davidson was elected on the motion of the Edmonton Branch, of which he is a very hard-working and esteemed member.

We shall not have another opportunity of reminding those who have not yet applied for tickets for the Moss-Heaford complimentary dinner that no time should be lost in doing so. The function is fixed for June 17, at the Boulogne

Restaurant, 27 Gerrard-street, Wardour-street, W. Tickets are two shillings each, and are to be had on application to the N. S. S. Secretary, at 62 Farringdon-street. The accommodation is strictly limited, so that early application is necessary. We do not know what the exact program is to be, but there will be music, singing, and speeches; and we hope there will be a good muster to congratulate the two veterans on their forty years' service in the "best of causes."

Many happy returns to Mr. Herbert Burrows, who reached the age of 70 on Saturday (June 12). Mr. Burrows has led a very strenuous life, and is now spending the years of his retirement in working hard for all sorts of advanced movements. And we are certain that they are all the better and the cleaner for his presence.

Considerations of space again compel us to hold over until next week another of the interesting series of articles contributed by "Abracadabra." We apologise to both the author and his readers.

In reply to the note in this column last week, Mr. H. Killick, of 27 Florence-place, Griffiths Town, Mon. will be pleased to get into touch with other Freethinkers in the locality, with a view to active propaganda.

Under the title of "The Righteous Judge," the *New York Truthseeker* reprints the *Daily Telegraph* report of the Bowman case. In an editorial note on the case it says:—

"The victory is accredited, first, to Mr. Foote, to whose forethought was due the organisation of a society capable of receiving bequests; and, second, to Mr. Justice Joyce, whose opinion was given without prejudice. Our English co-workers are fully deserving of this contribution to their cause, and no American Freethinker will withhold his congratulations. It ought to hasten the recovery of Mr. Foote from a rather serious physical breakdown by which his ability to write and speak has been checked for some months past, but from which, it is gratifying to know, he is now on the road once more to health and strength. The testimony of Mr. Thomas Bowman, is one who deserves excellent treatment by the historians of Freethought, and long remembrance."

The *Truthseeker* also reprints in the same issue Mr. Cohen's article on "Christian Teaching and Practice" from these columns. Due acknowledgement is, of course, made.

An American correspondent, who has omitted to sign his name, sends the following tribute from Mark Twain to Ingersoll, the occasion being one on which speeches were being delivered by several well known men. The tribute is taken from a letter to W. D. Howells:—

"I doubt if America has ever seen anything quite equal to it; I am well satisfied that I shall not live to see its equal again. How pale those speeches are in print, how full of color, how blinding they were in the delivery. Bob Ingersoll's music will sing through my memory always as the divinest that ever enchanted my ears. And I shall always see him, as he stood that night on a dinner-table, under the flash of lights and banners, in the midst of seven hundred frantic shouters, the most beautiful human creature that ever lived. They thought that a woman might own her child. The words look like any other print, but, Lord bless me, he borrowed the very accent of the angel of mercy to say them in, and you should have seen that vast house rise to its feet, and you should have heard the hurricane that followed. That's the only test. People may shout, clap their hands, stamp, wave their napkins, but none but the master can make them get up on their feet."

Just as we are on the point of closing this issue of the *Freethinker*, we learn with the deepest regret of the death of Mr. James Rowney, one of the old (Bradlaugh) guard. Mr. Rowney had been a very active worker in the Freethought cause for close on half a century, and was, in his more affluent days, a generous supporter of the movement. He was a staunch supporter of Charles Bradlaugh, and later of Mr. G. W. Foote. As a speaker on Freethought open-air platforms, Mr. Rowney was well known in all the London parks, and, although nearly 75 years of age, he kept up this form of activity until within a few months of his death. For some time he had been suffering from a very painful malady, and the end came on Tuesday, June 8. The cremation will take place at Golder's Green on Saturday (June 12), at 3 o'clock.

Science and the Bible.—II.

(Continued from p. 364.)

"When, Sunday after Sunday, men who profess to be our instructors in righteousness, read out the statement, 'In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them,' in innumerable churches, they are either propagating what they may easily know, and therefore are bound to know, to be falsities; or, if they use the words in some non-natural sense, they fall below the moral standard of the much-abused Jesuit."—PROFESSOR T. H. HUNLEY, *Critiques and Addresses* (1873), p. 271.

"It is unfortunate to have a religion that cannot be accepted by the intellect of a nation. It is unfortunate to have a religion against which every good and noble heart protests. Let us have a good one or none. O! my pity has been excited by seeing these ministers endeavor to warp and twist the passages of Scripture to fit some demonstration of science. These pious evasions! These solemn pretences! When they are caught in one way they give a different meaning to the words, and say the world was not made in seven days. They say 'good whiles'—epochs."—COLONEL LEWIS, *The Dying Creed*, p. 18.

The first two chapters of the Bible are devoted to a description of the creation of the earth and its population, including man, also the sun, the moon, and the stars, all within a period of six days; and for several hundred years Jews and Christians believed that this was a true and literal account of the creation, inspired by God and committed to writing by Moses. Professor Andrew White tells us:—

"In one of the windows of the cathedral at Ulm a medieval glass-stainer has represented the Almighty as busily engaged in creating animals, and there has just left the divine hands an elephant fully accoutred, with armor, harness, and housings, ready for war. Similar representations appear in illuminated manuscripts, and even in early printed books; and, as the culmination of the whole, the Almighty is shown as fashioning the first man from a lillock of clay and extracting from his side, with evident effort, the first woman."*

In other cathedrals, "one frequently recurring portrait" portrays—
"The Almighty, in human form, sits benignly, making the sun, moon, and stars, hanging them from the firmament which supports the 'heaven above' and approaches the 'earth beneath.' The furrows of thought on the Creator's brow show that in this work he is obliged to contrive; the knotted muscles upon his arms show that he is obliged to toil, enjoying well-earned repose and the plaudits of the hosts of heaven" (vol. i., p. 1).

The same writer observes:—
"So literal was this whole conception of the work of creation that in these days it can scarcely be imagined. The Almighty was represented in theological literature, in the pictured Bibles, and in works of art generally, as a sort of enlarged and venerable Nuremberg toymaker. At times the accounts in Genesis were illustrated with even more literal exactness; thus, in connection with a well-known passage in the sacred text, the Creator was shown as a tailor, seated needle in hand, diligently sewing together skins of beasts into coats for Adam and Eve. Such representations presented no difficulties to the docile minds of the Middle Ages and Reformation period" (vol. i., p. 27).

Until the time of Copernicus and Galileo, no one doubted that the first chapters of Genesis contained the scientific truth as to the origin of the universe. And this becoming an article of faith which it was necessary to doubt, it became, as Strauss remarks,—

"a barrier, an obstructive rampart, against which the whole onset of progressive reason and all the battering rams of criticism now strike with passionate antipathy. It especially has it fared with the Mosaic cosmogony, which, once erected into a dogma, arrayed all modern science in arms against itself."†

The same writer points out, according to the Bible,—
"The creation of the sun takes place on the fourth day only, when the changes of day and night, inconceivable with the sun omitted, are stated to have taken place already for three days. Moreover, the creation of

the earth precedes that of the sun by several days, and to the latter as well as to the moon is ascribed a subordinate position with regard to the earth, while only casual mention is made of the stars: a perversion of the true relations governing heavenly bodies, unbecoming a divinely inspired account of the creation. A fact no less striking is the statement that God took no less than five days to create and fashion forth the earth, while for the making of the sun, the whole starry host as well as the planets—not such in the Biblical narrative, it is true, but merely lighted candles—he allowed himself only one day" (pp. 17-18).

Strauss goes on to remark that there exist theologians, and even naturalists,—

"who are prepared with all sorts of little nostrums for cases of this sort. That God made the sun three days after he had already made the earth means, according to them, that then for the first time it became visible to the cloud-enviored globe of earth; and the days, although included unmistakably between sunset and dawn, are explained as referring not to days of twelve or twenty-four hours each, but as being geological periods, capable of being extended to any length that may be considered requisite. He, however, who is seriously convinced of the old Christian belief, ought on the contrary to say: 'A fig for science; thus it stands in the Bible, and the Bible is the Word of God.' The Church, and more especially the Protestant Church, takes this designation *au pied de la lettre*."*

This was the belief of Martin Luther, the founder of Protestantism. In his *Commentary on the First Five Chapters of the Book of Genesis*, after remarking that St. Augustine plays in a marvellous manner with the six days of creation, considering them to be mystical and not natural days, he observes:—

"What need is there to make a twofold knowledge? And equally useless is it to consider Moses, in this beginning of his history, to speak mystically or allegorically. For he is not instructing us concerning allegorical creatures, and an allegorical world, but concerning essential creatures, and a world visible and apprehensible by the senses: he calls (as we say in our trite proverb) 'a post, a post'—that is, when he says morning, or day, or evening, his meaning is the same as ours, when we use those terms; without any allegory whatever."

With regard to St. Augustine's allegorical interpretation alluded to above, which has been seized upon with such enthusiasm by the reconcilers of science and the Bible, his interpretation had nothing in common with that of the reconcilers, but was more in accordance with that of the modern cranks who endeavor to discover future events by a study of the Book of Revelation.

The ancient Church Fathers were great at finding allegories in Scripture. Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria, in the first and second century, appear to have introduced this method from Philo. Origen reached the limit, for he discovered that the Scriptures bore three meanings, "the literal, the moral, and the mystic." St. Augustine himself declared that "the drunkenness of Noah prefigured the suffering and death of Christ," and that the meaning of Noah's ark being "pitched within and without with pitch" was "to show the safety of the Church from the leaking in of heresy."† This mode of allegorising was not devised for the purpose of reconciling the Bible with science, for that problem did not exist then, but because the Bible, being regarded as the Word of God, was thought to contain hidden and deeper meanings than the words of mere ordinary men.

Before proceeding further, it will be as well to understand what were the ideas of the ancient Hebrews regarding the earth. The Rev. W. L. Bevan, in the article "Earth," contributed to Sir William Smith's *Dictionary of the Bible* (vol. i., p. 463) has gone into this question with the following result:—

"The earth was regarded not only as the central point of the universe, but as the universe itself; every other body—the heavens, sun, moon, and stars—being subsidiary to, and, as it were, the complement of the

* White, *The Warfare of Science*, vol. i., p. 24.
† Strauss, *The Old Faith and the New*, p. 17.

* Strauss, *The Old Faith and the New* (1874), pp. 18-19.
† White, *The Warfare of Science*, vol. ii., p. 299.

earth. The Hebrew language has no expression equivalent to our *universe*: 'the heavens and the earth' (Gen. i. 1; xiv. 19; Ex. xxxi. 17) has been regarded as such; but it is clear that the heavens were looked upon as a necessary adjunct of the earth. Moreover, it depended upon the earth; it had its 'foundations' (2 Samuel xxii. 8) on the edge of the earth's circle, where it was supposed to be supported by the mountains as by massive pillars (Job xxvi. 11). Its offices were (1) to support the waters which were above it (Genesis i. 7 and Psalm cxlviii. 4), and thus to form a mighty reservoir of rain and snow, which were to pour forth through its windows (Genesis vii. 11 and Isaiah xxiv. 18) and doors (Psalm lxxviii. 23), as through opened sluice-gates, for the fructification of the earth; (2) to serve as the *substratum* (or '*firmament*') in which the celestial bodies were to be fixed. As with the heaven itself, so also with the heavenly bodies; they were regarded solely as the ministers of the earth.....So entirely, indeed, was the existence of the heavens and the heavenly bodies designed for the earth, that with the earth they shall simultaneously perish (2 Peter iii. 10); the curtain of the tent shall be rolled up and the stars shall of necessity drop off (Isaiah xxxiv. 4 and Matthew xxiv. 29); their sympathy with the earth's destruction being the counterpart of their joyous song when its foundations were laid (Job xxxviii. 7)."

The same writer continues, further on:—

"With regard to the earth's body, the Hebrews conceived its surface to be an immense disc, supported like the flat roof of an Eastern house, by pillars, which rested on solid foundations; but where those foundations were on which the 'sockets' of the pillars rested none could tell" (vol. i., p. 464).

Such is the painstaking and candid statement of the Rev. W. L. Bevan, a Hebrew scholar, in that highly orthodox and learned work, *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*; from which it appears, to put it concisely, that the Bible writers regarded the earth as flat, like a plate; that the blue sky was a real solid thing, like an immense vault, in which the sun, moon, and stars moved. Above this solid vault was heaven, also mighty reservoirs of water, which could be let down by means of windows, to water the earth or to flood it, as in the time of Noah. No other world, or worlds, were dreamed of by the Hebrews; the earth was the universe. The sun, moon, and stars were regarded as merely lamps to illuminate the earth.

Many apologists have substituted the word "expanse" for "firmament," so as to get rid of the idea of solidity; upon which Dr. Samuel Davidson, the great Hebrew scholar, remarked:—

"It is also an alteration for the worse to change *firmament* into *expanse* in Genesis i. 6, for the purpose of doing away with the idea of solidity. The Hebrews certainly believed that the sky was a firm, hard, extended vault; and the etymology of the word employed by the Elohist agrees with that opinion, for the original verb involves the idea of beating out, or *expanding by beating*, something solid. *Firmament* is an excellent equivalent to the noun; *expanse* requires the adjective *solid*; 'a solid expanse.' The sentiments of the sacred writers about the phenomena of nature were those of the age they lived in; and it is impossible to reconcile them with the scientific views of modern times."*

Dr. Davideon was not only a Doctor of Divinity, but, such was his reputation as a Hebrew scholar, that he was appointed one of the Old Testament revisers of the Authorised Version of the Bible.

(To be continued.) W. MANN.

Poor Old Joe.

DAYLIGHT dwindled through the gloaming to the dark, and the stars shone, and the peace that fascinates weary minds fell like an invisible mantle over the earth. Solemn quietude breathed deeply from the countryside, issuing its appeal to sensitive spirits. It was the time that men love and women fear, the time of the solitude of nature.

* Davidson, *Fresh Revision of the Old Testament* (1873), p. 102.

Joe Foster's mind became more and more quieted as the shadows gathered. Within the narrowness of his room he paced to and fro, becoming ever more conscious that the walls approached each other. His chamber was a prison cell in which he could not rest. Imagination, he thought, would soon engyve his ankles and manacle his wrists. He felt he must escape; and the wind, blowing through the open window, seemed to welcome his desire: and he went out into the darkness with his *struggling* thoughts.

Joe was a doubter first, and evangelist afterwards. Strongly religious, yet his mind was a battlefield in which fought faith and doubt. He was well-beloved by all his acquaintances, conscientious, willing, eager to help, tolerant, a man who made a good chum, true and steady as a rock, and as sound as a perfectly made bell; and yet, deeper and more acute than his fidelity was his doubt. Trivial, unimportant happenings often meant, for Joe, hours and hours of incomprehensible mental struggle. He believed; but his belief, sometimes, was like the calmness of a bay that had no landing-place.

Invariably he studied the lesson before coming to the meeting. It was his delight and duty; but the morning the delight had fallen into duty, as a stone falls into mud. When he arrived at the meeting-place, he approached the reader and asked a few moments conversation previous to the service. He opened his Bible, and, pointing to several verses, said, "You can't read these!"

The reader, somewhat astonished, looked at the passage. Then he shook his head for no reason at all, and replied, "It goes against the grain of me, Joe, to leave out any portion of the Scripture. You know, friend, that these lessons are set for us that we may studiously read the whole of God's word."

"Maybe, Maybe; but you can't read these," Joe must pass them by. It would never do to squander these words."

"I understand you, Joe, old man, I understand thoroughly; but the spirit of God refines what seems to us the coarsest of words, the ugliest of thoughts, the lowliest of actions. And surely the men who compiled our lessons read them, and, had they thought this too unseemly to be read to the worshippers, they would have cut it out. They were Godly men, Joe. Are we of greater authority than they? Are we more religious than they or the men who first spoke our lessons? I cannot believe it."

A shade of pain passed over Joe's face, and his friend hastened to add, "But it's all right, Joe, honor your scruples and omit the verses from your reading."

Joe heaved a sigh of relief, and warmly shook his friend's hand. He knew, he felt, the lesson would be cleaner by the removal of the objectionable words. But his mind churned the matter all day long. His brain became dyspeptic; and always when disturbed his thoughts fled to the life after death. It was the battlefield of his brain. The subject was the life or death aspect of religion. Religions rose and fell by it. Of all holy belief it was the baldest, the most destroy the idea of immortality rendered the balance of good and evil futile and paltry. Immortality was the God or the Devil of creeds. And Joe doubted the truth; but his doubt was inconclusive and unproductive, shadowy, vague, and elusive. It was reasoned doubt; for all his reasoning powers were out desperately to fight it. Joe never had known the birth of this flaw in his faith; never had he been conscious of its coming; and its going he would have hailed with jubilant rejoicing.

And Joe went out into the darkness and stars, and their peace, and returned, as he had often done, with the same sad silence in his heart.

Every time he preached to his fellows, immortality evolved from his subject matter. Belief in a thousand and one incongruities of faith he found comparatively easy; and simplicity of faith he possessed in abundance. Spiritual insight he had only with the life after death; and, perhaps because of this, his remarks would pass from eulogies

childlike love to vehement self-argumentation on post-mortem life with the most blundering inconsistency obvious to everyone but himself.

The life after death fretted him into a fever. Psychologically it might have been reckoned a super-developed sex lust, the intermittent gratifications of which wane only with the weakening of vitality. It drew him like the influence of a strong mental magnet. Before it his quiet faith was tossed like a barque in the teeth of an angry gale. Publicly on the platform or in the pulpit, and privately in the sameness of his own room, he debated the matter with himself. He searched indefatigably in the Scriptures for a confirmation he never found. Other things were clear and plain; this always misty and abstract. He read and studied with a thoroughness which he was ignorant; but unsuccessfully. He prayed as much as one can, unceasingly, with the same hope-destroying result. He meditated with a profundity that should have brought the pearl-tears of pity to the eyes of the brass god he loved and worshiped so foolishly and so nobly. Gnawing were all his tireless efforts. The truth came not near unto him, as it cometh not to all metaphysicians; and poor old Joe died a few days ago with the faith and the doubt mingling pathetic-ly in his worn-out heart and his weary mind.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Religion in the Schools.

A DRASTIC PROTEST.

THE monthly meeting of the School Board of Lanark was held on Monday at the Grammar School. There were present—Mr. J. H. Fenton (Chairman), and Messrs. Leiper, MacDougall, Marshall, Shirlaw, and Wyatt, with Mr. J. F. Shirley (Clerk).

The minutes of the Grammar School Committee contained a complaint by two teachers of the defacing of a number of reading books by the writing of certain remarks on the margin. The Committee, after considering the matter, agreed to report the circumstance to the Board.

The janitor was summoned, and he laid the books complained of on the table.

Mr. Marshall, convener of the Committee, explained that the books had been defaced while in the possession of the school. Someone had written on the books. That constituted a defacement, and, according to the Board's rules, where a book was defaced, it had to be made good. It was for the Board to say whether they should give instructions that the party responsible for the defacement be required to make good the damage.

Mr. Leiper immediately rose and admitted that he was the party who had written on the books. The books had not been defaced. They had really been corrected—edited, if you would have it, or censored—but not defaced. The books were much more valuable now because much more than they would have been had they not been annotated by him. He reminded the Board that when free schools had been granted it had been expressly agreed that nothing in the nature of religious instruction should be allowed in the books which the children were to get. He was astonished when he got hold of some of the books his Victorian teaching. They were not up-to-date. He had drawn the attention of the Board to that, but his motion had been set upon. He had also written to the Scotch Education Department, and the Department sent the communication back to the Board. Of course, it had been set upon again. As a Freethinker, he certainly was not going to allow his child to be taught what he considered to be incorrect. Taking up one of the books—a history reader—Mr. Leiper quoted a passage which he alleged was not in accordance with historical fact. At the committee meeting he had pointed out that in giving that lesson they were contravening section 68 of the Education (Scotland) Act. From his point of view he had no qualms about editing the books, and he should edit the books again. By giving the instruction he explained of they were putting back the hands of the clock many years. The Act of 1872 expressly provides against any such thing.

The Chairman said he desired to explain to the Board that the book which he held in his hand, and which Mr. Leiper called a history, had been the first one interfered with. The

way this matter had been discovered was that a child who had succeeded to the possession of the book in the ordinary course was seen crying. On the teacher asking an explanation the child pointed to the writing and indicated that he was frightened he would be blamed for it. The first marginal writing was in pencil, but the second one was in ink. The Rector wished him to say plainly that none of these books were used in a religious sense at all. They were used as readers pure and simple. Having submitted an example of a lesson to which Mr. Leiper had put a marginal criticism, the Chairman denied that any non-Christian person, or even a Mohammedan, could object to that lesson on historical grounds. Anyone who objected to what the books contained could take other measures than those which Mr. Leiper had adopted, and he (the Chairman) for one could not tolerate this sort of interference of which they complained.

After a passionate scene between Mr. Leiper and the Chairman, Mr. Fenton moved that the Clerk be instructed to write the parent of Harold Leiper and ask him to make payment for the books damaged, and in the event of his refusing, that legal proceedings be taken to enforce it.

Mr. MacDougall seconded.
Mr. Leiper moved the previous question, but got no second.

The motion was thereupon declared carried.

—Hamilton Advertiser, May 8, 1915.

The Gods in Doubt.

THIS War of Empires puts the Trinity
Into an awful fix, for don't you see
That Germans, Austrians, Turks, together call
On one good God who is the Lord of all;
While British, French, and Russians also claim
The help of God the Father just the same?
So what on earth to do the gods don't know,
And that is why the War is lingering so!

Now Churchman, Nonconformist, wilt thou say,
But honestly, what God must do to-day?
Tell him whose arms to crown with victory,
And Heaven's Victoria Cross must fall to thee.
But this essential must your vote contain:
Justice to all, or else 'twill be in vain.

O Christian brother, surely it is true
That these appeals to God in war from you
Are foolish as the everlasting cry
That rings from all in pain across the sky.
For pain and sorrow never, never cease,
But everywhere and evermore increase.
Perhaps the heavens are empty, or else why
Should hurricanes like this come sweeping by?
Forget the gods and fight, if you must fight,
As men, and not as puppets in a fright;
For even your omniscient Trinity
Cannot decide upon the victory.
Then leave God out, that is the only way;
Be strong to win, and leave the weak to pray.
The War will fall again unto the strong:
May England to the winning side belong.

JULIAN ST. OREY.

Obituary.

Secularists in and around Lancashire will regret to learn of the death of an ardent and courageous Freethinker in the person of John Edward Broadbent, in the seventieth year of his age. The Secular Burial Service was read by Mr. Charles Pegg, of Manchester, at the Greenacres Cemetery, Oldham, on May 3, before a large gathering of his relatives and friends. His earnest work in the cause of Freethought will long be remembered. To his widow and family we tender our sincere sympathy.

The deepest sympathy was extended towards Mr. J. W. White, of Mary-street, Stanley, on the death of his only child, Master Morris White, which took place very suddenly on Saturday, May 29. He was buried in the Stanley Cemetery amidst a large company of all classes; for his father was held in great respect in the district. The burial service by Ingersoll was impressively delivered at the graveside by Mr. N. Richardson, of Chester-le-Street, and was well received. Everyone was deeply touched, and many were the expressions of sympathy offered to Mr. and Mrs. White in their sad bereavement.—R. BELL.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.
INDOOR.

SOUTH PLACE ETHICAL SOCIETY: 11, Herbert Burrows, "My Seventy Years of Life: Change and Growth."

OUTDOOR.

BETHNAL GREEN BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Park, near the Bandstand): 3.15 and 6.15, C. Cohen, Lectures.

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 6, Stephen Hooper, a Lecture.

α KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 7.30, W. Davidson, "What Infidels Have Done."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 11.15, Miss Kough, a Lecture. Parliament Hill: 3.15, L. B. Gallagher, a Lecture. Regent's Park: 3.15, W. Davidson, a Lecture.

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