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Views and Opinions.

More About Christianity and Woman.
 Freethinkers have every reason to feel pleased that the controversy over the temporary admission of women preachers into the Church has arisen. It will serve to bring home to many the extent to which Christianity has operated against the ideal of a rational sexual equality. And while all women will not have their eyes opened to the facts, some will be enlightened, and their awakening will be all to the good. A movement without women is doomed to be a comparative sterility. This is no mere sentimentalism, it is a sober statement of fact. It would be equally true of a movement without men. The co-operation of both is necessary to a healthy movement. The Christian Churches know this as well as we do. They have never despised the help of woman, all they have done is to condemn her character and stamp her an inferior being. The distinction between Christianity and Freethought is not that one utilizes the services of woman, and the other does not, but that whereas the Christian Church has always had a "woman question" because of its peculiar view of woman's nature and function, in the world of Freethought no such question has ever arisen. Her help and her comradeship have there been frankly accepted. There has been no discussion of equality, because the question of inequality has never emerged.

* * *

Primitive Priest and Modern Parson.
 Dr. Letitia Fairfield, writing in the *Daily Chronicle* of August 17, says that the objection to women preachers on the ground that they would contaminate a consecrated building is "the most comprehensive insult ever offered to a human being." She rightly adds that "it reveals a mentality interesting to the student of folk-lore and primitive magic." The last sentence touches bottom. The consideration of the influence of Christian beliefs upon the position of woman is essentially a study of the persistence of primitive superstitions amid comparatively advanced social conditions. In the South Seas the natives prohibited, on religious grounds, women entering

certain places reserved for men. These places were taboo. In London in 1916 the Bishop of London prohibits women preaching from the pulpit or the chancel, or places reserved for men, and large numbers of the clergy wish this prohibition extended to the whole of the Church. That is our taboo. Wherein lies the superiority of the one over the other? In what respect is the mentality of Bishop Ingram superior to that of the Polynesian priest? As Dr. Fairfield says, it is a question of primitive magic in both cases. The Polynesian priests and our English clergy would be quite *en rapport* in discussing the subject. The only distinction between them would be in their dress. And that might be easily removed.

* * *

Pagan versus Christian Ideals.

In this matter history illustrates anthropology, and anthropology explains history. It will be well to reverse the logical order and take history first. And here, contrary to the current teaching, I have no hesitation in saying that, even religiously, Christianity was a retrogression. By its teachings superstitions that were decaying in the ancient world were revived. A dominion and a practice of sacred magic were developed, such as only exist in the most primitive of social states. And the effect of this was soon seen on social life and conditions. So far as the position of woman was concerned, the whole impetus of Christianity was in the wrong direction. It turned its back upon the enlightened thought of Greece and Rome to seek inspiration from the Old and New Testaments. In not a single case do the ideals of womanhood, as illustrated in these writings, compare favourably with those of Greek and Roman literature. Monogamy, again, is a Pagan ideal. The Old Testament is wholly in favour of polygamy. The New Testament does not prohibit it. And more than one great Christian writer has asserted polygamy to be quite in accord with Christian teachings. Thus Luther said he could not assert it to be "repugnant to Holy Scripture" for a man to marry several wives. Milton held it to be "sufficiently established that polygamy is allowed by God's law." And Bishop Burnet, dealing with the same subject, said that "a simple and express discharge of polygamy is nowhere to be found" in the New Testament.

* * *

The Early Christians and Woman.

Had Christianity, in reviving the primitive taboo on woman, accompanied this with a full consciousness of the primitive reasons for its existence, there would have been fewer evil social consequences. The peculiarity of the position was that it proceeded to erect a philosophy of the inferiority of woman, quite foreign to the savage mind. Savages do not think of women as inferior, but only as different. Christians held her to be both different and inferior. The reason for the primitive view will be seen later; at present it is enough to note that the Christian conception of woman as—to quote St. Chrysostom's choice description—"a necessary evil, a natural temptation, a desirable calamity, a domestic peril, a deadly

fascination, and a painted ill," led to a conception of womankind as low as anything that has ever existed. The effect of Christian teaching was well put by the Rev. Principal Donaldson in the following passage:—

I may define man to be a male human being, and woman to be a female human being.....As human beings they are on an equality as to their powers, the difference in individuals resulting from the surroundings and circumstances of spiritual growth. But man is a male and woman is a female, and this distinction exists in Nature for the continuance of the race. Now what the early Christians did was to strike the male out of the definition of man, and human being out of the definition of woman. Man was a human being made for the highest and noblest purposes; woman was a female made only to serve one. She was on the earth to inflame the heart of man with every evil passion. She was a fire-ship continually striving to get alongside the male man-o'-war to blow him to pieces.

No wonder that Lord Hugh Cecil declares that to grant liberty of preaching to women is contrary to the mind and practice of the Church.

* * *

Christian Legislation and Woman.

I mentioned last week that a Church Council—that of Macon—discussed the question whether woman was a human being. Readers may be interested in the curious thesis there maintained:—

Nature, which ever aims at perfection, would always produce men, and when a woman is born it is, as it were, by mistake, and an error of nature; as when anyone is born blind or lame, or with any other natural defect, or like the fruit of some trees, which never ripen. Thus a woman is an animal produced by accident.

In the Church itself women were at first permitted to be doorkeepers and to hold one or two other unimportant offices, but these were ultimately refused them—a striking contrast to the Pagan practice. In all the social legislation that came into existence under Christian influences, the inferiority of women was insisted on. The right of a married woman to own property was taken from her, and only restored a little more than a generation since. Along with this went the right of sisters to share an inheritance equally with brothers, the larger portion going to "the worthiest of blood"—a distinction which Blackstone admits was unknown to Roman law. Under Christian law a woman could not bring an action against a man save for personal injury, nor could she appear as witness in a criminal suit nor attest a will. As late as the thirteenth century the Church Courts in England ruled that a husband could transfer his wife to another man for a period determinable at the recipient's pleasure. The same offences committed by a man or a woman entailed different penalties. An Act of Parliament in the time of Henry VIII. prohibited women, with other persons of "low estate," from reading the New Testament. Until Elizabeth's time they were denied benefit of clergy. Less than twenty years ago the Wesleyan Methodist Conference rejected a proposal to admit women delegates by 187 to 169 votes. One is not, therefore, surprised to find Lecky declaring that "In the whole feudal legislation women were placed in a much lower position than in the Roman Empire"; that the complete inferiority of the sex was continually maintained by the law," and that, wherever Canon or Church law "has been made the basis of legislation, we find laws of succession sacrificing the interests of daughters and of wives, and a state of public opinion which has been formed and regulated by these laws; nor was any serious attempt made to abolish them until the close of the last century"—a period, be it noted, remarkable for the rapid development and open expression of Free-thought views. And in 1880 a Methodist Conference

in America met a request for permission for women preachers with the following resolutions:—

First.—That woman is under a curse, which subjects her to man.

Second.—This curse has never been removed, nor will it be removed until the resurrection.

Third.—That woman, under the Mosaic law—God's Civil law—had no voice in anything.....That she was no part of the congregation of Israel, that her genealogy was not kept, that no notice was taken of her birth or death except as these events were connected with some man or Providence.....And that in the tenth commandment—always in force—she is scheduled as a higher species of property, that her identity was completely merged in that of her husband,

Fourth.—That for seeking to hold office Miriam was smitten with leprosy.....

Fifth.—That to vote is to rule, votes carrying with it all the collaterals of making, expounding, and executing law; that God has withheld from woman the right to rule either in the Church, the State, or the family; that He did this because of her having "brought sin and death into the world, and all our woe."

Sixth.—That the Bible is addressed to man, and not to woman; that man comes to God through Jesus, and woman comes to Jesus through man; that every privilege the wife enjoys she but receives through the husband, for God has declared that woman shall not rule man, but be subject to him.

It is not to be wondered at that in all the agitations for the equality of the sexes no appeal has ever been made for support to Christian teaching. The historical testimony was far too clear for that to be done.

* * *

Christianity and Marriage.

Something might be said in favour of Christianity if, while excluding women from public life, it had reserved for them as a place of honour the sphere of the home. But even this was not the case. There is no more depressing chapter in human history than that which deals with the Christian teachings concerning celibacy. Jesus himself was a celibate. Paul was also unmarried, and counsels others to remain so. Very early in the history of the Church there was a pronounced movement in favour of celibacy. Woman having become a "female animal," her function was that of reproduction, and that was looked upon with disfavour. It was Tertullian who described children as "burdens which are to most of us unsuitable as being perilous to faith"; it was Jerome who said, "Marriage is at best a sin; all that we can do is to excuse and purify it"; and Origen declared that all marriages were unclean. The result of such teachings was that Christian literature, with rare exceptions, presents as low and as coarse a view of marriage as is to be read anywhere. Dean Milman said, with truth, that in the Christian discussions on matrimony, there was a complete disregard of the social aspect of the subject. The disputants completely ignored the softening and humanizing effect of natural affection, of parental tenderness, and filial love. The consequence of all this was a hardening of nature, a coarsening of character, which had much to do with the barbarities and licentiousness of the mediæval period, Christianity, in its crusade against the equality of the sexes intimated a crusade against the welfare of the race. It revived and strengthened the primitive view of woman's nature, and backed this up with a vicious theology and a false philosophy peculiarly its own. While the power of Christianity remained unshaken, the subordination of woman was assured. Her liberation only commenced with its weakening, and will only be completed with its destruction.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Religious Authority.

ON what ground are people expected to believe in and live according to the doctrines of Christianity? Augustine had the courage to give expression to the fact that, in themselves, such doctrines are essentially unbelievable. His words are: "I should not believe the Gospel did not the authority of the Catholic Church move thereto." He also says: "To the Canonical Scriptures alone I owe agreement without dissent." The two sayings are thoroughly consistent, because it was the Catholic Church alone that decided which books were entitled to be regarded as canonically authoritative. The Christian doctrines are germinally contained in the New Testament, and the Church has declared that the New Testament is the inspired and infallible Word of God. According to the teaching of the Catholic Church, therefore, the seat of religious authority is twofold. At the famous Council of Trent, in the sixteenth century, tradition was pronounced to be of equal authority with Scripture; and that has ever since been the doctrine held by the Catholic Church. The Protestant Church, on the other hand, rejects the authority of tradition, but clings tenaciously to that of the Bible; and this, of necessity, means a signal weakening of the case for authority. There is no possible escape from the conclusion that the position of the Catholic Church is logically unassailable. She enjoys the double advantage of having entrusted to her custody a Divinely inspired Book, and of being herself Divinely inspired to interpret that Book, and to settle at her own councils all dogmatic questions as they arise. Newman discovered that submission to this authority would be, for him, the only practical safeguard against the threatened invasion of doubt and Atheism. Therefore he bowed his head and found peace to his mind. But the Protestant Church, by disbelieving in her own infallibility as interpreter and teacher, undermined the foundation of religious authority. When Luther ventured to deny the authority of the Pope and to aver that councils might err, he made the denial of all religious authority whatsoever logically permissible. The famous reformer submitted only to what he called the exclusive authority of the Scriptures; but with him this was merely a *formal* principle, the *material* principle being Justification by Faith, and the latter principle controlled the former. The moment he found out that the Epistle of James does not teach Justification by Faith, he lost confidence in it and angrily flung it out of his Canon, making hilarious fun of it as an epistle of straw. It is customary, in Protestant countries, to glory in the Reformation as one of the grandest movements in the history of religion. That it was a mighty movement is beyond dispute, but we claim that it was a movement calculated inevitably to make for the disintegration and dissolution of religion. Luther and Calvin did not perceive that by advocating the rights of private judgment and the fallibility of the Church, they were digging up the roots of all external authority. If Luther could cast off as worthless the Epistle of James simply because it seemed to oppose his pet doctrine, it followed that a disbeliever in the dogma of Justification by Faith was equally entitled to throw the Pauline Epistles overboard, pronouncing their contents morally dangerous. It would be a mistake, however, to look upon the Reformers as friends of freedom, for they were nothing of the sort. In reality, Luther and Calvin were but new popes, quite as exclusive and authoritative as the one at Rome. Private judgment, after all, only signified the judgment of Geneva against that of the Vatican. But the principle on which the split took place was bound eventually to undermine religion itself.

The appeal to the exclusive authority of the Scriptures was made in the interest of a special theory; but, ere long, other special theories sprang into being, each one of which made its appeal to the exclusive authority of the Scriptures, with the result that to-day Protestantism is divided into innumerable little sects, all of which claim the Bible as their infallible standard. And now the time has come when a Protestant clergyman is not ashamed to call this also "a false idea of authority, which has led in the past, and is leading now, to all sorts of serious mistakes in life." The Rev. T. Rhondda Williams, in an article in the *Christian World* for August 17, says that "so long as final authority is supposed to reside in any teaching of the past, there is a barrier to progress." We fully agree, but are amazed that such a truth should come from a man who still preaches a Gospel that owes its origin to the superstition of the past.

Mr. Williams endeavours to show that there can be no real federation of the Free Churches of this country until the authority of the New Testament has been abandoned. The reverend gentleman says:—

A man was asked whether his church—a Baptist Church poorly attended—would amalgamate with a Congregational Church in that neighbourhood, where there was plenty of room for the people. His answer was: "We could not do that, because we should have to give up the Bible if we did." There you have it. That man will interpret the authority of Scripture in such a way as to make the amalgamation of a Baptist and a Congregational Church impossible. He is typical of many. The federation will be up against that difficulty in a great many places: It is a difficulty that cannot be got over until the pulpit has really taught the people the truth on this question of authority.

Again we agree, but anxiously ask what is the truth on the question of authority? Mr. Williams is clearly of opinion that it is not to be found in the New Testament. "If the New Testament is to be the authority as to the kind of Church we want to-day, we shall have the same results as before"—innumerable divisions. "The apostolic form of church must not be obligatory":—

Congregationalists used to argue that the Congregational form of church must be the right one, because it was the apostolic form. Other churches, however, not Congregational, made precisely a similar claim. They could not all be right in arguing that their form had apostolic authority, but they were all wrong in supposing that any primitive form was binding.

Quite so; but what *is* the truth on the question of authority? The reverend gentleman is profoundly right when he says that "the main reason why so much of the modern world is outside the Christian Churches to-day is because it feels that the Churches belong so much to a world that has passed away." But what is the Christian Church? The temple of the Holy Ghost, the body of Christ, the Divinely appointed instrument of the world's redemption, the custodian of Christian truths. Consequently to "feel that the Churches belong so much to a world that has passed away" is tantamount to being convinced that Christianity is antiquated, that it has no message to deliver which the world needs to hear, and that its ministers are at best but quacks. Mr. Williams seems to imagine that Christianity and the Church are two different things; but they are simply two names for one and the same thing. Christianity is but the Church's creation, and the Church exists for the sole purpose of perpetuating Christianity. Her ministers are expounders and advocates of the Christian Gospel, whose avowed object is to persuade their hearers to believe the Gospel and get saved thereby. What is their authority? One minister says that it is the Bible and the Holy Spirit within them, and another that it is everyone's own sense of what is true and expedient; but both answers

are woefully inadequate. Scarcely any two people are agreed as to what the Bible teaches on any subject, and the utterances of the Holy Ghost are as different and contradictory as those through whom he is supposed to speak. That is to say, there is no external authority to which people can reasonably be asked to submit. A Catholic believes blindly on the authority of the Church, and the Protestant believes blindly on the authority of a book susceptible of a hundred different interpretations, whilst Mr. Williams would have us believe in something or other on the authority of a strange urge within us to do what we think right, which urge, he declares, is a Divine endowment of our nature. It is possible that Mr. Williams is much nearer to the truth than either Catholic or Protestant; but what puzzles us is why Mr. Williams is a Christian minister. He is really a Secularist *plus* an indefinable supernaturalist. He preaches a God for whom in his system there is neither need nor room. If "we must use all our faculties and all available knowledge and do our very best to find out what is our duty, and then we must do it," one wonders where God and Christ and the Gospel come in at all. Our moral consciousness is by no means a reliable authority, because it may be deflected by our passions, while at its very best it may lead us seriously astray. The conclusion to which Mr. Williams appears to come is that there is no external authority whatever by which our thought and conduct can be safely regulated.

We have three conceptions of authority before us, the Catholic, the Protestant, and Mr. Williams's. The first is perfectly intelligible. Here we have an infallible Book infallibly interpreted by an infallible Church, resulting in an absolutely infallible authority for all genuine believers. All that it is necessary to do in order to appreciate this conception of authority is to stop thinking, and believe without any reservation. We look upon it as a false and most pernicious conception, but it is intelligible. The Protestant species is utterly unintelligible, and has led to endless confusion and controversy. Time adds to its absurdity. Mr. Williams rejects the authority of the Church and of the Bible, and is apparently an advocate of what may be characterized as the authority of human nature. This is the only authority in which one can rationally believe; but believing in it, what conceivable business has Mr. Williams to be a preacher of any of the thousand versions of the Christian Gospel?

J. T. LLOYD.

The Man Who Kept Hell Alight.

Dismiss whatever insults your own soul.—Whitman.

Of all the dull, stagnant, unedifying *entourages*, that of middle-class Dissent seems to me the stupidest.

—Matthew Arnold.

The Churches are getting ashamed of their hell.

—G. W. Foote.

CHARLES HADDON SPURGEON preached his first sermon when a boy of sixteen, and he preached his last when nearly sixty. His mental attitude had changed but little in the interval, during which he was the most popular preacher in the English-speaking world. His career is, in many respects, unparalleled in the history of British Nonconformity.

To win and keep such a commanding position, Spurgeon must have had peculiar claims to attention. He was narrow, bigoted, ignorant; but it was precisely because breadth, tolerance, and learning would have been objectionable to his enormous following. The central fact in his career, the corner-stone of his fortunes, was that his utterance reflected the thick ideas of the lower middle-class. He was plain John Blunt, saying a thing

straight out; and occasionally Jack Pudding, reckless in raising a laugh. The very names of his books show this: *The Cheque Book on the Bank of Faith*, *A Double Knock at the Door of the Young*, *The Spare Half-Hour*, and *The Salt Cellars*, all in the good, illiterate tradition of Georgian and early Victorian Nonconformity.

Spurgeon was a most copious writer. He published a weekly sermon, without a break, for two generations. His *Treasury of David* consisted of seven volumes, containing over two thousand pages; and he also edited a magazine, *The Sword and Trowel*. His sermons show that, of the higher and deeper elements of the English language, he had no suspicion. Not for him were the rolling harmonies of Jeremy Taylor, the subtle cadences of Milton, the chastened utterances of Newman. He could not even echo Baxter or Bunyan. His language was simply the speech of the lower middle-class, purged of its slang. There is not an original idea in his thousands of sermons. Everything is second-hand and threadbare, and the paucity of the prose is emphasized by quotations from the worst doggerel in the hymn-books, such as:—

Great God, how infinite art thou;
What worthless worms are we.
My heart how dreadful hard it is,
How heavy here it lies;
Heavy and cold within my breast,
Just like a rock of ice.

A point of time, a moment's space,
May land me in yon heavenly place,
Or shut me up in hell.

No one with a scintilla of literary taste would quote such balderdash with gusto, and roll it trippingly off the tongue. He rolled the horrors of damnation over his tongue as a dainty morsel:—

When thou diest, thy soul will be tormented alone; that will be a hell for it; but at the day of judgment thy body will join thy soul, and then thou wilt have twin-hells, thy soul sweating drops of blood, and thy body suffused with agony. In fire exactly like that which we have on earth they to-day will lie, asbestos-like, for ever unconsumed, all thy veins roads for the feet of pain to travel on, every nerve a string on which the Devil shall for ever play his diabolical tune of hell's unutterable lament.

Here is another sample:—

Thou wilt look up there on the throne of God and it shall be written, "For Ever!" When the damned jingle the burning irons of their torment they shall say, "For Ever!" When they howl, echo cries, "For Ever!"

To Spurgeon, the magic of bygone things, the necromancy of learning, and art and literature, save as it may have touched the tiny circle of his Baptist creed, were repellant. Like a fanatical Mohammedan, he would have destroyed all literature but the sacred volume. He was the most perfect example of the Philistine, whom Matthew Arnold loved to banter, and who excited the derision of all cultured foreigners. Spurgeon's ideas were as shallow as a saucer. He had the true priestly temperament, with its personal importance, its unction, its liking for the rack and the thumbscrew. He had, moreover, one of those deplorable natures which never know the careless joys of a springtime. At sixteen, when other boys are at school, he preached with much acceptance to large congregations.

Not only was he intolerant, but he was infallible. A thing was right because he wanted to do it. He was a smoker and a teetotaler, therefore he defended tobacco, but alcohol moved him to furies of derision. In early life he shouted against the sin of Sunday travelling. In middle age he risked his immortal soul by driving to church like a mere bishop. Tartuffe himself could not have done more. Spurgeon's verbal knowledge of the Bible was nearly perfect; but he treated the volume

as if it were a newspaper. Hence his success with half-educated tradesmen and their wives, and his enormous limitations.

Spurgeon was the last preacher of any eminence who taught the savage dogma of eternal torment. Although his theology abounded in darkness, as of blackest night, his utterances were callous. Like others before him, he expressed the usual hypocritical sorrow for the sinner, but contemplated the everlasting torture and damnation of the majority of the human race with singular and touching fortitude. For, in truth, he was obsessed with the dogmas of Christianity. He had no patience with Rationalism, no interest in any point of view but his own. He never tried to understand the meaning of Free-thought. He had no time, he exclaimed, pathetically, "to play tomfool with Socinians, Rationalists, and such-like people."

Outside of the British Isles, Spurgeon could neither have grown nor thriven. His personality is the oddest blend imaginable, for it includes a good deal of Stiggins, a touch of Pecksniff, and a suggestion of John Knox, with an arrogant want of breadth of mind impossible to parallel outside English Nonconformity. At the close of his life he was more notorious than famous. He worked for notoriety as others work for fame. He was a supreme type of the Dissenters it was his pride to believe he represented.

He was as incapable of understanding the past and as blind to the future as the stupidest of his congregation, who cut cheese with a wire for a living. The pity of it was that he firmly believed the imperfect, one-sided, barbarous theology which he expounded sufficient for everything. The folly of it all. No one can rely on the justice of a man who worships an unjust God, nor on his humanity when fiendish motives are incorporated in his most sacred dogmas, nor on his intellectuality whilst he derides reason as a test of truth. Because people crowded to his tabernacle, Spurgeon thought himself the heir and successor of the apostles. He was, in reality, the last preacher, with any pretensions to eminence, who taught the brutal, Biblical dogma of eternal damnation. For which, as often as we think of it, we are satisfied. For it proves that Humanity is outgrowing the horrible doctrines of barbaric creeds, that civilized man is better than the gods of savages.

MIMNERMUS.

The Present Position of Evolution.

II.

(Continued from p. 534.)

APART from their evolutionary interpretation, the remarkable phenomena of foetal development are either entirely meaningless or positively misleading. Embryology is that branch of biology which studies the young organism in its earlier stages of development. As Spencer has forcibly argued, it is well that those who deride the belief that in the course of untold millions of years a protoplasmic speck has given rise to a man, should pause and reflect that every human creature on this planet has been developed in the space of nine short months from a fertilized germ-cell, about the 120th of an inch in diameter, to the baby as we see it at birth. Long familiarity has blinded us to the significance of this, as also to the circumstance that the mighty mind of a Shakespeare or a Newton lay potentially in an infant's brain. Yet body and mind alike arise from a fertilized egg-cell, which betrays, in the course of its pre-natal development, dim reminiscences of its million years' ascent up the ladder of life.

Adult animals are frequently so modified that they reveal little indication of their true relationship. But their affinity is often discovered through a study of their earlier phases of development. For there can be no serious question that each organism, passing as it does through a given series of embryological changes, betrays, in a blurred but still distinguishable manner, the various phases undergone by its immediate and remote ancestors during their racial evolution. This is what Haeckel terms the Biogenetic Law, which assumes that the foetal development of the individual presents a brief and obscured recapitulation of the evolution of the race.

This far-reaching theory was not hastily formulated, but was necessitated by a patient and painstaking examination of the facts. It appears to have been first clearly enunciated by Fritz Muller in his famous work, *Fur Darwin*, published at Leipzig in 1864. The theory was elaborated by Haeckel; utilized in a masterly manner by Spencer; and Darwin, who was immensely impressed by it, stated in his *Origin* (6th ed.), p. 396, that "Embryology rises greatly in interest, when we look at the embryo as a picture, more or less obscured, of the progenitor, either in its adult or larval state, of all the members of the same great class." This view has since obtained wide acceptance, and has exercised an enormous influence on the study of animal embryology.

In company with all the lower animal and vegetable forms, every superior organism starts its career as a nucleated cell. Now, with the Protozoa, the smallest and simplest animals, multiplication takes the form of simple division, each cell wandering away to lead an independent life, while these daughter cells in their turn divide and multiply, and generation after generation these single-celled creatures lead separate lives. This condition may be pictured as that of the single cell which, in certain circumstances, gives rise to the multicellular animals. Among these, the Metazoa, as they are termed, the germ-cells, instead of separating after division, remain together and form a cluster. The cells constituting this cluster arrange themselves into two layers, and this represents the stage of evolution in which sponges and similar organisms still remain. But with the developing embryo of the higher animals a third cell-layer arises between the two earlier layers, and from these layers all the external and internal organs of the body are developed. As we ascend higher and higher in the realm of life, we discover in its embryology that each ascending type is accompanied by a recapitulation of characters unmistakably common to inferior types. In the highest animals of all, the vertebrates, the same story is repeated. The embryo of a bird, a calf, or an ape carries fish like characters such as gill-clefts. And above all, in the unborn child, it is only after exhibiting successive resemblances to inferior animal forms that it at last emerges from the womb as a smooth-backed biped. As Spencer remarks:—

Marvellous as is this repetition of traits belonging to lower types, rudely indicated, it is quite congruous with the hypothesis of evolution—implies a kind of transcendental heredity. Indeed, it seems a necessary implication that if each existing type of organism has been reached through a series of antecedent types, its process of unfolding must bear traces of its ancestral history—cannot be like the unfoldings of those which have had different ancestral histories. How could the various kinds arrive at different *termini* if their journeys were all the same?

The numerous rudimentary organs in man and other animals teach a similar lesson. The whale is so piscine in outline that it was until recently regarded as a fish, while we still refer to whale fisheries. Originally a land mammal, the whale's young still show teeth which never cut the gums. Through adaptation to its aquatic

home, the animal has become greatly transformed. Its spindle-shaped appearance has been evolved, and its tail has been developed by a reduction of its posterior limbs, but their vestiges remain hidden beneath the skin. The seals also resumed the sea-life of their far-off reptilian ancestors, but with them the limbs remain in a less aborted state, the dwindling of the extremities not having proceeded to the same extent. In the great majority of snakes, the limbs have entirely disappeared, although the survival of diminutive vestiges of the hind limbs in the python furnishes palpable evidence of their descent from four-legged reptilian progenitors. With the snakes, their mode of life makes no demand for organs of locomotion, so that the atrophy of their limbs is easily explained.

The phenomena of reduction are clearly illustrated by the wings of birds. Darwin noted this fact in the case of the domestic duck. This bird seldom flies, and its wings are smaller, in proportion to its legs, than those of the wild duck. The untamed bird more frequently exercises its organs of flight. A strictly terrestrial bird like the ostrich possesses very feeble wings, while in some New Zealand birds the wings have nearly disappeared altogether.

Blind cave-dwelling creatures and wingless insects afford further evidence of the influences wielded by environing conditions. As Darwin observed, beetles inhabiting oceanic islands are liable during gales to be swept out to sea as they wing their way through the air. Those least capable of flight, in these circumstances, suffer fewer casualties; and it is suggestive that an extremely large percentage of the beetles native to Madeira and other exposed islands have suffered their wings to be so reduced that they no longer fly. It is also interesting to note that the greater number of these flightless beetles are allied to those of the adjacent continent, where the sea storms have not helped to eliminate their flying relatives. Adaptation, again, is the only available explanation of the numerous sightless animals that dwell in dark cavernous retreats. Cave organisms such as fishes, crustaceans, and tritons exist whose organs of vision display various degrees of atrophy. That their eyes were once functional is proved by the fact that in every known instance they are intimately allied to the normal species native to the surrounding region.

In his *Descent of Man*, Darwin made a powerful appeal to unprejudiced minds by citing the several vestigial organs which the human race has inherited from its animal ancestors. Since Darwin's day, the number of known vestigial organs carried by the paragon of animals has been considerably increased. A very high authority, Professor Wiedersheim, has shown that 180 such vestiges persist in the human framework, either in its undeveloped or adult state. As Professor J. A. Thomson states, man's "body is a museum of relics. We are familiar with unsounded or rudimentary letters in many words; we do not sound the 'o' in leopard or the 'l' in alms; but from these rudimentary letters we read the history of the words."

Many of the mammalia possess muscles which enable them to twitch their ears and move their skin, so as to scare away blood-sucking insects. Although these special muscles are rarely functional in man, they survive as vestiges. The caudal appendage has been almost obliterated in man and the anthropoid apes, but a remnant of the tail remains, and the muscles which at one time worked it are still to be traced. Remembering that the human embryo, at an early period of its development, is adorned with a conspicuous external tail, the rudiments which remain through life are not to be wondered at. As Wiedersheim and other authorities have shown, the tail carried by the human embryo is sup-

ported by eight distinct bones, just like the caudal organ of any other mammal. But, as development proceeds, these bones become reduced in number, and fuse together, thus producing the coccyx or vestigial tail.

Man's descent from herbivorous ancestors is evidenced by the presence of the vermiform appendix, a blind, wormlike structure leading from the large intestine. This organ, which is fully developed in plant-feeding animals, in them fulfils a useful function, while with man it is retained as a detrimental structure, and is the not infrequent occasion of disease and death. That the appendix is useless is proved by the fact that, when removed by means of an operation, no ill effects follow. Indeed, its disappearance proves positively beneficial. The organ is relatively larger in monkeys than in man, and is better developed proportionally in the human fœtus than in the child or adult.

Again, the semilunar fold of the human eye is a quite unnecessary vestige of the still functioning nictitating membrane of the birds. With them it continues to serve as a useful organ. Once more, man's near kinship to the apes and monkeys is further displayed by several characteristics which children and their arboreal cousins together share. In the tropical forests, where our hairy relatives still live, it is a decided advantage to possess inwardly curved feet with movable toes, which help monkeys to clutch boughs and branches as they swing through the trees. In the human infant the toe is far more flexible than in the man, and it is employed in a similar manner to the thumb. The fact has also been emphasized that little children may "often be seen taking up a similar attitude to that of monkeys, curving feet and legs inwards."

The grasping aptitudes of the hands of infants are truly astonishing. In Romanes' *Darwin and After Darwin* is reproduced an excellent instantaneous photograph originally taken by Dr. L. Robinson. This shows an infant, three weeks' old, clinging to a branch, and the child supported its own weight in this position for more than two minutes. The posture of the lower limbs is impressively monkey-like in appearance. Moreover, the natural fondness of children for running on all-fours is another illustration of the retention of primeval traits. A further feature is presented by the human ear, which is very noticeable in some instances. With the lower mammals the outer ears are pointed, and this peculiarity is strongly developed in the embryo of the apes.

In man, particularly among the higher races, the "outer rim of the ear curves inwards upon itself, when the rudiment of the point can often be distinctly traced as a little projection of the rim, giving thus plain evidence of man's animal descent."

Darwin elaborately discusses this curious structure in his *Descent*, and he informs us that his attention was drawn to it by the sculptor Woolner. Professor Schwalbe, the distinguished anatomist, has recently told us that Darwin's interpretation has been fully confirmed by his own independent investigations. "In particular, it was established by these researches that the human fœtus, about the middle of its embryonic life, possesses a pointed ear somewhat similar to that of the monkey genus *Macacus*."

Finally, the human body is made up of the same organs and the same tissues as other mammals, and it may be made miserable by the same parasites which infest its simian relatives, the apes and monkeys.

T. F. PALMER.

(To be continued.)

A union jack has displaced the usual altar frontal at the parish church of East Dean, near Eastbourne. It looks as if the worshippers are flagging.

Startling Announcement.

A Bishop Repudiates Jesus!

THE following passage from an article by Bishop Welldon, in the *Nineteenth Century*, must have filled true followers of Jesus Christ with dismay:—

If anybody holds that the use of force is immoral, he must willingly surrender his property to the first criminal who wishes to take it from him. He must go out of his house; he must live a life of penury; he must retain nothing as his own. That, and that alone, is the conclusion of the doctrine that it is wrong to use force for the suppression of evil doing.

Is it not the case that the passage above quoted contains an almost literally true description of the doctrine and conduct of Jesus Christ, which my Lord Bishop evidently sneers at and reprobates? What *property* did Jesus possess? Had he any to defend against a criminal? What was his scrip and purse worth? Had he a *house* to go out of? The Son of Man, it is recorded, had no place to lay his head. Did not he live a life of penury? And what of "his own" did he retain—in the sense used by my Lord Bishop? Who is this Bishop Welldon, who sets himself up as an authority against the Son of God, and combats his teaching "that it is wrong to use force for the suppression of evil doing"? Did Bishop Welldon ever read about a Bishop Myrie?

Bishop Welldon cannot have his cake and eat it. He cannot be loyal to Christ in the cathedral and disloyal to him in the pages of the *Nineteenth Century*. He merely makes himself an object of ridicule when he tries to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. The astonishing thing is that clerics can so delude themselves into thinking they can reconcile things that are irreconcilable. What this precious Bishop advocates in the *Nineteenth Century* is directly opposed to the fundamentals of the creed he has sworn by. A pretty kettle of fish, this! And a Bishop, too! How can he ever expect to receive the welcoming words at the end of it all, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant"? He has been deceived by—he has embraced—the vain philosophy of the world, and has *repudiated his Master!* This must be a "watery Sabbath" for the Church of England.

But, after all, Bishop Welldon—though he has been accorded the hospitality of the *Nineteenth Century*—may not be so important as he thinks himself. That he must have a tremendously big opinion of himself is proved by his audacious challenge of the teaching of the very Son of God! Bishop Welldon, in sooth, must be a *very* superior person—in his own estimation. But his sensibility cannot be very fine: his intellectual texture may be described as coarse, and his manners have not always been of the best—in controversy. We have known him in the past for a popular comedian on the platform—popular, that is to say, with Welldonians—a kind of universal quack who had ready remedies for every trouble. And *this* is the kind of individual who throws Christ overboard when it suits his purpose. *This* is the individual who on one occasion spoke in a certain sense of "a certain Mr. Foote." Ye gods! Perhaps, after all is said and done, Jesus need not worry very much over this defection. But it must be a "watery Sabbath" for true Christians.

IGNOTUS.

The Rev. Dr. Eaton, preaching in Cleveland, Ohio, to a congregation which included John D. Rockefeller, said Charles Darwin was the factor that brought about the great European War. It seems as if Dr. Eaton wishes to go down to posterity as a great truth-teller, for fear George Washington should be lonely.

Acid Drops.

Quite a business-like article appeared in a recent issue of the *Daily Mirror*, from the Vicar of St. Jude's, Hampstead, on the coming National Mission. The Vicar regrets that he sees no sign of a religious revival in this country, although there is one in France—a view which quite depends upon the rev. gentleman not being in France. If he were there he would discover that France is no better off—religiously—than we are. But the Vicar would have his religious brethren face the facts. The people do not go to church on Sunday—and if going to church involves giving up Sunday entertainments, they will not go. So let them play tennis, or golf, or anything else on Sunday, "provided" they go to church. "At present," says the Vicar, "the masses recreate without going to church. What we have got to bring home to them is that they may play games if and when they have been to church." Now, that is quite frank. Come to church. You may do anything you like if you come to church. We have seldom seen the real aim of the clergy so clearly stated.

"Religion has slipped back to something like our Christmas decorations—a very beautiful thing in its way but rather unimportant," said the Rev. Lord William Cecil at Westminster Abbey. Yet the clergy persist in saying that the European War is favourable to religion.

The playful ways of "Providence" have not been absorbed by the terrible holocaust on the Continent. An epidemic of infantile paralysis has broken out in New York and caused the death of 2,000 children, and the permanent crippling of many thousands. "His tender mercy is over all his works."

The *Catholic Times* raises a strong protest against the persecution of Catholics by the Russian National (Greek) Church. It asserts that a Roman Catholic Archbishop has been imprisoned, also that Roman Catholics are bribed into joining the orthodox Church by gifts of clothing. The *Catholic Times* says that if Russia were established at Constantinople "the Russian Church will become a peril to political peace in Europe." As the persecution of Jews and Dissenters still goes on in Europe, it is evident that whatever else the War may have done, it has not yet succeeded in robbing Christian intolerance of its most repulsive features.

A clergyman at Ealing dropped dead while reading the Communion Service. Had he been a Secularist lecturer, there would have been a tremendous moral. As it is, there is "nothing doing."

The August *Englishwoman* states that the Y.M.C.A. reading rooms at the Front are very popular, and that among the books asked for were Dante's *Inferno*, Maeterlinck's *Blue Bird*, and Dickens' stories. There appears to be no demand for the Bible. Perhaps the sacred volume is too "hot" for the warm weather.

Even the War cannot quite kill the festive moods of editors in the "dog days." A newspaper controversy is now raging round the question, "Should Women Preach?" Lady Henry Somerset considers that the inclusion of women means "the suicide of the Church," and suggests that "appalling scandals" might arise. What a high-minded crowd these Christians are, to be sure.

The provincial papers are more outspoken than those of London, although the latter plume themselves on being in the van of progress. An Essex editor says, "If that hare-brained Kaiser had not had the audacity to imagine himself a Protestant Pope—Emperor and nominee of the Almighty—the War would not have happened." Religion has played a sinister part in most wars from the Crusades to the Crimean campaign. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why the clergy wish the public to understand that the Germans are "Atheists."

"In spite of all that is said, England remains the most religious country in Europe," says the Rt. Hon G. W. E.

Russell. As only a small percentage of the population of England are regular attendants at places of worship, it does not say much for the other countries.

The *Sunday Companion* knows its readers, otherwise it would not venture to say that Mark Twain was a man "who had a deep-seated belief in God." Otherwise, asks the editor, how could he write that he "looked forward to the blissful state of those who had crossed the flood and stand on the sunlit shores of Paradise"? Well, he didn't say it, and the editor knows it as well as we do. Indeed, he confesses that "these are not his exact words, but they convey his meaning." They convey the editor's meaning, which is to befool his readers as much as is possible. Curiously enough, the same issue of the paper contains a request to be told something "about telling the truth."

The Rev. Dr. Figgis ought to be more careful not to violate exegetical law. Preaching recently upon the words, "Woe unto you, ye lawyers," he said that Jesus was "not thinking of barristers in a secular court, but of people who made religion a law." If any reader will look up Luke xi. 45, 46, he will see how completely Dr. Figgis misrepresents the text. Jesus had just pronounced his anathema upon the Pharisees when one of the lawyers charged him with reproaching them also. His answer was, "Woe unto you lawyers also." This is only an illustration of how utterly regardless of facts parsons are, and how foolish it is at any time to take them seriously.

Bishops are loyal to the New Testament only when it suits them. Bishop Welldon and the Bishops of London and Chelmsford decline to endorse St. Paul's refusal to let women speak in church. For them the great Apostle is not an authority on the woman question. Their lordships of London and Chelmsford are in favour of allowing women to take an active part in the coming Mission of Repentance and Hope; but the conditions on which they will be permitted to preach, lecture, or teach are such as to mark their inferiority to the men. And here again the two prelates part company with Paul, who says that in Christ "there is neither male nor female." In practical life, the Bible is the rule of neither faith nor practice even for Bishops.

"Do right for right's sake, seek truth for truth's sake, and love God for God's sake," exclaimed the preacher at the top of his voice. That solemn exhortation contains three fundamental errors. In the first place, there is no such thing as objective Right, for the sake of which any action can be performed. Right is simply a relative term. As one well says, "Right is relative to the situation in which we act." In the second place, truth in the abstract does not exist. Nobody has ever found the truth in that sense. The only things we can know are the facts of the Universe as related to one another and to ourselves. God is, likewise, a purely imaginary Being, who can be neither known nor loved. They who say that they love God, in reality love only themselves—an ideal projection of themselves. There are only two possible objects of love, ourselves and our neighbours, to love both of whom is man's highest duty.

Christians have very quaint ideas regarding the command to love their enemies. One pious London editor has been discussing the question, "Should we hang the Kaiser?" and some well-known Christians have joined in the discussion. Mr. Coulson Kernahan says, "I believe he has already been tried, convicted, and sentenced by his Judge and Maker, the execution fixed, and that no reprieve can come." Sir John Kirk, the "children's friend," thinks that "hanging is too good for him." May we add, "Scratch a Christian and find a savage."

A prize of £100 is offered for an essay on prayer by the Walker Trustees of the St. Andrew's University. The conditions state that the essay must be a "helpful" one. We suggest to intending competitors that they should not overlook the oriental praying-barrel. In these strenuous times machinery might be employed more extensively in connection with religion.

The Germans have issued a memorial card in memory of sailors who died in action. It is illustrated with a figure of Christ extending both hands in benediction, and the inscription is taken from a hymn. Another awful example of German "Atheism"!

The European War is not so favourable to religion as the clergy pretend. A writer in an Essex paper says that he recently discussed the matter with a local clergyman, who urged that the War was appointed by God so that the world should learn how wicked the Germans were. The writer adds, "It did my religious upbringing no good to look on at a group of Christian nations imploring the help of the same God to blow each other to pieces."

Everyone who has paid attention to the Irish question is aware of the dominating part played by religion. Animating and sharpening all other difficulties is the difference of religion. Apart from religious difference other sinister interests at work might easily be exposed, and in any case it would not be possible to appeal to religious feeling, as is now the case. In the *Times Educational Supplement*, a writer declares that the real cause of the breakdown of the recent negotiations was "the revolt of the Irish Roman Catholic hierarchy at the prospect of losing control of their schools in the six excluded provinces." At present the local priest is practically the manager of the schools, and if Ulster were separated from Dublin this would no longer be the case. Hence the revolt and collapse of the arrangement. Thus the moral remains—clear out the priest, Protestant as well as Catholic.

A recent *Times* advertisement announces for sale two policies of insurance on the life of a clergyman. Really, a clergyman should know better than to have an insurance policy. He should trust in the Lord for all things.

The death of Mr. Charles Dawson, of Lewes, recalls the fact that he was the discoverer of the Piltdown skull, which was evidence of the primitive source from which modern man descended. The age of the skull was fixed at about 200,000 years, and it is far older than the cave-men of Europe. In common with geologic discoveries, it helped to prove that the Bible account of creation was incorrect. Overthrown by science, the creation story received its death-blow from comparative religion, for the Bible story was stolen from older superstitions.

One of the elevating consequences of the War has been the employment of child labour. A Government return, dated July of this year, states that 12,719 children, between the ages of eleven and fourteen, have been employed in agriculture. The actual number in all occupations is very much greater. The evil consequences of child labour have been well illustrated in the past history of this country, and we do not see any reason for assuming that these consequences will be less evil in time of war than in time of peace.

The *Chelmsford Diocesan Chronicle*, the official organ, says "the old Puritanical Sabbath is probably gone beyond recall, nor do we wish to recall it." Ordinary folk realized this truism very many years ago.

A twelve years' old boy was, at Southend, ordered to be birched for stealing two shillings and fourpence from an alms-box at a mission church. Perhaps the magistrates remembered the Biblical advice, "Spare the rod and spoil the child."

Mr. George Moore, the famous novelist, is nothing if not audacious, and his latest romance, *The Brook Kerith*, deals with the Gospel legend, and the characters include Joseph of Arimathea, Paul, and Christ. The publication of the book should disturb the doves of orthodoxy.

The report that St. Paul's Cathedral is cracked need cause no alarm. Unkind people have been saying the same thing of the clergy for a long time.

To Correspondents.

- A. M.—Pleased you found our notes on Lord Chesterfield's "Religion of Sensible Men" so useful.
- J. KING.—We are really surprised at any paper having the impudence to publish the letter of Jesus to Abgarus "fake" at this time of day. It was *many* years ago—not fifteen, as the paper states—dismissed by everyone as an impudent and ignorant concoction.
- D. SOLOMON (S. Africa).—The business of the clergy is not to die for the Cross, but to live on it.
- J. WARDHAUGH (Bethulia).—We have sent copies to the addresses you were good enough to forward. As you say, improved circulation is the best way of meeting increased expenses. That is our own ideal. And we have no doubt about realizing it some day.
- E. DALES.—Thanks. We should be obliged if you could supply us with any information on the subject to which your postscript refers. We have heard something on the matter, and we can readily believe that such a move is contemplated.
- C. H. MAIR.—We are obliged for a sight of the letter, and are returning it under separate cover.
- A. J. MARRIOTT.—You will see we have already dealt with some aspects of Lord Parmoor's letter.
- "CLEAR SOIL."—We think if anyone were to take the *Freethinker* week by week, and carefully analyse its contents, he would find no small proportion of it given over to "constructive" work. In truth, the controversy of "destructive" v. "constructive" work is largely a play upon words. Work is seldom destructive unless it is constructive. And there is nearly always a positive aspect to our attacks upon theology.
- T. C.—A mere exploitation of current superstition—always an easy way to make money.
- J. BREESE.—Obliged for cuttings. Will be useful later.
- A FEW Freethinkers in Brighton are anxious to meet others who would be willing to assist in the formation of a Branch of the N. S. S. in that town. Those who are interested in the matter are requested to communicate in the first instance with Miss Vance, General Secretary, N. S. S., 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.
- H. V. STOREY.—We are sorry to hear of the disturbance on Parliament Hill, and we have a strong suspicion that these attacks on Freethought meetings are part of a general plan to get them prohibited altogether. We regret we have not the space to print the whole of your letter this week, but we deal with the matter generally in "Sugar Plums."
- R. MILLER.—(1) The Council of Macon. See the article *Geddicus* in Bayle's *Philosophical Dictionary*. (2) Tuesday. *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.*

Sugar Plums.

It is quite evident that the religious organizations of this country are preparing to take all possible advantage of the period of disorganization and rearrangement that will follow the War. So many things will need doing that reformers of all kinds will have to be well on their guard to prevent retrogressive interests being more firmly established. The Churches are certainly laying plans for what is to come, and it is imperative that Freethinkers should not be behindhand

in this respect. We have dwelt upon this aspect of affairs more than once, and if we return to it again it is because we feel the matter is an important one.

A straw showing the direction of the stream may be seen in the attempt to place religious instruction in State schools on a firmer position than it is at present. The recent discussion in the House of Lords has made it plain that an attempt will be made to remodel and improve our educational system. And the need for this no Educationalist will question. But when the education question is opened, the clergy are at once on the lookout—not because they are more interested than others in the question of education, but solely to see that their sectarian interests are safeguarded. Several articles have appeared of late, dealing with religion in the schools, and it is evident that an attempt is to be made to create a new religious compromise, which will, like the old one, serve only to obstruct genuine educational progress.

One illustration of what is afoot is supplied in a letter to the *Times* by Lord Parmoor. It is something to the good that Lord Parmoor recognizes that the advocacy of what he calls "a secular system" is strong enough for serious consideration. And he says that the

vital question is whether there is any basis on which there is any real prospect of co-operation among all the Churches and the advocates of a secular system. I believe that this basis can only be found in a recognition of the broad general right of all citizens to an equal and tolerant treatment of their children in the provision of religious instruction under properly qualified teachers in State schools. A Secularist parent has the right to withdraw his children from religious instruction; he is not entitled to go further, and to claim to force upon those who do desire religious instruction for their children a secular system which they distrust and detest. On the same principle, every parent should be provided the same opportunity in the religious instruction of his children whether he prefers such instruction to be given in a denominational or undenominational system.

If that is the only plan Lord Parmoor can suggest for the ending of the education difficulty, we think very little of it. It is the old plan of the open door for all denominations at the general expense of the community. Everybody is to pay for the religion of everybody else, and the evil of religious sects plotting and planning to gain a sectarian advantage remains untouched. A State religion in State schools is, at least, logical. Any and every religion in State schools is as absurd as it is impracticable.

There is one other point worthy a word before dismissing Lord Parmoor's letter. It is a cheap desire to identify everything to which one objects with "Germanism," and Lord Parmoor adopts this plan in a sentence about Germanism in education and materialism. Unfortunately for Lord Parmoor, the Prussian system is denominational, and the religious instruction is inspected by the clergy. The only one of the nations now at war in Europe which has abolished religious instruction in the State schools is France. Does Lord Parmoor think that the establishment of Secular Education there has ruined the French people? If so, what liars we must be to praise the French as we have done this past two years. And, if otherwise, what fools we must be not to adopt the same simple and just method of settling an educational difficulty, which is no more than the struggle of rival sects for a sectarian advantage.

We have reasons for believing that a strenuous attempt is being made by some religious people high in authority to get Freethought meetings in the open air prohibited. If our information is correct, the move is to be made under cover of the Defence of the Realm Act, although we think the authorities would be very ill-advised to adopt such a policy. Perhaps the knowledge that this little plot has leaked out will have some effect in quashing it, and to all Freethinkers we hope that forewarned will be forearmed.

The above has been written partly to warn London Free-

thinkers on another matter. In various parts of the Metropolitan attempts are being made to create disorder round the Freethought meetings. Speakers are badgered, and interrupted, and annoyed, in the hopes that temper will induce incautious speech, so that both may be used as inducements to the authorities to prohibit the meetings. Luckily, Freethought speakers are too old birds to be betrayed into incautious speech; and now that we have issued this warning, we feel they will be still more on their guard. And the prevention of disorder will be best achieved by Freethinkers turning up in force and remaining at their own meetings. We are not at liberty to say all we know, but we can assure our readers that we have good grounds for believing the danger to be a real one. And there are more than Christian Evidence speakers in the plot.

We have continually advised Freethinkers, in connection with the Military Service Act, as with other matters, to take their stand strictly on their legal rights. Several cases have been cited in these columns where a firm and respectful stand brought redress. A correspondent now sends us another case—his own. On presenting himself to the local recruiting station the officer refused to accept his affirmation. He properly declined to take the oath, went away, and complained to Lord Derby, and there came "instant redress." The recruiting officer wrote as follows:—

As I have now definite instructions with reference to "affirming" instead of taking the "Regulation Oath," will you please call at the recruiting office any evening before seven o'clock.

We are convinced that, in the majority of cases, the refusal to accept affirmation is due to ignorance of the rights of persons under the law. And in such cases an insistence upon one's rights serves an all round educational purpose.

A Poisonous Plant.

HATE is virtuous and vicious. It is good and bad, noble and ignoble, refining and degrading. There are times when its sublimity touches the heavens; there are times when its depravity sears, and even corrupts, the deepest depths of the tenderest heart. Hatred ruins and elevates. It strengthens and demoralizes. It purifies and taints.

Regard the existence of hatred as one may; abuse it as one can, and often should; praise it as one must; consider it a most detestable evil, or rank it with the greatest and strongest of valuable assets, according to the dictates of reason, or ignorant prejudice, or the ephemeral expediency of the moment, hatred remains the same diamond, whose innumerable emotional facets sometimes inspire us, sometimes degrade us.

There are guides to the valuation of this stern animal emotion, just as there are solutions to the operations of all passions, whether they are quiet or vulturous; but the pathways that lead us to a calm understanding of hate are full of perplexing obstacles. For the feet of the unwary huge roots protrude from the dark earth, as if deliberately implanted to trip the star-gazer. Beautiful plants hide beneath their leaves bottomless pits of greedy mud. Boulders, apparently insurmountable, rise on the paths as if wrathfully resenting the possibility of interference. And the journey is an unending series of bewildering curvings and twistings, that tire the mind, weaken the body, and fill the soul with enervation.

The pathway is always dark and gloomy to the adventurer; for hate, despite the many admirable qualities it owns, is stern. Its worthiest power is tinged with a tragic monotone. Under the gleam and the glitter lies an inherent darkness. It came from the dark, from trouble and strife, from fear and awe; and in its most

glorious manifestations one may observe a hardness, perhaps even a cruelty, that oppresses while it uplifts. This remarkable sternness of hate draws the emotion apart from its fellows; and in the segregation its hardness develops and becomes intensified.

Hatred inspires fear. No doubt, in the remote past, the fear from which so many superstitions, so many far-reaching errors were born, also gave birth to one straight child, whose name is hate; but the years play many diverting games with man's mind; and from the mother the child is born, and from the child, the mother. Hate breeds fear, just as fear engendered hate. The process reverses itself; and in this reversal it may not be altogether absurd to say we can find the root-causes of many popular beliefs of modern days.

When the phrase "straight child" is used to characterize hate, the never far remote repellancy of its nature is not forgotten; but, while admitting this, it is not impossible to understand that the child is well shaped. Black it may be, ugly, hideous perhaps; but it is not deformed. Even in its most repulsive operations it appears to possess a uniform strength in its gloomy nature that keeps it naturally unmoral and straight.

Individually and socially there is an enormous waste in love. This vaunted priceless passion is treated quite frequently, in both cases, as something of infinitesimal value. Love can be squandered, misused, misdirected; and we care not. Love has been enervated. The life-blood of it has become thin. Its nerves, and sinews, and organisms have become weakened. Its vitality, as an enduring emotion, from whose operations spring greatness of heart, of mind, of word, of action, might be questioned, and, maybe, even ridiculed. Perhaps it could be said there was little life in love.

But hate seems full of energy. Rarely does it turn its activities into futile channels. We cannot conceive hate wasting its powers upon something obviously foolish. When we estimate the love that is spent upon millions of heathen in an endeavour to Christianize them; when we consider the love that operates through thousands of inane charities; when we regard the love eaten up by hundreds of absurd movements towards social reform; when we try to gauge the extent of the love used in the impossible attempt to make Christians Christlike; we begin to have doubts concerning the sanity of love, and begin to wonder if hate is not, after all, an emotion that deserves more consideration. Will it not produce better results, we ask ourselves, with an expenditure of less energy? Would it not repay us to analyse the hatred that instinctively is an inherent part of our lives, to discover whether, if properly and reasonably subdued to individual, or, better still, to social service, its potentiality would not bear more and better fruit than love?

Surely, we think, hate would remain true to itself. It would not allow its influences to be overcome by sentimentality of the vicious or cheap kind; nor would it tolerate a guidance to futility. Sternly it would stalk through every obstacle. Obdurately it would oppose every infringement of its strength, every attempted suppression of its operations. We cannot imagine hate renouncing in the least the vigour that distinguishes it; nor can we imagine it deliberately misdirecting its grim energies. The ease whereby love can be made barren would be intolerable to hate. The adaptability, the changefulness, and stupidity of love would find no place in the lexicon of hate.

In all its innumerable aspects, throughout all its many activities, whether they be reckoned virtuous or vicious, elevating or degrading, noble or ignoble, good or bad, hate seems never to waste one grain of its splendid

strength. Immoral or moral, as one may view the effects of its influence, it retains a savage grandeur, that, for intensity of conviction and deliberation of purpose, might be said to equal any height to which love has reached.

When the latent powers of hate dawn upon us, when we realize the inestimable value they possess, when we think and understand how close to the surface of our own natures hate lies, how ready it is, often at the least little scratch, to manifest itself in a hundred trivial ways, we cannot but conclude that its social value, particularly, is beyond measure.

Religion has taught a hatred subservient to its own interests; but the old sternness has given place to a weakling sentimentality that makes love sickly. Modern religion would try to hide the existence of the emotion to which, in the past, it owed the supremacy it achieved. We, tempering the native emotion with reason, would use it for humanity's sake. We would show that the love pouring itself into an insatiable Sahara was criminal, even vicious. We would show that hate, levelled against tyrants, was virtuous. We would show that hate, used to abolish social or mental despotism, was noble. We would show that a straightforward profession of hatred to those who understood and yet refused to accept the responsibilities of knowledge was proof of the genuineness of a man's convictions, proof of his courage, and, in itself, worthy of appreciation and admiration. He who can hate well will work well. He who is unashamed of his hatred relinquishes none of his worthiness, rather does he add to it. Strong hatred signifies sincerity in a man. It neither boasts nor brags. Its remorselessness prevents duplicity. Its sternness abolishes the traitor sentiment. Its pertinacity permits of no compromise. It has no fear. Hate is a straight child.

ROBERT MORELAND.

Critical Chat.

THE BETRAYAL OF ANATOLE FRANCE.

M. ANATOLE FRANCE is the only contemporary French writer of fiction who is well known to the more intelligent section of the English reading public. An authorized translation of his books is nearing completion, and it would seem that the publisher, Mr. John Lane, has taken the trouble to secure translators who take seriously the task of turning an exquisite French style into readable idiomatic English. It is to be regretted that neither publisher nor translator always appreciates the responsibility of his position with regard to both writer and reader. A glaring instance of incapacity will be pointed out below.

As most people are aware, M. France is a Free-thinker of the undogmatic or sceptical type, a charming blend of Montaigne, Voltaire, and Renan. Like Voltaire, he is a master of the art of the short story with a philosophical turn. Into this delightful form he puts his ironical views of life, the result of wide knowledge and deep meditation, and leavens the underlying seriousness with light malicious banter. *Thais* is undoubtedly one of the best examples of the delightful art of representing a philosophic idea in the guise of fiction. It is a picture of life in the cosmopolitan and cultured city of Alexandria, and in the Thebaid, the great forcing ground of Christian monasticism in the second century. Paphantius has lived the artistic and voluptuous life of a wealthy citizen of Alexandria until, on the threshold of manhood, his vagrant and unstable imagination is made captive by the faith of Calvary. As a youth, he had loved from afar an actress and courtesan of great beauty, named *Thais*. When he withdraws to the desert, and

begins his new life of fasting, penitence, and maceration, the image of this loveliest of women is always before him. At first he forces his mind to dispel this mirage of sensual beauty, but finally his desires so deceive him that he is tempted to set out for the wicked city of Alexandria, and try to convert her. With sure and delicate touches, M. France makes clear for us the underlying opposition between the religious and the humane or secular ideal. Paphantius, after visiting the cultured society of Alexandria, and witnessing a performance of the "Trojan Women," not as a drama, but as a pantomime, in which *Thais* acts the part of *Polyxena*, is admitted to the garden adjoining the villa of *Thais*. He succeeds in converting her, partly by the sincerity of his belief and partly by a subtle sexual attraction, which is all the stronger because it never quite rises into consciousness. For years they are near together in the desert, and his desires slumber in the heavy atmosphere of religious routine. But when the death of *Thais* snaps the bond of steel forged by the monastic ideal, his suppressed passion becomes a raging madness, and he dies cursing the God who had seduced him from all the beauty, all the goodness of the world, and yet had forgotten to kill in him the spirit of Paganism.

It is not, however, an analysis of this beautiful story—a story so full of meaning to the study of religion—that I want to make here. The book is accessible in two or three editions—the best is the translation by Mr. Bruce Boswell (Lane)—and must be read to be appreciated. What I want to do is to draw attention to the gross carelessness of the translator in the version published by Messrs. Greening & Co. in their "Lotus" series. I will give in parallel columns a few examples of the art of literary betrayal. Judas Iscariot was clumsy at the business in comparison with Mr. Ernest Trislaw. His job was not worth thirty pieces of copper. If any grace be left in him, he should straightway seek the nearest elder-tree.

What M. France says.

What his betrayer makes him say.

She inflamed all the spectators with the ardour of *lust*.

She inflamed all the spectators with the fire of *luxury* (*luxure*—incontinence).

The temples that were still standing were supported by idols which served as columns, and with God's consent, *the horned heads of women fixed* on Paphantius a steady gaze.

The temples that were still standing were supported by idols which served as columns, and with God's consent, *all from women's heads to animals' horns fixed*, etc. (This is idiotic nonsense.)

Tainted *Arian* see (referring to the heretic Arius).

Tainted *Aryan* See.

Love is a disease of the liver (*foie*).

Love is a malady of faith (*foi*).

While the soldiers covered the victim (*Polyxena* in the Greek pantomime) with a veil.

While the warriors violated the victim.

The richest bankers.

The most vulgar bankers.

She believed that.....a woman could inspire love by pouring a philtre into a cup wrapped in the blood-drenched fleece of a sheep.

.....in a cup containing a sheep's bleeding fleece. (Surely a pretty big cup!)

Who does not know that the poets are seers, and that nothing is hidden from them?

Who knows that poets are not seers, and nothing is hidden from them?

I am persuaded that there is not a single human action, were it even the kiss of Judas, which does not bear within it the germ of redemption.

.....which bears a germ of redemption.

I have pointed out these incredibly stupid blunders with a certain amount of pleasure; the malicious pleasure, not of proving one's superiority, but of censuring pretentious ineptitude. There is no doubt, however, that

a part of the blame attaches to the publishers, who, it would seem, are willing to pay for a preface written in what may be mistaken by a servant-girl for artistic English, but deems it unnecessary to have the proofs read with the original by a competent French scholar. It is a pity, because M. France is woefully misrepresented by anything short of a clean, refined, and nervous style, and ill-punctuated, ungrammatical, clumsy sentences are insulting alike to him and to his English readers.

AN ENGLISH NOVELIST ON M. FRANCE.

I cannot do better than advise anyone who wants an introduction to Anatole France to get a little book by Mr. W. L. George (*Writers of the Day*; Nisbet; 1s. net). Mr. George is a novelist of some reputation, and writes from what I may call a Franco-British point of view. He brings out very clearly the Latin element in France, what is called the *esprit gaulois*. "The whole basis of him," Mr. George tells us, "is sensuality,..... it is joyous, frank, unrestrained; the world and all that is in it is his toy;.....the true Anatole France which hides under the sentimental old gentleman, so genial and so human, born so old and to-day so young, is the irreverent, jolly, blasphemous Frenchman of the Middle Ages." But in the matter of philosophy Mr. George is not quite so sound. On one page he assures us that it is incorrect to conclude that M. France is an Atheist. What is he, then? "Briefly," says Mr. George, he is an Agnostic; a distinction which it may please the critic to make, but which has no meaning for anyone who is not thinking in a hurry. Mr. George, I am afraid, is inclined to set too much value on mere boisterous speed. It is an easy fall from M. France's Agnosticism to his "theology which is so intermingled with his human interests that at bottom he is a pagan." Why "theology"? Surely not because a novelist and genial ironist is able to see some soul of good in things evil. The "religion of beauty" is a convenient metaphor, perhaps; but if I talk, for instance, of the "theology" of Rossetti, I take the metaphor for more than it is worth, and invite ridicule. In spite of a little loose thinking, Mr. George's book is never dull, which is something to be thankful for in this age of dull didacticism.

GEO. UNDERWOOD.

Letters to my Daughter.

VIII.

MY DEAR JOAN,—

One night when you had climbed all the golden stairs leading to Nid-Nod Land, I saw you as you lay asleep. The purity of your laughter, the innocence of your play, your dwelling in some other world whilst awake, is enough to banish all grown-ups from your company; but, I confess, a deeper mystery confronted me when I saw you asleep. If I were asked for the best definition of peace, I should say, a little girl's face whilst asleep. Other people may have other ideas about peace, but the world is a big place, and very often we search for things that are right under our nose.

There you lay, a little world in a gracious form, dreaming your dreams in a time which, for you, will never come again. And never again shall I realize the exquisite feeling that I had when I saw you with eyes closed and serenity surrounding your tender face. As grown-ups, we cannot penetrate your world, awake or asleep. For ever must we hover on the fringe; for ever must we keep company with a mystery, beside which the mystery of religion is tawdry, commonplace, and, in many cases, despicable. I wonder if the people

who lived long ago found a beautiful land where only children lived! This place may have been called the Garden of Eden, and we all, in our turn, must pass out of it as we grow up. Yes; out of a land where time stands still; where butterflies, rainbows, bubbles, and music convey no meaning but that of beauty. I believe your father is stumbling on truth. Where beauty is, truth makes a home, and sweet simplicity dwells with both. I see no reason why we all should not try to live near your world, if we cannot live in it.

How you cried when an arm of your doll came off! And yet—no; the grown-ups knew better than children, and if I mention something that is taking place in *our* world, so much farther do I remove myself from yours. Aye me, no more of this! How does that song go?—

Gaily the Troubadour
Danced round the water-butt,
Singing, my true love,
Come down to me.

Here do I record my joy. It is necessary that you wear my "top-hat" to sing this song properly. Amen. I never thought that I should live to see it put to such good use. The decline and fall of my aspirations are marked by your use of my hat. May I never lift my head again and aspire to be respectable—the hat is too far gone. As a sign of my repentance I will hereby give you a list of its uses. For—

Gathering Nuts in May.
The Broken Promises of Windbags.
A Boat for your Doll.
A Coal Scuttle.
The Game of Old Man.
A Flower Pot.
This, That, and the Other.
The Game of Make-Believe.
A Tool Box.
Socks to be Darned.

If it should not be worn out by the time it has been used for these worthy purposes, we will place it in the garden, sprinkle it with tap-water (not the same as holy water) dance round it, and leave it in its glory as a sign of Things That Do Not Matter. Then, I suppose, the fairies will inspect it, and say: "Behold, a mortal has the beginnings of wisdom; we shall desire his better acquaintance." But there, dear Joan, I am very late when I say that more than half the world is frightened by clothes, and the remainder by force. Later on, I may have something to say about force; for the present, I will only mention one little matter.

The enemies of all little children believe in force; they also profess belief in a man who loved children. When he was about to be taken away, a man named Simon Peter cut off the ear of a servant of the high priest. But Simon Peter's master healed it. You look puzzled. I assure you that the report does not say that he told all his friends to arm themselves and crush the high priests and their servants. I think I had better put the book away. To-morrow, which is the next time I write, we will talk about "The Pied Piper" who led boys and girls to a place where "the sparrows are brighter than peacocks." I might have known that it is useless to talk nonsense to a little girl who has no knowledge of the chief person who is the stock-in-trade of all those black wretches who have turned their coats and left their lambs in the ditches. You do not understand. Yet another reason now appears for the necessity of banishing forever from your presence these people and their odious teachings. Appointed by the High Pan Jam to be the guardians of the what-you-call welfare of the people? I would rather entrust you to the care of the dustman—he did make you laugh.—Your loving father,

TRISTRAM.

Skeleton Sermons.

VIII.—Why Did Jacob Weep?

THAT ever popular pastime called courting, I need scarcely explain, is played by two persons of opposite sexes taking a seat in the park, or any other presumably quiet spot, and trying to discover who can hug the hardest or kiss the longest without catching breath. That rosy little game was invented by Adam and Eve—probably by Eve alone—and has never lost an hour's popularity from that far distant date till the present time.

There is a passage in Genesis xxix. which runs: "Jacob kissed Rachel, and he lifted up his voice and wept." If I'm not mistaken, there is something about this text which strikes me as peculiarly romantic and pathetic. I have often wondered whether early spring onions was really the cause of Jacob's weeping. In the osculatory business Jacob knew his way about; no doubt, and missed no opportunity on that account; and, although he played his hammer-lock grip on the lady he wickedly kissed in spite of her great resistance, which lasted fully thirty seconds, it got tragically reported that he "lifted up his voice and wept." And more's the pity. Up till now the sensational affair has caused no end of scandal in religious circles, for which there was not the slightest occasion. You see, Jacob was a fair type of Moses, kissing the girls till he made them cry (cry for more, of course). Put it down at that.

In sacred history, Jacob certainly was most given to kissing; kissed his father while cheating him; kissed Laban, whom he defrauded; kissed Esau, whose vengeance he feared; kissed Rachel, when he "lifted up his voice and wept." Perhaps in hugging Rachel "in the pale moonlight," Jacob tried to steal her brooch, and not having sneaked anything that day, his feelings overcame him and he fairly blubbered. Perhaps he wept for joy because it tasted so good; or, on the other hand, did he find out that it was not half what it was cracked up to be? Was Jacob erroneously under the impression that Rachel's was a natural colour, and did he weep to find the paint come off?

"I would be a pity to spoil the significance of Jacob's "talkissimus" by creating a false atmosphere to this pretty story; and where ignorance is bliss a stitch in time gathers no moss.

En passant, it may be said, that ignorance leads us blindfold through the beauties of youth, and age rudely snatches the bandage from our eyes to show us the glories we've left behind.

But to the solution of the "Why"? Perhaps Jacob was temporarily rendered dumb by his crowding emotions; or, perhaps the incongruity of costume was a poetical way of sympathizing the fact that it was not dawn till Rachel's answer broke in upon him; or, that he was in such a whirl as not to know night from day; in other words, "E dunno where 'e are!" He must have missed his top note when he wept. How do we know but that she slapped his face for taking so great a liberty?

THE OWL.

Correspondence.

WOMEN PREACHERS.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Should women preach in Churches? Certainly. Especially the younger ones, as they may succeed where the "old women" have failed; but let the archpriestess and priestess have a living stipend, not a paltry £15,000 or £10,000 annually.

Seriously, I think the effort supererogatory, as the work of disintegration is proceeding slowly, but surely, and the future religion will be universal Humanitarianism in lieu of a "Christianity" "by schisms rent in sunder, by heresies distressed."

C. MARSHALL.

DANTE AND THE CHRISTIAN MYTHOLOGY.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—Your correspondent, Mr. William Repton, was, in my opinion, rather severe in his estimate of Dante in your issue of June 18. I hold no brief for Dante's theological opinions, but in spite of them, it seems to me no broad-minded man can withhold admiration for his towering genius and sublimity of thought.

If his remarks are somewhat acrimonious in places, one has only to consider the injustices his super-sensitive nature was subjected to in life as an explanation. Besides, it is not fair to criticize poetry as one would a theological treatise.

Dante has immortalized the Christian mythology, and his memory will be revered when most other Christian writers are forgotten. All the romance and poetry, as well as credulity of the Dark Ages, find expression in his wonderful poem—the "voice of ten silent centuries," as it has been described.

We do not blame Homer for his attachment to ancient mythologies; let us be fair to the great Dante. For my part, I have far greater reverence for the faith of Dante than for the intellectual contortionists of our more enlightened era who pose as the champions of his faith.

Johannesburg.

E. A. McDONALD.

NIETZSCHE.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—We can now almost spell the name, and begin to glimpse the nature of Nietzsche. But his will for long be name and nature to conjure with. He is exhilarating. He rouses depression and shocks complacency. He is the escape from the commonplace. He is extraordinary and much misunderstood. He is of, and writes for, the elect. He never defined his superman. Neither do we. We believe his call is upward. We follow where we can, and assimilate what we may. But not *too* strenuously, not *slavishly*. Were I Nietzsche, I would not be *me*. Every man is a little universe in himself. And when the poor soldier closes his eyes on the battlefield, the sailor in the wave, it is for him *the extinction of a universe*, one that all the Christs and all the Nietzsches cannot restore. We ought to value Nietzsche; we ought to value *ourselves* more than we do. Nor under nor over-value others; but estimate exactly, and just err a little for comradeship, for convenience, and social playroom.

Well, Sir, Mr. Mann has given me an inspiration. I am now able to "place" Nietzsche. I find him at one extreme, the Christian at the other end of the human scale—the Christian, meek, crawling, grovelling, groping in the dark and slimy caverns of fear; the other laughing, dancing, gesticulating on the mountain-top, drinking the sun and air, beholding the visions, living dangerously but gloriously, full of commiseration mingled with contempt for the children of superstition imprisoned in the dungeons of ignorance. I live somewhere on the slopes of these two spheres, with many slippings towards my brothers in the abyss, who also are happy in their way. The mole is not always miserable. Besides:—

He that is down need fear no fall,

And he that is low no pride.

But why should he fear to rise? Ah, there's the rub! Now and then, one says, I will arise and go to the mountains; and there is a stirring among the dry bones on his return, and the dim religious light in the mediæval casement seems to glow with purer light; but the sleep is deep, and the slumber long, and there is no general rising or sudden conversion, for even when the doors are opened, and the moorland path invites, and the sage allures the brighter worlds and leads the way, the nether man consults the dim old Book, in the dim old crypt, and the dim old Book says No!

I thank our super Mann, who, as usual, has performed his task well.

NIL ADMIRARI.

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

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FINSBURY PARK N. S. S.: 11.15, E. Burke, a Lecture.

HYDE PARK: 11.30, Messrs. Saphin and Shaller; 3.15, Messrs. Dales, Smith, and Shaller, "What Did Jesus Teach?" 6.15, Messrs. Beale, Hyatt, and Yates.

KINGSLAND BRANCH N. S. S. (corner of Ridley Road): 7, R. Miller, a Lecture.

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