

The

FREETHINKER

FOUNDED · 1881

EDITED BY CHAPMAN · COHEN · · · EDITOR · 1881-1915 · G · W · FOOTE

VOL. XXXVI.—No. 21

SUNDAY MAY 21, 1916

PRICE TWOPENCE

Great issues should be handled with courage or not at all.

Views and Opinions.

The Dublin Rising.

Attention has been called in several quarters to the fact that most of the men prominent in the recent Irish rising were possessed of considerable literary ability. And all of them were men of ideas. They were, as one writer put it, "mostly poets, professors, teachers, and intellectuals." If this circumstance had been merely noted, it would not have called for special comment. But when it is recorded as something remarkable, and because remarkable, worthy of reflection, one sees in it a fresh evidence of that hand-to-mouth philosophizing which is destructive of wide views, and capable statesmanship. Revolutions, great or small, successful or unsuccessful, are invariably the work of men of ideas. Discontent there may, or must be, but it is a mere unrest until the idea is born around which this discontent may gather. And devotion to an idea is not yet so common a thing in life that we need withhold that amount of recognition from those who led so mad and so hopeless an undertaking as the Dublin rising.

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The Power of Ideas.

All revolutions, nay, all reforms, are wrought by ideas. That is the great lesson of history, which is here the lesson of life. The masses suffer dumbly, and the persistency of their suffering develops an indifference to its presence. It is only when these masses find a mouth-piece that they threaten the established order, and for this the man of ideas is essential. That is why all vested interests, religious or social, hate a new idea. They recognize that of all forces this is the greatest and the most untameable. Once it emerges it is the most difficult of all things to suppress. It is more explosive than the most deadly compound in use in this chemico-mechanical war, and far more shattering in its effects. It comes as near realizing the quality of indestructibility as anything we know. You can quiet anything in the world sooner than the thought in a strong man's brain. You can subdue anything in the world with greater ease than you can subdue the conviction born of strenuous thought. Fire may be extinguished and strife made to cease; ambition may be killed and the lust for power grow faint; the one thing that denies all and finally conquers all is the Truth, which a strong man sees and for which brave men fight.

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Ideas as Social Facts.

Do not let any delude themselves with the notion that what has been said is mere rhetoric. It is, on the contrary, the soberest of truths and expresses the most fundamental of social facts. For what is our social life, as expressed through its various institutions, but the embodiment of an idea? On what does the Church, the Crown, the Government build upon but ideas? They are not material realities, but psychological facts. It is

the idea of the Church handed on from generation to generation that keeps the Church alive. And the same truth holds good of any other institution we examine. Each is the embodiment of an idea. Kill the idea upon which it lives and the institution decays. Tinker away at an abuse in the name of reform while the idea remains unaffected, and our work is in vain. That is why the struggle for advancement is always a war of ideas. Revolutions are prepared for by the men of ideas, they are sustained by men of ideas, and in this respect at least the Dublin revolt, mad as it was, only served to illustrate a general and important truth.

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The Church and the War.

What has been said may well preface some comments upon an article on "The Church and the War" in a recent article in *Everyman*. The article takes the form of a conversation between three persons, and one of them, after remarking that before the War the Church was "out of touch with the working men of the country, and with the intellectuals, and was dependent largely on rich people, too busy with money-making to have time for ideas, and on a lower middle class too much under the heel of convention to discard her," wonders whether the Church will come stronger out of the War? To this another one of the three replies:—

I don't expect the post-war Church to be much, if any different from the pre-war. She is too closely tied to the past by her theology, and too dependent on the present social situation. There will be big changes after the war, I grant you; but, frankly, I don't think the Church will have much to do with them. When labour speaks, *e.g.*, as it will speak, will there be as much as an echo in the Church? I doubt it very much. One heard, of course, infinite denunciation of Germany, and German theology, and Nietzsche, and so on, from our pulpits at the beginning of the war. But we were all in that line at the time—press, platform, and pulpit. But have you heard any clear, resounding word from the Church, say, on the profiteering that has been rampant since the war broke out, or on war contracts, or on the great shipping shame and scandal? Never a syllable. Many ministers, I am told, were perfervid recruiting agents when the war began, and tremendous hands at denouncing the Kaiser. Now they are ready enough to join the hue and cry against the Clyde workmen. But what of war profits and the conscription of capital? The Church is supposed to stand for sacrifice. What of the absolute equality of sacrifice that is essential if we are to win the war?.....I don't see the Church leading the nation today in holding up the idealistic side of the war, and calling for that merciless self-discipline that means victory. It is the men with the rifle and the bayonet to-day who are our true idealists. These men, at any rate, have given up everything for their country's sake.

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The Impotence of Christianity.

Now, this strikes me as quite a clear and rational forecast of the immediate future. And it is the more noteworthy because it appears in a journal which would say nothing but good of the Church, were that possible. But the obtrusive fact is, that throughout the whole of

this War, the part played by the Christian Church—that Church which claims to guide the conscience of the nation—has been wholly contemptible. They have been “perfidious recruiting agents,” and warm denounciators of the Kaiser, but it hardly needed an inspired religion, with a priesthood of nearly 50,000 and an expenditure of between twenty and thirty millions, to do these things. And people have willingly accepted the aid of the Churches in building huts for soldiers, and the like. But, religiously, the Churches have been ignored with a completeness that is almost amazing. You may listen to scores of men in train, or tram, or in the street, discussing the War and its problems, the thing that one never hears suggested is that the settlement of any of these questions is dependent upon our attitude towards Christianity. That is ignored so completely, so contemptuously, that the thoroughness with which it is done helps to blind people to the fact. No one looks to the Churches for help. No one expects them to help. They are treated as something outside the stream of national life.

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The Paralysis of Education.

But this situation contains a moral. Ideas, I have already said, are the directive forces of social life. Not necessarily good ideas, or true ideas, but ideas. And in the main the great social issue arises in connection with the play of two sets of ideas—those that represent the past and those that stand for the future. And inevitably the Churches, Christianity, religion as a whole, is committed to the maintenance of ideas that have no vital relation to contemporary life. And the whole training and education of the clergy emphasizes this. During the most formative period of their lives they are being trained, not to think—which is the most important function of the real leader of men—but to teach. Their minds, instead of being cultivated, are stifled. They repeat phrases, and mistake the repetition for thinking. They are told *what* to think, and in the vast majority of cases, go on thinking it. Provided with certain fixed ideas, they will welcome any fact which appears to support those ideas, while deliberately rejecting all facts which oppose them. They become mental cowards by habit, and obscurantists in practice. Worse still, from an absence of a desire to get at the truth, to a carelessness about the truth in speech and act, is only a step; and a large number of them illustrate this in their handling of many subjects that are of vital importance to a nation's welfare.

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Ideas and Progress.

The prime condition of progress is the free play of ideas. Ideas are the only agents that can adequately correct the faults of institutions which, even when good at their inception, become injurious through altered conditions. And, of necessity, it is only the man of quick imaginative powers who is susceptible to those influences which culminate in a new ideal or in a new set of ideas. Material prosperity does not in itself mean progress. It may only mean a contented stagnation. Even peace may mean no more than that. There is only one thing that makes for progress, and that, as is shown by the life of Ancient Athens, by the Renaissance, and by the latter part of the eighteenth century, is the clashing of ideas. It is on that battlefield on which the real salvation of man is to be won or lost. It is the idealist who really leads the world; the man of new ideas who is the real social reformer. They are the foremost in the social world. Right or wrong, they are always challenging accepted customs and established institutions, and by no other method than this can their sanity and utility be maintained.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

More Nonsense About the War.

THE May meetings of the Churches and their Societies this year are being devoted to discussions of the War in its various aspects, but chiefly in the effect it is likely to have on religion. All the speakers agree that, in the long run, religion will derive immeasurable benefit therefrom. The spirit displayed is generally of an extremely war-like nature. It is related with pride that so many professing Christians have joined the Colours. If a minister happens to be convinced that war is an evil, and that a Christian is guilty of high treason against his Divine Lord and Master if he engages in it, a necessity is laid upon him to resign whatever pastorate he may hold. If he ventures to say that to him “war and the situation incidental to it are such a flagrant challenge to his whole conception of Christianity” that he cannot help speaking against them, his church will tell him to go and denounce them somewhere else. The overwhelming majority of Christians are tremendously enthusiastic in their advocacy of the War. For twenty months churches and chapels have been so many recruiting agencies, and the clergy so many recruiting orators. Indeed, the contention is that we are fighting for God and Christ, for righteousness and freedom, and that, consequently, nothing but good can result from the conflict. The Rev. Mr. Spurr, of Regent's Park Baptist Chapel, says that the business of the Christian Church is “not to keep out of things,” but to honour Jesus Christ by killing as many Germans and Turks as possible. Another man of God assures us that already the War has thrown a flood of new light on the doctrine of the Atonement, and that altogether the religious outlook is most encouraging. Dr. Scott Lidgett hopes and believes that a religious revival is about to occur, and that it “will take the form of an application of the religious spirit to the problems and duties of social life,” but he is “uncertain how far it is likely to take the shape either of personal religion or of interest in the work of the Church.” In the leading article in the *Christian Commonwealth* for May 10, there is a quotation from Dr. Paul Sabatier's *France To-day* which, if true, is ominously illuminating. It is a description of what took place in France after the War of 1870:—

One saw the old cathedrals invaded by deeply stirred vibrating crowds, in which the majority was composed of that working element which called itself indifferent, sceptical, or hostile. Notorious heretics, members of more or less Masonic associations, contended for seats with professed devotees, and were only remarkable for their attention.....The people of France were returning to their Mother, quite simply and sincerely, to sit down at her table.....Now the board was not laid. The old Mother had no fatted calf to kill, nor even energy enough to prepare a little substantial food for the famishing. She had only strength left to work herself into a passion and load them with reproaches.

It is necessary to bear in mind that Dr. Sabatier is a Protestant divine, and that his remarks apply to the Catholic Church. To what extent they are true or false we have no means of ascertaining, though we are inclined to doubt the accuracy of the reference to “notorious heretics” vying for seats with “professed devotees.” The significant admission is that the crowds which invaded the old cathedrals were not satisfied with what they got there. France did not “accept the fables of her priests,” but scornfully turned away from them to learn obedience to the laws of national life. During the interval of forty years between the two wars, she disestablished the Church, secularized the schools, and came to be known as an anti-Christian nation. Nothing can be more fully attested than the fact that the Franco-

Prussian War of 1870 was not followed by a real revival of religion, but, particularly in France, by a rapid growth and development of Atheism. Now, is there anything to indicate that this War will exert a reviving influence upon Christianity, the popular interest in which had been visibly decaying for several decades before it began? And yet in the leading article already mentioned this is what we read:—

It is probably true to say that, as a result of the War, the Atonement has gained an altogether more vital significance. With thoughtful people, in or out of the pulpit, it is no longer an academic doctrine aloof from human experience, a mystery without analogy or illumination in the travail of mankind. It has become evidently and dramatically, what it has always been unobtrusively, the central fact of life.

We maintain that the doctrine of the Atonement is the most immoral dogma ever elaborated by the human intellect. Paul teaches clearly that the death of Christ was a form of satisfaction to Heaven's outraged justice, without which God could not forgive sinful men and restore them to his favour. However sin entered into the world, it could not be driven out of it except through faith in the most diabolical murder ever committed. God is described as having accepted such a murder as a substitute for the everlasting punishment, not of all mankind, alas, but of as many as see their way clear to put their entire trust in the substitution. To aver that the War furnishes a most apt and telling illustration of such a doctrine is to show that it deserves the most unpromising condemnation. On the other hand, to assert that all the horrors of the War, "all such sufferings as we are now seeing, find their exemplar and their explanation in the Cross," is to pronounce the Cross the quintessence of injustice and wickedness. Such is the faith of which the Church is being reassured by this most savage and dehumanizing War; and the writer has the temerity to affirm that, "did time allow, it could be shown that, in the light of what is happening, every vital article of Christianity presents fine and enviable provocation to the true preacher." Dr. F. B. Meyer says that God is in the midst of the War, "sorrowing with every broken heart and wincing with every hard blow," but in the article under review we are told that "what we are going through is the passion of God and his children together." If there were a God, such utterances would be in the most culpable degree blasphemous; but as there is not, his self-appointed spokesmen are allowed to say what they like in his name, unrebuked and unexposed except by their fellow-beings who see through them.

Dr. Scott Lidgett is much more moderate in his statements than the writer of the article. He, too, thinks that "the War has deepened religious susceptibilities and concern on the part of those people who are already members of the Church, but he has seen no marked change in the attitude of the people outside." We do not pretend to speak for loyal members of the Church; but we cannot be blind to the fact that Church membership is itself on the decline. At the Presbyterian Synod, just held, a decrease of 742 in the membership was reported, and a decrease of £9,000 in the total income of the Church. Of the people outside the Churches, it is safe to say that their indifference to religion has been greatly increased because of the War. Mr. Spurr may be scornful of questions put to ministers in railway carriages and elsewhere, such as "Why did God allow this War?" simply because he cannot answer them. It may be quite true that many of those who asked them never showed any interest in God and his ways before the War broke out, but that fact has no bearing whatever on the point at issue. They do not believe in God at

all, perhaps; but Mr. Spurr and his brethren pose as his representatives on earth, and are expected to explain why he does this and does not do that. Someone asked the reverend gentleman, "What is God doing in this War?" He answered, "God is teaching men in this War, by allowing them to be burnt, to let the fire alone for the future." Does it not occur to Mr. Spurr that by such an answer he is giving God the worst possible character as a teacher? From the beginning until now, the human race has been constantly ravaged by disastrous wars, and the present one is on a much more gigantic and devastating scale than all its predecessors; which means, according to the reverend gentleman, that in all the generations of human history God has been teaching men in wars out of number, by allowing them to be burnt, to let the fire alone for the future, and they have never taken the lesson to heart yet. In the name of common sense, what is the use of so utterly incompetent a teacher? Does not his incompetency amount to a crime of the deepest dye? In reality, what Mr. Spurr has presented us with is one of the most cogent arguments for Atheism, for God's total failure in all the centuries of necessity implies his non-existence. It is because they begin to discern the force of this argument that so many abandon the Church, while every fresh realization of it confirms the people outside in their disbelief in Christian Theism.

Our conclusion, therefore, is that the War, though ostensibly conducted in the name of the Deity, and for the establishment of his kingdom, is merely an international struggle for supremacy, and, particularly at its present stage, even for existence itself. Christianity was powerless to prevent it, and it is equally incapable of bringing it to an end; and while it will doubtless survive it, its hold upon people's minds will never be what it has been hitherto. The glowing prophecies indulged in by its champions just now are doomed to non-fulfilment.

J. T. LLOYD.

"Shakespeare's Sister."

"George Eliot" was exactly the right person, and came at exactly the right moment. She is an original word which could not have been uttered before, and cannot be repeated or imitated.—*Mark Rutherford*.

WHEN Voltaire sat down to write a book on epic poetry, he dedicated his first chapter to "Difference of Taste in Nations." A present-day critic might well write on the difference of taste in generations. Changes of taste are always taking place, and sometimes we are embarrassed by their recurrence. One morning we wake up and find the gods of our youthful idolatry treated with contempt, and sometimes consigned to the dustbin. Recently I saw in a popular periodical the statement that "George Eliot" was no longer read. I put down the paper in which this airy opinion was printed, and thought of the Marie Corellis, the Hall Caines, and the Charles Garvices who had so dispossessed the really great woman, who was formerly acclaimed as one of the literary glories of England.

It is many years since the literary world was trying to realize the extent of the gap made by the death of "George Eliot." She had long been accepted as one of the foremost writers of her age, and, what is not always the case with Freethinkers, she was very popular. The interval has affected her reputation, and her fame has shrunk. Her books are neither so much read nor so much quoted as they were. As regards some of her work, this is not surprising. *Theophrastus Such*, with its repellent title, is dead. *Daniel Deronda* and *Middlemarch* are dying. But that *Scenes of Clerical Life*, *Adam Bede*,

Silas Marner, The Mill on the Floss, and Romola should be obsolete is incredible. This priceless legacy in books must last while the world values superlative achievements in English prose.

"George Eliot" is unique. Few women have attained to so high a place among the writers of our country. She has often been spoken of as Shakespeare's sister. The simile is a happy one, for they were both nursed by the same outward influences. The same forest of Arden was round them both. It is pleasant to think that the great trees of her childish memories, survivors of the great forest, may have cast their shadows on that immortal poet to whom we owe the deathless gifts of the ever-charming *Rosalind* and the melancholy *Jacques*. There was something Shakespearean in "George Eliot's" genius, and her Mrs. Poyser took her place from the first by the side of Sir John Falstaff and Sancho Panza. It was but a few weeks after the appearance of *Adam Bede* that a speaker in the House of Commons quoted one of Mrs. Poyser's sayings, certain that his hearers would understand him.

At once novelist and poet, "George Eliot" was the singer of the intellectual life, sincere and dignified, full of a scholarly reverie. Her poetry brings with it a far-off sound of bells heard down some lovely village on a golden afternoon. The "still, sad music of humanity," which had fired the austere imagination of Auguste Comte, was to her a well of exhaustless inspiration. She was content to know that though her personality be blotted out by "the poppied sleep, the end of all," her influence would go to swell the volume of human worth. Her aspirations were expressed in her own beautiful lines:—

O may I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence; live
In pulses stirred to generosity
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end in self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge men's search
To vaster issues.

In her dual character of Freethinker and author, "George Eliot" united the critic who analyses and the artist who creates. The pen which had translated Strauss and Feuerbach, two most relentless opponents of the Christian superstition, this very pen drew the portrait of Dinah, the Methodist girl, and composed the pathetic prayer in the condemned cell. All writers, but the greatest, take interest in their own class, their own religious or philosophical ideas, alone. Then their characters are merely marionettes. The really great writer shows that even the humblest, "if you prick them, they bleed," and discovers the touch of nature in the most unpromising characters—in frivolous Hetty Sorrell, in sensuous Arthur Donnithorne, as well as in pious Dinah and Mr. Irvine. Or, as the Master saw it in pleasure-loving Falstaff, in crafty Iago, in ambitious Lady Macbeth, or in mad Lear.

One of the freest thinkers on all subjects, "George Eliot's" union with George Henry Lewes is a proof of its extent. This union was, undoubtedly, the most important event of her life. It was a true marriage, undertaken with all deliberation, and was a source of strength and happiness to both. The dedications of the manuscripts of each succeeding novel declare in varying language how her beloved friend was the source of her inspiration. She was, in his eyes, at once a genius and a lovable woman. Without his literary guidance and sympathy, it is doubtful whether she would have produced the masterpieces which are her claim to fame. A fable has been invented that this union was the tragedy of "George Eliot's" existence. It is as absurd as it is

false, and the slanderers invite the scathing denunciation of Laertes over the dead body of the drowned Ophelia:—

Lay her in the earth,
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,
A ministering angel shall my sister be
When thou liest howling.

Despite the jibes of irresponsible journalists, it is impossible to neglect the personality and work of "George Eliot." One of the greatest women among her contemporaries, maybe one of the greatest of all Englishwomen, she did magnificent work in her day and generation. She counts among the pioneers of her time. She was one of the brave women who attempted to free the life of the nation from "the lie at the lips of the priest." Loftiness of purpose and splendour of genius have won for her a high place in her country's Valhalla, and few more worthy names are inscribed upon the bead-roll of noble Englishwomen. Her first claim on us is, indeed, genius; but we should be hardly less interested in the record of a woman born of that heroic temper to which, after lifelong recognition of the vanity of vanities, Liberty never waxed old, nor Love failed of his loveliness.

MIMNERMUS.

Pioneers of Modern Chemistry.

WITH the banishment of mysticism and metaphysics from its realms, chemistry became a science when its foundations were laid on a strictly materialistic philosophy. It had been the belief that the solitary combustible substance in Nature was a mode of matter termed phlogiston, which combined with other materials, and thus rendered them inflammable. Erroneous as this opinion was subsequently proved to be, it played a useful part in securing more exact knowledge.

In the eighteenth century the ancient Greek notion that the four elements of Nature were air, earth, water, and fire was the accepted doctrine of chemical science. Very few of the acids and alkalies had been discovered, and even these were very imperfectly understood. The knowledge of the various gases so important to current chemistry, was then barely imagined. The few facts then known appeared to support the phlogiston hypothesis as did the discoveries made as the century advanced. Cavendish, in 1776, discovered hydrogen gas, and some chemists hailed this extremely light gas as phlogiston itself. The well-known circumstance that a candle flame becomes dim when confined to a small space in ordinary air was explained by the saturation of the imprisoned atmosphere by phlogiston.

Chemistry now made distinct progress, and the orthodox view received a shattering blow when Priestley and Scheele discovered oxygen gas in 1774. The import of this triumph was not immediately realized even by the men who accomplished it. The French Lavoisier, however, grasped its significance and promptly set to work to study the new gas. His experiments showed that oxygen undergoes a transformation during the burning of any substance in ordinary air. Here then was the true agent of combustion, and the suppositious element phlogiston seemed in no way concerned with the phenomena.

As no satisfactory evidence for the existence of phlogiston was available Lavoisier boldly recommended its immediate removal from chemical science. In company with three other famous French chemists, Lavoisier evolved a system of the science from which phlogiston disappeared, and in which other important reforms were carried out. This remarkable work was published in 1778. From its pages not only had phlogiston been

eliminated but oxygen and heat were put forward as the sole elements concerned in combustion. Many other cherished beliefs were discarded and Lavoisier and his colleagues advocated a rational nomenclature for chemical substances.

Hitherto, writes Dr. Williams, the terminology of the science has been a matter of whim and caprice. Such names as "liver of sulphur," "mercury of life," "horned moon," "the double secret," "the salt of many virtues," and the like, have been accepted without protest in the chemical world. With such a terminology continued progress was as impossible as human progress without speech.

Unfortunately, this eminent iconoclast fell a victim to popular fury, but the seeds he had scattered soon became a vigorous growth on Gallic soil. French science received the new gospel, but in other lands Lavoisier's consistent system was viewed with aversion. Berlin burnt the reformer in effigy, but Germany soon repented and accepted his teachings. The English fought the reform, but after a brief struggle succumbed to it. Such celebrated progressives in their respective departments, as Black, Rutherford, and Cavendish, as well as the ordinary run of chemists, opposed the improved scheme, but they were steadily driven to embrace it. It seems strange that the outstanding antagonist who was never reconciled was Priestley, the sage whose labours had prepared the way for Lavoisier's researches. Like the later conservatives who refused to capitulate to the evolutionary philosophy, Priestley battled for phlogiston long after every one else had forsaken it. He died in the belief that in his work, *The Doctrine of Phlogiston Upheld*, published in 1800, he had utterly demolished Lavoisier and his crazy system. But in truth the conflict was over and the victory won, and no man of standing has since supported the defeated cause.

Another of the fathers of modern chemistry was John Dalton, and it is to him that we owe the atomic theory. It is true that this theory has since led to results unsuspected by its parent, but the fact remains that upon Dalton's theory of the atom the whole complex structure of both organic and inorganic chemistry have been erected.

Dalton began his scientific career as a weather student, and in the county of Cumberland where he was born, he soon became acquainted with the rain. His meteorological observations and experiments form the basis of the now important science of meteorology. In 1787 he commenced a journal of atmospheric observations, which he continued through life, recording the vast number of 200,000 observations.

These inquiries rendered Dalton familiar with the problem of evaporation. He quickly realized that vapour exists in the air as a separate gas. Now, as it is plainly impossible for two bodies "to occupy the same space at the same time, this implies that the various atmospheric gases are really composed of discrete particles." These particles lie far below the limits of vision. So minute are they that the highest powers of the microscope utterly fail to reveal their presence. Indeed, they are so small that we can scarcely imagine them. Yet they form the ultimate constituents of all modes of material existence.

In 1803 Dalton formulated this atomic concept which was destined to achieve such extraordinary results. Of keen insight, he saw that his theory, if sound, would unravel some of Nature's most jealously guarded secrets. Cavendish had already demonstrated that water is not an element, but a compound, of oxygen and hydrogen gas. If this fluid was evolved by the combination of two gases, then it must necessarily arise from the union of the atoms of each gas. From this it logically follows that the relative weights of the two gases which have combined

to form water must likewise represent the relative weights of each of their individual atoms. If, as Dalton's experiments proved, one pound of hydrogen combines with five and a-half pounds of oxygen, "then the weight of the oxygen atom must be five and one half times that of the hydrogen atom." Dalton applied the same principle to various other compounds with unvarying success before he submitted his theory to the world. His tests showed that hydrogen enters into compounds on a smaller scale than any other element with which he was acquainted. Hydrogen, therefore, more conveniently than any other element furnished the atomic weight which served as unity.

This far-reaching theory for the moment fell on unheeding ears. The chemical experts were at the time hotly engaged in a controversy concerning the elements of their science. They were busily debating whether the chemical elements always combine one with the other in definite proportions. The foremost authority of the day, Berthollet, affirmed that within certain extremes substances unite in proportions practically indefinite. He asserted that solution itself is really a mode of chemical combination, and many deemed this judgment final. Several chemists, however, declined to accede to Berthollet's ipse dixit. The most notable of these was Proust who, assisted by his supporters, accumulated sufficient evidence to satisfy all save the most hardened and obstinate that the chemical elements combine in strictly definite proportions.

One discovery led to others. The determination of the weights of uniting elements proved not merely that the proportions were distinctly definite, but that they display a given relation one to the other. This was recognized by Wollaston and confirmed by Berzelius. Dalton was again vindicated, for a generation earlier he had observed that the elements combined in definite proportions, and this discovery paved his path to the atomic weights.

Another illustrious chemist had meanwhile appeared in France in the person of Gay-Lussac, whose experiments with gases prepared a further advance. He showed an astonished world that gases at a stated temperature and pressure invariably unite in definite numerical proportions as to volume. For example, two volumes of hydrogen combine with one volume of oxygen to produce water. Again, when a given quantity of water is transformed into gas the latter bears a constant relation to the combining volumes. In the instance just given, the combination of two volumes of hydrogen with one of oxygen evolves exactly two volumes of water vapour.

The advocates of the atomic theory added this important discovery to their armoury of facts. But most wonderful to relate, it was one of science's little ironies that the great Dalton, the begetter of the modern atomic doctrine, alone among all the progressives, steadfastly scorned to admit the validity of Gay-Lussac's experimental labours. Yet countless subsequent tests have demonstrated the truth of the Frenchman's discovery which has proved of priceless importance to modern science.

The scene now shifted to Italy, where Avogadro developed Gay-Lussac's law. Avogadro established the fact that in similar physical states every kind of gas contains precisely the same number of particles in a given volume. Each of these minute parts may be made up of two or more atoms, but such compound atoms act as if they were single atoms with respect to the space capacity that divides them from their fellow atoms in given states of heat and pressure. These compound particles or atoms were elevated to the rank of molecules by Avogadro and it is to molecules when regarded as the units of material structure that this chemist's law applies.

This important distinction between atoms and groups of atoms or molecules was made known in 1811, and although the immortal Ampere reached similar conclusions and employed them in his mathematical researches, Avogadro's revelation made no impression on chemists, and it was neglected for some score of years. It may be mentioned that at this time Dalton's law was still under discussion and the more timid chemists hesitated to regard it as "safe" science.

Professor Thomson of Edinburgh, in 1807, favoured the atomic hypothesis and did something to forward it. But it was the gifted Swede, Berzelius, who placed it on an unassailable foundation through his critical and conclusive laboratory tests. The results of his extensive researches found their only thinkable explanation in terms of Dalton's law. The atomic weights were now universally accepted, and the material concept of the atom "as a body of definite constitution and weight" gained ground rapidly.

This was a splendid victory for scientific Materialism. Dalton had represented the various atoms by geometrical symbols, and now Berzelius resolved to improve on this by discarding the symbol and replacing it with the initial letter of the Latin term for the element concerned. Under this scheme—the one still in use—O signified Oxygen, H Hydrogen, and so on; a numerical co-efficient succeeding each letter to indicate the number of atoms contained in any given compound.

The international influence of Berzelius secured the general adoption of his reform, and the chemical scientists proceeded from this now acknowledged principle to embark on further discovery which placed the atomic theory in an impregnable position. The French physicists, Dulong and Petit, in the course of their thermal studies in 1819, discovered that the specific heats of solids—in other terms, the amount of heat necessary to exalt the temperature of a given mass to a given degree—display a constant inverse relation to their atomic weights. A contemporary inquirer, the German, Mitscherlich, then announced the discovery that compounds containing the same number of atoms to the molecule possess the property of arranging themselves into the same angle of crystallization. This is the phenomenon of isomorphism.

These findings were severely tested by other investigators and their validity was completely established. All the ascertained facts pointed to the unalterable reign of law in the ultra-visible world of substance. Chemistry now advanced with giant strides, and Dalton, the quiet provincial member of the Society of Friends, a community at that time regarded by ordinary religionists as fitter subjects for mockery than for honour; John Dalton, then, the pioneer whose insight into Nature was so immensely instrumental in generating these epoch-making discoveries of later seekers after truth, was placed on a pinnacle in the temple of fame and the whole scientific kingdom has since revered him as one of the very greatest masters of those that know.

T. F. PALMER.

May, 1916.

Flowers and Philosophy.

Of these am I, Coila my name.—Burns, "The Vision."

"I AM fed up with philosophy!"—eccuse for a moment the replete alliterative vulgarism and its infantile irritability. As a matter of fact, no one is fed up *with* philosophy; but rather foolish for the *want* of it. A man, and he may be a very earnest and even intelligent man, reads his brains into "train-ile," shuts his book with a snap, and

repeats the above formula; but he is not fed up *with* philosophy, he is about to be wise, and wisdom is—philosophy.

Pope, whom, in spite of superior and inferior critics, detractors, etc., we persist in admiring, asks and answers:—

What differs more, you cry, than crown and cowl?
I'll tell you, friend, a wise man and a fool.

The folly we refer to is not the witlessness of nature's stint, but a kind of intermittent unwisdom of the wise. Philosophy endures. It is wisdom, reason, truth, common sense. We but lack for the moment strength and simplicity to grasp it. "The refined luxuries of the table, by soliciting the appetite, destroy that very pleasure which they were created to afford." We are replete without being refreshed. Philosophy did not fail us; we failed philosophy. Philosophy is the large and genial atmosphere of the soul. We might say of it, as of Life, in Shelley's matchless imagery—

Heaven's light for ever shines, earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments.

Yea, all we fear or hope is tinted in that many-coloured glass. Someone has said something to the effect that philosophy triumphs over past and future evils, but present evils triumph over philosophy. Euripides chimes in here, and says: the sorrow of yesterday is as nothing; that of to-day is bearable; but that of to-morrow is gigantic, because indistinct. And Shakespeare: Cowards die many times before their deaths; brave men never taste of death but once. Then Burns, quoting Thomson:—

The valiant, in himself, what can he suffer?
Or what does he regard his single woes?
But when, alas, he multiplies himself
To dearer selves
To helpless children then! he feels
The point of misery fest'ring in his heart,
And weakly weeps his fortune like a coward.

This latter consideration alone might serve to civilize mankind were there not so many "unnatural" fathers below and so much of the impossible supernatural father above. Rochefoucauld is practical. We should manage our fortune like our constitution; enjoy it when good, have patience when bad, and never apply violent remedies but in cases of necessity.

With much that passes, has passed, for philosophy, all will not agree alike; but as Nietzsche says of a religious passage by Renan—sentences with their truth absolutely inverted—"It is so nice, and such a distinction to have one's own antipodes!" *Gratitude*, says the nimble German, was the characteristic of ancient Greek religion. Later it was *fear*—"and Christianity was preparing itself." We later pagans are turning back to gratitude—delightful atavism—or mere quiet, contenting pleasure in the common things of earth, worship of the natural noble impulse of heart and brain. Christianity is again preparing itself—for its grave. We are beyond its good and evil. All dogmas are more or less in the melting pot. Dogma, then disintegration. That is almost the rule. And, then, the sea change into something rich and strange. Is nothing, then, eternal? Yes, truth and beauty. Think of the rough clod become the perfect perfumed flower. Carlyle praises work in many a strenuous striking line but he never struck a truer note than when he praised the vagrancy of the flowers, even the lilies of the field of Solomon—"a glance, that, into the deepest deep of beauty." The flaunting flowers our gardens yield have a certain cultural and artistic value; but the artless art, the effortless perfection, the real idiot abandon of simple loveliness in shape and hue and scent breathes in the wilderness, blushes in the desert air.

How we bend above a mossy stone, and its primrose and violet, in smiling worship o'er the altar and the saints of earth.

And so at last we have arrived, by somewhat rambling and irrelevant roads, at the point we kept in view:—

Where smiling spring her earliest visit paid
And parting summer's lingering blooms delayed.

Exquisite! oh gentle, facile, fertile Oliver; thou truest citizen of the world. We enter this little valley, or nook rather, bosky with green bushes; and taper spires, festooned with new and tender leaves, are waving in the wind. The river runs below—that river grown so familiar—and so dear—in fact, in fancy, and in happy dreams; such river as quenches all the hells that ever blazed. In plashing amber, and in soothing sound, the river glides along. And the sweet flowers, and the trailing greenery, seem to bend and list its lone eternal hymn.

COILA.

Acid Drops.

The New Military Service Act follows the line of the first one in exempting the clergy from military service. And the man in the street wonders why this is so. It cannot seriously be argued that they are indispensable to the national life. No one looks to them for guidance on any subject of importance, no one asks them for advice, and few notice the advice given by them unasked. France very properly makes no distinction in this respect. One citizen is as liable to service as another; no one is allowed to shelter himself behind a bishop's injunction, or behind the plea of their work being necessary in time of war. At a time when so many thousands of men are compelled to yield military service, in spite of the claims of business or of home, it is little short of a disgrace that so many thousands of able-bodied men should escape service on the plea of their being engaged in the preaching of religion.

Of course, the plea of these clergymen of military age is that they would go, but they are forbidden by their superiors. But this is pure evasion. If they wished to go, no one could prevent them. If they offered themselves, the military authorities would not reject them on account of their being in the Church. And certainly people would think none the worse of them if they ignored the command of their superiors and enlisted forthwith. Moreover, there is the Nonconformist clergy, who also obtain exemption on the ground of their being religious preachers. They are not deterred by a bishop's prohibition. The clergy have acted as recruiting sergeants; it is surely time that the Government paid them the compliment of assuming they are sincere, and subjected them to the same law as other people.

It is getting a commonplace that the English people care little or nothing for education. They do not realize even its cash value, to say nothing of the higher aspects of the subject. This received a startling illustration the other day. In the daily press for May 9 appeared a report of the proceedings of the City of London Tribunal. One member said with regard to the war-work of a schoolmaster:—

It must be work which has nothing to do with the teaching of the young. We should not consider that work of national importance.

And this is the verdict of a member of a Tribunal—not of some remote agricultural district, but of the chief City of the Empire. We have no hesitation in saying that such a view shows an utter unfitness for any representative capacity whatever. We are at war with a nation that more than any other has recognized the value of education. That it has put that education to an evil use matters nothing. We, on the other hand, were admittedly far in the rear in this matter; and now we are told flatly that the work of the schoolmaster is not a work of national importance!

We venture to say there is no other work before us so important as that of national education. The national life will be, relatively, poor enough as a result of the War, but to add to this by deliberately stunting the development of the rising generation, is to set the country the task of regeneration with its hands tied. Everything else should suffer rather than education. We should retrench everywhere before we economize on the children. They represent the future, and the future will be determined by the way in which the present deals with the children, which is the future in embryo. The worst of it is that this City Solomon was only saying what a too great number feel.

The Bishop of London is a victim of the green-eyed monster. He is actually jealous of the Y.M.C.A. He fears that it may "become the starting-point of the setting up of a kind of new religion if the Church fails to retain its young men when they return from the War." It is a certainty that the Church, in its present form, will not retain its young men; it has been losing them by the score for many years. But it is doubtful that many of them will join the Y.M.C.A., or any other religious organization.

The Established Church claims Shakespeare as a Churchman. Canon Beeching, in an article in the *Church Quarterly Review*, has no difficulty whatever "in showing that the poet was what we should now term a 'central Churchman,' an average Anglican of the best type." We congratulate the Canon upon performing such a feat without the assistance of a single scrap of evidence. The age of miracles is still with us.

The *Church Times* has made a far-reaching discovery, namely, that conscience is not "the voice of God," but "a purely human faculty." Secularists made that discovery many centuries ago; but we rejoice to find that our ably-conducted contemporary is at last on the high road to Rationalism, which is common sense.

From the *Yorkshire Evening Post*:—

Any man who is to-day doing useful work in England is helping England to win the War, writes Canon Edward Rees. If he wins his daily bread by chopping firewood, and if that is the best work he can do, he is helping England, and releasing a possibly more efficient man to handle a rifle for her. If, on the other hand, he is doing useless work, he is helping in the defeat of England. There is no other alternative.

This is rich! Coming from a class who have done absolutely nothing to "help England." We might almost call it cheeky.

Outside humanity, says Rev. F. C. Spurr, there is no evidence that anything is wrong with the Providence of God. We do not know what Mr. Spurr calls evidence, but we should have imagined that the suffering and carnage in the animal world, the fact that one-half the animal world is forced to live by killing the other half; that diseases are almost as common in the animal as in the human world; that only a fraction of the animals born survive; we should have thought that these and a hundred other facts would have been enough evidence to satisfy even Mr. Spurr. It is evidently a case of a blind eye and a telescope.

Mr. Spurr says he is "inclined to be scornful" of people who ask, "What is God doing in this War?" Well, that is a safe attitude. When you run up against an awkward question, just be scornful. It will save a lot of trouble. And yet it would have been easy to have said what God was doing in this War. He is doing nothing. That is, apparently, his trade—and his condemnation. For at a time when the man who is not doing something is denounced as a shirker, an idle God is the most indefensible of luxuries.

The Bishop of London is becoming a whole-hogger, and his advice to his followers is getting more and more ascetic. Speaking at a meeting of the Lord's Day Observance Society, the Bishop said they ought to stop tea-drinking parties on Sundays. Do they drink only water at Fulham Palace?

The power of the Church is waning rapidly, and the clerical contention of the indissolubility of marriage is treated by many people with high-sniffing contempt. On one day last week 143 decrees nisi were made absolute in the Divorce Court.

We take the following from the *Daily News* :—

Just home on leave from the Front, where he is serving as chaplain, the Rev. Neville Talbot, eldest son of the Bishop of Winchester, says he has heard men say, "I have never prayed yet; I will not pray now. Why should I pray now that things are bad, when I have not prayed before?" They would find that the sporting manly man or woman who had not prayed when they were well, would not pray when they were sick; those who had not prayed in peace, would not pray in war; those who had not prayed in life, would not pray in death. They would just chance it. They would not pray the prayer of fear or of necessity, and, for the most part, the Army in Flanders did not pray. It did not want to. Why?

We congratulate Mr. Talbot on his courage in so flatly contradicting those of his fellow-clerics who have been industriously circulating the fable of the revival of religion at the Front. And we specially commend his testimony to the Bishop of London. The British soldier would indeed be a poor creature if at the first sign of danger he went on his knees whimpering to God to protect him.

What noses the clergy have for certain things! Speaking at a meeting of the Baptist Union, the Rev. Joseph Hallett said: "It is an old tradition that France is more impure than England. It is a lie. England, in certain parts, is a perfect cesspool of iniquity." What have cesspools to do with Christianity? As Shakespeare says, "An ounce of civet, good apothecary!"

The faithful few who still live to defend the Design Argument in theology will be pleased to hear that there is a patient at Charing Cross Hospital who has undergone thirty-five operations in twelve months, and the unfortunate man is awaiting his thirty-sixth.

The "Less Meat and Drink Crusade," supported by the Bishop of London and other ascetic gentlemen, has not caught on. Inquiries at leading London restaurants, says the *Daily Mail*, proved that the abstention was unnoticeable, and that at Fulham Palace "the bishop had not started" taking his own advice.

Mr. Gilbert Chesterton considers that Shakespeare was "spiritually a Catholic." The genial journalist is in too much of a hurry this time, and his qualification does not fit so well as "the nun's lips and the friar's mouth"—as Shakespeare puts it.

The new Chairman of the Congregational Union hopes that before the year is out Free Churchmen and others will attend a great Thanksgiving Service at St. Paul's to celebrate victory. We also hope that before the year is out victory will be celebrated; but we cannot see why there should be a Thanksgiving Service. The clergy will have done nothing to bring victory, and it is not clear that God will have done anything either. Of course, when victory comes, the clergy will make the most of the occasion, and point to the goodness of God in securing it, just as they would discover that God had a benevolent end in view if victory did not come. Either way, we shall be asked to praise God for his goodness—the goodness of an Almighty who could permit the suffering and bloodshed of a War such as this one—and did nothing!

So the Sabbatarians have had their way, and the concerts that were arranged to take place on Sunday, May 28, on behalf of blind soldiers has been abandoned. Naturally, the agitation was conducted with all the usual Christian cant and humbug. The objectors were, on principle, opposed to Sunday concerts, but their chief concern was, as the *Church Times* put it, for "the liberties of the artists and staffs of theatres, music-halls, and the like," etc. This is very touching, and indicates the existence of concern over the "exploitation" of labour in a quite unexpected quarter. Only we observe that when concerts are held on a week-day, and

the performers are asked to give their services free, the *Church Times* raises no protest. Nor does it get excited over the "exploitations" of labour in other directions. It is when it is to be done on Sunday that our pious contemporary discovers that labour "ought not to be exploited in this way." And that is certainly illuminating.

Still, there is a serious moral, for Freethinkers, to all this. Intellectually bankrupt though Christianity is, this incident shows the tremendous power of organization the churches still possess. They have still a strong hand on the motor forces of society, and by appeals to all sorts of licit and illicit motives, are often able to turn events to their own advantage. Freethinkers are too apt to underestimate that, in the face of a common danger, the churches and chapels will sink their differences and unite against the enemy that threatens all alike. It is from this cause that we feel Free-thought may have to yet battle for bare existence. And if we are wise we shall take precautions, not only to make as many Freethinkers as possible, but to organize ourselves as effectively as possible.

The clerical statement that the Germans are Atheists is constantly being challenged by facts. At a meeting of the London Missionary Society it was stated that before the War over 800 German missionaries were engaged in different parts of the Empire, 400 being in India.

Speaking at the Annual Meeting of the Essex Congregational Union, the Rev. W. J. House, Vicar of Dunmow, a High Churchman, said he "looked to the time when there would be one fold and one Shepherd"—one "Holy Catholic Church." We rather think that when the Catholic lion lays down with the Nonconformist lamb, the latter will be inside.

"Muscular Christianity" is not so much to the fore in these degenerate days when Christians are "too proud to fight," but there is no reason for undue pessimism. The Galleywood Parish Magazine informs us that "our young bell-chimers did their duty by the bells on Easter Day, as two broken bell-ropes testify."

The War benefits religion say the clergy, but the Sunday-school scholars know that it means alarms and no excursions.

The British and Foreign Bible Society boasts that it has distributed four and a half millions of Bibles in the War-zone, and their depots are still open in Berlin, Vienna, Budapest, and other enemy cities. The circulation of the sacred volume has not softened the rigours of the "game of beasts."

The bishops are always protesting that their positions necessitate large salaries, but they leave plenty of money when they die. The late Bishop of Kilmore willed the residue of his estate, amounting to nearly £30,000, to the Clergy Fund. Where did he expect to spend eternity?

"A rumour that a great spiritual awakening is at hand has gone forth," says a writer in the *Hibbert Journal*. We have heard of that spiritual awakening before. In fact, we cannot recall a time when we didn't hear about it. Every time a mission is organized, or every time things get more than usually dull in the religious world, the pious begin to talk of that "great spiritual awakening." The truth is, of course, that there would be no talk of a spiritual awakening unless people were spiritually asleep. It is no more than an illustration of the policy of the tradesman who, finding trade dull, gets out a big poster advertising the enormous demand for an article for which he finds little or no sale.

Mr. George Moore has been called the "English Zola," and a sensation seems probable over his forthcoming novel, *The Brook Kerith*, which deals with the Founder of the Christian religion. Mr. Moore cheerfully assumes the theory that Jesus survived the crucifixion, and was taken away alive and joined a settlement. This account of the first Salvation Army ought to be a welcome relief in war-time.

To Correspondents.

- MR. J. H. ROUND, 20 Thornaby Place, Thornaby-on-Tees, will be glad to hear from Freethinkers in the district willing to cooperate with him in propaganda work. We hope to hear that a good response is received, and that active work is being done.
- E. A. MITCHELMORE.—You and your friends seem quite an interesting little group, and we are pleased to make your acquaintance—even in this way. One day we hope to meet you in the flesh. We are sending copies of the *Freethinker* to your friend, and would send on your copy as you suggest, but you have omitted to send your address. Please forward it.
- J. HARGRAVE.—Received with thanks, but cannot publish for several weeks owing to pressure of matter in hand.
- A. P. L.—Sorry we cannot find room for your lines.
- A. RADLEY.—We are obliged for reference, and agree with you in regard to the much be-photographed R. J. Campbell. Undoubtedly certain papers and magazines find it to their interest to "star" such men, but the fact of their finding it profitable to do so is a sad exhibition of the value of large tracts of public opinion.
- S. H. LENCON.—We are not sure we have your name correctly, but it will be near enough for recognition. By common consent the word "right" is used in a loose, but serviceable, sense in both sociology and ethics. Strictly, "Right" is the expression of a relation, and so could not exist with one person. If, therefore, "My right there is none to dispute" is used by a solitary individual, the proper word should be "Power" or "Will." Legally, a right is a claim upon others, which the State will enforce. Moral "Right" has the same implication, save that in this case the exercising force is public or general opinion. But in any case, a right must be against some person or persons, and can only spring from one's relation to him or them. Briefly, "rights" grow out of a recognition of claims by social opinion or by the law. In this sense all "rights" owe their origin to society. What is "bequeathed by nature" is power. The social control and direction of that power creates. We are afraid we run some risk of misunderstanding in attempting to answer so thorny a question in a few lines, but we have risked that.
- J. HUDSON.—In directing the policy of a paper we must consider all sorts of people, and we think we do manage to keep the balance equal. You will, we are sure, recognize that to modify the paper to meet this or that section would only end in disaster, and thus please no one.
- A. MILLAR.—We haven't seen Mr. Randall's book on *The Culture of Personality*, nor does your description of it make us specially anxious to read it. If it comes our way we may deal with it.
- B. ADAMS.—Thanks for your very sympathetic and encouraging letter—a type of scores received. We know that we have the confidence and support of Freethinkers throughout the country, and so long as we have that, nothing else matters.
- R. C. PROCTOR.—If you can obtain a suitable hall for lectures in Gainsborough Mr. Cohen will be pleased to pay a visit and see what can be done.
- G. E. WEBB.—Sorry space will not allow your reply to the Hon. Bertrand Russell to be published until next week.
- STOCKTONIAN.—Thanks for subscription. Pleased to have your appreciation of what you call our "splendid efforts."
- (Miss) A. M. BAKER.—We are encouraged by so hearty an appreciation from such a staunch supporter of the Freethought Cause.
- T. VAIL.—As your friend sent us an "earthly crown," and you enclose a "double one," if someone goes one better we shall feel like the Pope of Rome himself.
- S. CLOWES.—P.O. received for book, but no address given for sending. Please send.
- J. BURGESS.—Sorry your subscription to the Fund was entered as 2s. 6d. instead of 5s. 8d. It was quite a printer's error, as you will see the 5s. 8d. was allowed for in the total.
- C. NAYLOR.—Sorry to hear of what you describe as an organized effort to prevent Freethought speakers being heard. But we must have word from some of those officially responsible for the meetings before we can do anything.
- 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.

Special Propaganda Fund.

WE have still some little distance to go to make up the whole of the £200 needed to secure the other £200 promised, and only one week in which to do it. It is probable that many are waiting till the last to determine their contributions; in fact, we know this is so in one or two instances, and there may be others. The Fund will be closed with our issue dated May 28, which means—as we go to press with the *Freethinker* for that date on Tuesday, May 23—that all subscriptions which are to appear in the final list should reach us not later than the morning of that day.

The origin and purpose of this Fund has already been explained, but the main facts had better, perhaps, be repeated once more. A gentleman desirous of helping the Freethought cause generously offered a sum of money up to £200, on condition that I raised through the *Freethinker* a Fund of equal amount for propaganda purposes, the whole to be expended as my judgment approved. The Fund, when completed, will be spent in helping Branches of the National Secular Society, and in the promotion of Freethought generally. The expenditure will be under the direction of myself, Mr. J. T. Lloyd, Mr. C. Quinton, and Mr. R. H. Rosetti, all members of the National Secular Society's Executive. And, of course, a statement of the expenditure will be issued. The whole sum of £400 will certainly give our propaganda a great impetus, and will, I hope, as a result, be the means of bringing many other friends into touch with the Freethought movement.

As will be seen, we require only £21 2s. 4d. to realize the full £200, and I feel every confidence that this sum will be forthcoming. The way in which this appeal has been met has been most encouraging—so encouraging that it would be a pity if we were to "fall short of the post." In a difficult situation, and in times of exceptional stress, it is cheering to feel that there are those around us who will not see the work languish for want of support at a critical moment.

Previously acknowledged, £156 6s. 2d.—Dr. J. Laing, £5; J. Newton, £1 1s.; E. Parker, 5s.; Stocktonian, £1; E. Dawson, 5s.; T. Vail, 10s.; Margaret Viles, £1; John Foot, 10s. 6d.; Mrs. B. Siger, 2s. 6d.; D. Cornock, 2s. 6d.; A. B., 10s.; P. Hertz, 2s. 6d.; One of Keridon's Converts, £1 1s.; Civil Service, £1; B. Adams, £1; H. Matthews, 10s.; One of the Forty-Four, £1; S. M., 5s.; G. Smith, 10s.; E. Richmond, 2s. 6d.; J. Stanway, 10s.; A. D., 10s.; S. Hudson, £1; Anno Domini, 10s.; Advie, £1; F. V. Matthews, 2s.; An Old Member, 2s.; Miss Alice M. Baker, £3. Total, £178 17s. 8d.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Sugar Plums.

We hope that Branches and Members of the N. S. S. throughout the country are bearing in mind the Conference

of the N. S. S. on Whit-Monday. Every Branch should send a delegate, and there ought, in addition, to be a good gathering of private members. There are very good reasons why the Conference this year should be as large a one as is possible. Those who require accommodation should write to Miss Vance, the General Secretary, who will do her best to suit them. The Agenda of the Conference, with other particulars, will be published next week.

We are indebted to the *Daily Chronicle* for the following:—

Shiraz, which the Persian loyalists have retaken, is the "Garden of Mirth"—the home of oranges, myrtles, roses, and wine, sung by Hafiz and Sadi. But one natural feature of the place strikes the English visitor as strangely unpoetical. "In the delicious glow of eventide," says Mr. Foster Fraser, "I was gazing at the sun-flushed rocks, when I gave a start. 'Well, I never!' I muttered. 'What place do you call that?' 'That is Bradlaugh Nob,' was the reply of my host. Time, earthquakes, and storms had carved out of the rocks the bust of Charles Bradlaugh—the scanty-haired head, the heavy eyebrows, the firm chin, and, above all, the upper lip. There was no mistaking the upper lip."

We are asked to announce that a Social Party, in connection with the Bradlaugh Fellowship, will be held at the Boro' of Shoreditch Radical Club, New North Road, N., on Wednesday, May 24, at 8 o'clock. There will be speeches, music, and dancing. Admission is free.

A Freethinker in camp in England would be glad to receive a copy of the *Freethinker* weekly after it has been read, and would be glad also if the sender would add to the favour by "an occasional friendly letter." We would send the copy from the office, but that would not supply the friendly letter. If one of our readers will oblige in this way, and will drop us a line to that effect, we will forward the address. We are sending the paper meanwhile.

We have received rather too-late for insertion in this week's issue a report of the General Meeting of the National Peace Society. This will appear in our next. Considerations of space have also compelled us to hold over for answer until next week a number of letters.

A correspondent at the Front writes:—

There are about 130 men in my company, of these not more than a dozen are members of the Church of England; another dozen belong to one or other of the Nonconformist bodies; the rest regard Church Parade as a huge joke, or else a confounded nuisance, according to temperament. Of course, I have no means of getting the exact percentage, but I assure you these figures are not exaggerated.

It is no wonder that the clergy prefer the Church Parade to be compulsory. Marching the men to church to keep up the pretence of religion, so far imposes upon the unthinking.

We have often called attention to the shameful neglect of the scientific investigator in this country. For this we have not blamed the Government so much as general public indifference. In *Science Progress*, Sir Ronald Ross gives a good case in point:—

What are we to think of the following case? One of the most meritorious of such workers in Britain—a man who has been toiling for years in a tract which will yield no profit to himself though much profit to science in general—recently sent us a valuable paper. We noticed that his name was not followed by the usual letters, and wrote to inquire why. His answer was that he could not afford to subscribe to the learned societies, the membership of which was denoted by those letters! Can anything more shameful be imagined?

A man who gives his life in this way is unnoticed, or noticed only to be sneered at as a crank. If he had devoted himself to some nonsensical religious crusade, he would have been held up as an example of the rare self-sacrifice developed by religion.

A newspaper paragraph states that the Empress of Russia thanks "the children of England and the Dominions for their gift of 1,000 New Testaments and Psalters sent to the

Russian Army." This is a small number for a great army. Perhaps the Greek Church ecclesiastics will permit a raffle for the sacred volumes.

Shakespeare called the penny a "begrarly denarius." Regret was expressed at the Birmingham Cathedral Vestry that so many of the congregation prefer this form of contribution to all others. Bishop Baynes said that one day, with 1,400 coins in the offertory, there was only one over a shilling.

Talks With Young Listeners.

VIII.—THE GRAND VIZIER.

A LONG line of camels, carrying loads of spices and sweet-scented oil and ointment, trudged along through the hill country of Canaan. Swarthy Ishmaelites, armed with spears, were leading the caravan southwards to Egypt.

One of the caravan men heard a curious moan which seemed to issue from the ground. Looking about, he saw a hole. Leaning over the edge, he peered down into a dry cistern, and, in the half-darkness, saw a youth crouched at the bottom, and wearing a long-sleeved coat, gaily coloured. Such coats were not worn by common folk and labourers. A rope was let down, the youth was hauled up. His face was pale and scared. The camel-drivers crowded round him, listened a few moments to his quick, breathless tale about certain wicked brothers who had put him in the pit. But time was precious. At a signal from the leader, the Ishmaelites strapped the youth upon camel-back, and the caravan plodded on. Along the sandy road by the sea, and so to Egypt, they journeyed.

The captive youth, bred among shepherds and peasants, gazed in wonder at temples, gates, statues; at chariots and soldiers; at bands of musicians piping and harping as they followed priests who bore small boats in which the images of Gods sat. Over all was a blue sky. Seldom did rain fall in Egypt.

The lad was sold as a slave to Potiphar, a captain of the king's guard.

This youth was Joseph, son of Israel the bargainer, and brown-eyed Rachel. His father had petted him, favoured him, dressed him in a superior coat; and Joseph put on mighty airs, and dreamed dreams of becoming a prince, before whom his brothers should make humble salaams. His ten elder brothers were sick of his tall talk, and one day they dropped him, as you have seen, into a dry cistern; though, according to another legend, they sold him to the caravaners for twenty pieces of silver. The twelfth, and youngest of the brothers, was Benjamin, also son to the shepherdess Rachel.

Joseph was quick-witted and active, and, in course of time, rose to be steward or manager of the captain's house, and farms, and servants. So busy was he that, only in a quiet sad hour now and then, had he leisure to think of the far-away encampment where his people pastured their sheep and goats, and offered sacrifice to Yahweh, and he thought of the pillar that stood over his mother's grave.

A sudden change of fortune flung him into prison. "This wretch," said the captain's wife, with a sparkle of hate in her eyes, and pointing to Joseph, "asked me to be his lover!"

It was a lie, but Captain Potiphar believed it, and Joseph was lodged in the jail.

Here again his Hebrew wit helped; and it was not long before he was once more a manager, for the prison-keeper simply saved himself labour by using Joseph as his chief clerk. King Pharaoh had packed off two court officials, who had offended him, to this same jail, and Joseph amused himself with explaining to them the meaning of their dreams.

"I dreamed," said one, who was royal cup-bearer, "that I squeezed juice from grapes for the royal cup."

"And no doubt," smiled Joseph, "you will soon be back at your duties; and if so, do not forget your Hebrew friend, who was stolen away from his homeland."

"I dreamed," said the other, "that I carried baskets of food for the royal table, and the birds pecked at the meat and cakes."

"Ah," sighed Joseph, "you will be hanged."

And sure enough (that is, sure enough for a legend), the cup-bearer was restored to his post of honour, and the cook was hanged; and alas! the cup-bearer had a short memory, and forgot the interpreter of dreams for two whole years.

The cup-bearer heard the king of Egypt narrate his dreams before the lords and captains of the court, but not a soul could make out the riddle. In the dream he had seen seven lean cows swallow seven fat ones; and seven thin wheat-ears swallow seven ears full of grain.

"Ah," exclaimed the cup-bearer, as if shot.

Everybody wondered.

"The young Hebrew, the young Hebrew," he went on, "fetch the young Hebrew!"

When his confused talk was explained, a message was dispatched, and Joseph, who had hurriedly shaved his head in the Egyptian style, was rushed to the palace.

"The thing is clear enough," he said, after hearing the dreams repeated; "for seven years the crops of Egypt will be rich, and then for seven years scarce any corn or other food-plants will grow; and Egypt will need a wise head to plan how to save food for the seven thin years of famine."

Of course, his was the wise head. Pharaoh gave Joseph his kingly ring, arrayed him in princely robes, sent him riding round the city in a chariot, and the town criers and heralds told the gaping crowd that Joseph was grand vizier, or chief minister and manager of the royal wealth and the fortunes of Egypt.

He had climbed from the pit to the throne.

During the seven fat years, the grand vizier of Egypt gathered corn and beans into huge public granaries and stores; and, in the first year of famine, people came in their thousands to buy food from the thrifty vizier's "mounded heaps."

One day, ten travel-stained men led their asses to the gate of one of the granaries, and seeing the vizier,—shaven-headed, gold-collared, and attended by soldiers,—they made low salaams. He knew his ten brothers at once. Sharply he questioned them, and, in fear and trembling, they replied that they had come from Canaan, where they had left an aged sire and a younger brother; and there had been a twelfth brother, but.....he was dead.

"For all I know," snapped out the vizier, sternly, "you may be spies. Next time you come to buy, bring the youngest brother with you, and, as a pledge and hostage, I shall keep one of you here as prisoner."

One was immediately led away. His name was Simeon.

"Doom has fallen on us," groaned the eldest brother, Reuben, to the others, "It has all come about through your cruelty to Joseph. You know I begged you not to put him in the pit."

There were tears in the vizier's eyes as he listened, for though he had spoken to them in the Egyptian tongue,—an interpreter translating into Hebrew,—of course he knew his mother tongue, and understood all they said.

Slowly and sadly they retraced their way to Canaan. On the road, one of the ten corn sacks was opened, and the money which had been paid for that very sackful

lay on the top. Reaching home, each found his money in his sack, where, as you may suppose, Joseph had ordered it to be placed. They dreaded lest they should be treated as robbers when they returned to Egypt; and as for poor old Jacob, his heart was nigh unto breaking at the thought of Simeon in jail, and the danger that might befall young Benjamin.

The corn was all eaten. They must go to Egypt again. Brother Judah swore solemnly that he would take the utmost care of Benjamin, and for ever bear the blame if the youth did not come back. So the little train set out again, and arrived at the granary, and lowly bowed.

To their immense surprise, they were all sent into Joseph's palace, an officer leading the way; and to this officer they eagerly explained that they had brought double money for the corn, since, by some accident, the first payment had been slipped into the sacks.

"All right," he said, smiling, for he had himself played the trick; and then he bade them bathe their feet, while their asses were taken to the royal stable.

A bustle at the gate,—Joseph alighted from a litter borne by slaves,—the brothers salaamed, and offered a gift of honey and nuts, brought from far Canaan.

Dinner was laid, the vizier being seated at a table by himself on a dais, the shepherds from Canaan eating at other boards in the same stately chamber, and the men, open-eyed, marvelled one at another. A slave kept running to Benjamin with dainties from the vizier's table.

After a night's rest, they set out joyfully with eleven asses and eleven sackloads, for Simeon had joined the party again.

"Halt!"

The command was given by horsemen who had followed after them.

"Scoundrels!" thundered the officer who led the horsemen, "I arrest you as robbers of the grand vizier's fortune-telling silver cup!"

"Robbers? cup? scoundrels? Sir, look into our sacks and prove us!"

He did. Each sack contained the corn-money, and Benjamin's sack contained the divining cup. In this cup, a wise man could tell fortunes by looking at the rings formed by liquids.

So back they went, and they were cut to the heart when the vizier, quietly but with deadly meaning, said Benjamin must become a slave; the rest might go home.

"Oh, my lord," cried Judah, as he knelt, "I pray you, let me speak. We have lost one brother; he and Benjamin were sons of the same mother; and if we go back without our father's darling, his grey hairs will be brought down with sorrow to the grave, and I,—oh, mercy on me,—I shall for ever bear the blame, for so I gave my father pledge."

At these last words, the grand vizier broke down, and he sobbed aloud, and said:—

"I am Joseph,—Joseph your brother: come near to me; you will know me by my Hebrew speech; come to me—Benjamin, Simeon, Reuben, Judah—all."

Thus was sorrow turned to joy, and fear to happiness; and, ere many weeks had passed, old Jacob had arrived in Egypt, with sons, women, grandchildren, slaves, flocks; some on foot, and some riding in the royal wagons sent by King Pharaoh. Years afterwards, the body of the aged Israel was borne along the caravan road to the cave where Abraham had been buried, and a procession followed him to his resting-place in Canaan.

* * * *

Such is the famous story of Joseph. We shall hear later how the twelve tribes, or clans, of Israel formed the kingdom of Canaan, with Jerusalem as the chief city, and Yahweh as their national God. But these

Jewish goatherds and shepherds, though wise and clever at many things, were not wise and clever in their politics, and they quarrelled and split, and two tribes (Judah and Benjamin) set up the kingdom of Jerusalem, or Judah; and ten tribes set up the kingdom of the North, or Israel. Of these ten tribes, the most powerful were those two (Ephraim and Manasseh) who were descended from Judah. So you see the Southern kingdom would regard Judah as their father, and the Northern kingdom, Joseph.

The story of Joseph was most likely a legend made by the story-tellers and minstrels of the Northern kingdom; but perhaps another version of it was told in the South, and that is why the incident of Judah has been introduced, so as to give him an important place in the tale.¹

F. J. GOULD.

What is Atheism?

MR. CAMPBELL, as cited in our issue of May 7, makes the astonishing statement that "there are no Atheists except in practice," because "we all believe in the power that produced us"; it is well, therefore, to point out once more *what* dogma is rejected or denied in the term "Atheism," just to show how wholly unrelated it is to a belief in "the power that produced us"; so much so, that what purports to be an argument is not distinguishable from a mere quibble.

The core of Theism was not the mere existence of a deity, but the dogma that that heterogeneous miscellany called the Bible was God's own revelation of himself, miraculously disclosed to certain priests or prophets of the Hebrew race, and that it was thus a collection of eternal verities. Atheism was, therefore, simply the rejection or denial of that fundamental dogmatic claim. Such was its invariable import as used by the Church in connection with its policy and practice of persecuting beliefs. Anyone who had the temerity to deny any Biblical dogma was charged with the crime of Atheism, and was usually punished for it in one of its characteristic tender methods.

Seldom, if ever, the charge involved a denial of the Being of God. Paine, Voltaire, and all the Deists of the eighteenth century firmly believed in such a Divine Being. Moreover, their God was incomparably more exalted in conception than that worshipped by the Christian Church. That fact, however, did not save them from being denounced, reviled, and persecuted as "Atheists." What the Deists rejected was not God, but the so-called revelation of him—that crude and barbaric deity portrayed in the Bible. They repudiated the claim only because this "revealed" portrait was the image of a savage chief, and not that of a transcendent creator, sustainer, and ruler of the infinite universe. That is to say, because the image belied itself in every attribute and action ascribed to it. To them its falsity was branded on its forehead. A little while ago Mr. Campbell's opinion of this "revealed God" was even more scornful than theirs. That he did not suffer the tragic fate of the ill-starred Vanini, only shows what different value is now set upon efforts of solving the "mysteries of God" by evasion, suppression, or subterfuge. Then, such attempts were treated as Atheism, despite the verbal veneer in which they were disguised. To-day, any straw of evasive jugglery is impatiently seized with joy—anything that promises to save the weathered craft from sinking. Vanini suffered, not for denying the "existence of God" or for disbelief

¹ There is an Egyptian tale of Two Brothers, which contains an incident like that of Potiphar's wife and her tempting. Very likely this legend and the Joseph legend both made use of a popular tale of the captain's wife.

in "the power that produced us," but for "Atheism," and Mr. Campbell had even a better claim to a heretic's death and glory. Has he gone back on his position? His pantheistic definition of God does not seem to say so. If he has not, then Mr. Campbell himself is still an *Atheist* in the only ecclesiastical usage of the term. Apparently, like all the deistic "heretics," he solved this "mystery of God" by repudiating the fundamental Christian dogma of an inspired Bible—the very *raison d'être* and sole foundation of the historic Church.

THE FUNCTION OF ATHEISM.

On the whole, that has been the very rôle of Atheism from the first, namely, to remove some "mystery of God." The mysteries of Nature are solved by *knowledge*, because they are due to some obscurity of cause or relation. But the "mysteries of God" are banished by *denial* of dogma, and not by knowledge. No amount of research, or of learning, or of genius can dispel one jot or tittle of these divine mysteries, because they do not arise from any natural obscurity, but from self or mutual contradiction, or from some hopeless incongruity inseparable from the dogmas which embody them.

Let us now cite a few instances of such solutions.

In the Pentateuch, God is represented at one moment as a wizard conjuring into existence a boundless universe by sounding a human word; and at the next as a divine tailor making "coats of skin" for Adam and Eve. And, again, as a man, more or less elusive, conversing with the patriarchs and revealing his back unto Moses. The account, however, since it was claimed to be an *inspired* record, perplexed and bewildered the civilized intellect; it violated and outraged every sense of proportion and congruity, with the result that a vast number of people were, as a last resort, driven to solve it by repudiating the preposterous claim which created it—an attitude which the Church uniformly branded as Atheism.

In the same documents Jahveh is described as a merciless Oriental despot, demanding the indiscriminate devastation of a countryside and the ruthless destruction of innocent life; and also as an insatiable bloodthirsty being who refuses to be pacified unless his altars are perpetually drenched with the blood of animals; and, again, as one that was gratified by obsequious prayers, fulsome praise, and abject postures. Now, ever since the rising tide of modern humanism has set in, and more or less so at all times, there have been quite a number of people who were so scandalized by such a degrading and abhorrent portrait of God, as to be forced to solve this historic moral mystery by contemptuously rejecting the whole priestly claim as a barbaric dream of a primitive age. But those who dared, did so at the risk of being found out and treated as Atheists.

Again, we are bidden, under penalty of eternal damnation, to believe that God, moved by his infinite love for the human race, became incarnate in a man who lived in Palestine some nineteen centuries ago, but who, despite his omniscience, left mankind more deeply sunk in crass barbaric ignorance than he found it. For, according to the "inspired" records, he not only departed from the world without shedding a ray of light on any branch, section, or kind of knowledge, but intensified its mental darkness by endorsing every form of credulity and every species of superstition. For example, the bulk of the sayings and doings attributed to him, either assume or assert the demoniacal origin of disease, pestilence, and insanity—an endorsement which ere long led to the degrading Christian practice of casting out demons—an ecclesiastical function that gave human credulity a new lease of life. Now the clash between these two

dogmas—the presumed omniscience of an “incarnate God” and the crass ignorance of the presumed “inspired record”—created another “mystery of God,” and one that persistently refused to be solved, either by scholarship or by subtlety, for the simple reason that it was wholly created by the dogmas which embodied it. It was, therefore, susceptible of no solution save that obtained by their rejection; but those who adopted that method, or some disguised equivalent, were invariably treated as Atheists by the historic Church.

Another very perplexing divine mystery was created when a suffering “Jesus-God” was added to the despotic ruling-God of Judaism, *without* abandoning its arrogant dogma of Monotheism. The profound enigma thus created was: “How two individuals could also be only one individual.” This new “mystery of God” embroiled Europe for the best part of two millenniums—a mystery which the combined genius and learning of Christendom failed ignominiously to solve, though every species of metaphysical jugglery was resorted to. And the reason so obvious—it was insoluble.

Finally, mankind was, in the name of God, commanded to believe in an eschatology purporting to have been revealed by Jesus himself while on earth. This eschatology included four events of the most transcendent significance to mankind. They were:—

1. That the end of the world was at hand.
2. That this event would be attended by a general resurrection of the dead of all times and places.
3. That the same event was also to be the final Judgment Day for all mankind. And—
4. That a semi-material hell of fire and brimstone had been divinely provided for the reception of the bulk of the human race, in which eternity was to be spent in more or less agony. Now these divine *revelations* became divine *mysteries* when they turned to be flatly contradicted by facts. The first was soon falsified by history; and, indeed, the essentially mythical character of the rest was also plainly indicated by the same fact. The mystery, however, was not complete until modern science had exposed the ineffable barbarity of the second and the third “revelations,” or until our more refined and humanized moral nature had revealed to us the abhorrent fiendishness of the last. And yet all this was divinely revealed by an incarnate God! What a mystery! so infinite that only Atheism could solve it and scatter its gloom.

Such, then, has been the invariable role of Atheism—viz., to solve the “mysteries of God,” by denying the preposterous claim that savageries, barbaric absurdities, absolute inconsistencies, flat contradictions, and demonstrable falsities, were verities revealed by God. In brief, the Deity rejected in “Atheism” was the Christian fetish-god—the Bible. The meaning of the term cannot be in doubt, for it has been inscribed by the Church in characters of blood and fire athwart every page of Christian history; and no one knows that meaning better than Mr. Campbell unless he has forgotten all his past discourses.

May we, therefore, with all due deference, ask Mr. Campbell, who says that there are no Atheists in practice, to be so good as to tell us, without evasion, and in unequivocal language, how does he now solve the above divine mysteries? We shall then know whether he is at present an Atheist or a Christian? It would, by the way, solve another mystery—the mystery of Campbell himself, which is only a degree less insoluble than those of God. But probably Mr. Campbell will find it easier to ignore our challenge than comply with our request.

KERIDON.

Skeleton Sermons.

VI.—Who Was Cain's Wife?

ONE of the greatest unsolvable problems that was ever propounded perhaps is—Who Was Cain's Wife? Cain's wife (Gen. iv. 17), of blessed memory, is a back number, and must take her place on a back shelf, for she has had her day, and it was a red-letter, not to say a red-haired day, too. That old genealogy containing the long line of history and vigorous “begats,” beginning with Adam and Eve, and ending with Noah, included not a few wonderful hale old fellows, and if there be really any ruling passion strong in death, it is the ruling passion to live for ever.

But in that genealogy there is a bad set-back with regard to Cain's wife that, I fear, the Bible will have to be revised over again to even up matters. Certainly the question, through which pervades “a delightful air of mystery that up till now has failed to fix the fleeting fancy,” leaves, as a matter of fact, all kinds of loop-holes or open doors for anthropologists, biologists, Darwinian theorists, and others, to speculate upon and discuss until the Day of Judgment—or, if showery then, until the day after.

Recently I have been engaged in compiling a little genealogy “on my own.” In doing so, I must ask the reader to ponder over one or two things. Have you ever thought how many male and female ancestors were required to bring you into the world? First, it was necessary that you should have had a father and mother—that makes two human beings. Each of them must also have had a father and mother—that makes four human beings. Each of these four must have had a father and mother—that makes eight human beings. And so we must go back to fifty-eight generations, which brings us only to the time of the Christian Era. The calculations thus resulting show that 288,229,966,551,711,744 births must have taken place to bring you into the world—you who read these lines. Many, if they have consciences, ought to be sorry they gave so much trouble for such a poor result.

“But to our muttens!” The truth of the adage as to the inadvisability of wearing “one's heart on one's sleeve,” is a warning not always heeded, alas! As to Cain's wife, she'll ever remain an enigma for all time; for how could Cain or any man marry at a time when he had no other relative than his father and mother? “A little learning is a dangerous thing,” but *Cain knew his wife*, and good luck to him! For man is a molecule in the mass, and must be wedded to something. “Cain knew his wife”—more probably her protesting with the broom, or the washing-jug, or whatever happened to be handy. In all probability, she would have the last word, even if she had to use up all the firewood in the land of Nod to do it.

The proper way to deal with the question as to “Who Was Cain's wife?” would be that adopted by an authority who once undertook to write an essay on “Snakes in Ireland.” He commenced:—

“There are no snakes in Ireland,” and having got that far, found that he had exhausted the whole subject.

Both Solomon and the late lamented Job tried their hands at a great many stiff contracts in their days; but they carefully gave the above stupendous problem the go-by—which was a mighty good thing for Solomon's reputation for wisdom, and for Job's character as a man of Christian fortitude and prize-medal patience.

THE OWL.

Christianity enjoins the blessings of poverty, and it is interesting to note that two wealthy Christians are Charlie Chaplin and the Czar of all the Russias.

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