

THE Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.

VOL. XXXV.—NO. 33

SUNDAY, AUGUST 15, 1915

PRICE TWOPENCE

It is with diseases of the mind as with those of the body; we are half dead before we understand our disorders, and half recovered when we do.

Atheism and the Law.

THE *Church Times*, in its issue for August 6, devotes a lengthy leading article to the decision of the Court of Appeal in the Bowman case. That decision is, it says, a "momentous" one, and it "marks a revolution in the constitution of the country." I agree that the decision is a momentous one, but it is surely straining both language and fact to call it a revolution in the English constitution. It is rather a reasoned and explicit statement of the present state of the law in relation to Freethought propaganda. And that state of the law—to say nothing of the state of public opinion—has been steadily developing for many years. The decision may, of course, come with all the force of a revolution to those who would wish to father the thought, have persuaded themselves that merely to attack religious belief was still a criminal offence. Others will have recognised that, if the law allows an attack on religion, it cannot logically refuse protection and assistance to those who are doing only that which is legally permissible.

The reason why the *Church Times* regards this decision as effecting a revolution in the English constitution, is that—

"It is now for the first time legally recognised that the promotion of Atheism is perfectly legal, and that a trust for the purpose will be enforced by the Courts..... Inasmuch as a limited company may be lawfully formed for the promotion of Atheism, Atheists are for practical purposes as much established as the Separatist Churches and the Roman Catholics..... For Secularism and Atheism the decision is no doubt a great triumph. Unlike other dissentients from the established religion, their civic rights have been given them by the Courts of Justice, and this in the teeth of every tradition of the law. In future, so long as they abstain from indecent language, the Secularists may cover the boardings with what placards they please; they are at full liberty to create a great trust for the endowment of their views, and doubtless ere long the Chancery Courts, in the exercise of their paternal jurisdiction, will be removing the children of a Secularist father from the care of a Christian mother, that they may be instructed in the principles of unbelief."

The final clause of the concluding sentence is, of course, "writ sarcastic"; and yet one may well ask, Why not? Enlightened law, administered by conscientious judges, would in any such case consider only the fitness of a parent to have charge of children, without regard to religious opinions. The *Church Times* will hardly deny that it is not uncommon for a religious man or woman to be a very undesirable parent, and I am quite willing to concede that this may be so in the case of a freethinking parent. And a law which aims at justice between citizens can only properly consider the moral fitness of either the father or the mother in whose care the children are to be placed. Presumably the *Church Times* leans to the opinion that a bad religious parent is preferable to a good Secularist parent. In the

Middle Ages, when the practice of scientific medicine was practically confined to the Jews, and their competitors were ignorant, miracle-working priests, it was openly taught that a man had better die with a Christian priest than live with a Jewish doctor. And the *Church Times* evidently inclines to the opinion that it is better to run the risk of growing up a blackguard with a Christian parent than become a decent citizen with a Secularist one.

In other respects, the writer places his hand upon a point of real value. The judgment, as he says, is courageous. It is the first time—so far as I am aware—that a judge in an English court, in allowing the right to full criticism of religious beliefs, has had the courage to face and use the word "Atheism." Other judges have implied as much, but none have deliberately used that expression. Lord Coleridge, Mr. Justice Phillimore, and others have admitted the right to criticise—in becoming language—the fundamentals of religion, and this implies the existence of God; but they have not said that one was free to teach Atheism. That was a tabooed word, a dangerous word. It was left on one side, much as many people prefer to veil their Atheism under the more respectable forms of "Agnostic" or "Rationalist."

Now, at last, the word has been used by a judge of the Appeal Court; and used, not in accents of horror, but in an ordinary everyday tone, as connoting a form of opinion that was entitled to the same respect as other opinions. In commenting upon Article (a) in the Memorandum of Association, Lord Justice Warrington said deliberately that it involved the teaching of Atheism, and his judgment showed that in his opinion—and in the opinion of the other two judges—there was nothing in the teaching of Atheism, *per se*, that could be considered wrong in the present state of the law. When I heard the judge say this, I scored a heavy line under the notes I was taking. I recognised it, not as creating a revolution, but as epoch-marking. It showed that this ancient bogey was losing its terror. It marked the tremendous advance made by public opinion in the course of little more than a generation.

For this pronouncement of Lord Justice Warrington we have almost entirely to thank Mr. Cave, the opposing counsel. I do not know what his friends thought of his speeches, but to me they gave every satisfaction. I said at the time they were delivered that they were admirably adapted to defeat the purpose he was trying to achieve. Mr. Cave is a K.C., an M.P., and a Privy Councillor, but his speeches showed that he was quite lacking in that power of psychologic insight which is essential to a good pleader, either at the bar or elsewhere. He was constantly harping upon "Atheism." That bogey appeared as terrifying to him as to a mediæval monk. Over and over again in both Courts he said that the Articles of the Secular Society, Limited, amounted to Atheism. Atheists, he said, had never been relieved by law (I shall have more to say about that presently). Other people had been relieved—Unitarians, Jews, Roman Catholics, etc., but not Atheists. Mr. Cave not only said so; he evidently thought so; quite ignoring that the Oaths Act of 1887 deliberately provided relief for those who were without religious belief. More, he quite as evidently thought it only right that Atheists should continue outside the law—at least to the extent that, while

not punishing them, the law should not assist them. And I must do Mr. Cave the justice to say that his horror of Atheism appeared to be quite genuine; it had not the ring of an argument merely adopted by a counsel in carrying out his brief.

Before judges of almost impregnable bigotry this constant emphasising of Atheism might have had the desired effect. Before any other judges it had a fatal defect. It ignored the psychological truth that by over-emphasising a thing one suggests its opposite. By insisting that a bequest to the Secular Society, Limited, might be a bequest for the promotion of Atheism, Mr. Cave must have inevitably suggested the question, Why should not that form of opinion known as Atheism be assisted by means that are open to the promotion of other forms of opinion? Is there anything in the law that forbids the promotion, in a decent manner, of Atheistic principles? Mr. Cave forced these questions on the notice of the judges; one part of his case rested on that issue. He forced the judges to notice it, when a wiser man would have realised that the less said about it the better, and the stronger would have been his other arguments. And the judges faced the issue with courage. They accepted Mr. Cave's dictum that Article (a) involved Atheism, and declared in set words that the teaching of Atheism was not illegal, provided it be done in a decent and becoming manner. Mr. Cave deserves our thanks.

So much for the psychological aspect of the subject. So far as the legal aspect is concerned, I cannot find any clear evidence that Atheism, *per se*, has ever been counted an offence at law, nor that there has ever been a case of a man charged with and punished for Atheism. I am quite aware that some judges have held a denial of the being or providence of God to be an offence at law, and also that as late as 1841 a Royal Commission declared that the law forbade denial of the being and providence of God. Nevertheless, I cannot find any record of any trial for Atheism as a separate offence, and in nearly every case the charge of having attacked the belief in God has been accompanied with the charge that it has been attacked irreverently, or mockingly, or with contumely, or blasphemy. Consequently, the reply to Mr. Cave's plea that Atheists are under the ban of the law because they have never been expressly enfranchised, as is the case with Jews, Catholics, and others, is that it is an open question whether they were ever outside the law. That they were subject to disabilities is unquestionable. But this disability appears to have been generally in connection with heresy or blasphemy, and any change in the interpretation of the Common Law—under which blasphemy trials have always proceeded—must be taken to affect Atheists as it affects others who dissent from orthodox Christian teaching.

When, therefore, the *Church Times* says that "To safeguard the conscience of the Atheist, to meet the sentiments of a sceptical society, the judges have wrecked the law of the ages," one need only inquire, What law? They have said that people may teach Atheism if they do so in a becoming manner. They have also said that a legal society may exist to promote Atheism, provided that its Articles contain only those things which may be taught in a becoming manner. There is, of course, the possibility of a society acting in an unbecoming manner, but if it does, it incurs stated legal penalties, which it may be called upon to pay. But they have not wrecked "the law of the ages." Judge after judge declared, even before Coleridge, that the law did not punish opinion, and although some dissented from this view, it is enough that it was there, and it proves that more recent judges have only expressed in a more deliberate manner a well-marked tendency in English law. It is to the honor of Lord Coleridge that he gave an authoritative and, I believe, final statement to this view, and decisions since have shown that the law upon this point may now be taken as settled.

C. COHEN.

(To be continued.)

"The Day of Destruction."

It is a peculiarity of the Rev. R. J. Campbell, of the City Temple, that he labors under the portentous delusion that by some auspicious intervention of the Deity it has been his good fortune to penetrate further into the mystery of human life than all others. In a remarkable sermon, bearing the title which forms the heading of this article, which appears in the *Christian World Pulpit* for August 4, this characteristic of his teaching is to be seen in great prominence. His text is 2 Peter iii. 10, 14, and he begins by making a few astonishing admissions. One is that the Apostle Peter did not write this epistle, though it was written in his name. Who the author was is not known, but he had the audacity to represent Peter as predicting what was actually happening as he wrote. Thus Mr. Campbell bases his discourse upon verses in a fraudulent document. Though attributed to him, the following are words Peter never used:—

"In the last days mockers shall come with mockery, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For from the day that the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation."

Already people were getting to realise that Christian promises were made to be broken. The mockers were disillusioned disciples. Whether their disappointment led them to renounce the discredited new religion we do not know, though probably the being mockers indicated that they followed the Lamb no more. Mr. Campbell acknowledges that the sub-apostolic age was "a period of disillusionment, moral reaction, and loss of faith." That is to say, in the eyes of many, who had expected much of it, the Christian religion was an ignominious failure. The answer to the mockery indulged in by the disillusioned, contained in this epistle, is only a further illustration of the fraudulent nature of all Christian claims. Of course, in a forged letter, as Didymus calls this, one is not surprised to find fallacious reasoning and old fables treated as facts. As rendered into modern English in the *Twentieth Century New Testament*, 2 Peter iii. 5-7 reads thus:—

"They [the mockers] wilfully shut their eyes to the fact that long ago the heavens existed; and the earth, also—formed out of water and by the action of water, by the fiat of God; and that by the same means the world which then existed was destroyed in a deluge of water. But the present heaven and earth, by the same fiat, have been reserved for fire, and are being kept for the day of the judgment and destruction of the godless."

As a matter of fact, the world was never "destroyed in a deluge of water." In many nations there were legends to that effect, but history knows nothing of such a catastrophe. Mr. Campbell makes no secret of the truth that the prophecy with which the above extract closes "has, especially within the last generation, fallen into the background of our thoughts without being formally repudiated." But why has it fallen into the background of Christian thought? Simply because it has never been fulfilled, and because, in our day, fulfilment seems farther off than ever. In uttering that prophecy the writer was only giving expression to a widespread Pagan belief. Readers of Cicero are perfectly familiar with the notion of the destruction of the earth by fire. There was a well-nigh universal expectation that the end of the world was at hand.

Prior to parting with his text, Mr. Campbell has the temerity to assert that its prediction of the end of the universe, as we know it, is in complete harmony with modern science, which we positively deny. Here is the modern rendering of part of the text:—

"The Day of the Lord will come like a thief; and in that day the heavens will pass away with a crash, the elements will be burnt up and dissolved, and the earth and all that is in it will be disclosed."

That is a theory with absolutely no scientific evidence to support it. Indeed, Mr. Campbell himself con- trasts the scientific theory of the world with the

religious. He grants that, according to science, "the universe is self-sufficient, self-contained, eternally in flux," and that "mankind is one of its products, but no more permanent than any other," so mind being at the back of the process, and none needed. According to the religious theory, on the contrary, "God made the world, and will not carry on and complete in some other world the development of the immortal souls he has brought into existence on this material plane." Having thus stated these two theories in his own words, Mr. Campbell unblushingly declares that they are not irreconcilable, but that "a viewpoint is slowly emerging which will finally absorb and justify both." That is Campbellism in all the majesty of its fundamental contradictoriness. Its puerilities are amongst the chief wonders of the earth. It is an absurd mixture of Berkeleyism and Kantianism, but would not be endorsed by either the Irish Bishop or the German philosopher. The reverend gentleman is radically mistaken when he avers that it is the ground on which many men of science, as well as theologians, seem to be taking their stand. He has been advancing this claim for many years, but it is an absolutely false claim, as Sir Ray Lankester and other leading scientists have repeatedly pointed out in books, pamphlets, and articles. And here, again, Mr. Campbell gives us a naive example of his lack of any practical realisation of the existing state of things:—

"It will be a long time before the prevailing views of which I have spoken will be completely harmonised by this or any other means. And the situation at the present moment in Christendom bears a striking resemblance to the one brought before us in this chapter. The unbeliever—I use the word in no offensive sense—maintains that he cannot find in the world any indefeasible tokens of Divine guidance and benevolence, and there are not a few Christians who find that their faith has given way under the strain of the dreadful and sinister period through which the world is passing." He admits that there is not much room for rosy optimism in such a world as this; but our supreme wonder is how on earth a believer in a God of infinite goodness and love can be anything but an incorrigible pessimist. Mr. Campbell's description of Germany and its people shows conclusively what hopelessness hypocrisy underlies his religious faith. Germany's adherence to Christianity is as general and fervent, to say the least, as Great Britain's, and as many sincere and earnest prayers for victory ascend from that country as from our own; yet the oracle of the City Temple is not ashamed to avow as a solemn fact that Germany's intention has been anti-Christian, that her conduct has been in defiance of all Christian principles, and that that is the reason why we are at war with her. We are fully aware that this is what the parsons almost to a man maintain; but we are strongly convinced that no honest reader of the various documents containing the diplomatic correspondence that took place between the different countries concerned prior to the declaration of war would ever dream of coming to that conclusion. With their usual insularity, the British parsonry of all shades take it for granted that their brand of Christianity is the only genuine article under the sun.

Mr. Campbell's statement of the Agnostic point of view in regard to the War is moderately accurate. What we maintain is that all history, the history of Christendom not one whit less than the history of the world, negates wholly the postulate of an ever-ruling God of justice and love, and that this war, with all its horrors, is only a more than usually emphatic instance of the general negation. How does Mr. Campbell seek to break the force of this argument? Ignoring the past, with its endless list of the most ferocious wars waged in the name of God and for the establishment of his so-called Kingdom, the reverend gentleman says that "this war is a Divine judgment," that "God's verdict upon the ideals by which the world has been living is to show what they inevitably produce in misery and wrong." But if the world has been living by low,

unworthy, and wicked ideals, who is to blame for it? If God sits as King for ever, as Dr. Campbell Morgan so repeatedly assures us, "all surface facts notwithstanding," does not the state of the world at any given moment, particularly at the present one, furnish an overwhelming proof that the dogma of the Divine sovereignty is the most stupendous lie ever invented by misguided and deluded man? Is it not under that so-termed Divine Sovereignty that false ideals of living have been permitted to gain their ascendancy? If so, why? If not, is not God dethroned and succeeded by the Devil? We believe in neither God nor the Devil, and dismiss the belief in the Divine Government of the world as the veriest of myths, a survival of mankind's primal stupidity that ought to have vanished long ago. We are but children of the earth, and of no more value in our mother's sight than the grasshoppers upon the summer fields. If we are foolish enough to quarrel and invent all sorts of frightful weapons to slay one another, she lets us. We are descendants of fighting races, and the blood of battle still runs in our veins. The word that we are all brothers and sisters long ago went forth, and there have been brief periods when we seemed on the verge of a practical realisation of our essential solidarity. But hitherto each such period has been followed by a time of hatred and strife, when the strong nations seemed determined to subjugate or exterminate the weaker ones. In the world's history steady progress has never been, and possibly never will be, experienced. We advance for a while, and then retrograde almost as much, and sometimes more. Our only hope lies in the ultimate triumph of humanitarian ideas which work, like leaven, in the meal of our nature. The altruistic idea is slowly gaining ground, and we trust, though but faintly as yet, that the time is coming when egoism and altruism shall kiss each other and begin to work harmoniously for the welfare of the race as a whole. Even now, while the War is on, we can all do something to bring the two closer together.

J. T. LLOYD.

A Prison Paradox.

"Rough work, Iconoclasm, but the only way to get at Truth."—OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES.

"Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage." —LOVELLACE.

"YOU see how this world goes!" is one of King Lear's pregnant exclamations in the greatest tragedy penned by the master-hand of Shakespeare. Gloucester says he sees it feelingly, and Lear replies that a man may see how this world goes with no eyes, which is sightless in Gloucester's case:—

"Look with thine ears: see how yon justice rails upon you simple thief. Hark in thine ear: change places, and handy-dandy, which is the justice, which is the thief?"

Lear, even in his ramblings, gives terse, pungent expression to thoughts extraordinary for acuteness and depth; but he seldom surpasses this transformation scene, in respect to suggestive import and vivid presentment.

The paradox is explained by the history of religion. Read the story of the judicial murder of heretics, Jews, and witches. Read Foxe's *Book of Martyrs* and Wheeler's *Dictionary of Freethinkers*. See how, through many ages, independence of mind was killed off and servility fostered. For many centuries Europe was given up to the Church as a sheep to the shearers. With thumb-screw in hand, and calumny on the tongue's tip, the "Bride of Christ" did her awful work. Thus it happens that some prison records are bright spots on the scroll of history. There is an unfortunate affinity between pioneers and prisons. Many of the noblest men and women in history suffered long and cruel incarceration within the grim walls of prisons for their devotion to truth. Prisons have thus not infrequently

been glorified by the halo of the martyr. How many brave soldiers of the Army of Human Liberation have rotted in gaols? How many men of genius have solaced their imprisoned hours with their pens, learning in suffering what they taught in books?

The ancient priesthood commenced the work of persecution. In far-off Athens, Socrates solaced his prison hours with philosophical pursuits before he drank the deadly hemlock among his sorrowing disciples. The Christian priests, mad with fanaticism, sometimes dispensed with the mockery of a trial, and, as in the case of the unfortunate Hypatia, resorted to murder. The great Galileo, when he was old and poor, suffered in a Roman dungeon, and Roger Bacon was on two occasions imprisoned—once for a period of ten years—on the common charge of heresy and magic. Yet he, too, like Galileo, disturbed the pious ignorance of his contemporaries with ideas of discoveries that were to be realised after his death.

Nor can we forget that the hapless Giordano Bruno, perhaps the greatest martyr of all, suffered the horrors of a cruel imprisonment before his tragic end by burning at the hands of the hired assassins of the Great Lying Church. Thomas Paine was another fine illustration. To relieve the tedium of the loneliness during his captivity in prison he composed part of the world-famous *Age of Reason*, a work for which many brave men and women afterwards suffered imprisonment. It was while in the Bastille that Voltaire wrote the greater part of the *Henriade*, a tribute to Henry of Navarre. The priests were always anxious to arrest Voltaire, but thanks to his influence and position, he always evaded their eager clutches. Richard Carlile, his family, and associates had more than their share of pains and penalties for daring to defend free speech. Carlile himself suffered nine and a-half years' imprisonment, and his family and shopmen divided among them about fifty years' confinement. Think of it! One small circle of acquaintances serving, between them, sixty years in prison. That warm-hearted poet, Leigh Hunt, calmly endured two years captivity for satirising the Prince Regent, afterwards George the Fourth, of indifferent memory. Thomas Cooper, the Chartist, was no stranger to the interior of a gaol. His *Purgatory of Suicides* was another instance of mind triumphing over captivity. Ernest Jones, another Chartist leader, also belongs to the roll of men who have, by the resources of genius, converted a prison into a palace of thought.

Another noteworthy prisoner was honest John Bunyan. He was not a Freethinker, but he spent twelve years in Bedford Gaol for Nonconformity, and wrote part of *The Pilgrim's Progress* while there. Bunyan had an excellent humor. When a Quaker came to visit him, and declared, in his snuffing way, that the Lord had ordered him to search for John in half the prisons of England, he replied, "If the Lord had sent you, you need not have taken so much trouble, for the Lord knows I have been in Bedford Gaol for years." It is a singular coincidence that the authors of two of the most popular books ever written should have been not only contemporaries, and of the same nationality, but both imprisoned in the same country. Daniel Defoe did not write *Robinson Crusoe* while he was imprisoned, although other works of his prolific pen were born of his captivity. Cervantes, a greater writer than Bunyan or Defoe, and one of the foremost authors of the world, was held captive by the Moors for five years.

Among the host of noble names of those who have suffered imprisonment, we have referred only to a few, and most of these were apostles of Freethought. For them the darkest night was jewelled with the brightest of stars; for them there was a budding morrow in every midnight. For them there was nothing irrevocable, for their eyes were ever looking forward.

Freethought is a far wider and nobler creed than a merely religious one. It has its roots in intellectual necessity, and, deeper still, in ethical right. It is based on the psychological law of human develop-

ment, only apprehended by a few choice spirits for ages, but, latterly, taking on a new significance and a fresh urgency. Perpetually reaffirmed from generation to generation by unnumbered examples of unselfish martyrdom, from the days of Hypatia to those of Ferrer, it is to-day changing the direction and character of the ideas of the civilised world.

Freethinkers have ever been the most potent forces of progress. No other men are discussed so widely as these apostles for freedom; but magnificent as is their life-work, the men are greater. Hissed at by the superior people, stoned by the vulgar, they have many trials to submit to. They see charlatans ride by in their carriages, or, in other words, mark the success of humbug, while they find that intellectual honesty is not a paying career. Yet good and true men and women have had to submit to this treatment. Charles Bradlaugh, prematurely aged by his fight for liberty, saw honors showered on men not fit to black his boots; Ferrer, fronting the rifles of the soldiers, had to find his triumph in his own conscience. Mr. Foote had to listen to the mocking voice of the judge telling him that he had devoted his great talents to the service of the Devil. Yet, in their hours of apparent failure, these men have triumphed. They were martyrs who missed the palm laurels, and conquerors without the jubilation of victory. Laboring not for themselves, but for the world and the coming generations, for them shall be influence as far-reaching as the utmost reach of the great wave whose crest they sometimes were.

MIMNERMUS.

The World's Premier Plant.—II.

(Continued from p. 507.)

EGYPT ranks as the third cotton producing country, although its climate is so strikingly different to that of the ideal cotton lands of America. The extreme dryness of the Egyptian climate has, however, been to a considerable extent overcome by the construction of wonderful irrigation works, which furnish the crops with the necessary moisture. About 1,800,000 acres are under cotton, and nine-tenths of this area is within the Nile Delta. In 1906 the yield was 1,400,000 bales of 500 lb. each, and the crop increased to 1,500,000 bales in 1912.

The cotton under cultivation is chiefly that of exotic varieties, introduced into Egypt during the nineteenth century. The industry was enthusiastically promoted by the Frenchman, Jumel, under the administration of Mehemet Ali from 1820 onwards, with striking success. Egyptian cotton is related to the Sea Island species, which is generally regarded as a native West Indian plant. Says a high authority:—

"Egyptian cotton in length of staple is intermediate between average Sea Island and average Upland. It has, however, certain characteristics which cause it to be in demand even in the United States where, during recent years, Egyptian cotton has comprised about 80 per cent. of all the 'foreign' cottons imported. These special qualities are its fineness, strength, elasticity, and great natural twist."

These qualities commend the cotton to manufacturers.

There is some promise that in addition to becoming one of our greatest granaries, the Land of the Pharaohs is also destined to play its part in the enormously increased production of cotton which the coming years are certain to demand. In 1893 the Egyptian crop was barely 650,000 bales, so that the constant increase in its yield is a matter of considerable economic importance to the British Empire. It is true that there was an increased production in India during the Lancashire cotton famine occasioned by the American Civil War, but after that conflict was ended and the period of reconstruction in the States had set in, America easily regained her former command of the market. American experts them-

elves admit that Egypt, unlike all other cotton growing lands, continued to steadily develop her industry after the close of the Confederate War, and they concede that the Nile country "has taken a backward step in the eighty years since she began sending her 5,323 bales to Liverpool."

Still, for long, long years to come, the cotton world is likely to pay little heed to the crops of India, Egypt, Russia, or Brazil, when it considers the prospects of the impending season's supply. For more than three-fourths of its raw cotton it depends on a dozen American States. In 1912 out of a total world production of 22,500,000 bales, the United States raised 14,885,000 bales. Cotton is the mainstay of more than one million American farms. It is usually a highly profitable crop, although perhaps more dependent than any other leading agricultural product on hand labor. And "Dixie Land," the vast cotton country of the South, is without doubt better favored by Nature for the culture of cotton than any other area on the surface of the globe.

In addition to the wool, a huge sum is now made from the manufacture of cotton cakes and oils, meal, hails, and other commodities. For a century the Southern planter consistently wasted his cotton seed. In sober truth, the seed was placed in the category of rubbish, to be disposed of in the easiest possible manner. Down to a quarter of a century ago cotton gins—Whitney's invention to separate the lint from the seed—were actually erected over the running stream. In the interests of the public health some of the State laws compelled ginners to remove or destroy the decaying heaps of waste seed.

Of the enormous value of cotton seed as a fertiliser of the soil, as a food for cattle and sheep, as an elaborator of oil, or for more sinister purposes, no one has existed. But this is now quite ancient history. The value of raw cotton seed is now estimated at more than one hundred million dollars, or about one-fifth of the value of the complete crop, and such profitable purposes are the manufactures of by-products of the seed being put, that Atkinson, an expert, is convinced that it would pay the cotton grower to cultivate great crops of cotton, even if the bolls bore no lint, but yielded seed alone. Unfortunately, when the cotton farmer became aware of the immense fertilising value of the seed, there was too strong a tendency to employ it as manure, but the planter is now gradually recognising that it is much more economic to feed live stock on cotton seed cake, and still obtain three-fourths of the fertilising properties in the ordure cast by the animals, when this is restored to the soil. Yet, writing as late as 1907, Birkett and Poe complain that—

"in the one State in which the authors live, about 3,000,000 dollars worth of cotton seed meal is used as a fertiliser—which means that 2,500,000 dollars in feeding values goes for nothing, and is a dead loss to our agricultural interests."

The refined oil prepared from cotton-seed is of greater commercial value than the cattle-feeding cakes and hulls produced by the crude oil processes. But the latter commodities are of weightier consequence to the farmer. Refined cotton oil is termed "summer yellow," and the finest quality of this is known as butter oil. This liquid is largely utilised in making oleomargarine, butterine, and even enters into the composition of "butter" itself. After being subjected to pressure, prime summer yellow becomes a considerable part of the salad-oil of commerce. Great quantities of summer yellow are exported to Italy where, having undergone certain changes, it is transformed into "olive oil." It is interesting to learn that the larger part of the "olive oil" consumed in the States is in no way related to the olive tree. It may be imported from Italy, but it is simply high grade summer yellow specially treated, and labelled as olive oil.

This cotton oil is also used in the preparation of compound lard and other commodities. In this form cotton oil is highly appreciated, and is now retailed under its genuine name as coftolene. But the uses

to which the products and by-products of cotton seed are at present put are inconsiderable in comparison with those that are to come. Still, it does seem a pity that the products of a plant so incalculably useful to man should be degraded to the purposes of dishonest trading. Adulteration is one of the worst blots on modern manufactures, and not the smallest of its sins is the barefaced manner in which it misapplies some of Nature's most gracious gifts to human kind.

Assuming that forty gallons of oil could be drawn from each ton of cotton seed produced in the crop of 1905, it is a fair estimate that 71,000,000 gallons of oil were in that year extracted. The money derived from the crude oil alone amounted to the respectable sum of 14,280,000 dollars.

Very cogently indeed is it contended that just as a cotton factory takes raw cotton and turns it into finished goods, so on the plantation should the agriculturalist dispose of his cotton-meal and other seed products, and transform them into such desirable assimilable articles as beef, butter, milk, and cheese.

As previously intimated, it is sadly inefficient in the cotton planter to employ his cotton-seed meal as manure, when it is so precious as an animal feeder and fattener. The raising of kine for the table and the development of dairy farming may together proceed with the highly remunerative production of cotton. The cotton-meal that is, or was until very recently, exported to Germany to feed its dairy cows might be much more profitably used at home. From the researches of organic chemists it appears that cotton-seed meal stands above all other vegetable food-stuffs in the percentage of assimilable protein it contains. While not to be recommended as a diet for pigs and calves; both horses and mules flourish when fed with it in moderate proportions. In stated quantities it forms an ideal feeding material for dairy cattle, and is claimed to make butter as good as the world produces. It is greatly superior to corn meal and similar foods in increasing the supply of milk, while it is hard to exaggerate the primeness of the meat it produces when it forms part of the diet for fattening bees. These details may perhaps seem irrelevant to anyone but the American farmer, but agriculture is world-wide, and such facts as the foregoing may have to be taken into consideration when other States enter into serious competition with the New World cotton grower, or raise within their own domains a large percentage of the raw cotton their mills consume. It is quite conceivable that Old World countries may be driven to these things, and at no remotely distant date.

We will now glance at some of the enemies which wage perpetual warfare with the cotton plant, reserving the romance of the rise and progress of the remarkable manufacturing industry in Lancashire for final treatment. With frigid impartiality Mother Nature has evolved the beautiful cotton plant, together with the multifarious cotton parasites that are so difficult, in terms of Theism, to explain. Numerous insects prey upon the plant wherever it is cultivated. In Greece several out-worms assail it; in India it is attacked by boll-worms; while in Australia a red bug injures the crop. But our knowledge concerning the pests and diseases that afflict the cotton plant is most fully complete in connection with the Cotton Belt of America. And this will be fully understood when we learn the extent of the evil which the Southern cotton planter is compelled to suffer. The foes of the cotton crop are all very small individually, but their collective efforts, if we accept a conservative estimate, damage the cotton to the tune of 60,000,000 dollars (12,000,000 sterling) annually. For 40,000,000 dollars worth of damage a little beetle, the cotton boll weevil, and a couple of caterpillars must be held responsible. When Nature gave us cotton, she certainly did not forget to mingle her favor with a sharp spice of malice.

In America several of the insect pests which now infest the cotton lands have transferred their affec-

tions to cotton within recent generations. Their former victims now enjoy a certain amount of immunity from attack. But as cotton culture has become a more centralized form of tillage, and its production more intensive, the shrub has become subject to diseases special to itself. Moreover, many of the plant's insect enemies have more firmly adapted themselves to a cotton diet, and were the details of this transformation more completely known, we should doubtless discover various valuable evidences relating to the evolution of animal instincts and habits.

One fact stands out clearly with reference to diseases affecting cotton. As a rule, these pathological phenomena are much more marked in those areas in which cotton is constantly cultivated. Where there is no variation in the kind of crop grown on the same soil, the life-cycle of the disease germs escapes all interruption; their development suffers no check, and the maladies to which their activities give rise, tend, in consequence, to reappear with increasing intensity with each succeeding season's crop.

Two outstanding diseases attack the cotton bolls; a couple menace the plant's roots, while eight ailments injure the leaves or stems, or even assail both these important organs. Among these maladies is Anthracnose, an ailment caused by a fungus. This parasite preys on the plant during every stage of its development. It attacks the seed leaves as soon as they appear above the ground, and it ravages the larger leaves and stems. But the parasite's chief crime is the production of Anthracnose in the bolls. This disease is a serious danger to the planter, more particularly when it becomes epidemic and, unfortunately, its ravages cannot be stayed. A remedy for this malady may be found in the evolution on Mendelian principles of some resistant strain of cotton which will prove impervious to the parasite's attacks.

Root-gall is generated by a nematode worm which infests the tissues of the roots and produces pathogenic galls. This pest is not only directly injurious but, indirectly, hurtful as well. The harm induced by the root-gall worm makes easy the entrance of the wilt-fungus, another root disease. This malady is most prevalent on soils in which the nematode worms are abundant.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

Mental Evolution.

THERE was a land—it need not matter where—
Of love and legend; once I sojourned there:
There shone the sunlight of the mother's smile
That sweetened all that else were harsh and vile:
One goes, one ne'er returns; but in sweet ways
And rustic nooks there mem'ry ever stays.
When I was there—dear, distant, pensive when!
I mind I was a "thinker" even then;
But much confused, untutored, all unskilled,
Foolish, ambitious, feeble, pickle-willed;
I knew not what the many currents were,
The floods of hope, the ebbings of despair,
Until Experience came with thought mature
To set me on a footing more secure.
Truth made me sad, anon I loved the true;
And, still athirst, my clamorous questioning grew—
A sea of doubt unrolled upon my view.
A gloomy sea, with chill forbidding wave,
And faint the light the far horizon gave.
Slow rose the Sun of Reason on the sight,
A tangled, cold, austere but steadfast light,
A cheerful beam, and steady, not too bright;
Then ocean smiled, the vapors fled apart,
And poured the morning fragrance o'er my heart.

Such is the birth of mind—the second birth—
Such is thy travail, and thy hope, O Earth!

A. M.

Acid Drops.

After spending a great deal of time in writing on the power and immense influence of Christianity, and, above all, belauding the Salvation Army for its work, Mr. Harold Begbie now writes in the August issue of the *Regist Magazine* on "The Rout of Religion." He has not withdrawn any of his books from circulation. They are still on sale; so those who wish to read that religion is impotent and those who wish to read that religion is all-powerful may both be satisfied. It is veritably a case of paying your money and taking your choice.

Mr. Begbie's article turns upon the fact that religion has been impotent to prevent this War, which, Mr. Begbie says, is at bottom a war for commercial supremacy. And he says that "religion is only impotent in this crisis because it has been impotent all along in that which has led up to this crisis.....Religion could not prevent the War because it cannot stop the War because it has never attempted to stop trade wars, or sweating, or price-cutting, or trusts, or commercial selfishness," and he is quite certain that God disapproves of all this quite as much as he disapproves of the War. We suppose that we must take Mr. Begbie's word for what God approves or disapproves; and we believe that, after all, he knows as much about this as anyone else. Only we are surprised that Mr. Begbie has not spent some of his indignation on the price-cutting, low-wage, competitive commercialism of the Salvation Army instead of writing doubtfully reliable stories of the conversion of used-up burglars and worn-out drunkards.

Religion, says Mr. Begbie, has hitherto been a looker-on and has done nothing. "It has played no active part in existence." This is not quite fair to religion. It has played a very active part in existence. It would have been better for the world if it had not done so. Religion supplied exactly that measure of moral sanction that persuaded masses of people to submit to commercial exploitation, and soothed the conscience of those who were guilty of the exploitation. Human nature is so constituted that it must find some sort of moral justification for what it does, and religion provided the justification in this case. Of course, it may be said that if not the religious shibboleth, some other shibboleth would have been found; and this may be so. The historic fact is that in this case it was religion that did the trick. It pauperised their minds, and so favored the exploitation of their bodies.

Finally, Mr. Begbie thinks that when the War is over, religion will make a fresh appeal to mankind, and will "endeavor to win the whole world to the real faith of the real Christ." We do not doubt that religion will make a fresh appeal to mankind, that is part of the game, and unfortunately, there are always enough shallow-pated persons to encourage it. But that it will be essentially different in the future to what it has been in the past, we do not for a moment believe. The religion of a country always has meant the form of faith that is most profitable to the dominating class, and it will continue so. That is the religion that will get preached, because that is the religion that will get paid for. And we have heard about the "real Christ" before. It is the plaything of every fool, and the stock-in-trade of every charlatan. It is the puppet of the folly or the fashion of the moment. It is the politician turned parson, and of the parson turned politician. There is no "real Christ," there is only a Christ that is made in this or that fashion as the occasion demands. It has required a European War to make Mr. Begbie realize that religion has been a failure in the past. We wonder what would be needed to make him realize that it will continue to be a great failure in the future?

The *Sunday Pictorial* says that Mr. Horatio Bottomley "is a force in the State. His services should be utilized more and more by the Government." Certainly! In view of his piety, we suggest that he be made Minister of Public Worship.

Mr. R. F. Colam, K.C., Recorder of Croydon, whose hobby is carpentry, had his portrait reproduced in a *Sunday paper* under the heading of "Recorder-Carpenter." The editor forgot to mention that English people worship a carpenter god.

The clergy are fond of having a finger in every pie, and the Archbishop of York has made a few days' visit to the British Fleet, and during the trip religious services were

held on Sunday afternoons and a week-day morning. We wonder if his Grace preached on Captain Noah and the memorable voyage of the Ark.

There is no limit to human folly when religion or any form of the supernatural is in question. In Paris a music-hall singer finding that his income had been seriously affected by the War hit upon the notion of turning himself into a spiritual agency. He formed a committee of spirits, which included Tolstoi, Gambetta, and others, with King David as honorary president. Séances were held, and the shades of the departed encouraged the faithful to contribute handsomely to the support of the ex-music-hall artists. Unfortunately for him the police raided the house, took him into custody, and dispersed the community. The next stage of the proceedings will be in the police-courts. Maybe the medium will be allowed to call King David as a witness for the defence.

A tale is going the rounds concerning a former Bishop and Sir Richard Burton. After a hot debate on evolution, the Bishop remarked to Burton, pointing to a picture of a monkey, "There is your ancestor, Sir Richard." To which Burton replied, "In that case, my lord, I have progressed. But what of your lordship, who is descended from the angels?"

An organisation called the Pure Literature Society advocates prominently that for sixty-one years it has promoted the circulation of "pure, healthy, and gospel literature." Not many journals issued in Fleet-street would fill this bill.

A South Wales parson has enlisted, and the papers are referring to the Church Militant. But one swallow does not make a summer.

The Infanta Eulalia, of Spain, who knows the Kaiser intimately, says that if he had not been born a king he would have become a religious leader. Yet the clergy persist in calling the Kaiser a Prussian Atheist.

Our sympathies are with the Rev. T. W. Jex Blake, late Dean of Wells, who died recently and left estate valued at £125,780. Such a load must be a terrible handicap to one striving to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

A man and woman, charged at Willesden with stealing apples, reminded the magistrate of "Adam" and "Eve." The sentence was more humane than that passed in "The Garden of Eden."

"Many women are not religious-minded, but ecclesiastical-minded," writes "Marmaduke," in the *Evening News*. Why not? Don't the dear clergy wear petticoats?

"At no time in the history of journalism have newspaper proprietors spent such large sums as they do now to procure the very best information," says the *Evening News*. In the same issue an illustrated article describes "Gaby Deslys in tears at the Loss of her Pet Dog."

The Bishop of Sebastopolis, Dr. J. S. Vaughan, attributes a terribly bad character to the Almighty. Preaching in the Salford Catholic Cathedral the other Sunday, he said that the history of every nation is little else than a history of its wars. Of all wars, however, the bloodiest and most savage is the present one. What is the cause of this terrific conflict? Not the ambition of the Kaiser, not Prussian militarism, but God's wrath against Europe as a whole. The Almighty is the Master of men and the Father of the nations, and when they displease him he scourges them according to the enormity of their sins. He has ever so many scourges at his disposal, such as pestilence, famine, earthquake, fire, and above all, war. We do nothing to blame the German Emperor, God alone being the instigator of the War. Europe had fallen into such an awful state of rebellion against him that he was obliged to show his hand.

Bishop Vaughan knows all about it. God has seized the most frightful of all his scourges, and is wielding it without mercy. France is the chief sinner. She had turned her back upon her Maker, she had rebelled against the Church, she had seized ecclesiastical property, thrust the religious out of the schools, torn down the crucifixes from the walls of the colleges and schools, and forbidden any mention of the name of the Divine Being by civil servants, and Dr. Vaughan

assured his congregation that her due punishment is now being inflicted:—

"God was present at all that. He heard those words, he witnessed those deeds. He saw their irreligion, their anti-catholicism, their rebellion against his law and order."

Thanks! A more convincing argument for Atheism was never elaborated by any Freethinker.

Religious folk are bombarding the troops with tracts and pious publications. A soldier, writing in the *Sunday Times*, says: "They mean well, only their efforts are not always as good as their intention. Somebody sent our battalion a gross of 'Holy Living and Dying.' We sent them over to the Germans; they seemed more suited for that quarter than for us."

Canon Hoskyns, preaching at Brighton, took for his text a cartoon from *Punch*, the world-famous comic paper. Truly a jolly disciple of the "Man of Sorrows."

Commenting on the legend of the "Mons Angels," the *Daily Mail* says "We know the names of the evangelists and the apostles. Their written and verbal testimony concerning miracles is accordingly received with respect. But we do not know the name of a single person who saw the vision of Mons." The *Daily Mail* overlooks the fact that the Gospels were written generations after the alleged miracles, and that it was highly dangerous to criticise the stories.

From the virgin chalk of the Chiltern Hills at Wendover, at a depth of several feet, a geological specimen of marcasite has been found, which geologists declare to be some millions of years old. This is long before the Biblical date for the Creation.

The Germans are hustlers and the Turk is not. "Before the Germans knew him," says the *Daily Mail*, "the Turk used to fold his hands and remark that, as Allah was so great and good, one could take things easily." Presumably, the Turks are now sweating tallow-candles.

Providence again! At Erie, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., a cloud-burst placed a large part of the city under water, and did an estimated damage of £600,000. Up to the time of writing, twenty-seven dead bodies have been recovered from the flood, but it is feared that the death-roll will exceed fifty.

Germany commemorated the completion of the first year of the War by a series of addresses more or less saturated with religion. The Kaiser gave an address, in which he asserted his belief that God was with the German Army, and that he would conquer "with the help of God." The Catholic "Army bishops" issued a pastoral letter, in which it is declared:—

"We are fighting this War not only for our country, but also for Christianity.....The masks have dropped! We have to fight not against flesh and blood, but against dominations and powers of darkness and evil. But the spirits of evil shall not triumph. The Christian blood which now flows in streams over the battlefields shall not serve as cement for the building of the Anti-Christ.....We are sacrificing these rivers of blood in conjunction with the precious blood which daily flows at our altars to the Heavenly Father as expiation for the sins of the world, for reconciliation with Him and for the attainment of a general Christian world's peace, such as the allied Emperors have set up for their object and as we, together with the Holy Father, are daily praying for."

When it comes to religious exhortation, Germany is not a whit behind the other countries engaged in the War, and we believe that its piety is quite as genuine.

Germany appeals to religion, and prays to God. That is sheer hypocrisy. We have a Day of Intercession, and pray to God, and say that we are fighting for Christianity. That proves our sincerity. An impartial onlooker might well ask why religious professions prove hypocrisy in the one case, and are called "blasphemous," while, in the other, they are evidence of a nation's sincerity and its conviction of the righteousness of its cause? Why not label it as so much elaborate humbug, and take it all as being equal proof of sincerity? It is this sort of thing that makes one despair of either sanity of view or breadth of mental grasp so long as religion is allowed to dominate men's minds. Misled we may easily believe the German people to be; blinded by their military leaders we believe they are; but their use of religion only proves with them, what it also proves with us—that it is used to bolster up anything and everything, and rightness or wrongness has nothing whatever to do with it. It would be a bad thing indeed for Britain if it had

nothing better in this War than a religious justification, and no better guides than religious ones.

And what does our "Day of Intercession" amount to after all? On the day appointed for the service at St. Paul's, ten bishops each sent a message to the *Evening News*. Their messages all took an identical form—they all said it was a time for prayer. Naturally, prayer is their trade; and they were pushing their business as hard as they could. They were all convinced that God would answer their prayers. So is the Kaiser, so are the German bishops, so are German Christians. And how will the issue be decided? Not by such solemn tomfoolery as Days of Intercession, even though the performance is organised on a national scale. It is the longest purse, not the longest prayer; the man in the trench, not the man in the pulpit, that will ultimately decide the issue. Wars are often caused by religion; we have never heard of one that was ended by it.

Mr. Arthur Machen wrote a descriptive account of the service at St. Paul's for the *Evening News*. He says that during the process of the service it seemed to him that three "invisible" angels were seen from the choir. One carried a vial of blood, another a vial of tears, a third a red flame. They represented the blood that had been poured out, the tears that had been shed, the third the high resolve in all men's hearts. Mr. Machen should be more careful. Since he invented the story of the angels at Mons he has been hard at work trying to prove that it was an invention, and not a statement of fact. And we shall not be at all surprised if, presently, some one writes an account of the appearance of these angels, and Dr. Horton discovers some letters from people who were present testifying to the genuineness of the apparition.

Journalists turned Christian for half-an-hour to report the Intercession Service at St. Paul's Cathedral, London. One newspaper referred to it as "A Nation at Prayer." This was incorrect, for the majority of the inhabitants of the British Empire are non-Christians, and the service was conducted by the clergy of the Government religion.

Preaching at the Intercession Service at St. Paul's Cathedral, London, the Archbishop of Canterbury quoted Martin Luther. Yet so many of the clergy tell us constantly that all Germans are Atheists.

Although Providence is said to count the hairs of our head, and to watch the fall of the sparrows, it did not prevent the death of an eleven-years-old child, who was burnt to death in a house at Finsbury Park, London.

The "Russian Army" myth was succeeded by the legend of the "Mons Angels," but the latter seems to be first favorite, and the story is travelling across the Continent. According to the newspapers, soldiers in the east of Europe have seen a "white figure on horseback." A mounted angel should be as comical as a sailor on horseback.

According to the *Daily Mail*, an examination of the jewels in an altar-cross at a Worthing church has revealed them to be of imitation coloring. This is by no means the only "imitation" associated with the Christian religion.

The *Christian Commonwealth*, in noting the decision of the Court of Appeal *re* the Bowman case, wonders whether the change of opinion in relation to bequests to a Freethought Society is a proof of tolerance or indifference. So far as religion is concerned the two things go together. When a professedly religious community becomes tolerant towards non-religionists it is *prima facie* evidence that it has become more or less indifferent concerning it. It has reached the point of recognising that religious belief is not vital to good citizenship, and it has become less certain of the truth and value of current religious conceptions. Historically, at least, toleration of non-religion and indifference to religion have gone hand in hand. That is why religious persecutors have been men of intense religious belief. We have never been amongst those who believe that it is un-Christian to persecute. On the contrary, we conceive persecution to be the cardinal Christian quality. Given absolute certainty of the truth of Christianity, and the suppression of heresy becomes the most important of duties.

The *Methodist Recorder* says the year of war has been a year of religious revival. Most of the clergy have given up singing this tune, although they kept to it as long as was possible. The only evidence that the *Recorder* offers is that

fraternity and fellowship is universal amongst the Allies and in the Empire. If we were running a Christian paper, we should not care to dwell upon this point. It might invite the retort that the only thing that could unite Christians in fraternity and fellowship was the prospect of killing one another. And when the War is over the probability is that all these Christians will recommence their internal fighting at the point where they dropped it in order to fight someone else.

The Paris paper, *France de Demain*, publishes a telegram from Petrograd, stating that many Russian sentinels declare that they have seen the famous ghost of General Skobeleff, in a white uniform, riding on a white horse. The apparition, according to tradition, always marks a critical moment for the armies of the Tsar, and invariably causes a terrific panic in the enemies' ranks. How amused and sceptical Dr. Horton, and the Vicar of Clifton, and Miss Marrantable, and those who believe in the Angel Host at Mons will be!

"This War has come just in time to save our national character from rapid and terrible deterioration," says the Bishop of Exeter. Of what value is the clerical boast that Christianity strengthens the character of a nation?

The Germans are as degraded as "the cannibals of the Southern Seas," says Earl Spencer. Just so! And Germany is a Christian country, and the home of Martin Luther and the Reformation.

"Satan's Daughter" is the title of a story running in a leading newspaper. We did not know the Devil was a married man, but his chief rival had several sons.

"E. L." (Rev. Edward Lewis?) thinks it is rather dangerous to talk too much about "Providence" just now. He says, in the *Christian Commonwealth*, that "at a time when millions of prayers are being offered in Europe for the safety of dear ones," to which the only answer is the awful casualty list, this doctrine of "special providence" tends much more to "unbelief than to belief." But if there is anything in the doctrine of "Providence," this is surely the time when it should be taught. What Mr. Lewis implies is that the doctrine should never be taught when there is the slightest chance of testing its value.

Printers' errors are often very humorous. Recently a poet sent some verses to a newspaper on the subject of the sacrifice of the soldiers, whom he described as "Like broken roses drifting forth to God." This appeared in print as "broken noses."

"Soldier, if You were Shot Dead this Moment, where would You Go To? Heaven or Hell?" This is the title of a cheerful leaflet distributed in the fighting line. Another happy effort is entitled, "Eternity! Where? Prepare to Meet Thy God!" Criticising these tracts, Corporal George Thompson, in the *Sunday Times* says, "If people at home cannot do better than that, they had better not send any thing."

THE COUNTERBLAST.

It's strange that God should fash to frame
The yearth and lift sae hie,
An' clean forget to explain the same
To a gentleman like me.

They gusty, donnered ither folk,
Their weird they well may dree:
But why present a pig in a poke
To a gentleman like me?

They ither folk their parritch eat
And sup their sugared tea,
But the mind is no to be wyled wi' meat
Wi' a gentleman like me.

It's a different thing that I demand,
Tho' humble as can be—
A statement fair in my Maker's hand
To a gentleman like me:

A clear account writ fair an' broad,
An' a plain apologie;
Or the deevil a ceevil word to God
From a gentleman like me.

—Robert Louis Stevenson.

To Correspondents.

Donor's HONORARIUM FUND, 1915.—Received from March 15: previously acknowledged, £131 11s. 10d. Received since:— E. D. Voss (Cape Town), £1 1s.; H. Courlander, £1 10s. 6d.; Three Mydesdale Freethinkers, 3s.

London.—We appreciate your congratulations on the issue of the Bowman case, also on the quality of the Freethinker week after week. May we say that this could only be done by a staff of writers that have their hearts in the work and are, therefore, glad to give of their best.

Thanks for cuttings. Mr. Cohen will be writing again on the Mons Myth very soon.

BORCHERS.—So long as the legal decision is with us, we are not at all alarmed about the "gates of hell or heaven."

J. N.—MSS. received. Shall appear, but owing to quantity of matter in hand cannot promise its publication for some weeks.

BARNARD.—Our strictures on the press boycott did not exclude the possibility of exceptions, and we are only too pleased to acknowledge the liberality of the editor of the Essex City Chronicle in giving both sides a hearing. Where this is possible we think that Freethinkers should take full advantage of opportunities.

JACKSON.—See reply to "E. B." Glad you think that the Freethinker retains its dignity and sanity, in spite of the disturbing nature of the times.

DEWITT.—We are not surprised that you are disgusted with Dr. Horton's statement that an Atheist is never seen in the trenches, and the nonsense about the Mons Angels. As you were in the retreat, and are at present in the firing line, your feelings are easily accounted for. Still, it does not do to take such statements too seriously. Glad to know that you read some chapters from Bible Romances to your comrades, and that they asked for more.

MACFARLANE.—Thanks for congratulations, and also for sending the story of "The Comrade in White." This is one of the items that Dr. Horton helped to circulate. We have filed it for possible use in the future.

D. Voss (Cape Town).—Received. Sorry to learn that the War has affected you, but it is not surprising. We are afraid that we have not yet experienced the worst, although we hope that in this respect we may prove a false prophet.

MATTERS.—Of course, we might pay more attention to various cases that exist in the social sphere, but our silence does not mean that we are not alive to their existence. And do you not think that in attacking the abuses we do that we have a sufficiently comprehensive job on hand?

DAVIDSON.—The name was mentioned with the gentleman's sanction and approval, and he must be taken as the author judge in such a matter. The other part of your letter is answered in "Sugar Plums" in reply to another correspondent.

J. STUART.—We regret to learn of your illness, and hope that the expression "an invalid" refers to a passing indisposition only. The phrase you cite is often associated with the name of Ingersoll, but we believe it is of much earlier origin. Mr. Voss may have used it, but he never classed it as his own.

C.—Thanks for papers.

GREENWOOD.—Glad to learn of your efforts on behalf of the Freethinker, for which, many thanks.

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

NOTICES must reach 61 Farringdon-street, London, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

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

Contributions 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.

The veteran Freethinker and my very old friend, Mr. A. B. Moss, writes to me that he has been for a week's holiday at Aldershot, and I am glad to see he has escaped the danger involved in being under a seizure age. I have nothing to fear myself in this respect. Recruiting officers do not frighten me, neither do I read the face of the special constable. But to be serious. He returns in time to add his voice to the chorus of congratulations over the result of the appeal in the Bowman case. "The judgment of the three judges in this case is as wise as it is just," he says, "and you certainly deserve all the kind words and warm congratulations you are likely to receive for devising such an instrument as the Secular Society, Ltd." Mr. Moss thinks "it is singular that at the same time as the three judges pro-

nounced in favor of the legality of the Memorandum and Articles of the Secular Society, Ltd.," a learned barrister should go out of his way to insult a Freethinker, who had fulfilled his legal obligation by affirming in accordance with the law; by telling him that being "without religious belief" he was "unfit to assist in the trial of a serious case."

* * *

The insulted man ought not to have submitted so easily in this case. Mr. Moss thinks that "such an insult should not have gone unrebuked," but the insulted man should have insisted in acting on his legal right, and claimed the protection of the Court. Instead of which, he appears to have walked out of the Court with sheepish docility. I cannot say his conduct surprises me, but it cuts me to the quick, for he occupies one of those inferior positions in the Freethought Party, which, if not heroic, should at least be marked by the courage of self-respect. Mr. Cowell cannot plead that his Freethought education has been neglected, for he has had a long course of Bradlaugh and Foote and other leaders of Freethought, which was bold and even aggressive. But perhaps Mr. Cowell may recover himself, and exclaim with ancient Pistol—who was pulling himself together after swallowing the leek—"All hell shall stir for this."

* * *

But let me end with something more palatable. Mr. Moss, who is far from being a bad judge in matters of literature, says he admires my last week's article on "Shakespeare and Mr. Muir on Swearing," with Shakespeare brought in by the way. "I judge from your writing," he says, "that your health is improving rapidly, and that you will soon be your old self again." Thanks, Moss, thanks! But some people couldn't see that if I wrote like Shakespeare himself. (Pardon the audacity of the comparison).

* * *

I have no doubt that, at least as far as I am concerned, the Bowman case is over. Our solicitor does not think that there will be any further appeal. According to Shakespeare's "law's delay," the man who has wasted so much of our time (I do not reckon his own) has one more chance of procrastination left, but I do not think he will take it. There are reasons against it. He knows them, and so do I. I shall say nothing, and I hope he will be as discreet. I think I may claim to have finished my work. I cannot carry on all the societies that may be founded on my basis. I must try to see this one right through if there should be another movement left in the moribund body of the enemy. Then we shall see—what we do see. I cannot say more.

* * *

The papers keep saying that Mr. Bowman left the Secular Society, Ltd., the sum of £10,000. He did nothing of the sort. He left, first of all to his wife, a sum of £1,000 in cash, the house they lived in at Ventnor, and the net proceeds of the estate for the rest of her natural life. Several nephews and other persons were left some £200 each. Other small matters were dealt with, and the whole residue was to be realised by the trustees for the sole benefit of the Secular Society, Ltd. There is no mention whatever of £10,000; but considering the beneficiaries mentioned in the will, it was thought that this would probably be about the value of the residuary estate.

* * *

I see the announcement of Mr. Keir Hardie's illness being so bad that instead of a six months' holiday, it is doubtful if he will return to public life at all. I wonder why the length of my own illness has been considered so extravagant.

* * *

Some time ago Mr. H. S. Salt, in acknowledging some, as he called it, flattering, but I called them dead-rock truth remarks about himself as a real reformer, mentioned another reformer of his own acquaintance whom they were all getting anxious about—Mr. Howard Evans. I am sorry to say I have just seen an announcement of the veteran's

decease. He was seventy-seven, and had been engaged for I know not how long in the service of humanity. Thus they go, one by one, the teachers of peace, the last sounds in their ears being the roar of cannon, the crash of shrapnel, and the bombs from the awful but less deadly Zeppelins. Mr. Evans professed a species of Christianity. I never could quite make out what it was, but I know what peace is, and I know that the Christian world is full of war, and is not satisfied then without dragging in the other first-class religions in the world to keep it company.

G. W. FOOTE.

Sugar Plums.

We are glad to see that the importance of the judgment in the Bowman Appeal case has been widely recognised. Some of the religious papers have been discreetly silent; others have dealt with it as of first-rate importance, and as marking a decisive change in the state of the law with regard to Freethought propaganda. The judgment is not quite a revolution in English law—as some of the papers have called it—it is rather an evolution, although it may well be considered revolutionary by some.

At any rate, the judgment of the Court of Appeal is epoch-marking, and one may almost say that it will become historic. For this reason, and because of the wide interest aroused by the case, we shall print next week the first portion of a verbatim report of the judgments of the Master of the Rolls and Lords Justices Pickford and Warrington. The report will extend to two issues of the *Freethinker*, and this will offer a first-rate opportunity for those who wish to do some useful and inexpensive propaganda by securing extra copies and putting them into circulation. Such opportunities occur but seldom, and when they do it is as well to make the most of them.

We print elsewhere a letter from a correspondent who comments adversely upon what we said concerning Mr. Muir and the Freethinking juror. It was said there that "It would, perhaps, not be a bad thing if, when Freethinkers are again summoned to attend on juries, they were to cite this incident as a precedent, and ask to be discharged on the ground of having no religious belief." This was offered as a mere suggestion, and we think its intention obvious. There seems no plain and easy way of calling judges to book for tolerating, and even assisting, conduct of this kind, and it is well within the bounds of probability that by that method some judges would be led to speak pretty plainly on the subject. We have not the slightest fear of this policy leading to the Act becoming a dead letter, or that judges would be found ready enough to excuse people service on that ground. If they did, they might find so many jurors asking to be excused, that the Oaths Act would become one of the most popular in existence.

Finally, what Mr. Bradlaugh fought for, and what we are all fighting for, is to see that Freethinkers get their full civil rights. So far the Oaths Act gives it to them in this direction, but if judges allow themselves to act so as to make the Act a dead letter—and it was certainly so in this case—it then becomes a question of how best to call the attention of the community to the fact. The suggestion made would, if acted upon, certainly do that, and if judges generally were to allow that plea, it is fairly certain that the Lord Chancellor would be compelled to remind them that they were contrary to the law. At any rate, we quite fail to see the danger of the advice, and it is as well not to be timid of danger when a greater benefit may be secured thereby.

Set debates between Freethinkers and Christians are not common nowadays, and this, in a sense, renders the printed reports of previous ones the more interesting. We are, therefore, pleased to say that the Pioneer Press has still in stock a number of copies of the Debate between Mr. W. T. Lee and Mr. G. W. Foote, on *Theism or Atheism?* originally published at one shilling, which it is now offering at sixpence. It has also some copies of an earlier Debate between Mr. Foote and the Rev. Dr. McCann, on *Christianity and Secularism*, tastefully bound in cloth, which it is offering at ninepence.

The second of the London Freethought Demonstrations will be held in Brockwell Park to-day (Aug. 15), at 6 o'clock. The speakers will include Messrs. Davidson, Rosetti, Hooper, Miss Kough, and others. We hope there will be a good muster of Freethinkers—and Christians; also that the weather will be more gracious than on the occasion of the last Demonstration.

The Fourth Gospel.

THE MIRACLE OF THE LOAVES.

IN his sixth chapter the writer of the Fourth Gospel takes one of the Synoptic narratives—the feeding of five thousand—and transforms it almost out of recognition. The new version, it is true, has the same framework—a miracle-worker named Jesus, five loaves and two fishes, and twelve baskets of fragments—but the writer could not withstand the temptation of altering it and putting in new details out of his own head. For the purpose of comparison I give the first part of Matthew's account, as being the nearest to the original, and the portion corresponding from the "Gospel of John."

Matt. xiv. 15—19.—"And when even was come, the disciples came to him, saying.....Send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves food. But Jesus said unto them, They have no need to go away; give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes. And he said, Bring them hither to me. And he commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass."

John vi. 4—10.—"*Jesus therefore lifting up his eyes, and seeing that a great multitude cometh unto him, saith unto Philip, Whence are we to buy bread that these may eat? And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do. Philip answered him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one may take a little. One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves and two small fishes: but what are these among so many? Jesus said, Make the people sit down. Now there was much grass in the place.*" [The words in italics are additions]

From the foregoing it will be perceived that the pseudo-John has completely remodelled the older narrative. He has omitted the alleged fact that the multitude had been with Jesus all day, and that it was then evening—which occasioned the miraculous feeding. He has also omitted the circumstance that the disciples asked Jesus to send the people away, so that they might buy food, as well as the reply of Jesus—"Give ye them to eat." In this new version, the multitude had only just come to Jesus, and there was no question of sending them away. The writer has also invented imaginary conversation between Jesus and Philip and Andrew—the two disciples whom he had himself represented as coming to Jesus in Judea the day after his baptism (John i. 40—45). Again, the loaves, this writer says, were made of "barley" and the fishes "small," and they did not belong to the disciples, as implied in the three Synoptic narratives: they were the private property of a "little child" or a "little boy" (*pandara*), not, as translated, of a "lad," a term which might be applied to a big boy or young man. We see, also, in this new version something of the cunning of the pseudo-John in making his Savior ask Philip what they were to do to feed the people—"to prove him"—knowing all the time what he intended to do. The words "two hundred pennyworth of bread" were added by Mark (vi. 8) and copied by the pseudo-John, who employs them in a somewhat different way. Furthermore, at the end of the miracle the writer makes two fraudulent additions. He says:

John vi. 14.—"When therefore the people saw the sign which Jesus did, they said, This is of a truth the prophet that is to come into the world."

John vi. 15.—"Jesus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force to make a king withdrew again into the mountain himself alone."

These statements were both fraudulent: the three Synoptists know nothing of either of the circumstances mentioned. A man who could so falsify an ancient narrative of his Savior, which the Church of Rome which he was a member believed to be true, would not think twice about forging a Gospel in the name of an apostle—if he could do so without being found out.

MORE METAPHORICAL LANGUAGE.

The next day the multitude sought Jesus again, and when they had gathered round him he said:—

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me not because ye saw signs, but because ye ate of the loaves, and were filled. Work not for the meat which perisheth, but for the meat which abideth unto eternal life, which the Son of man shall give you" (vi. 26, 27).

This was the introduction to a long discourse in which the pseudo-Jesus employed some perfectly absurd metaphorical language. He had, of course, no "meat which abideth unto eternal life" to give them. Continuing his ridiculous oratory, he said:—

"The bread of God is that which cometh down out of heaven, and giveth life unto the world.....I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.....I am the living bread which came down out of heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: yea and the bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world" (vi. 35, 51).

Upon hearing this nonsense, "the Jews strove one with another, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" One would think that Jesus would explain himself; but no, he does not, and has no idea of doing so. He only tries to mystify his hearers still more. He says:—

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in yourselves. He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life.....For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. This is the bread which came down out of heaven. He that eateth this bread shall live for ever" (vi. 53—58).

Not even now does this Savior explain what he means.

It is probable that the pseudo-John, when writing his balderdash, had in his mind the primitive Gospel account of the institution of the "Lord's Supper," in which the Synoptic Jesus, speaking of the bread, represented as saying, "Take, eat; this is my body"—and of the wine, "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood," etc. (Matt. xxvi. 26—28). We know from Justin Martyr that this "Lord's Supper" was an important part of the service in all Christian churches in his day (A.D. 150), and that all the members, save converts under instruction, partook of it. If this was the matter to which the pseudo-Jesus is made to refer, then the Presbyter John ought to have remembered that the rite had not been instituted until the night of the arrest of Jesus; so that the Jews whom the Christian Savior was addressing, as well as his own disciples, could not possibly know what he was speaking of, and would probably think that he was teaching cannibalism—

and the words here ascribed to the pseudo-Jesus appear to have some such meaning.

But even the pseudo-John admits that the language he had placed in the mouth of his pseudo-Jesus was somewhat mystifying, for he makes "many of the disciples" murmur and say "This is a hard saying; who can hear it?" Then, without actually explaining his meaning, he represents his Jesus as saying (but only to the disciples):—

"It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life" (vi. 63).

It is thus admitted that the new Jesus did not mean what he said when he spoke of eating his flesh and drinking his blood: his words were "spirit"—that is figurative. But as he did not care to explain what he did mean, "many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him": so this Savior lost his hearers because he employed outrageous language which they could not understand, and which he would not condescend to explain. And this was the way that the new Jesus "did the will of him that sent him." It is almost needless to say that the Jesus of the Synoptics never spoke in the absurd way in which the Jesus of the pseudo-John is here represented as doing: the two Jesuses have nothing in common save the name.

A CRITICISM BY PORPHYRY.

In the seventh chapter we are told that "the feast

of the Jews, the feast of Tabernacles, was at hand," and as Jesus on such occasions generally went up to Jerusalem, "his brethren"—who are here represented as staying with him in Galilee, though they "did not believe on him"—urged him to go up to the feast and show himself, if he really did wondrous works. To this brotherly counsel Jesus replied:—

"My time is not yet come.....Go ye up unto the feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; because my time is not yet fulfilled" (John vii. 6, 8).

Here it should be stated that the word "yet" in the reply of Jesus is a later addition—inserted after the fourth century. In A.D. 270 Porphyry, a learned Pagan philosopher, wrote a book against Christianity, in which work he cited, amongst other matters, the words "I will not go up unto this feast" in proof of the inconstancy and falsehood of the Christian Savior. The word "yet" was not in Porphyry's copy of the Fourth Gospel, nor was it in that of the Christian "father" Jerome (A.D. 400), who read Porphyry's book in order to "refute" him: neither is it in the oldest MS. of the Gospels—the *Codex Sinaiticus*, which dates from the fourth century. In the margin of the Revised Version it is stated: "Many ancient authorities omit yet." It will thus be seen that the writer of the Fourth Gospel made his Lord and Master tell a downright falsehood. Not wishing for the company of his unbelieving "brethren" during the journey to Jerusalem, Jesus told them that they had better depart without him, as he had decided not to go to the feast on this occasion—and he gave them a reason for not going. Then we read: "But when his brethren were gone up unto the feast, then went he also up, not publicly, but [as it were] in secret" (John vii. 10).

The words "as it were," which I have placed within brackets, are also a later addition: they are not found in the Sinaitic MS. nor in some other MSS. We have thus clear evidence, not only of the pseudo-Jesus uttering a deliberate falsehood, but of something worse: for he has assigned a reason for not going. This was, that the time for his arrest and crucifixion had not yet come. Now, in this statement it is clearly implied that if he went up to Jerusalem to that feast, his doing so would bring about his arrest before the time pre-ordained for it had arrived: otherwise his words have no meaning. But the reason he gave to his "brethren" was merely an excuse to get rid of them: for in "the midst of the feast," we are told, "Jesus went up into the temple and taught"—and nothing came of it. It is true that after he had been wrangling with the Jews in the temple, and had provoked them almost beyond endurance, we find it stated—"They sought therefore to take him; but no man laid his hand on him, because his hour was not yet come" (vii. 30). It thus appears that Jesus could say or do anything he pleased with impunity until the pre-ordained hour had come; consequently the reason he assigned for not going up with his brethren to the feast at Jerusalem was another deliberate falsehood.

These cases of lying and deception do not, of course, affect the character of the Jesus of the Synoptics: they simply show the low cunning and underhand ways of the writer of the Fourth Gospel, who did not scruple to make his Savior speak and act as he would have done himself. Such a writer, as already stated, was just the kind of man who would think nothing of forging a Gospel provided he could do so without being found out. And, since the fourth Gospel obtained a place among the canonical writings of the New Testament, we may take it that the forger was able somehow to palm off on the church at Ephesus a work of his own composition as that of the apostle John.

ABRACADABRA.

The manner of God's existence is above all conception; neither infinite space, nor infinite duration, nor matter infinitely extended or eternally existing, nor any nor all of these taken together, can be God.—Rev. W. Wollaston, "Religion of Nature Delineated."

The Earthquake.

CORNELIUS J. JACKSON stood on the verandah of the missionary bungalow and looked, half-shrinkingly, at the mighty scenery before him. Quite close was a sheer drop of near a thousand feet, at the bottom of which a torrent flashed, foamed, and filled the narrow valley with the noise of its swirling plunges, and drenched tree, bush, fern, and moss with spray from its wild career. Across the valley, in a dip on the ridge opposite, was a Bhutanese village, from which came the screams of a pig that was being butchered. A couple of carrion hawks who, evidently, had learnt that the screaming of a pig was always preliminary to a feast, over which they squabbled with the dogs of the village, were circling above on the look-out. Away to the left, immense, remote, hooded with ice and snow, loomed the great masses of the highest Himalayas, causing Cornelius J. Jackson an almost terrified feeling of insignificance as he gazed at them.

The day had been ideal. Rather warmer than an English summer day, it had yet been made very pleasant by the cool breeze that blew along the Teesta Valley from the snow-clad giants beyond. The air was crystal clear, distant objects showing with wonderful distinctness. Sunset was close at hand, and the western sky was aglow with crimson splendor. The ice-caves on colossal Kinchinjunga were fiery with the rays of the setting sun, and outside the Bhutanese village the long bamboo poles, to which were affixed rag-streamers to frighten away evil spirits, were sharply visible.

Cornelius J. Jackson was an American missionary, hailing from Illinois, where he was much related to a number of families of the names of Cornrake and Hayseed, who, no doubt, are zealous upholders of broad-minded intellect. He was thinking of these far-away cousins as he stood on the verandah of the missionary bungalow. He pictured them harvesting, saw the golden corn ripple under the touch of the wind, heard the rattle and clatter of the reaping-machines. He was getting a feeling of homesickness when his wife joined him on the verandah. She was looking rather dispirited, but each found comfort in the other's presence.

"Corney," she said, "the screams of that pig unnerve me."

"Yes, my dear," he replied, "it is very trying to hear the poor brute. These people are so primitive and, as you know so well, deeply resent any interference with their customs. I have ventured to advise them to stun their pigs before slaughtering them, but they laughed at me."

"How terribly big those snowy heights always seem," remarked Mrs. Jackson, abruptly turning from the uncongenial subject of native pig-slaughtering.

"Yes," returned her husband, "they always make me think how awfully immense God must be."

The young missionary and his wife were in a rather difficult situation. So to speak, they had their backs against the wall. The Bhutanese were Buddhists, observing a corrupted Buddhism it is true, but they were, nevertheless, Buddhists, and their Buddhism was all-sufficient for them. They did not want Christianity, however good Christianity might be for the white folk. They said, We do not ask you to forsake your religion; then why should you ask us to forsake ours? Their attitude was an all-prevailing barrier against further missionary effort. Cornelius J. Jackson and his wife were only too bitterly aware of this fact. The missionary and his wife, in their efforts to win over the Bhutanese, had adopted the Bhutanese dress, and had thereby gained the contempt of both native and European. Their only converts were their two native servants, and these strictly came under the heading, "Rice and Blanket Christian."

The missionary and his wife remained on their verandah watching the glories of the Indian sunset, passing exclamatory comment on the color-splendors

that attended the sinking of the sun in the west, and then, when melancholy greyness had succeeded the final tinge of vast-spreading crimson, they turned away as if they had just witnessed a funeral.

Rapidly the night-darkness swallowed up the twilight. Up from the great ravine came the rushing and booming sound of the headlong passage of the torrent, unpierced by other noise. A few adventurous fireflies from the plains were flitting about some bushes near the missionary bungalow. A cooking-fire flared fitfully from the Bhutanese village across the valley. The long-drawn howling and subsequent yapping of jackals came from somewhere on the hillside.

Two hours had passed and the moonlight was streaming through the open doorway as the missionary and his wife were taking supper. Then came a low rumbling sound, and the floor of the bungalow quivered and heaved beneath them. The tremors increased in violence; and as they staggered out to the verandah, it seemed as if they were on the deck of a steamer laboring in a heavy sea. A terrifying scene met their gaze. In the moonlight, trees and bushes were swaying up and down, as if unseen and very powerful hands were shaking them by the roots. The noise of the torrent had ceased, for, higher up the valley, a fall of many hundred tons of earth had choked its course. In the Bhutanese village, men were shouting wildly and staggering about as if drunken, while the women and children were either screaming or moaning. A number of the crazily constructed native huts had collapsed, and one was on fire and smoking thickly. Came a pause. The missionary and his wife were feeling very scared. Both were silently and fervently praying for deliverance from danger. Their two native servants lay face downward on the floor of the verandah, motionless with terror. A dog began to bark, but stopped and emitted a frenzied howl when the earth-tremors recommenced. This time one end of the bungalow gave way, the hillside at the back was torn open, and a gush of water sprang therefrom, which, dashing past to the right of the bungalow, carried stones, earth, uprooted bushes and broken foliage with it, in its mad rush to the neighboring ravine. Another pause. Then again that fearful trembling of the ground. But, happily, each quaking was weaker than the preceding one; till, presently, the earth ceased to be convulsed. When assured of this, the missionary and his wife knelt and gave thanks for their preservation.

Some hundreds of feet higher, where the bungalows of a mountain battery were situated, the effect of the earthquake had been both tragical and comical. When the first shock came, a game of billiards was in progress in the billiard-room. The players, who were liberal indulgers in the cup that inebriates, stared, amazed at the sudden movement of the ball about the table, then, with one accord, they rushed out of the room. The exodus from the canteen tap-room was very sudden. Some of the men were terror-stricken, and clung to the first object that offered; others, who had experienced an earthquake in another part of India, tried to make light of this one; while some dropped on their knees and prayed aloud for mercy.

A corporal had an alarming adventure. He was returning to barracks by the steep, narrow path which skirted the wall of the disused European cemetery when the earthquake happened. The cemetery wall, just ahead of him, fell with a great crash, and a following fall of earth exposed a number of coffins. The corporal had barely time enough to spring forward to escape the collapse of the wall which he had just been alongside.

In the bungalows of the native soldiery there had been much commotion and much calling upon *Khodai* and *Allah*. Many *chupatties* had been spoiled by the overturning of the brass pans in which they were cooking and by the subsequent trampling under foot in an excited rush of terrified men. Many gun-moles had torn up the pegs to which they were shackled in the stables, and were plunging about and kicking each

ther. But, at length, quiet was restored. With the return of daylight the white, yellow, and brown men were somewhat ashamed that they had called so wildly for assistance to God, Khuda, Allah, and Buddha. The torrent had swelled up above the destructing mass of rock and soil the earthquake had thrown upon part of its course, and was beginning to cascade again into its old-time fallings and windings. Nature and man were settling down to repairing the ravages. Repair would obliterate the traces, and forgetfulness would dull the memories of the earthquake.

JAMES H. WATERS.

Correspondence.

JOSEPH SYMES.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

What lively scenes are conjured up before the mental vision of the older section of your readers, of the fighting days, by the reminiscences of Mr. Moss which are appearing in the *Freethinker* from time to time. The last instalment revives many of the stirring incidents connected with Mr. Symes' advocacy of Freethought in the County of Wolsingham in the early 'eighties. His debates and lectures went that time caused deep interest, and shook the dry bones of theology to their foundations in such centres of population as Crook, Wolsingham, Tow Law, Spennymoor, Bishop Auckland, and other places. I always considered Mr. Symes to be one of the most able and fearless advocates of our cause—and that is saying a great deal. I am inclined to agree with Mr. Moss that discretion was not Mr. Symes' strong point. He never seemed to think of the consequences when truth demanded a straight and open avowal; like Lord Milner, damned them. I remember well the famous debate he had with the Rev. W. W. Howard. At that time, it promised to be one of the longest tussles of the kind on record. I think it was Mr. Howard and his friends who, full of enthusiasm, insisted that the debate should go on for three weeks—six nights at Crook, six at Tow Law, and six at Wolsingham, the Sundays being excepted. On the first night of the Tow Law section, the subject being "Secularism v. Christianity," with Mr. John Milner in the chair, Mr. Symes, in affirming that secularism was superior to Christianity, commenced by referring to the Bible in support of his contention, when Mr. Howard rose, and objected to Mr. Symes referring to the Bible. On resuming, Mr. Symes insisted on his right to refer to the Bible, on the ground that the Bible was the foundation of Christianity; but in pursuing that course, Mr. Howard again interrupted with his objection. On the point put to the chairman, he ruled that Mr. Symes had a perfect right to refer to the Bible. At this stage, one of the most dramatic incidents occurred that I ever witnessed. Mr. Symes, advancing to the table—being put on his metal by those senseless interruptions—and stretching himself to full height, said, "I know why Mr. Howard objects to referring to the Bible." After a short pause, and flipping the book, as it lay on the table, with the back of his right hand, he finished with, "He's ashamed of it." White with passion, Mr. Howard sprang from his chair, and shouted, "You say that I am ashamed of the Bible?" Still facing the audience, and without deigning to look round, Mr. Howard, again flipping the book, said, "I know for a fact you are ashamed of it." At this Mr. Howard sank back into his seat, and troubled no more with any interruptions. The effect was electric, and a great shock to most of Mr. Symes' supporters, as they never dreamed that an opponent could make any stand against their champion. On Friday night, Mr. Howard and his party threw up the sponge, and mass of high explosives. As a consequence, the debate at Wolsingham never came off. I hope Mr. Moss will be able to continue his reminiscences.

JOHN ROBINSON.

THE RIGHT TO AFFIRM.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

As a reader of the *Freethinker* from its first number, I would allow me a small space in which to strongly protest against the suggestion contained in an "Acid Drop" in your issue referring to the illegal attitude of Judge Rentoul, who permitted Mr. Muir, K.C., to make insulting remarks and rebuke to a juror who claimed his right to affirm, and did in fact uphold Mr. Muir by discharging the said juror. The advice that "when Freethinkers are again

summoned to attend on juries they cite this incident as a precedent, and ask to be discharged on the ground of having no religious belief," would tend to render effete the Oaths Act, for which Mr. Bradlaugh so valiantly struggled. It is a poor tribute to Mr. Bradlaugh, who made it possible for a Freethinker to discharge his duties as a citizen without doing violence to his conscience, to suggest that he should now ask to be relieved from them, in order to test whether other judges would follow the bad example set by Judge Rentoul, and would not be quite to the taste of your present leader, I fancy, whose policy is, as we have seen, "to fight every inch of the way."

"STEADFAST."

Mr. Foote's Garden—and Mine!

"Solicitude in hiding failings makes them appear the greater. It is a safer and easier course frankly to acknowledge them. A man owns that he is ignorant; we admire his modesty. He says that he is old; we scarce think him so. He declares himself poor; we do not believe it."

—Who was the fine old Sophist?

"The Kirk and State may gang to hell,
But I'll gae to my Anna."

—Burns.

The local press awaits my "light and leading." Friends await my letters, and may receive only apologies. Nature tempts me forth from every window—but by the door, of course. Mere work—hateful word—has to be done. But I must write to Mr. Foote. I have a garden, too. Comparisons are not always odious. Other things are incomparable. The gardens may be compared. I did not believe it, and it did not matter, but I was vastly tickled with the "napkin" and "shirt" dimensions of our other editor's gardens; was also richly and rarely pleased with, and contemplated with him, the morning miracle of the roses and the lilies—and their lesson.

But here is where we differ—our gardens, I mean. My "policies," twelve feet by nine, are planted with trees, weeds, wild poppies, wild strawberry, etc. Here, also, "emulation hath a thousand sons"; but the gardener, like an arbitrary god, is by to prevent overcrowding. He is, withal, a kindly god; and considereth long ere he, one by one, back in the closet lays such sweet, superfluous shapes and hues. He slays the individual plant-soul that the whole may survive and be sweet. Ah! here philosophy o'erpeers, and would tempt us beyond the garden-wall, but we are not going. One world at a time. Even this confined space in the grey tenement's shade, and the roses and lilies where our quondam—and future—editor keeps his state, his humor, if it had ever gone, returns with hope, and happiness with health. I do not merely pet our invalid in his chair, but I owe something more than allegiance to the man who introduced me to Burns and Shakespeare, and to himself; who broadened my horizon and encouraged a richer, deeper, maturer culture; to the man—and still I swear it is not flattery; with all my faults and failings thick upon me I would not fawn myself to favor—who, through all vicissitude and strain, has remained so sane and normal as almost to seem abnormal; who never tried to hurry the universe, or hoped for the impossible, or sought perfection here or perpetuity hereafter; yet, weaving withal something that would endure, some strand immortal in the web of time, the common work of honest, human hand and brain. Spirits are not finely touched but to fine issues. Merely mundane human destiny is surely grand enough for highest effort, hope, and enthusiasm—individual, too; but, in the wider sense, collective, posthumous. My garden has round it no "noble wall to keep the vulgar out." I wish it had. The grubby children of the adjacent street mount its low wall and railing and peer within our communal dwelling; no place is sacred, all is as democratic as a tramcar. But the young trees remain untouched for wonder and delight, who knows, for awe of this oasis of the street.

The *Freethinker* is no fetish, but my friends can wait.

"The Kirk and State may gang to hell,
But I'll gae to my Anna."

Love is first, if friendship is a good second; but often they are twins—Siamese. So with the deliberate abandon of a great lover, I once more salute our great man, and devote my little garden and my little soul to Friendship and Freethought everywhere—worlds without end, Amen!

A. MILLAR.

WHAT TO EXPECT

It is, in its way, a tribute to the excellence of the arrangements at the Front; but there is a grim touch in a soldier's story in the *Nottingham Guardian*:—"You see, if a number of Army chaplains suddenly turn up, we can always guess that something good and hard is going to be asked of us shortly."

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

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OUTDOOR.

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

CAMBERWELL BRANCH N. S. S. (Brockwell Park): 6, Demonstration. Speakers: W. Davidson, R. H. Rosetti, S. Hooper, Miss Kough, etc.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley-road): 7.30, F. Schaller, "Christianity Unsound."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (Finsbury Park): 11.15, Miss Kough, a Lecture. Regent's Park: 3.15, A. D. Howell Smith, a Lecture. Parliament Hill: 3.15, R. H. Rosetti, a Lecture.

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