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Rough work, Iconoclasm—but the only way to get at truth.
—O. W. HOLMES.

Views and Opinions.

Belief and Knowledge.

The man who knows but one language, said Max Muller, knows none. The epigram is still more expressive when one applies it to religion instead of to language. The devotee of one religion is the man who knows least about it. He cannot understand its origin, and he is unable to forecast its destiny. It appears to him as something original, complete, and final, when in reality it is none of the three. He is without sense of the meaning of the doctrines to which he pins his faith, for the reason that in his own day it is a thousand chances to one against them having any vital meaning whatever. His interpretation of them is almost certain to be the wrong one, because it will be in terms of present-day life, whereas they began as an expression of a life that is past. Did he understand that past and the conditions that gave rise to these doctrines, he might find them none the less interesting, but he would not—in the religious sense—believe them. In religious matters, belief is in inverse proportion to understanding. The man who understands religion does not believe it; the man who believes it does not understand it. He simply knows it—as an ignorant yokel knows the "thunderbolt," which to the scientist carries its message of man's forgotten past.

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A Medico at Sea.

An illustration of this occurred the other day in a *Times* article from "Our Medical Correspondent." Someone had written a paper on the not quite original theme concerning the—I believe, imaginary—connection between cancer and pork eating. Whereupon "Our Medical Correspondent" discerns in this "the latest scientific support for the Mosaic code," and also that it suggests "the physiological reason for the dietary imposed upon the Hebrew race." When a "Medical Correspondent" reaches this stage, one's first feeling is one of sympathy with his patients. For it must be a terrible thing to fall into the hands of a man whose capacity for scientific thinking is such as to lead him to attribute to a semi-civilized people knowledge which it is absolutely certain they could not have possessed. For a people who were demonstrably destitute of knowledge concerning phenomena of a much more accessible character to have been accurately informed on minute points of micro-biology, is so glaringly absurd that the assertion carries its own refutation. Moreover, in the whole of the Bible, there is not a single instance of a disease or an epidemic being attributed to this diseased food. All is supernatural. The Mosaic prohibition of pork has no more connection with hygiene than the Sabbath has with an early closing agitation.

Taboos—

It is all a question of Taboo. And what is Taboo? Well, Taboo is one of the most important things about primitive religion—if not about all religion, primitive or modern. The word itself is Polynesian, but the *thing* is world-wide. In substance it is the English "Don't," but "don't" applied to religion. It has the universal characteristic of forbidding something. Don't do this; don't eat that; don't touch the other. There is nothing that may not be taboo to the primitive mind. Roads, foods, objects, persons, clothing, names, days, anything and everything may become taboo. To look for a logical connection between the taboo and the punishment for infringement is useless. Even amongst moderns, with the fear of the supernatural in the dim background, the power of taboo is great. It is all-powerful in primitive life where the fear of the supernatural is supreme.

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And Totems.

All Totems are Taboo. But what is a Totem? A Totem may be defined as an object—animal, vegetable, or even mineral—to which man pays religious worship. All savage tribes possess these totems, and as primitive customs linger longest with the royalty and aristocracy of a country, we see these totemic survivals in the animal symbols that figure in coats-of-arms, etc. The Lion of England, the Cock of France, the Bear of Russia, the Eagle of Germany, the wolves, foxes, and other animals that figure in the crests of the aristocracy, have all a totemic origin. The precise way in which these totems are selected is of no consequence to our present purpose. They are often chosen in dreams—as a consequence of certain ceremonies at puberty, or by some imaginary benefit conferred on the individual or tribe. The important point is that, once the totem is selected, it is sacred. If a tribe has the bear for a totem, it will offer it religious worship—for supposed benefits received; for the savage religion moves along lines of cash payment—and that tribe will refrain from eating bear flesh. A neighbouring tribe that has the wolf for a totem, will eat the bear readily. And so on through the whole range of natural history. To select an animal as a totem is to make it sacred. And all sacred things are taboo. If they are eaten at all, they are eaten ceremonially.

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"Holy" and "Unclean."

A step further, and we shall have reached the true meaning of the Mosaic prohibition of pork. To the Jew, the pig was, and is, an "unclean" animal. And, misled by a word, the modern religionist—who knows little or nothing about religion—concludes that unclean means unhygienic. And this is quite erroneous. In religion there is no connection whatever between the two things. In religion, "unclean" and "holy" are interchangeable terms. An unclean animal is a sacred animal—sacred, that is, either to all the members of a tribe or to certain people belonging to a tribe. In relation to the person or persons involved, the sacred animal

possesses a supernatural influence inimical to the person or persons affected. That animal must not be killed, or if it is killed, it must be done ceremonially. If eaten, the same rule applies, although, generally, eating a holy animal is forbidden. Thus, on the Loango coast, the heir to the throne is forbidden to eat pork. The kings of ancient Egypt could eat no flesh but that of veal and goose. With the Syrians the dove was "holy," and to touch it made a man "unclean." With the Semitic peoples—to whom the Jews belonged—quite a number of animals (the bear, the dog, the pig, the ass, the serpent, etc., etc.) were sacred to one tribe or another. And the same prohibition existed with regard to these as exists in the Bible with regard to the pig. As Robertson Smith puts it :—

> A prohibition to eat the flesh of an animal of a certain species, that has its ground not in natural loathing, but in religious horror and reverence, implies that something divine is ascribed to every animal of the species. And what seems to us a natural loathing often turns out, in the case of a primitive people, to be based on a religious taboo, and to have its origin, not in feelings of contemptuous disgust, but of reverential dread.

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Religion a System of Taboos.

"Our Medical Correspondent" is thus very wide of the truth. The Mosaic prohibition of pork is no more an anticipation of modern bacteriology and hygiene than is the prohibition of eating rabbits. One need only consider the long list of dietic prohibitions in the Bible to realize this. It is a question of a religious taboo. The pig was a totem with some Semitic tribes, as the bear, the wolf, the hyena, the lion, the fish, were with others. The pig was a holy animal, and therefore those who ate it as an article of common food became unclean. The fish was another totem, and this is proved by the eating of fish on Friday evening, the commencement of the Sabbath. The Sabbath itself is an example of another taboo. It was the day dedicated to Saturn, the slow-moving planet which modern astrologers assert casts a malign influence. The consequence was that anything done on that day became unlucky, and work was therefore taboo. Religion is one long string of taboos,—names, dress, practices, and things. It is with profound justification that Frazer remarks, "When all is said and done, our resemblances to the savage are still far more numerous than our differences from him." I need not dwell at present upon how numerous are these resemblances; the pity is that men, in the name of modern science, should strive to give to purely savage superstition the sanction of present-day knowledge.

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20,000 Objectors—and their Significance.

"The Government," says the *Times*, "are appalled by the number of conscientious objectors with whom the tribunals have to deal. It is estimated that they number between 15,000 and 20,000." Accepting that estimate as genuine, the figures give rise to some reflections. Ought we to feel "appalled" because out of a population of between forty and fifty millions of people, 20,000 profess an invincible repugnance to the taking of human life? And should our "appalled" feeling be with reference to these being so many or so few? Give France and Germany an equal number of conscientious objectors and the grand total is 60,000. And each of these countries have been listening for centuries to Christian preachers talking about the Brotherhood of Man, etc.! Surely, if Christian teaching had possessed, in this direction, any real force, the figures should have had a different application. There should have been found no more than 60,000 people who had no objection to the taking of human life, and then war would really have been impossible. But this fifteen or twenty thousand—whatever else they may betoken—demonstrate beyond dispute the colossal nature of Christianity's failure.

Chapman Cohen.

The Religious Outlook.

Cocksureness is always the outcome either of absolute knowledge or of inveterate ignorance. The scientist can often afford to be dogmatic because his statement rests upon both observation and experiment, and he knows that what he says is true. The theologian, on the other hand, who is by far the more cocksure of the two, has no right whatever to be dogmatic, because his propositions are based upon unverifiable assumptions, never upon ascertained facts. God, Christ, the soul, immortality, and the infallibility of the Bible, are not ascertained facts, but merely objects of blind belief; and yet these are the subjects upon which the theologian waxes most absurdly arrogant, pretending to a knowledge which neither he nor anybody else possesses. As examples of this sort of blind dogmatism, we may refer to two well-known Nonconformist divines, namely, Dr. Horton and Dr. Dixon. The latter is the present minister of Spurgeon's Tabernacle, who, in *The Sword and the Trowel*, falls foul of the former for his audacity in holding theological views different from his own. According to Dr. Dixon, the whole tendency of Dr. Horton's teaching is to "confirm unbelievers in their unbelief." The latter, in a book of children's addresses, entitled *The Children's Crusade*, suggests that Jesus was not tempted in a real wilderness, but in the metaphorical wilderness of the human heart, and that there was no real Devil tempting; whereupon the fiery oracle of Spurgeon's Tabernacle declares that "the children who listened to such addresses are to be pitied, and that the man who dares to give such teaching incurs a grave responsibility." Here we have two men of God, each equally dogmatic in his way, who widely disagree on almost every point of supernatural religion, and in whom is epitomized the whole history of the Christian Church. Take the bitter controversy between Athanasius and Arius, which lasted so long. Athanasius eventually won the day, but at what a terrific cost to the peace of the world. In his estimation, the Arians were "Devils, Anti-Christs, maniacs, Jews, Polytheists, Atheists, dogs, wolves, lions, hares, chamelions, hydras, eels, cuttlefish, gnats, beetles, leeches," who richly deserved to be most cruelly hounded down. Soon, however, the tide turned, and the persecuted became the persecutors. Athanasius was Bishop of Alexandria, whence he was urged to retire, which he refused to do without a warrant from the Emperor. His enemies were resolved to compel him to leave his post, and on his refusal to do so, they called in the aid of the mob; and "of all mobs," Dean Stanley informs us, "the Alexandrian, whether heathen or Christian, was the most terrible." The date was Thursday, February 9, 358, on the night of which the Bishop, with his congregation, was keeping vigil the whole night long, in preparation for the celebration of the Lord's Supper the following day. This is how Dean Stanley describes the disgraceful scene that transpired in the Church of St. Thomas:—

> Suddenly, at midnight, there was a tumult without. The church, which was of unusual size, was surrounded by armed men. The presence of mind for which he was famous did not desert the Bishop. Behind the altar was the Episcopal throne. On this he took his seat, and ordered his attendant deacon to read the 136th Psalm, which has for every verse the response, "For his mercy

> endureth for ever." It was while these responses were being thundered forth by the congregation, that the doors burst open, and the Imperial general and notary entered at the head of the soldiers. The soldiers were for a moment terror-struck by the chanting of the Psalm. But as they pressed forward a shower of arrows flew through the church. The swords flashed in the light of the sacred torches, the din of their shouts mingled with the rattle of their arms. The wounded fell one upon another, and were trampled down, the nuns were seized and stripped; the church was plundered. Through this mass of horrors, the two Imperial officers and their attendants passed to the screen before the altar.....The church was piled with dead, and the floor was strewn with the swords and arrows of the soldiers (*The Eastern Church*, pp. 240-1).

Athanasius was carried out in a swoon, and then "he vanished, no one knew whither, into the darkness of the winter night."

That is only one short chapter out of the History Book of the Church, but it serves as a fair sample of all the others. The Church has never been for long without her persecutions, and nearly all her wars have been bloody. Everybody imagines that he and his party alone know the truth, and that all others are in error, while the stronger party never fails to penalise the weaker parties. And what have all the controversies been about? About words, and nothing more. In his address from the Chair of the Free Church Council, which recently met at Bradford, the President made the following quotation from Mr. Lloyd-George:—

> The Church to which I belong is torn with a fierce dispute—one party say that it is baptism *into* the name of the Father and the other that it is baptism *in* the name of the Father. I belong to one of these parties. I feel most strongly about it. I would die for it, but I forget which it is.

That has been eminently characteristic of all theological controversies. They have been about words, and nobody knew what the disputed words really stood for. The result has always been stupid divisions, insane jealousies, and dehumanizing antagonism. For entertaining two of the Free Church Council delegates and for attending the Lord Mayor's reception to the Council at its recent meeting, the Vicar of Bradford has incurred the displeasure of the local branch of the English Church Union, and is charged with having compromised the Church. What ineffable puerilities theology is responsible for!

Well, at last the people's eyes are being opened to the true inwardness of the Church's vain pretensions, with the result that they are giving her the go-by in their thousands. As knowledge progresses, faith retrogresses. The President of the Free Church Council, in his opening address at the Bradford meeting, sorrowfully confessed that things are not going well with them, that for ten years at least they have been steadily losing touch with the people. He was in possession of facts so utterly discouraging that his conscience would not let him disclose them; but it was common knowledge that for years there had been a continuous decline in members and Sunday-school scholars, and that unless it could be stopped, the Free Churches would erelong cease to be. Denominationalism, in his opinion, had had its day, both the nation at large and the members of their Churches in particular being wholesomely tired of it. What was the remedy? Union. The Free Churches must unite in a thoroughly vital sense and become the Free Church of the land. The President's message really amounted to this: Unless we improve our machinery, we are doomed to extinction. Improved organization would doubtless prove of some benefit; but the President does not seem to realize that the leakage is due not so much to antiquated machinery as to a loss of faith in the Christian religion itself. It is interest in, and sympathy with, the Christian Evangel that are dying out. People crowd the cinemas on Sunday evenings, or go boating, golfing, or loafing on Sunday, not because they are dissatisfied with the machinery of the Churches, but because they no longer believe that preachers have anything to tell them that appeals to their intellects and consciences; not because they disapprove of this or that denomination as such, but because theology in all its forms no longer possesses any reality for them, and it appears to us inevitable that the old faith held by our fathers is not recoverable by any means whatever, least of all by any reforms in Church organization or device. Mr. Shakespeare is Secretary of the Baptist Union as well as President of the Council of Evangelical Free Churches, and we should like to know from him why he and his brethren so persistently oppose the Sunday opening of places of entertainment? Are they not aware that such selfish opposition is not entirely unconnected with the people's alienation from the Churches? The Nonconformists are much given to priding themselves upon the many liberties they have won for themselves and the country; but are they the only people entitled to the enjoyment of freedom? What right have they to dictate to the people of Great Britain how they should spend their Sundays? Before the War there were thousands upon thousands who worked from eight o'clock in the morning till eight o'clock at night, and on Fridays and Saturdays several hours longer, and whose only chance of any recreation occurred on the Sunday; and yet men like Mr. Shakespeare would have moved heaven and earth to prevent them from enjoying themselves in their own way on their only free day. Why shouldn't they laugh at the unspeakable sillinesses of a Charlie Chaplin, or look at instructive historical, geographical, and biological pictures on the Sunday evening?

The religious outlook is black because of the attitude of religious leaders to the relaxations and pleasures of the people, because religion itself is getting out of date for thoughtful and self-respecting folk, and because knowledge is ever growing from more to more and exposing the superstitious nature of all supernatural beliefs. The trend of the time is towards the truths discovered by the reason which make all men free to think and act for themselves.

J. T. Lloyd.

Pious Puerilities.

An At-Random Essay on Angels.

> Give to airy nothings
> A local habitation and a name.
> —*Shakespeare.*

> Familiar to children, not unknown to youth, commended and even credited by old men, yet no more true than the miracles of Mahomet.—*Cervantes.*

Mankind, from earliest ages, seems to have believed as firmly in guardian spirits as in witchcraft. Such a view was held by Pythagoras and Plato, and many an ancient philosopher besides, and their faith was as robust as that of the Christian metaphysician, Sir Thomas Browne. Sir Thomas says that angels have a "contemporary knowledge," in which they resemble women, for the fairer half of humanity usually arrives at just conclusions by instinct. According to the very polite Jesuit father, Louis Henriquez, angels masqueraded as ladies, had their hair curled, and wore rich linen. So that, in the love of dress, ladies and angels have much in common. Anyone who wishes to pursue the reverend father's

views on the subject should consult his book, *The Business of the Saints in Heaven*, published in Salamanca in 1631.

In this Secular generation the world has lost that simplicity of faith which took the priest's imaginings for granted — and without a smile. Father Henriquez believed that heaven was full of pleasant baths, where saints swam about like goldfish, and sang. Let us not laugh too loudly at the priest's celestial aquarium. Did not Theophile Gautier, when a child, in infantile simplicity, mentally arrange paradises for well-behaved beasts, including stables of marble, with ivory mangers, for overworked horses. A pleasant departure, truly, from the boyish ideal of the anonymous pirate island :—

Yonder in the western deep,
Where the skies for ever smile,
And the blacks for ever weep.

In the Middle Ages, indeed, a man might believe any folly, so long as he was orthodox. In the Campo Santa, at Pisa, Andrea Orcagna, in his fresco, "The Triumph of Death," painted his angels as birds, surmounted with the heads of his lady friends, who were not at all angelic. This idea of angels taking the form of birds was always popular. Shakespeare, knowing what would tickle the long ears of the crowd, makes Horatio say over the dead body of Hamlet :—

Now cracks a noble heart.
Good night, sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.

"Angels' visits are few and far between," says the untruthful and popular proverb. They come in shoals in parish magazines, on cinema films, in melodramas, and in Spiritualist publications. In the old Saxon manuscripts the dear angels are dressed in shirt and undershirt in the fashion of the period. With Perugini, Luini, and Raffaelle died the old, simple, and ascetic angelhood. The more modern varieties are elegant creatures. After all, it comes to this, that artists have all along created angels, and so with writers. Dante deals with them with a mixture of ideality and worldly satire. Our own Dante Gabriel Rossetti, confessedly copying his great Italian namesake, is more ideal. Thus, *The Blessed Damosel* is more æsthetic than the angel who lifted the veil from the great Florentine's brow : —

The blessed damosel leaned out
From the golden bar of heaven.

Then we learn how she was dressed in white :—

Her hair that lay along her back
Was yellow like ripe corn.

No one would for a moment confound the heavenly militia of Milton with the popular angels of Longfellow. The first suggests Michael armed from head to foot, angry and defiant; the second recalls the tearful "Death Angel" in *The Legend of Rabbi Ben Levi*.

From the iconography, the written or drawn images of angels, to their osteology, is but a step, but it is the one narrow step that divides the sublime from the ridiculous. It is well for the faithful to let the bony structures of angels alone. With Michael Angelo, George F. Watts, and other artists, the skeleton might be left to take its chance under ample draperies. It cannot be denied that, with a pair of wings fixed without relation to muscular and anatomical requirements, the scapula is made to do double its appointed work. The point of juncture of the wings with the body of an angel has always puzzled the artists—as well it might. Concerning the articulations necessary for a six-winged angel, like that figured on a stained-glass window at Merton College, Oxford, the least said the soonest mended. Such discussion is mere word-spinning, more or less resembling Charles Lamb's jocose question to the pious Coleridge as to how many angels can rest on the point of a needle ?

The fact emerges, that Christian theologians borrowed their angels, with so much else of their religion. Christian art is not entirely to blame for angelic construction. Some of the responsibility for the iconography of the angel must be thrown upon the Greeks, who, according to their own imperishable works, possess backs broad enough for the burden. The "Winged Victory" of the Greeks is unquestionably more sublime than any feathered creature of the Christian imagination.

Mimnermus.

Humour in Serious Subjects.

The death of George William Foote, the Editor of the *Freethinker*, calls attention once more to the difference in the reception of wit or humour applied to religion according to the social position occupied by the author, or whether the witticism is uttered within or without the Church. In 1883, Mr. Foote published in his journal some "Comic Bible Sketches," was prosecuted for blasphemy, and sentenced by a judge, who happened to be a Roman Catholic, to a year's imprisonment. The sentence was strongly condemned by many who had no sympathy with the offence, and a petition to the Home Secretary for Mr. Foote's release was signed by such eminent men as Herbert Spencer, Huxley, Moncure Conway, Edward Clodd, G. J. Romanes, G. H. Darwin, E. B. Tylor, Tyndall, George du Maurier, Dr. Fairbairn, Guinness Rogers, Ray Lankester, Leslie Stephen, and a host of others whose names were in the first rank. But Sir William Harcourt, who was Home Secretary at the time, feared that the release of Mr. Foote would revive the attack on the Government, already bitterly assailed on the Bradlaugh question, of such eminent champions of religion and morals as Lord Randolph Churchill and Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, and he was deaf to all applications on the subject. Mr. Foote served his sentence, and, as might be expected, the experience did not make him less inclined to use the weapons of sarcasm and ridicule with which his armoury was so well supplied. But if the prosecution did not stop the use of ridicule in fighting the dominant creed, in had the effect of fixing upon Mr. Foote the character of an uneducated, vulgar blasphemer. As a matter of fact, this was an entirely false view. He was a scholar, a Shakespearean student, a man of wide reading and keen insight. A master of style like George Meredith fully appreciated Foote's qualities, and sent the prisoner when in Holloway Jail a copy of his poems, continuing in correspondence with the "blasphemer" throughout his life. Foote was himself a great lover of poetry, and was capable, at times, of writing verse of great power and pathos, while he had a keen appreciation of Shelley, Byron, and Burns.

But the law had stamped Foote as a railer at sacred things, and as he was without what is called social position, the offence he had committed in publishing pictorial sketches of Biblical incidents, but little worse than those presented in old illustrated Bibles, was never condoned, and the reputation thus acquired clung to him through life. "The coarsest picture," said one who had no sympathy with such methods, "is a sidewise view of a giant's form, in labourer's garb, the upper and lower part veiled by a cloud. Only when one knows that the figure is meant for Jahve could any shock be felt." The reference under the picture was to Exodus xxxiii. 23. Now, the curious thing is that Lord Salisbury, a few years later, could see no harm in very similar treatment applied to a well-known legend of the Roman Catholic Church. Asked a question regarding a then much-advertised picture of the denudation of Saint Elizabeth

of Hungary, Lord Salisbury said, amid the laughter of the House of Lords, that the only idea he had been able to form of the work had been from *Punch's* parody, "Zæo showing her back to members of the County Council." Now, in the original picture, the kneeling performer is naked before an altar with a crucifix, so that *Punch* and Lord Salisbury between them went some way to "offend religious susceptibilities"—that is, Catholic sensibilities. But no one suggested that for such an offence *Punch* should be indicted or Lord Salisbury summoned before the Lord Mayor. It is probable that not a single bishop declined the noble Lord's friendship or patronage. Again, Sir W. Harcourt, who kept Mr. Foote in prison for a year for ridiculing the Bible, was not averse to parodying its language for political purposes. Speaking at a great meeting in the provinces of an encounter with the Tories in the House of Commons, Harcourt said of Gladstone:—

> "With his unparalleled eloquence he withered them; with the blast of his scornful indignation he laid bare their inmost souls. He consumed them with the fire of his wrath, and they were scattered like chaff before the wind.....The penalty they had to pay was annihilation, and they became like Sennacherib's army—"when they arose in the morning, they were all dead corpses."

This parody of the Bible, in which Gladstone was likened to the Deity, was received with shouts of delighted laughter by some thousands of people, yet if Mr. Foote had been the author instead of Sir W. Harcourt, there can be little doubt that it would have been denounced as vulgar profanity. So much depends on the individual and the medium, or whether one's own sensibilities are shocked or those of other people. Mr. Stephen Coleridge, in his "Memories," denounces Huxley, who was not a friend of his, for referring in his controversy with Gladstone to "the Gadarene pig affair," a phrase admitted into the *Nineteenth Century* without question; but Mr. Coleridge has no word of condemnation to express concerning Matthew Arnold's likening of the Trinity as conceived by the English middle class to "three Lord Shaftesburys," and heaven to a perpetual tea-party. On the contrary, being on affectionate and intimate terms with Matthew Arnold, he refers to the critic as a "universally beloved man of genius." Again, Mr. Coleridge speaks contemptuously of Darwin's belief that men are descended from apes, but he would be the first to describe as coarse or indecent a sarcastic reference to Genesis. "When an orthodox man," says Moncure Conway, "asks an evolutionist if his grandfather was an ape it sounds to the latter indecent. Should the evolutionist ask such questioner if his grandmother was made out of rib it might sound indecent to the orthodox." It all depends on the point of view. Mr. Coleridge, for example, is known as a strong opponent of vivisection, and in the language which he has used concerning those who believe that experiments on animals for medical purposes are justifiable he has certainly not minced his words, saying that detestation of cruelty was early grafted into him. Yet he tells with a certain amount of glee that his grandfather, who was at school with Shelley, had not much sympathy for the eccentricities of genius, and "I am afraid he did not exert himself to prevent a diversion known as a 'Shelley hunt,' [in which the poet was chivied about, and any handy missile thrown at him." Shelley, of course, was fair game, having in very early years shown a disposition to unbelief. But two pages later Mr. Coleridge describes the miseries he himself suffered at school, and how in later years, when asked to subscribe to a testimonial on behalf of the schoolmaster, it gave him peculiar pleasure to reply that he could only contribute on the specific condition that the testimonial should take the form of a rope with which his old schoolmaster might hang himself. It was, of course, a joke for older boys to chivy about a shy young recluse and throw missiles at him, especially if he had thoughts different from theirs, but it was brutal for a schoolmaster to take advantage of his superior strength and thrash young Stephen Coleridge.

—*Japan Chronicle.*

(*To be concluded.*)

The Visions of the Apocalypse.

Apocalypses were a form of literature freely resorted to by Jewish writers in the century and a half preceding, and the century and a half following, the beginning of the Christian era. They took the place of prophecy as a vehicle for the expression of the exasperation which was felt among the poorer classes in Palestine under foreign government, with its accompanying economic exactions, and of their hope for a supernatural deliverance by a heaven-sent leader, or Messiah, who would turn the tables on the hated Gentiles. The three best-known Apocalypses are contained in the Old and New Testaments and in the Apocrypha respectively, viz., the Book of Daniel (composed in the time of the Maccabees, 165 B.C.), the Revelation of John (A.D. 68-69), and the so-called "Second Book of Esdras" (probably another Jewish-Christian work, about A.D. 97-98). The Apocalypse of John is exceptional in bearing the name of an almost, if not quite, contemporary figure of the Jewish-Christian Church, instead of the name of some ancient worthy like Daniel or Ezra.

In examining the visions of the Apocalypse, it is best to treat them as falling in two series (chapters iv. to xi., and xii. to xix.) which cover the same series of events, and which are followed by three chapters, xx. to xxii., describing the millennium, the last judgment, and the "new Jerusalem." In each of the parallel series of visions the seer is shown the following tableaux: (1) the translation of Jesus, after his crucifixion, to the throne of God in heaven; (2) an ensuing flood of calamities on the earth, including the persecution of "the saints"; (3) a vision of the elect singing before the throne, followed by (4) a succession of seven plagues inflicted by angels on the Roman world, in punishment for the persecution; (5) a judgment on a guilty city—Jerusalem in the first part of the book, Rome in the second; (6) the final triumph of the Messiah (Jesus) over the enemies of the Church. In the first series of visions the symbolism is vague, indirect, and mild compared with that in the second.

The description of heaven in chapter iv. is grotesque and garish, showing at once how little artistic sense, or even sense of humour, the author had. God is sitting on a throne, and resembles "a jasper stone and a sardius," with an emerald rainbow round him. This peculiar deity—a sort of enormous Cullinan diamond!—is attended by twenty-four elders and "four living creatures full of eyes before and behind," who sing their eternal hymn, "Holy, holy, holy," etc. This imagery is obviously modelled on the visions of Isaiah and Ezekiel (Isa. vi. 1-3; Ezek. i. 4-28).

In chapter v., Jesus is introduced as a lamb "as though it had been slain," with seven horns and eyes, "which are the seven spirits of God," and as having purchased by his death the exclusive right to open the "book sealed with seven seals," the opening of which is to let loose the disasters of the last days on the earth. In the corresponding vision of chapter xii., a woman typifying Israel, or the godly part of the Jewish nation, gives birth to a son (the Messiah), whom a "great red

dragon, having seven heads and ten horns" (Satan, working through the Roman authorities) tries to devour, but who is "caught up to God and to his throne." The parallel character of these two visions is clear.

In chapter vi., the opening of the seals by the "lamb" brings a succession of portents on the earth—war, famine, plague, earthquake, eclipses, etc.; and the souls of the martyrs in the Neronian persecution ask how long they are to wait for vengeance. Chapter xii. is more explicit. The "great red dragon" is driven out of heaven by Michael and his angels, and comes down to earth to do his worst while he has the power. He persecutes the woman who gave birth to the Messiah (the Jewish Church), but she flies into the wilderness, and there finds refuge for the three years and a half during which the dragon holds sway. The dragon gives up the chase of the woman, and, in chapter xiii., proceeds to reinstate Nero on the throne. It was a common belief among the ignorant classes at this time that Nero (who in reality committed suicide in A.D. 68) had escaped from his enemies, and was preparing to emerge from his place of refuge and to destroy them. This belief the Christians fully shared. Accordingly, in Revelation, the dragon summons from the sea "a beast having ten horns and seven heads, and on his horns ten diadems, and upon his heads names of blasphemy." (The description is borrowed from Daniel vii. 3-7, where the successive empires which had ruled the East down to the second century B.C. are depicted as four beasts of varying aspect.) The beast is to reign for three years and a half, and during that time is to renew his previous persecution of the Christians.

One feature in chapters xii. and xiii. has been totally misunderstood by many readers, and notably by Milton. This is the contest between Michael and the dragon. This has been taken by Milton in "Paradise Lost" as referring to an event supposed to be prior to the creation of the world. It is quite clear, however, that the writer of Revelation thought of it as taking place in his own days, and that he regarded the descent of Satan to earth as the direct cause of the calamities which he saw around him. The Jews did not consider Satan as modern Christians do, as a permanent exile from heaven. On the contrary, as for example in Job, the Hebrew Satan has just as free access to heaven as any of the more respectable angels, and his work is to accuse men before God, and bring undeserved punishment on them, especially on the Jews. Michael, on the other hand, was the especial champion of the Jews (see Daniel xii. 1). After Yahweh, the tribal war-god, had been turned by the prophets into the one god of all the world, the Jews felt the need of some particular champion of this sort, and this brought Michael to the fore. The idea of a conflict between a beneficent god or hero, and a noisome dragon or serpent, is of course a myth which is found the world over among primitive folk (Marduk and Tiamat among the Babylonians, Apollo and Python among the Greeks, Sigurd and Fafnir among the northern races). It was originally a story to explain the succession of night and day. By the first century A.D., the real significance of this legend must have been quite forgotten among the Jews, and the writer of Revelation finds no difficulty in putting it to his own use.

The escape of the woman into the wilderness refers to the flight of the Jewish Christians to Pella beyond Jordan just before the siege of Jerusalem, and probably about the date of this prophecy.

The "beast" is cryptically identified by the number "666," which, though it has been the basis of innumerable silly speculations, is a simple way of indicating to Jewish readers whom the author meant to describe. In Hebrew, as in Greek, letters of the alphabet were also used as numbers. The number of a name meant the sum of the numbers denoted by the letters in it. "Nero Cæsar," in Hebrew, adds up to 666, or if transliterated a little differently, to 616, which, as stated in the margin of our Revised Version, is actually an alternative reading here.

In chapter xiii. 9-10, an apparently irrelevant passage, we have probably a warning to Christians not to attempt armed resistance to the expected persecution. Many Jewish Christians no doubt sympathized with the rising in Judæa, and may have been tempted to throw in their lot with the Zealots.

The second beast, described in verse 11 as rising from the earth, is far less easy to identify. From the description ("he had two horns like unto a lamb, and he spake as a dragon") some Christian, whom the writer regarded as a paganizer, seems to be intended. It may be that the writer—an ardent Jew—had Paul in his mind. It would have been a gross misrepresentation of Paul to depict him, as here, as inculcating worship of the emperor and assisting in persecution; but Paul's injunction to respect the Roman Empire as "ordained of God," and his known teaching on the subject of eating meat that had been offered to idols, may have been twisted by the author of Revelation (who can be scurrilous enough about his opponents) into this grotesque fiction.

The vision of trouble and persecution is followed by a picture of the deliverance of the elect from among Jews and Gentiles. In chapter vii., the angels seal 144,000 of the Jews on their foreheads, to whom are added the "great multitude" of Gentile converts who suffered martyrdom at the hands of Nero. In chapter xiv., the 144,000 are given the privilege of learning a "new song," which they sing before the throne, and which the Gentile martyrs are evidently debarred from learning. It may be asked how even this qualified acceptance of Gentile converts is to be reconciled with the writer's acrimony against Paul? The answer is that Gentile Christians, in the first century, were by no means all Paulinists. We know from Josephus and other writers that a large number of Romans and Greeks of a religious turn of mind practised a modified form of Judaism; and many of the early Christian converts came, probably, from this class, and continued, even after their conversion, to keep the Jewish rules as to abstinence from pork and other foods, and observance of feasts and festivals. Paul at times tolerates, and at times censures this, and warns his converts against it (Col. ii. 16-23), but it died hard. The writer of Revelation allows these Gentiles to be saved, but puts them in a lower class than the real Jewish Christians, "them of the circumcision."

(To be concluded.) Robert Arch.

Priests.....who are ye?
A selfish, cruel, and malignant tribe,
Who, yourselves shelter'd, at our dangers laugh;
And, in your easy mantles wrapp'd, presume
To govern us who sweat in cumbrous mail:
Us, who 'mid bloodshed, apprehension, death,
Lead, for our wives, our children, and ourselves,
Lives of distress, and constant wretchedness.
Cowards, less dignified than idle women,
Would ye with lithe wands, and fantastic hymns,
O'er us, and o'er our weapons, arbitrate?

—*Alfieri*, "*Saul*."

Obituary.

Freethinkers in Leicester were sorry to hear that Mr. J. Ainge, for many years a member of the Leicester Secular Society, died on Saturday, March 11, at the age of 74. He was one of the sturdy rank and file who was present at the opening of the Secular Hall, and active enough to be present at the Anniversary gathering on Sunday, March 5.

Acid Drops.

The Sabbatarians experienced a decided reverse on the London County Council the other day. They have been working might and main to get the theatres and music-halls committee to report in favour of cinema shows being closed on Sundays till the end of the War. Instead of doing this, the committee reported that "it was not desirable that cinematograph halls should be closed on Sundays, or that consideration of all applications to open such halls on Sundays should be deferred until after the termination of the War." This was adopted by the Council, in spite of some little opposition. This brought out the utterly false cry of economy, as though there was less economy in money being spent on Sunday than on any other day in the week. If economy is to be secured by shutting up places where money might be spent, then it would be more sensible to close the picture halls all the rest of the week, and leave them open on Sundays. It is, of course, not economy that these people are concerned with; their real object is Sunday closing.

We are pleased the Council did not yield to Sabbatarian pressure, although, as we have already said, we are quite at a loss to see on what ground the Council takes to itself the right to allow or suppress Sunday opening of picture shows. We think the proprietors are actionable for so doing, and it is a statutory offence to open a place of entertainment to which admission is by payment; the Council does not seem to have any standing in the matter. It is an assumption of power which the Council does not really possess; if anyone cares to set the Council at defiance they can do so.

An article in a contemporary bears the happy title, "The Christianity of Tommy," by a Methodist Chaplain at the Front. What delightful innocence! Tommy's Christianity extends from Catholicism to Christadelphianism and other fancy creeds, and sometimes "Tommy" is dark-skinned and a Pagan—and none the worse for that, either. When will clergymen remember they are living in the twentieth century and not the tenth?

There is a danger that the War will be made the excuse to put in practice much Nonconformist propagandist nonsense. The worker's drink has already been restricted, cinema-shows on Sunday are threatened, and some public libraries are no longer issuing novels. Perhaps these Christian folk think there is enough fiction in the Bible.

The new Chairman of the Free Church Council devoted his presidential address to the subject of Christian union, a favourite topic just now, but which is not likely to lead anywhere in particular. He pointed out that the "world and the Church are becoming less and less willing to listen to the man who has nothing to say," but omitted to point out that men who have something to say are less and less willing to enter the Church. Long ago Ruskin said that, in general, a man's becoming a clergyman signified no more than that he was desirous of gaining a reputation for wisdom without experiencing either the pain or the trouble of acquiring it. And now even that device is becoming so transparent that a growing number sees through it.

For what, after all, is the use of this Black Army of ours? Is there a single thing they do that cannot be as well done—that is not as well done by those who are parsons, and who have no intention of becoming such? Does anyone look to a parson, as such, for a single useful lesson in sociology, in ethics, in literature, in art, or science? Are they, as a body, better men than any other class in the community? Do we look to them for examples in intellect or morals? Everyone is aware that the answer to all these questions is, No. They have only one legitimate function, and that is to tell us all about a God and a future life, two subjects on which they know as much—neither more nor less—as the most ignorant person at large.

Mr. Shakespeare—what a name for the Chairman of a Free Church Council!—complained that a Government which trembles before a Labour Party or an Irish minority "simply trifles with us." But what right has Mr. Shakespeare to demand that the Government shall consider the wishes of a Free Church Council? What right has a Free Church Council to demand that the Government shall consider its wishes? These are the people who call themselves *Free* Churchmen. Their avowed principle is that the State shall not interfere in matters of religion. And yet they are constantly lamenting that the Government will not recognize their sectarian claims, and urging united action in order to secure some sectarian advantage! The State has no right to concern itself with Mr. Shakespeare and his friends except in their capacity as citizens. And if they were men of principle they would neither defend nor tolerate anything else. *If* they were men of principle! There is much virtue in that "if."

Emmanuel Church, Cheltenham, has been totally destroyed by fire. It might have had a worse fate and been converted into a cinema theatre.

The Bishop of Chelmsford, speaking at a Masonic Service at Southend on Sea, said that "there was the recognition by every Mason that God was the great architect of all." Yet the Catholic Church is not very fond of Freemasons.

Prayers at the House of Commons usually take eight minutes, a contemporary says, "but recently they have been got through in two and a half." This looks uncommonly like the down grade—or hustled holiness.

The French Catholics are considering the advisability of commemorating their successes against the Germans by placing a statue of Joan of Arc in Notre Dame Cathedral. We humbly suggest that they erect a memorial to St. Thomas Atkins.

An American book bears the quaint title *Is God Dead?* and Transatlantic papers say the story has been filmed. The title sounds very promising.

An instructive sidelight on United States advertising methods is afforded by an account which appeared lately in the *North China Herald*. After exhorting people to buy in America, "the only big market in normal conditions," the advertiser went on to say, "Our catalogues are in the hands of every American missionary." We have heard a good deal lately in condemnation of British conservatism and excessive regard for dignity in the conduct of business, but after reading this advertisement, I feel a good deal of sympathy for our much-deplored reticence, if this be an example of the desired enterprise. I should like to know, too, whether the governing boards of the American Missionary Societies are aware that the gentlemen whom they send to China to preach the Gospel are acting as commercial representatives of a big Chicago firm. Or has this firm arranged to pay to the missionaries a percentage on the business done through them.—*Advertising World*.

The ecclesiastics do like to have their fingers in every pie. At the Guildhall meeting, advocating an economy campaign, the Archbishop of York and Cardinal Bourne were present. A delicious comment was made by a Tory newspaper, "Forty luxurious motors outside the Guildhall, waiting the return of the arch-economists, snorted approval."

Some of the men who claimed exemptions before the Military Tribunals gave very quaint reasons. At Teddington a member of the Church of England, who "never attended," claimed as a conscience-man. A still more remarkable case was that before a Weybridge tribunal, when the applicant said, "As God has no earthly kingdom, his people are not called upon to fight." This man was remanded for a medical examination.

When in discussion with Freethinkers, the clergy make a great pretence of their "consciences." It is, therefore,

interesting to find how some of the clergy regard the conscientious Christian objectors to militarism. The Rev. F. B. Meyer says "conscience is not a sufficient guide apart from truth." Father Barry regards conscientious objectors as "cowards or imbeciles." The Rev. Joseph Hocking considers "real conscientious objectors are very, very rare." Father Bernard Vaughan would "make short shrift" of the objector. How these Christians do love one another.

The halfpenny Christians are more interesting than the more educated—and artful—varieties. The *Daily Mail* recently printed in its centre page, with a bold heading, a letter from a correspondent stating that "Reprisals have Divine sanction," and quoting the Old Testament precedent of the slaying of the first-born in Egypt. Does not the pious Kaiser gather some of his inspiration from the Bible as well as the halfpenny Christians?

A religious paper hailing from the Antipodes, the *Spectator*, raises a doleful lament over the decline of the Sunday-school. It remarks that in this they are in line with the "old country"; but that is small comfort as against a continuous decrease of about 1,000 per year, and a last year's decrease of 2,485 scholars. Our interest in the figures lies in its illustration of the truth that the decay of religion is not a national but a universal one. Its cause rests with civilization, and the church which wishes to arrest the decline of religion must strive to arrest the development of civilization. The *Spectator* quite truly says that "The Church which loses its children is doomed." Quite so; but that is only another way of saying that the Church which trusts for the acceptance of its doctrines by a mature, unprejudiced intelligence, may as well close its doors. The only safe method of making Christians is to get them before they are old enough to understand what it is they are asked to believe.

The Southend-on-Sea Education Committee, acting under clerical influence, has under consideration the censoring of cinema films in the Borough. As the films exhibited have already passed the official censor, and the police authorities have expressed no disapproval, this seems like an attempt to gild refined gold.

Father Bernard Vaughan, writing on "Piccadilly in War-Time," says "England has not been brought to her knees in prayer like Russia, France, and Italy." We doubt if the countrymen of Voltaire are cultivating housemaid's knee.

At one of the Military Tribunals a Y.M.C.A. worker, who applied for exemption, was asked if he ever sang "Onward, Christian Soldiers"? He admitted the soft impeachment, and got exemption.

The Salvation Army has had its annual Self-Denial Week, which means an orgy of promiscuous and indiscriminate cadging. We noticed this year that Salvation Army "lasses" have taken to boarding buses in motion, and coming round with the collection-box. It is certain that none others would be permitted to indulge in this form of annoyance, and we fail to see any justification in the case of the Salvation Army. Where public money is taken for alleged public work, it is only fair that there should exist some sort of public control, and this is quite wanting in the case of the Army. And, of course, the house-to-house visitations are made with all the effrontery of a tax-collector, but without any of the justification he is able to offer.

In the circular letter sent round, "General" Booth prints the following as an inducement to almsgiving. It is said to be from a man in the trenches:—

> I am holding regular open-air meetings close to the firing line, and souls are being won for Christ in almost every meeting. In the pouring rain on Sunday three men sought the Saviour.

And what then? Is this Salvationist in the trenches being paid for his preaching? If we know the Army, we should say he is not. And if not, in what way can this soldier's preaching in the trenches be a legitimate reason for begging? But that is the Salvation Army policy right through. The fanaticism of the rank and file is used as a reason for getting money sent to headquarters, of which very little appears to find its way back again.

"What would England be like if they had a race of Solomons, Byrons, and Shelleys, strong intellectually, but weak morally?" asks the Bishop of Chelmsford. His lordship need not worry. England is full of good people, who regard the story of Lot and his daughters as fit reading for children.

The newspapers say that the Germans advanced in the Verdun battle singing "guttural hymns." Yet the clergy will have it that the Germans are Atheists.

The 112th anniversary of the founding of the British and Foreign Bible Society was celebrated at the Guildhall on March 4 by a party, attended by a thousand children, and a huge cake, weighing 112 lbs., was cut by the Lord Mayor's daughter. Not a bad bait for the little people.

At Christ Church, East Dulwich, London, a young soldier recently delivered a sermon on "The Bankruptcy of Unbelief." The young soldier was a son of the minister of the church, and the sermon was a translation from a French work. The whole affair seems second-hand.

A Scots newspaper published recently a leading article on "Unnecessary Churches," and we confess that necessary ones, so far as we can see, are very few. The paper in question based its remarks on the need for economy, and we have several times pointed out that here, at least, is a direction in which economy could be practised safely. The bishops could forgo their generally huge salaries, and the overpaid members of the clergy could follow their lead. And why not try closing all the churches until the end of the War? They were of no avail to prevent the War breaking out, and they are certainly useless as a means of bringing it to a close. As they are of use neither as a means of prevention nor a method of cure, we suggest scrapping the lot.

Amongst the many businesses financially hit by the War is the Papacy. Naturally, the contributions from all the belligerent countries have fallen off during the War, and the Vatican is threatened with a serious deficit this year. It is suggested that after the War the Pope should decree an "Annee Sainte," and so induce a pilgrimage to Rome. The plucking of the faithful would then be an easy task.

Rev. E. H. Tottenham, late British chaplain at Karlsruhe, says that while he was there, fifteen was a good congregation. There were also Germans who came for their free lesson in English. That is at least a good word for the Germans. They will be able to plead a sensible reason for attending church.

That brilliant journalist, "Marmaduke," has been writing of "the madmen of Hyde Park," and he refers to a person who used to stop people with a Bible in his hand and question them about Jonah and the whale. There is nothing very remarkable about this, for thousands of brainy clergymen are continually talking of this fishy old prophet.

A new book has been published with the fascinating title, *The Man Who Knew All.* We wonder if it refers to that distinguished Christian, Mr. Horatio Bottomley?

Religious periodicals and tracts, sent to the Front, are not in favour with the soldiers, and they are used to suff mattresses. Formerly they used to stuff the Christian readers.

A headline in the press read, "Huxley's Income Tax." It did not refer to the great scientist, but to a jockey of similar name.

Mr. C. Cohen's Engagements.

Sunday, March 19, Victoria Hall, Fowler Street, South Shields; at 6.30. "The Challenge of Unbelief."

April 16, Abertillery.

To Correspondents.

E. Mills.—Twenty-three years ago is a long time to carry one's mind back, but we have some recollection of meeting you then. Please accept our thanks for all the good things you say.

G. A. Sproit.—We quite agree that a Christian *may* think freely, but there are enormous chances against his thinking without prejudice. With regard to your question, we do not think that "existence" calls for any explanation. It is an indispensable condition of all thinking, and must be taken for granted in every argument.

"A Christian."—We do not all question that Christians *believe* they are made better—or "saved"—by Jesus Christ. It is not the belief that we question, but the fact. So do the followers of other faiths believe they are "saved" by their particular figure-heads. They cannot all be right, and it is possible they are all wrong. We prefer to believe that the change which occurs—whatever it may be—is due to the operation of normal human forces, wrongly interpreted as religious.

H. Shaw.—Received, and will prove useful.

H. G. Farmer.—Very appropriate. Will usefully fill a corner.

G. F. Walsh.—So long as we are agreed that character comes before creed, we are agreed upon the all-important point.

S. Lidgett.—Thanks for the trouble you have taken. From what we know of the person you name, added to what you send, we are inclined to agree with your diagnosis of his character. Your conclusion that the work of Freethought is all important, is sound. It must precede all really useful work.

H. Fizpatrick.—The essence of the question lies in whether progressive improvement belongs to the individual or the race. (1) It is obvious that death puts a sharp termination to the individual's progress; but, on the other hand, his contribution to the social stock of ideas and improvements remain. (2) Starting with this greater capital, the next generation achieves more, not because of individual superiority, but because of better opportunities. (3) The phenomena of variation takes place with the human as with the animal organism, the variation which survives is determined by environment. (4) Up to a certain point in animal evolution, progress is by the elimination of unfavourable conditions. Beyond that point, artificial creation—clothing, weapons, instruments, institutions, etc.—appear to be the principal factors, and these are affected for better or worse by the labours of each generation. This is the essence of the problem so far as we can state it in a paragraph.

Keridon.—Your letter reached us too late for use this week. In our next issue.

G. Parry.—We do not preserve all the newspaper cuttings on which paragraphs are based. But if you care to go to a public library and consult the file of some religious journal, such as the *Church Times*, for the week preceding the date of the *Freethinker* in which the paragraph appeared, you will not fail to find it.

Mrs. G. Windsor.—Thanks for paper, also for your help in securing new readers. We are glad to hear that yourself and sister are both admirers of the *Freethinker*.

P. Cannar.—We are taking steps in the matter.

J. Benton.—It is good news—but not *new* news—that the men at the Front are interested in reading the copies of the *Freethinker* you sent out. As you will see in "Sugar Plums," one of our readers is desirous of helping this to be done in a very effective manner.

J. Critchley.—We can only say "Them's our sentiments," with great heartiness.

E. Gestlin.—There is no fear of our regarding such letters as yours with a languid interest. *Brimstone Ballads* is out of print.

W. S. Clogg.—We had been already considering the suggestion you make, and it will no doubt eventuate. Your address on Ingersoll to such an audience can have done nothing but good. Is not Habit the real reply to your concluding observation?

T. M. Mozley—Will bear your suggestion in mind in the event of a new edition. Sorry we did not have a chance to speak with you when we were at Leicester. We *saw* you, however, in the audience.

J. H. Weaver.—The religious talk about death-beds is, as you say, "bosh." It is no more than a pious legend, circulated for interested purposes. You are making excellent use of your *Freethinker* in sending it out to the Front.

Jesmond.—We note your appreciation of the new dress of the *Freethinker*. Your practice of taking six copies of the paper weekly, and distributing them, is a very useful form of assistance from all points of view.

Inquirer.—You do not say in what connection you require the names of notable Freethinkers and in philosophy, science, and literature. There are many hundreds in the *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*, published at this office.

Achille Pompa.—A great deal of anxiety and considerable struggle is naturally involved, but we shall pull through. Glad to receive your congratulations on "the new dress of the dear paper."

When the services of the National Secular Society in connection with Secular Burial Services are required, all communications should be addressed to the Secretary, Miss E. M. Vance, giving as long notice as possible.

The Secular Society, Limited, office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

The National Secular Society's office is at 62 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

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

Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

Orders for literature should be sent to the Business 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.

G. W. Foote Memorial Fund.

(To take the form of a Presentation to Mrs. Foote.)

March is drawing rapidly to a close, and we are still a considerable distance off the desired £500. There is, of course, still a chance for that much-talked-of Freethought millionaire to materialize, or for his place to be taken by a rally of small donations. We shall see next week. Meanwhile, I have just had an offer which I am bound to place before my readers. A gentleman—who desires to remain anonymous—offers to be one of as many £5 subscribers as are needed to bring the Fund up to £500. Allowing for promises in hand, we should need at the moment of writing about eleven others. But, of course, this number should be reduced by next week's subscriptions. Readers will please note that this Fund closes on March 31.

C. C.

"The Roll of Honour."—Fourteenth List.

Previously acknowledged, £406 4s. 6d.—A. W. B. Swan, £1 1s.; M. M., 10s.; J. Jesmond, £1; Girendan Dass, 1s.; A Working Man, 1s.; S. Lidgett, 2s. 6d.; F. J. Oakes, 5s.; R. T. Cooke, 5s.; J. F. Yeadon, 2s.; J. B. Middleton, £1; W. E. H., 2s. 6d.; J. Critchley, 2s.; John Hayes, 5s.; J. O. Restall, 5s.; H. L. J. J., £3; T. N. Mozley, 2s. 6d.

Per Miss Vance.—Mrs. Helena Parsons, £5; Chas. Lewis, 2s. 6d.

Sugar Plums.

Mr. Cohen visits South Shields to-day (March 19) and will deliver a lecture in the Victoria Hall, Fowler Street, at 6,30. The subject will be "The Challenge of Unbelief," with, of course, special reference to the attacks made on Freethought in connection with the War. There will be music from 6 to 6.30, and Mr. Cohen has been asked to meet local friends for a friendly chat before the meeting commences. Tickets of

admission, and leaflets advertising the meeting, may be obtained from the Secretary, Mr. R. Chapman, 6 Wenlock Road, Simonside, South Shields. Tickets may also be obtained at the hall itself on the evening of the lecture. Mr. Chapman writes that the Committee has been thoughtful enough to arrange for a moonlight night, which on the North Coast is something to be pleased with in war-time.

Next Sunday (March 26) Mr. Cohen lectures in Liverpool. Friends in the district will please note that tickets for the meetings—afternoon and evening—can be obtained of Mr. W. McKelvie, 21 Globe Street, Kirkdale, Liverpool. Any help in advertising the meetings would also be appreciated.

We continue to receive numerous letters expressing pleasure at the new type with which the *Freethinker* is printed. We are, of course, pleased to know that our efforts have met with approval, and we hope to do still more so soon as circumstances permit. But we must beg our readers to do what they can to help us weather the storm by paying what attention they can to the question of increased circulation. As everyone may imagine, with paper now double the price it was, and other expenses also increased, the struggle at this end is a very hard one. And we must remind our readers that the *Freethinker* is the only paper of its class that has maintained itself unchanged right through the War. Other papers have raised sustentation funds, and decreased the number of pages, and very many have gone under altogether. We shall not go under, but we say what we have said in order to impress upon our friends that their help is needed. And it must also be remembered that the wholesale calling of men to the Colours necessarily robs us of many readers.

H. L. J. J. who subscribes to the "G. W. Foote Memorial Fund," sends also cheque for £2 towards our "new type bill." He also considers the new "dress" "decidedly more artistic and attractive." We have not solicited help to pay for the new type, but it has, of course, to be paid for, and H. L. J. J.'s thoughtfulness is deeply appreciated.

Mr. Lloyd has many friends and admirers in Leicester, and they will be pleased to welcome him in the Secular Hall, Humberstone Gate, at 6.30 to-day (March 19). His subject, "The Christ that will follow the War," should be alone sufficient to ensure a crowded hall. It is a subject on which the clergy have been very busy of late, and a Freethinker's view of it is certain not to be lacking in pregnancy.

On Wednesday next (March 22) Mr. Lloyd lectures before the Hounslow Adult School on "The Poetry of George Meredith." We have no other details to hand, but Freethinkers in the locality will please note.

One of our readers send us a suggestion of a very practical kind. He offers to send out to men at the Front 100 copies of the *Freethinker* for one month if other readers will supply the names and addresses to where they are to be directed. Or, failing the one hundred abroad, the number may be made up by addresses in England. This is an excellent offer, and we hope advantage will be taken of it. Please send postcards only, with names and addresses plainly written, and marked "Propaganda."

Animal Life in the Tropical Forest.

The wonderful luxuriance of floral life displayed in tropical regions completely dwarfs the vegetable growth of temperate climes. So, in the animal kingdom, an endless array of organic forms may be encountered in the dense forests of the equatorial zone. Our near relatives, the apes and monkeys, are practically restricted to the torrid belt, and countless other creatures rarely stray beyond its boundaries.

In lands where the bright sun pours his beneficent beams with genial prodigality from January to December, plant-food is furnished without stint to the herbivorous animals of the forest-clad country. Cold and sullen winter is there unknown. Vegetables and fruits are abundant at all seasons, and grazing and frugivorous organisms enjoy a perpetual banquet of succulent food. The man-like apes are mainly frugivorous; the fruit-bats flourish on similar diet; the parrots and innumerable other birds feed on fruits and berries, and lead a life in the virgin forests which would be impossible in regions where the vegetation puts off its green garments on the approach of dark winter's dismal reign.

Not merely have tropical faunas adapted themselves to their constant food supply, but animals provided with rich coverings of fur are comparatively rare, no protection against cold being requisite in these genial surroundings. Reptilian life is amply in evidence, the heat of the solar orb brings forth life from these cold-blooded creatures' eggs. Insect life is rendered possible on an immense scale by the perpetual warmth of the tropical jungle, and countless millions of these form the food for vast numbers of insectivorous animals.

The tropical woodlands are carpeted with an extremely dense and luxuriant undergrowth, and various arboreal organisms never from choice descend from the trees which form their permanent dwelling-place. The sloths of South America have so completely adapted themselves to arboreal life that their feet are quite unsuitable to terrestrial locomotion. Other animals have become equally incapable of movement along the earth. This circumstance has necessitated the evolution of strange organs of flight. Where breaks in the tangled forest-growth occur, animals closely adapted to a strictly arboreal mode of life would, in the absence of organs enabling them to cross the boundary, experience the gravest difficulty in journeying from one tree to another. Nature has surmounted this obstacle by developing partial means of progression. Numerous tree-dwelling animals are provided with parachute appendages which permit them to take short flights or leaps. Phalangers, frogs, and lizards thus flit from tree to tree. Squirrels and lemurs have overcome hindrances to locomotion among the forest-growths in a similar way.

Yet, notwithstanding the wondrous wealth of plant-life in the tropical forest, these regions are not nearly so favourable to the maintenance of higher mammalian existence as might be thought. The equatorial forests are very thinly peopled with savage humanity, and their apes and monkeys are far fewer in number than one might suppose from the apparently propitious nature of the woodland environment.

Still, it is in such surroundings that our hairy relatives dwell, and the primeval forest was doubtless the original habitation of those extinct primates from which early humanity was evolved. The long upper extremities and the short lower extremities of apes and monkeys, with other striking characteristics these animals display, all lend themselves to the arboreal existence of these mammals, while their marked specialization of hand and brain are, likewise, particularly helpful to them in the battle of life.

Among monkeys one structural feature is curiously significant. It is a truism that herbivorous animals are extremely prone to danger when feeding, for, with all plant-eating mammals, huge quantities of their comparatively innutritious food must be swallowed. The ruminating organisms, such as the sheep or ox, can

greedily gulp down the herbage on which they graze, and store it in the intestinal canal, afterwards lying down and masticating the regurgitated food. In several of the monkeys a similar phenomenon has arisen. These animals possess a cheek-pouch, in which food may be, for the time being, deposited, to be subsequently triturated and swallowed at leisure. This serviceable adaptation is absent among the American monkeys, and many of the Old World primates do not possess it, although it is very general with the monkey group.

The baboons and Tibetan and Himalayan monkeys range beyond the tropical area, but all other members of this extensive family are restricted to the equatorial forest-belt. The tailless man-like apes—the African gorilla and chimpanzee, the orang of Borneo and Sumatra, and the gibbons of South-East Asia—all dwell within the tropical forests. The langurs are long-tailed, leaf-devouring monkeys, whose habitat embraces a large area of South-East Asia. Though, as monkeys go, their arms are short; they are remarkably nimble, and swing through the trees with amazing rapidity. In West Africa leaf-eating monkeys are also found, which are famous for their beautiful silk-like hair.

The highly intelligent companion of the Italian organ-grinder is also a denizen of the luxuriant forest-land of Western Africa. These little monkeys belong to the genus Cercopithecus. All are adorned with cheek-pouches, and they are singularly catholic in their food. The Asiatic macaques are very similar in appearance to the organ-player's pet; their cheek-pouches are strongly developed, and these monkeys are most omnivorous eaters. Like man, the leading member of the primates, they evince a pronounced fondness for animal food. The African baboons wander over a wide range of territory, but this is in some measure to be attributed to the fact that these animals are not, strictly speaking, arboreal dwellers. Short in the arm, they are indifferent climbers; they live very conveniently on rocky surfaces, and may almost be classed as quadrupeds.

The Platyrrhine or American monkeys are in several important features to be distinguished from the primates of the Eastern World. The monkeys which abound in the tropical forests of Brazil are small in size; not one possesses an opposable thumb, the caudal appendage is usually prehensile, and the nostrils lie widely apart. The capuchins are outstanding monkeys of this group, and since the introduction of agriculture into South America, they have easily acquired the habit of stealing man's crops. Destitute of cheek-pouches, these artful animals eat as much as they can, and then retreat with all the spoil they can carry in their hands or tucked under their arms. The howling monkeys are notorious for their dreadful cries, and many and various are the less noisy genera which spend their merry and mischievous lives in the equatorial forests. Though the sylvan regions are their customary abode, the New World monkeys range northwards as far as Southern Mexico, and southwards as far as latitude 30° S.

The marmosets are exclusively confined to the tropical forests of South and Central America. These monkeys are distinctly squirrel-like in appearance. They are not expert climbers, although their home is among the trees. "In the absence of the special adaptations shown by their allies, the animals climb like squirrels rather than like monkeys—that is, they do not grip the branches and swing freely from one to another, but stick in their claws and climb along the branch on all fours."

The lemurs are the humblest members of the group whose evolutionary masterpiece is man. In America they are not met with, and in the Old World they only survive on sufferance. They are very harmless creatures, and have been driven to their last retreats through the appearance of better equipped modes of life, as well as the antagonism of predaceous mammals. They linger in the equatorial forests of Africa, in the wild woodlands of South-East Asia, but they flourish best in Madagascar. On the continent of Africa, as in their Asiatic haunts, the lemurs are few in number and insignificant in size. In the great island of Madagascar they are represented by over thirty species, and are numerous wherever trees or undergrowth afford them shelter. Here they dwell in happy isolation, fairly free from molestation. No apes or monkeys disturb their solitude, and they are never incommoded by the attentions of the bloodthirsty feline mammals. The lemurs are not nearly so clever or sharpwitted as monkeys, although they probably represent the surviving members of the group from which monkeys were developed.

The large fruit-bats are almost confined to the tropical areas of the Eastern Hemisphere. In the Western World they are entirely unknown. The vampires, on the other hand, are special to the forests of equatorial America. The vampires really belong to the insect-eating species of bats. Some of these ugly mammals—and we must bear in mind that bats are mammals and were originally included by Linnæus in the order primates—have adopted a strict vegetarian diet. Some feed both on fruit and insects, while others have descended to the level of mere bloodsuckers.

Among the marvels of the tropical fauna we have a flying lemur, as well as a flying squirrel, and both of these are confined to the Malay Archipelago. Sanguinary beasts of prey find the tropical jungles an ideal hunting-ground. The Indian tiger and the American jaguar play havoc with forest life. The larger herbivorous mammals are not, as a rule, denizens of the dense woodlands. Deer, however, abound in the forest jungles of Asia, while in Africa, which is destitute of deer, a few of the antelopes have closely adapted themselves to sylvan life.

Along the streams which glide through the tangled forests or amid the swamps, various animals love to dwell. The damper and darker forest regions of India and Africa form the haunts of wild marsh and bush swine. Several marsupials are adapting themselves to arboreal life. In the hot forests of New Guinea and Queensland kangaroos are even now slowly acquiring the art of moving with facility among the trees.

Naturally, feathered life is amply represented in the tropical trees. Despite the darkness of the denser jungle, birds of brilliant plumage abound. The peerless birds of paradise grace the forests of New Guinea and the adjacent areas. Parrots, strange pigeons, and wonderful cockatoos, the love-birds, and gorgeously arrayed macaws, all adorn the leafy regions of the tropical world.

That noble and magnanimous creature, the crocodile, must not be neglected. This amiable reptile and his allies infest the lakes and rivers of the equatorial forests as they watch and wait for the terrestrial animals when these wander to the water to quench their thirst. In terms of design, the terrible crocodile has been specially favoured by Providence. The breathing organs of the brutal reptile are so contrived that he is able to drown his victims by holding them beneath the water until they are dead. The crocodiles themselves escape drowning owing to the structure of their internal nostrils.

The snakes and tree-boas of South America prey largely on birds, their young, and their eggs. Throughout the earth's tropical areas, snakes exist in plentiful profusion. All are carnivorous animals; they are comparatively unintelligent, and are terribly destructive to higher and nobler forms of life.

Among insects, the tropical butterflies are among the painted glories of the world. Flies swarm everywhere; many of these are bloodsuckers, and in company with the tsetse flies and mosquitoes, they transmit the germs of deadly tropical diseases which deal out agony and mortality to man and the lower animals alike. Ants of innumerable kinds are likewise abundant. Scorpions, spiders—including the bird-slaying South American form—and ticks, which are instrumental in conveying the fatal diseases of the torrid zone, are also to be included among the fauna of these prolific centres of living matter.

T. F. Palmer.

Selfishness and Sacrifice.

Like dew on the gowan lying
Is the fa' o' her fairy feet;
Like wind in Summer sighing,
Her voice is low and sweet.

Whisper it, suggest it, signify it, express it how you will, but do not break the spell! Replete with a dainty dinner, and still idly perplexed, but happier, perhaps, he sat before *his* genial fire, till suddenly and imperceptibly the sombre reverie dissolved in sweetest sound, even in childhood's simple rhyme; and he was not happy only, his whole inner being was transfigured. First, stirring gently in some subconscious recess, some silent hidden niche of memory and sensation, the thought-sounds stole *backward* from the past, anon trembled on the lip in exquisite and soothing sweetness; and the whole soul of the man was stilled to listen to its own music as poets have listened to the strains of lark or nightingale—listened, aye, and been lifted up to the blue of Summer noon, or carried away on the crimson clouds of eve. Hush! the rich blood, in copious flow, is inundating thought's "mysterious seat." Sleep, rest, refreshment—in a word, recreation—is the only magic of this mental metamorphosis, and beside which miracles are tame and banal. These grander moments come not only with repletion, prosperity, and content. They come when the moon is at the full, and when there is no moon! They come when all is lost; when hopes, ideals, dreams, ambitions, all are shattered; when man is outcast from all that man can prize. They come, not as the last infirmity, but as the last *strength* of noble minds. Have ye ever known this sovereignty?.....

Some such strain as this is ultimately suggested to my mind by pondering Mr. Robert Moreland's recent article, "A Slave of Self," wherein his hypothetical, yet very common, thinker subjects his psychology to perfectly logical and legitimate criticism. In the vast realm of consciousness, imagination sheds its sorrowing beams on the chaos of injustice and inequality. Conscience upbraids comfort, thought is insistent, selfishness survives, and thoughtlessness supervenes; the blinds are drawn, the world is excluded, and human misery at all entrances is shut out; pleasure reigns. But Pope says:—

Two principles in human nature reign—
Self-love to urge and reason to restrain.

In our later learning, the two are one. Egoism and altruism are convertible terms. The martyr at the stake and the epicure at the feast, each satisfies an instinct within him. Whence comes the instinct? From all time, and from all around; from heredity and environment; from everywhere and everything. It is brutal or refined; and that a man is good or bad depends, in poetical language, "on a thousand air-blown chances incalculable as the descent of thistledown"—only for "chance" let us plead "ignorance." There is, never was, and never can be, such a thing as chance in nature. Such is the mechanical inescapable law; such the immovable root and stem, but the leaf and flower and perfume of which is found in social life.....It was cold out there. We are glad to return to our thinker in his easy chair, by his cosy fire, in his artistic room. Selfish man, but satisfying. We would sit with him, and suggest a cigar and something from the cellar, and on the clouds and fumes of an enchanted hour enter the portals of our social paradise:—

Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious;
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious.

Secure, for the moment, from the penalty of Adam..... The icy fang and churlish chiding of the winter's wind, we smile, and shiver vicariously, and murmur commisseration for *les miserables*, and sip our nectar, and drift away on comfort's downy cloud—

Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel.
Yes, yes, another time; but not to-night.

And yet—and yet—we believe that goodness is growing; that philosophy is a-ripening; that charity—intellectual, moral, international—is on the increase. Why do we believe this? For many reasons. For one thing, most men act morally *from habit* alone. There is a universal *solidarity* on the moral plane, otherwise there could be nothing *outstandingly* bad. All is relative, and all is related—articulated, one might say—a homogeneous, heterogeneous, separated, inseparable whole, which is Monism, and the only sure basis for all speculation. Again, we know that in a gust of religious altruism thousands of simple but sincere men and women have joined the Salvation Army, etc. The motive was an admirable, if a woefully mistaken, one. And we know that the patriot-altruist of to-day has volunteered in millions to serve his "King and Country"; but more, perhaps, to satisfy the *moral impetus* from within, and undeterred, in the face of the most frightful military menace the world has ever known; and all at the call of duty, pure and simple—pure and simple! aye, but also heroic and sublime:—

And their bones shall be laid with the myriad dead,
With the myriad martyrs, the heroes—misled;
But still heroes! Theirs not to know why;
Theirs only the *courage* to do and to die:
And they sleep 'neath the stars of an alien sky.

I am not lecturing Mr. Moreland; I am merely, as he has been his, uttering my thoughts aloud. His argument is the linked mail of consecutive thought, of logic absolute; but it seems to me the pattern is too sombre; even I am much of a pessimist, but would fain see the sun glint on more shining armour. A slave of self, indeed; but all depends on the self, and the self depends on—what? and from—where? That's hard to be conceived. The line of least mental resistance. Take Bradlaugh; take our late (and later) chief, who was always *himself*, and never "beside himself." It was his pleasure to go to prison, though he suffered it in pain. What a glorious self was this! and how many coarser "selfs" it turned to finer ware! Morality, character, intelligence, knowledge, are cumulative. There is a deep niche in Time's restless wheel; when the hour comes, it strikes. Suppose our armchair philosopher had swept his slippered ease aside, and, like Don Quixote, or the Salvation altruist, dashed into the storm, seized upon the first shivering wretch he met, haled him into paradise, thawed him at his fire, feasted him, *and made his acquaintance;* instructed him, and been instructed in turn; satisfied the material nature and satisfied the craving of the spiritual man; his *protegée*, the while warmed, fed, bewildered, abashed, suspicious of this madman, "smoking" him at last, and sponging on him to his heart's content. Such reads well in a Charles Garvice, Harold Begbie, Hall Caine, Marie Corelli book; but in actual life, fraught with such a chain of

consequences, inconveniences, dilemmas, and distresses, as to make it a consummation devoutly to be avoided. What then? Must we sink into selfish repose, and leave the wretched to their fate, comforting our minds with the unction that, after all, we did not make the world? Such a summary dismissal of responsibility is impossible to higher natures. The moral sentiment is growing, slowly, from its root in the reflex mud and slime of ancient ocean beds. Those old sea-bottoms are beginning to reappear. The moral sentiment antedates by many million years the provisional novelties of Law, Religion, and Authority. It may not always be superficially evident, but the "mutual aid," the insistent urge, is there, the solidarity of the race. Habit becomes sovereign in the individual and in the species; *in ninety-nine cases in a hundred man acts morally from habit.* What a testimonial to man! and what a refutation of the claims of religion! what a denial of the need for it.

The simple, mechanical, naked, scientific truth is: that the mere love of pleasure is the motive of all, even the greatest, human action, but culminating at last in the complex and æsthetic flowers and perfumes of social service, friendship, love, etc. Whence came our statuary? "Praxetelian shapes filling the hushed air with reverence and with love," paintings, poetry, prose masterpieces? Who feels such exquisite pleasure as the supreme artist in music, painting, sculpture, poetry, and prose; or as the mild, majestic, patient, prosaic, scientific Darwin, with all the world for his book, and all time for the culmination of its plot?

Who was "Annie Laurie," "The Minstrel Boy," "Jock o' Hazledean"? Where bloomed "The Last Rose of Summer," whose love was like a "red, red rose"? Whence came the pathetic figures in *The Mill on the Floss?* These have a name, but no local habitation. They are universal. They came from the human breast, and will find their echo in human hearts for ever. The melody is never lost; it is merely mute awhile. The gentle gust of passion, of compassion, stirs the chords. On the open window-sill of the universal soul the ancient æolian harp awakes, faintly at first, tremulous, tentative, breathing "The still, sad music of humanity," now clanging, echoing, commingling in the very tempest and ecstasy of inspiring sound:—

> For now 'twas like all instruments,
> Now like a lonely flute,
> And now it is an angel's song
> That bids the heavens be mute.

The individual chord is there, and swells above the rest; anon is merged in multitudinous sound, and rises again, but only in seeming solo, its base and impulse founded on the correlate and natural scale. "Perhaps 'Dundee's' wild warbling measures rise, or plaintive 'Martyrs' worthy of the name." But its effort is effortless; even its direction fixed as a planet's path. And so with moral and "immoral" man. There is full natural impulse and sanction for good and evil deeds, for slippered ease and altruistic toil, else they would not be. Conscience itself, discontent, dissatisfaction, altruism, egoism, etc., etc., are but the various manifestations of this unseen but inexorable law. Mr. Moreland's thinker will long since have left his meditations behind, and merged his energies in more or less agreeable work, selfish too, but not so sweet, perhaps; not even a "duty that he owes to society," but a dire necessity, lest worse befall; a trouble to avoid trouble; an adaptation to environment; a yielding to public opinion; to the sense of social service, honour, friendship, love, all so many bayonets, such a barbed wire compound surrounding him on all sides. So man must succumb to laws more ancient, relentless, than any formulated by Law, Religion, and Authority.

Shall we, then, throw care to the winds, and "roll darkling down the torrent of our fate"? We cannot. We are fated to struggle; and in that struggle we are forming fate itself. "That the struggle be a faithful, unconquerable one, that is the question of questions." The struggle, then, is necessary, inescapable; noble or ignoble, false or true. Contrast is created. Pain gives zest to pleasure. Toil makes rest sweet. Reverie is delightful, and recreates, restores lost harmonies; and in those hours of peace and deep content the fibres thrill anew with ancient music.

> We hear old footsteps wandering slow
> Through the lone chambers of the heart.

In such an hour man thinketh no evil, hath no enemies, is the enemy of none, loves and would be loved by all, is not over-earnest nor meanly ambitious, but greatly emulous; will hope and strive for the happiness of the world. His heart is open and his head is clear; he holds out his arms to invoke the justice and humanity of earth. Hush! do not break the spell!

A. Millar.

Pernicious Pars.

We are pleased to record the fact that a young man with very long hair and a pale face, who informed a recruiting sergeant that he believed in Jesus Christ, and could not take human life, has been sentenced to six months hard labour. Is it not monstrous that these contemptible shirkers and whimperers should adopt this blasphemous attitude towards the military authorities?.....We trust that there will be a larger attendance at the church of All Saints' next Sunday than hitherto, as the collection has been dwindling for several months. The Church must not be neglected in these glorious days.—*Hilarious Harbinger of Love.*

We regret to announce the death of Mr. Josh Willings, of Peat Villa, Pentonville. We need not remind our readers that Mr. Willings was the famous housebreaker, forger, and embezzler whose early days were so promising. He attended chapel and church on alternate Sundays, and at the age of twenty-two was confirmed by the Bishop of Stuntdale. He contributed lavishly to the collection-plate, and was always to the fore with a helping hand when the clergy were in need of funds. We cannot explain his early fall from grace. Were he alive and young to-day he would doubtless be a shining light in the Army. The deceased was ninety years of age, eighty of which he spent in gaol.—*Peculiar Periodical and Roll.*

The Bishop of Golddale, a well-known figure in the East End and the West End, is due to lecture at the Grimy Baths next Monday evening. A very large congregation is anticipated. There will be a collection. The subject of the Bishop's lecture will be, "The Divine Origin of the Hand-Grenade." The Bishop has, we understand, deduced some very remarkable evidence in support of his thesis from the Old Testament. Briefly, it is this: that God invented the hand-grenade while experimenting in creation before the book of Genesis was written. The spheroid shape of the hand-grenade certainly lends itself to the Bishop's theory. God, quite probably, created millions of hand-grenades before shaping the innumerable planets, etc., which adorn the night sky.—*Christian Cataplasm and Gazette.*

Before his sermon, "Is Christ the Man of Peace?" the Rev. Curdle will sing, "Let Me Like a Soldier Fall." We have much pleasure in announcing that General Biffall will be present, and will, at the conclusion of this song, fire six blank cartridges. The congregation may look forward to a highly elevating evening of a unique kind. The General has also promised to give an exhibition of quick-firing in the vestry. Will members of the congregation kindly bring empty bottles upon this occasion?—*Divine Showman and Guardian.*

Arthur F. Thorn.

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.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Kells and Dales, "Thinking Backwards"; 6.30, Messrs. Shaller, Dales and Saphin,

COUNTRY.

INDOOR.

LEICESTER (Secular Society, Humberstone Gate): 6.30, J. T. Lloyd, "The Christ that will Follow the War."

SOUTH SHIELDS BRANCH N. S. S. (Victoria Hall, Fowler Street, near Ogle Terrace car-stop): 6, Music; 6.30, C. Cohen, "The Challenge of Unbelief."

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