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Views and Opinions.

A Farewell to the Church.

There are books which say much, but their significance is nought. There are other books that say little, and signify much. And there is yet a third class of writings, the importance of which lies in their being symptomatic of certain phases of public opinion. We are inclined to place in this last category, although it might well claim to be placed in the second as well, a small booklet with the title, *An Englishman's Farewell to His Church*. It is a little book of only seventy-five pages, but its appearance is highly significant. And this significance lies not so much in what is said—nothing, indeed, is said with which readers of this journal are not perfectly familiar—but in the person who says it. For the writer, whoever he is—we exclude female authorship on internal evidence—evidently says farewell to his Church with reluctance. And while giving up the Church and every doctrine of orthodox Christianity, he still writes as a religious man. It is the pressure of facts that has driven him to write his farewell, and it is this consideration that makes his little treatise of so great interest.

* * *

The Touchstone of War.

We have no faith whatever in the talk about the moral betterment brought about by the War. That is sheer cant, and we doubt if anyone really believes in it. But the War has made men more serious-minded; it has made them realize more keenly, and some for the first time in their lives, the sham of many of our institutions and of many of our professed beliefs. And amongst those that have fallen under condemnation is the Christian Church. There is to-day a greater readiness to listen to an attack on Christianity, there is a scarcely veiled sympathy with a reasoned attack on the Church. Many who have left the Church have, like the writer of the *Farewell*, written down their reasons for so doing, but generally these have been stated as a difference of opinion. The writer here says plainly that he is not leaving only because he disagrees with the Church, but because its ministers are positively dishonest. He

believes the Church teachings to be a lie. He believes, also, that the ministers of the Church know them to be a lie as well as he does. He is forsaking an organized hypocrisy. * * *

A Sterile Church.

Here is a deliverance that impresses one with all the weight of an unchallengable truth. Addressing the Church, the writer says:—

Men are leaving you because you have nothing to give them. You profess to give more than all the world can give them—more than nature, literature, art, science, travel, and creative work can give them—but in truth you give them nothing. They find they can live their lives as well without you as with you.....You are not true. Now, in the world which neglects you, pays no heed to you, goes its own way to eternity, and does not even trouble to attack or to mock you, so indifferent is it to your existence—in this world there is perhaps no great hunger and thirst after truth, but there is an instinctive, ever increasing sense of the value of truth.

This is not an indictment drawn by an avowed Atheist, but one who attacks the Christian Church in the name of religion. And the indictment is undeniably true. Here is a great Church absorbing annually many millions of money, having in its service many thousands, and yet with positively nothing to offer the nation in return—nothing, that is, on which the vast mass of thinking men and women place a value. Art and science, literature and music, politics, ethics, and sociology, each goes its way independent of religion or its message. The mass of people no longer seriously bother with it. They feel that the Christian teaching is not true. And large numbers of the clergy know it is not true. Their apologies do but serve to betray their uneasiness and exhibit their lack of candour. In the eyes of millions of the best brains of Europe—among both the educated and uneducated classes—the clergy are considered as no more than hired advocates of an intellectually discredited cause.

* * *

Clerical Insincerity.

The extent of this established imposture blinds many as to its real nature. And yet it needs little reflection to realize what a huge fraud is modern Christianity. Take, as does the author of the *Farewell*, such cardinal doctrines as the Fall of Man, Miracles, the expiatory death of Jesus, or the Resurrection of the Body. How many educated, thoughtful people believe in these things? How many of the clergy, even, believe in them? Here and there some may believe; but the majority? Do they believe? Everyone must realize they do not. Study their apologies, and we know they do not. For we see that what they now mean by these things is not what the Church once meant. They keep the old formulæ, but they give them a new meaning. And no one is justified in giving an entirely new and contradictory meaning to an old formula, and in declaring that he still holds to the original belief. Except for such strongholds of atavism as the Salvation Army or the Metropolitan Tabernacle, nearly everyone realizes that these beliefs are dead. And a clergy that goes

on preaching a recognized falsehood, cannot do so without undergoing a progressive mental and moral deterioration. Their mental calibre sinks, their moral influence is destroyed, and the "man in the street" is quick to notice these things. The clergy fail to make him believe, largely because they have ceased to believe themselves.

* * *

Simplicity or Knavery?

It is not alone that educated people have ceased to believe in orthodox Christian doctrines. There is more in it than a mere suspension of judgment such as belief implies. They *know* that these things are not true. They know that the Fall of Man is a myth, that the Resurrection is a fable, that Miracles do not happen, and that a Virgin Birth is a downright absurdity. So long as these doctrines are spoken of with any definite or intelligible meaning, we know they are wholly and irretrievably false. And for our own part, we quite decline to believe that the majority of the clergy are not as well aware of this as we are. We decline to believe that the majority of the clergy are so foolish or so ignorant as not to know what a decently educated secondary school-boy knows, or that they are deficient in knowledge that can be gleaned from thousands of books and periodicals accessible to all. Such ignorance is really inconceivable. The educated world has kept up this sham of the simplicity of the clergy long enough. They are not more simple, neither are they more ignorant, than other classes in the community. Neither are they less self-interested. They are simply furthering their interests by methods which, while discreditable from the point of view of intellectual rectitude, are made permissible by the practice and tradition of the Christian Church.

* * *

The Beginning of the End.

The significance of *An Englishman's Farewell to His Church* lies, as we have said, in its being symptomatic. Written by an avowed Freethinker, the importance of the booklet would be no greater than that of an ordinary anti-Christian pamphlet, even though much more was said. Being written by one who still professes belief in a God, and even in a "Christ"—of a sort—it must be taken as symptomatic of a fairly general frame of mind within the Church, and as indicative of the mental attitude of a much larger number outside. Quite correctly, the author says that "men who march with the Time Spirit" pay no heed to the compromises and adjustments, the hair-splittings and quibblings, of theologians. Their doctrines form no part of the lives of men and women. Theologians may explain, but men go on knowing the doctrines are not true. Nothing can re-establish them. They have been decisively disproved. And no Church, no institution, can stand for ever against this general contempt. While the contempt is, so to speak, sub-conscious, the Churches may still maintain a bold front. But so soon as it wells into consciousness, so soon the end of the Church for that man or woman has come. To-day this is occurring on a scale larger than has ever before been the case. *An Englishman's Farewell* is an indication that for honest and thoughtful men and women the Christian Church has no message and offers no habitation.

CHAPMAN COHEN.

Rev. R. J. Campbell's Fallacies.

THE Rev. R. J. Campbell's attempt to trace the evolution of his ecclesiastical and theological life in his recently published work, *A Spiritual Pilgrimage*, is not at all likely to rank with Newman's story in the famous classic, *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*, either in

style or in matter. The narrative is interesting enough, but not fascinating like that told by the great Cardinal. Besides, the portrait of himself which Mr. Campbell has painted for us is by no means pleasant to contemplate. For twenty years he skilfully played the hypocrite, publicly declaring that forms were of no vital importance, whilst at heart sorely missing and ardently longing for the service of the altar. Though his body was in a Nonconformist pulpit, his soul, he now tells us, was elsewhere all the time. And yet, according to his own confession, he left Nonconformity, not because of his views on the nature of the Church and her ordinances, but in consequence of his inability through ill-health to continue his ministry at the City Temple. He informs us that his affinities were with liberal Catholicism, and that by the middle of 1914 it was quite clear to him that "there could be no returning to Protestant individualism." Yet, whilst holding such views, he admits, with amazing *naïvete*, on leaving the City Temple, that "as long as I was able to do the work necessarily required of the minister of this great church I have felt morally bound to remain at my post; I did not feel free to choose any other" (*A Spiritual Pilgrimage*, pp. 288-9). If it was the will of God that he should become a priest in the Episcopal Church, it follows that the will of God must have caused the illness that rendered his exit from individualistic Nonconformity practicable. Unfortunately, we cannot get rid of the fact that one remark he made seems to deal the Divine will in the case a rude knock-out blow, namely this: "After the City Temple no other Nonconformist pulpit has any attraction for me; no other church is possible to me as a future sphere of labour than that to which I go." Any other Nonconformist pulpit *after* the City Temple would not have been consistent with his very human sense of dignity. Since he was under a *physical* necessity to make a move, he was under a corresponding *mental* necessity to move upwards, not downwards. And for this purely human preference he holds the Divine Being responsible.

Such has always been Mr. Campbell's mode of procedure. The New Theology came according to the will of God, and it speedily went in the same manner. It arrived like a whirlwind, and like a whirlwind it departed. Suddenly, there was a great, confusing noise in the theological world, and just as suddenly there was ominous silence again. And everything before, during, and after the storm was inspired by the Holy Ghost. The New Theology sermons crowded the City Temple from floor to ceiling, the building being often too small to hold the throngs that flocked into it even on Thursday noons; and for all these outward signs of prosperity Mr. Campbell fervently returned thanks to God; and to the Holy Ghost was accorded most of the glory. In this connection, the illuminating fact is that crowds are to be seen wherever there is some excitement provided. In Dr. Parker's time no tameness ever characterized the City Temple services. There was no telling when that great pulpit genius might dramatically call upon the Almighty to damn the Sultan of Turkey, or some other offending potentate; and the City Temple was packed to the doors. Parker's exceptionally brilliant oratorical gifts were denied Mr. Campbell, though for ordinary church-goers he too possesses irresistible charm, but of a much quieter order than that of his predecessor. At first he was such a complete contrast to Dr. Parker that there was a strange fascination even in that; but just as the novelty of it was wearing off, the New Theology appeared on the stage, and at once the City Temple became the centre of a violent theological tempest that for a considerable period raged with great fury throughout the length and breadth of the land. In the estimation of many, this was a time of glorious refreshing

from the presence of the Lord. It was perfectly thrilling to hear the old God of orthodoxy cursed and sworn at in the name of a brand new Deity, and the people clapped their hands in token of their rapture. Again and again were the Old Theologians addressed as "Liars!" "Liars!" By degrees, however, the commotion died down, and the attractiveness of the New Theology came to an end. Then there was a subtle change of opinions, parading itself as "a change of emphasis" merely. All those who kept their eyes and ears open, and used their reason, knew exactly what was happening. It was the home-coming of the theological prodigal son; and great was the rejoicing in the camp of the orthodox. He had gone to the far country to sow his wild oats of heresy, but now was back again, a penitent and forgiven sinner, in his Father's house. The wicked little book, entitled *The New Theology*, was eventually withdrawn, and the publishing rights purchased, to prevent its possible reissue. That volume, too, had been composed by the inspiration of God, for only a consummate egotist, or a man God-mad, could have penned the following:—

Does physical science imply the doctrine of the Trinity? Yes, unquestionably it does, after a fashion, for it starts with an assumption which takes it for granted. Perhaps this would be news to Professor Ray Lankester, and such as he, but I think I could convince them that I am right if I had them face to face.

Now, at length, under the alleged guidance of the same Holy Spirit, he has found his way into the priesthood of the Anglican Church, identifying himself at once with the Catholic party therein. This, of course, he had a perfect right to do, and we have no wish whatever to blame him for doing it. All we maintain is that it is essentially unfair on Mr. Campbell's part to lay the responsibility for all the changes and follies in his career on Divine shoulders. If at any time he has done well, let the praise be his alone; but if at other times he has gone astray, and both said and done silly things, then let him alone be held accountable. We have no admiration, but only contempt, for the snuffling piety so constantly affected by the reverend gentleman. So far as his relation to the public is concerned, he has turned a complete somersault, and says of it, in effect, "It is the Lord's doing." But what is the nature of the step which, in reality, he has taken? Unless we sadly misread *A Spiritual Pilgrimage*, he has severed his connection with a mere sect and joined the true Church. In a word, as Professor Vernon Bartlet says in the *Christian World* for November 16, in spite of all his professed joy at being back among his own people, "he was never a Congregational Churchman, but a preacher of Anglican leanings exercising his ministry in one of our pulpits, with little or no relation to the fundamental Church principles which called English Congregationalism into being." That criticism is fair and well merited, from which there is no escape. In the book under review Mr. Campbell virtually unchurches all who do not accept the Catholic notion of the Church; but he is as inaccurate in many of his so-called facts as he is loose and illogical in much of his thinking. As an example, take the following:—

No new Church was created at the Reformation settlement; the Church of to-day is the Church of Augustine and Augustine's predecessors in this island home of ours; and the first step towards a reunited Christendom, so far as our own country is concerned, is the gathering into one ancient fold of all the diverse elements, so many of them rich and admirable, which together constitute the religious life of England at the present time (pp 289-90).

It is simply not true to say that no new Church was brought into being at the Reformation, the Established

Church of England having been positively created by Henry VIII. and his slavish Parliaments. There was as complete a break with Rome then as it is possible to conceive, and a wholly new Church sprang into being. Macaulay says that "Henry the Eighth attempted to constitute an Anglican Church differing from the Roman Catholic Church, and that his success in this attempt was extraordinary" (*History of England*, vol. i., p. 45). Green (*History of the English People*, p. 340), informs us that in this new Church "the Sacraments were reduced from seven to three, only Penance being allowed to rank on an equality with Baptism and the Lord's Supper," and that "the Articles of Religion, which Convocation received and adopted without venturing on a protest, were drawn up by Henry himself." Has Mr. Campbell never read Chapter ix., entitled "The Catholic Martyrs," in Froude's *Henry VIII.*? Is he ignorant of the visitation and consequent dissolution of the monasteries? Surely, with these and many other facts in mind, it is absurd to assert that "no new Church was created at the Reformation settlement," a Church which Roman Catholics have from that time to this invariably pronounced a schismatic, false sect, whose "Orders" are utterly invalid, and which occupies cathedrals and churches stolen from the Roman See. In the face of these undoubted facts, Mr. Campbell is woefully disingenuous in the following passage:—

In England, the power and significance that come of age and long unbroken continuity are on the side of Anglicanism, not Romanism. The latter is a modern importation and has a distinctly foreign flavour about it. The Church of Augustine and Colman is the same Church without a break in which I minister to-day. Her historic dioceses are the same, co-terminous with the ancient Anglo-Saxon kingdoms, with a succession of prelates reaching back without interruption to Wilfrid, Chad, and Aidan. Her very buildings in no small degree are the epitome of her story (*A Spiritual Pilgrimage*, pp. 273-4).

The whole of that extract is a miserable piece of question-begging. What he says may be true enough of the Pre-Reformation Church, but in the connection in which it is said it must be characterized as dishonest and wicked special pleading. The first English Church was a Roman Church founded by Augustine at the special request of Gregory the Great, and Roman it continued until the time of Henry VIII., who, in order to secure a divorce, which Rome refused to grant, cast off the Roman yoke and created a new Church, of which he himself was supreme and sole Head.

Mr. Campbell's piety may be very deep and sincere, but his Divine Guide seems to fail him in every time of need. We believe that a few years hence he will be as heartily ashamed of *A Spiritual Pilgrimage* as he now is of *The New Theology*, and will be equally anxious to withdraw it from circulation. And a time may come when he will realize how wholly unreal and fantastic is all this twaddle about the will of God. J. T. LLOYD.

Shakespeare and the Catholic Church.

I had rather be a dog and bay the moon
Than such a Roman.

What damned error, but some sober brow
Will bless it and approve it with a text.

Stuffing the ears of men with false reports.

—Shakespeare.

ORTHODOX folk repeat, like parrots, the statement that Shakespeare was a Christian. They wish to claim the greatest Englishman as one of themselves, and from time to time publish volumes of special pleading, which would

have brought blushes to the hardened face of an Old Bailey advocate. Lengthy disquisitions, as numerous as "quills upon the fretful porcupine," have been published to demonstrate that Shakespeare was a Puritan, a Spiritualist, an Evangelical Christian, and other things beyond count. Baconians dispute Shakespeare's claim to his own books. Other surprising people allege that the Almighty inspired his works. Perhaps the most curious and interesting work is Father Bowden's *The Religion of Shakespeare*, in which the author seeks to show that Shakespeare was a Roman Catholic.

This publication reminds us of the popular farce of *Box and Cox*, for the book has two authors, and the result is as bewildering as the evergreen work beloved by generations of playgoers. The work, as Father Bowden tells us, is chiefly from the writings of the late Mr. Richard Simpson. Three chapters are pointed out as Father Bowden's own work; the rest is mainly Mr. Simpson's. This "mainly" does not allow us to distinguish between Box and Cox, between the priest and the layman. Therefore, by way of convenience, we shall refer to Father Bowden as the author, since he makes himself responsible for the opinions of the deceased layman who "does in vile misprison shackle up" the thoughts of Shakespeare.

This book is the work of a man who has read Shakespeare, and its scholarship is sound. But it is a monument of misdirected energy, and criticism, sharp as Shylock's knife, soon pricks Father Bowden's bubble. Shakesperean commentators are adepts at bringing startling meanings out of the master's text, as a conjurer brings eggs, birds, and rabbits from a hat. But this attempt to prove the author of *Hamlet* a Catholic easily surpasses them, and leaves the unfortunate reader gasping.

At the outset we are asked to observe, as a proof of the poet's genuine Romanism, how he employs Catholic vestments and ritual as symbols of "things high, pure, and true." Why, think you? Because he makes wily old Henry IV. say that he kept his—

Presence, like a robe pontifical,
Ne'er seen but wondered at.

A phrase which as much recalls non-Christian as Catholic sacerdotal pomp. Unbelievers employ such similes daily. The monasteries were destroyed, it is alleged, through avarice. Therefore Timon's tirade against "gold, yellow, glittering, precious gold," must be Shakespeare's protest against the avaricious spirit of the Reformation. Nay, is it not clenched by the detail that "this yellow slave," as the master says, "will knit and break religions"?

A still more curious perversion is that of the Countess's speech in *All's Well that Ends Well*, regarding Bertram's desertion of his wife:—

What angel shall
Bless this unworthy husband! He cannot thrive
Unless her prayers—whom heaven delights to hear
And loves to grant—reprise him from the wrath
Of greatest justice.

"Helen," supposes the ordinary reader. "Nay," answers Father Bowden, "nothing less than the Holy Virgin!" Prayer to the Virgin! Then, again, when it is said that Desdemona could persuade Othello—

To renounce his baptism,
All seals and symbols of redeemed sin,

it is suggested that Othello is represented as a Catholic. Naturally, for he is supposed to live in a Catholic country, although we cannot see how the passage demonstrates it. We could pile up such amazing and amusing inferences from the poet's text. A handful of customary, everyday expressions put dramatically into various mouths, such as "God rest all Christian souls," of Juliet's loquacious nurse, are cited as proof that

Shakespeare was an adherent of the Catholic faith. One special morsel remains. Portia says playfully to her lover:—

Aye, but I fear you speak upon the rack,
When men enforced do speak anything.

Father Bowden, with solemn want of humour, actually demands, "Is not this an expression of contemptuous disbelief in all the evidence upon which so many pretended Papist conspirators suffered the death of traitors?" Where cannot such an eagle-eye spy Catholicism? He would find it embedded in *The Analects of Confucius* and *Alice in Wonderland*. Even the pretty conceit of Lorenzo about the stars:—

Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubim

must also be a proof. We admit cheerfully it need not have been drawn solely from the pages of that old Pagan, Montaigne. It was the tradition of fifteen centuries, as Father Bowden says, and of antiquity before that. Why need Shakespeare have been a Catholic, therefore, because he employed a tradition common to Christian and Pagan? Bah!—

I had rather be a dog and bay the moon
Than such a Roman.

Father Bowden is on firmer ground and far happier when he is dealing with the religious opinions of Shakespeare's relations. He reminds us that Mary Arden, the poet's mother, came of a Catholic family. The probability is that she was herself a Catholic, but there is no evidence either way. Shakespeare's father is not so doubtful. He was a member of the Stratford Corporation during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and must have conformed to the Protestant religion. The result seems that young Shakespeare was brought up under a probably Catholic mother, and a father who was, at least, a professing Protestant.

Father Bowden has not only failed to prove his case, but he has given it away completely. If the circumstances of Shakespeare's childhood were, as Father Bowden depicts, the more clearly is emphasized Shakespeare's revolt from the Roman Catholic Church. This assertion of Shakespeare's Catholicism is a most unwarranted inference. Shakespeare was so ignorant of Catholic ritual that he makes Juliet ask the friar if she shall come "at evening mass." No Catholic could have made this mistake. *King John* is, obviously, not the work of a Romanist. The purport of *Love's Labour Lost* is to show the uselessness of vows. The Duke, in *Measure for Measure*, playing the part of a friar preparing a criminal for death, gives Claudio consolation. Not a word of Christian doctrine, not a syllable of sacrificial salvation and sacramental forgiveness is introduced. This omission is most significant. Moreover, Shakespeare's poems and plays are full of eloquent passages directed against the celibate ideals of the Catholic Church. In a wonderful line in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* he pictured the forsaken sisterhood of the cloister:—

Chanting faint hymns to the cold, fruitless moon.

Elsewhere, in a more Rabelasian mood, he refers to something being as fit "as the nun's lips to the friar's mouth," and other significant passages might be quoted. Shakespeare's view of life is never ascetic nor religious. Throughout he seems to say, with Sir Toby Belch:—

Dost thou think because thou art virtuous, there shall
be no more cakes and ale?

He was known to be irreligious, and the epitaph on Mrs. Hall, Shakespeare's eldest daughter, clearly implies that his life had not been one of piety:—

Witty above her sexe, but that's not all,
Wise to salvation was good Mistris Hall;
Something of Shakespeare was in that, but this
Wholly of Him with whom she's now in bliss.

She derived from Shakespeare her powers of wit, but none of the influences which conduced to her salvation.

The fatal objection to Father Bowden's whole contention is that neither Queen Elizabeth nor King James could have publicly favoured Shakespeare if he were a Catholic. Nor could the Pembroke have given him their patronage. Father Bowden, however, does make one point. He shows that Shakespeare was no Puritan, no conventional Reformation Protestant. But far too much stress has been laid by the reverend father upon isolated passages from the plays. We must discriminate between the dramatist and his puppets. Shakespeare speaks through the type, but the creation only betrays a momentary predominance in his mind. Of course, Shakespeare does reveal himself in his writings. We learn, certainly, something authentic of his humanity, honesty, and patriotism. His art tells us of his own passion for justice, his hatred of spiritual superstition and tyranny. Although his characters are born of Shakespeare's mind, they are not Shakespeare in the sense in which the sightless Samson of the *Agonistes* is Milton, forsaken by his wife, blinded and betrayed, and the mockery of the Philistines of his day.

In no sense was Shakespeare a bigot. With equal interest and equal ease he portrays Hamlet's philosophising, Wolsey's piety, and Falstaff's blasphemy. In his great tragedies he deals with the deepest issues of life and conduct, but he never points to the Cross as a solution. In an age when religious wars and schisms were convulsing Europe, and in England the Reformed religion was engaged in a life-and-death struggle with the Old Faith, it is remarkable that Shakespeare turned his back on Christianity. Not, observe, from hostility, for he was too free from prejudice for that. It was from the knowledge that, as a philosophy of life, it threw no useful light over the deep abysses of human thought, and over the awful tides of human circumstances. On these momentous questions his own views were Secularistic. That is why three centuries after his death, when Christianity is in the melting-pot, men turn to his pages for guidance on those momentous questions which knock at every thoughtful man's heart. It is well, for Shakespeare's name is the greatest in the world's literature.

Deep in the general heart of man
His power survives.

MIMNERMUS.

Pagan and Christian Morality.

V.

(Continued from p. 742.)

If honour were claimed for Jesus, as for Socrates, for Seneca, for Hillel, for Epictetus, we might apologize for his weak points as either incident to his era and country or to human nature itself; weakness to be forgiven and forgotten. But the unremitting assumption of human wisdom, not only made for him by the moderns, but breathing through every utterance attributed to him, changes the whole scene, and ought to change our treatment of it.

Unless his prodigious claim of Divine superiority is made good in fact, it betrays an arrogance difficult to excuse, eminently mischievous and eminently ignominious.

It is hard to point to anything in the teaching of Jesus, at once new to Hebrew and Greek sages, and likewise in general estimate true. Forgiveness of injuries, kindness to enemies, life after death, future retribution, had all been taught in Greece or in Egypt long ago. The pure attributes of God, his oversight of human conduct, his forgiveness of penitent sinners, his love of righteousness, his judgments on the obstinately wicked, had been amply enforced by Hebrew prophets and psalmists. Voluntary poverty, equality of all disciples, had been vigorously exemplified among the Essenes; nay, perhaps long before in Pythagorean and Indian schools. One may search in vain through the Gospels for a precept or sentiment so novel and valuable as to justify the grandiloquent

boast: "Blessed are ye who hear now from me things which many prophets and kings have in vain longed to hear."—Professor F. W. Newman, "Christianity in its Cradle," pp. 51-52.

MANY Christians think that Jesus invented the parable, and that it was unknown before his time. Mr. McCabe remarks upon this belief: "The overwhelming majority of Christians are under the impression that the parable was a charming invention of Jesus for conveying instruction to the common people, whom the Rabbis ignored. They do not even reflect when the oldest Gospel (*Mark*) represents Jesus as choosing the form of parable precisely to hide his meaning from the common folk and reserve it to the disciples. They are quite unaware that, as any Jew could tell them, the parable was a familiar vehicle of instruction of the Rabbis, and that many of the chief Gospel stories, and scores of others, are found in the Talmud.....there is not a moral or humane sentiment in the Gospels which was not familiar to the Rabbis and their pupils. Love of neighbours, and even love of enemies; tenderness to children and help of the helpless; purity of thought and intention as well as of conduct; respect for parents and humanity to all; the golden rule; even the counsel to turn the other cheek to the smiter—all are familiar elements of the rabbinical exhortation. The description of the Jewish teachers in the Gospels is false in spirit and in detail. One does not need to be a Jew to recognize this."¹

The admonition to love our enemies is also given in the Sermon on the Mount. This is regarded by Christians as the high water-mark of moral teaching, and quite unknown to the world until revealed by Jesus. But Professor Max Muller, the learned Oriental scholar, who translated the sacred books of India under the patronage of the Indian Government, explicitly states:—

The commandment, not only to love our neighbour, but to love our enemy, and return good for evil, the most sublime doctrine of Christianity, so sublime, indeed, that Christians have declared it to be too high for this world, can be shown to belong to that universal code of faith and morality from which the greatest religions have drawn their strength and life.....this, the highest truth of Christianity, had been reached independently by what we call the pagan religions of the world..... Shall we say they borrowed it from Christianity? That would be doing violence to history. Shall we say that, though they use the same word, they did not mean the same thing? That would be doing violence to our sense of truth.²

Max Muller was a professed Christian, and therefore thought highly of this maxim to love one's enemies. As a matter of fact, it is impossible for men to love their enemies; and if it were possible, it would be wrong. Who are our enemies? They are the cruel, the deceitful, the coward, the bully, the mischief-maker, the cheat, the thief, the liar. How can we love these? If it were possible to do so, it would be wrong and immoral. Love is not a sentiment that can be commanded by any authority, human or divine; it has to be earned. Love—we are not dealing with sexual love here, neither was Jesus—is the tribute we pay to the unselfish, the just, the noble, the tender, the innocent, the courageous qualities, when we find them displayed by our fellow-men and women, in contrast with the bad qualities above enumerated.

To be loved, one must have some lovable qualities. As E. P. Meredith points out, Jesus himself could not, and did not, love his enemies. "The emotions of his own mind should have convinced Jesus that this was impossible; for his language and conduct to the Pharisees and others of his open enemies, on many occasions, show that so far was he from being able to love these enemies

¹ McCabe, *Sources of the Morality of the Gospels*, pp. 89-90.

² Max Muller, *Physical Religion* (1890), p. 363.

that his bosom rankled with *anger* against them. Mark (iii. 1-6) indeed openly admits that when once these enemies were seeking to destroy Jesus, he 'looked round about on them with anger.' Perhaps, if asked at that moment, he would have confessed it *impossible to love an enemy.*"¹ Again, he declares, "He that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi. 16). He denounced the Pharisees as a "generation of vipers," "serpents," "hypocrites," and "blind guides." As Professor Francis Newman remarks: "Some of his invectives (*as reported to us*) outdo Tacitus and Suetonius in malignity, and seem to convict themselves of falsehood and bitter slander."² Jesus commanded us to love our enemies; this is how he would treat his own: "But those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me" (Luke xix. 27). "Gentle Jesus."

When Confucius, five hundred years before Christ, was asked the question, "What do you say concerning the principle that injury should be recompensed with kindness?" he replied, "With what, then, will you recompense kindness? Recompense injury with justice, and kindness with kindness."³ That is the deliverance of a wise, humane, and thoughtful man. The teaching as to loving one's enemies could only have emanated from an unbalanced mind.

It has also been pointed out that when Jesus does teach good morality, he generally gives a wrong reason for practising it. As Professor Newman remarks: "To forgive that we may be forgiven, to avoid judging lest we be judged, to do good that we may get extrinsic reward, to affect humility that we may be promoted, to lose life that we may gain it with advantage, are precepts not needing a lofty prophet."⁴

Mr. Foote, also, noting this point, observes of Jesus:—

Nearly all his ethics have a selfish sanction. Future reward and punishment, the lowest motives to right conduct, are systematically proffered. Those who forsook family and property for his sake were to receive a hundredfold in this life, and a still greater profit in the next life. "Great is your *reward* in heaven" was his highest incentive, except in occasional moments when he was truer to the natural instincts of sympathy and benevolence. Not in such teaching is the cure for selfishness, but rather its intensification. A finer spirit breathed in the Pagan maxim that "Virtue is its own reward."⁵

Then, again, Christians claim that Christ first taught the "brotherhood of man," and they have repeated this statement so often that they believe it to be true; yet there is not the slightest foundation for it. Mr. J. A. Farrer, in his very able and scholarly work, *Paganism and Christianity*, declares emphatically:—

It is utterly false to say that this idea of the brotherhood of all men rests on the teaching of Christianity. It was one of the dominant ideas of philosophy, especially of Stoicism, long before the foundations of the Church were laid. Marcus Aurelius rises from the conception of the political community to that of the wider community of humanity with a breadth of spirit that at no time of her history has belonged to the Church, regarding as she ever has done all who are ignorant of or indifferent to her teachings as aliens and enemies and outcasts.....The idea of humanity as a whole, of all mankind as one fraternity, independent of all barriers of race or language, was first grasped by the philosophers; the hold of it was rather relaxed than heightened by the Church; and the narrow nationalism of modern Europe contrasts poorly with the cosmopolitanism of the pre-Christian world. The supreme

pontiff of Pagan Rome offered up prayers for the whole human race. We have the testimony of Plutarch that the Pagan priests prayed not only for whole communities, but for the whole state of mankind. It was Cicero, and no Christian, who said: "Nature ordains that a man should wish the good of every man whoever he may be and for this very reason, that he is a man" (*De Officiis* iii., 6).¹

Mr. Farrer gives many citations from the Pagan philosophers in proof of his statement, and concludes: "Nor were these principles confined to the lecture-room or the cabinet. They bore magnificent fruit in that conception of a law of nature, applicable to all classes and nations of men, upon which the whole later system of Roman law was founded. How different the tendency and result of Catholicism, which has ever withdrawn men from the ties of family and country, not to the service of humanity at large, but to the servitude of the Church! and whose votaries, in ceasing to be patriots, have become not cosmopolitans but sectarians, with no broader horizon for their sympathies or affections than that of their creed and their sect! Of all the historical conventional myths still current in the world there is none with so little foundation in fact as that of a broad Christian spirit of unity, or of a world-embracing Christian charity. That idea of the brotherhood of mankind was an idea which, as it had its origin from Philosophy, so perished with Philosophy; nor has the history of the Church from the time of its conquest under Constantine onwards for more than a millennium been anything else but the history of cruelties, riots, wars, and persecutions, the horror of which in its entirety the human mind is incompetent to grasp, but the like of which may be searched for in vain in the pre-Christian annals of the world."²

W. MANN.

(To be continued.)

The Clerical Mind.

Examples of Pious Psychology.

We believe in God, but we put him in the second place he is not of very great importance.—*Rev. Lord William Cecil.*

Each man's moral life shows that he belongs to a greater order than the order of Nature.—*Archbishop of Canterbury.*

God has been completely forgotten in Germany.—*Rev. Lord William Cecil.*

The Church, like the holy angels, is bound to render worship to God and to do service to men. But God comes first; just as in the Lord's Prayer.—*Dean of Lichfield.*

The Church has not been as simple-hearted, as pure-minded as it ought to be. But we do mean to try afresh.—*Archbishop of Canterbury.*

The Devil is, no doubt, working for some way of harming the Mission, and he must not be allowed to succeed.—*Bishop of London.*

Party passions have been aroused, controversy encouraged and all this on the eve of the Mission of Hope, which has been in our thoughts and prayers for months. Surely this has been the work of the Devil.—*Bishop of Chelmsford.*

The only hope of salvation for the Church of England is the way of corporate government.—*Bishop of Oxford.*

¹ *The Prophet of Nazareth*, p. 325.

² *Christianity in its Cradle*, p. 54.

³ Max Muller, *Physical Religion*, p. 361.

⁴ F. W. Newman, *Christianity in its Cradle*, p. 58.

⁵ G. W. Foote, *Will Christ Save Us?* p. 5.

¹ J. A. Farrer, *Paganism and Christianity* (1891), pp. 174-5-6.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 177-8.

Acid Drops.

A correspondent—an officer in the Army—writes:—

It may interest you to know that in this camp toleration of any description is conspicuous by its absence. In spite of a determined stand on my part, I am emphatically refused exemption from Church Parades, although I offered to take charge of the company to and from the church, without attending the actual ceremony myself.

When such is the treatment meted out to an officer in the most important branch of the Army, can it be wondered that the position of the "Tommy," who has the courage of his convictions, is an impossible one?

Here, the men themselves adopt every conceivable device to avoid the Sunday parades, and as to the "increase" in religion amongst the troops—my experience is that this claim is a calculated lie, worthy only of the clerical mind. The majority of the men resent most strongly the increasing efforts of the Padres to cram religion down their throats on every possible occasion.

We commend this to Mr. Lloyd George who spoke some little time ago as to the need for religious liberty in the Army. We said at the time that all he meant was equal liberty for all the Christian sects—that is, the liberty believed in by the religious bigot who lacks intellectual foundation for his bigotry.

"Why," asks a correspondent in the columns of a daily paper, "must the secretary-superintendent of one of the largest London hospitals be a member of the Church of England?" Perhaps Nonconformists and Rationalists who subscribe to the institution may be interested to find out.

Rev. N. Popplewell, addressing the Leeds Free Church Council, denied that any wide religious movement existed among the soldiers in France. He had seen nothing of such a movement during his residence in an area with a military population of 80,000. With over 2,000 men passing through the Y.M.C.A. tent with which he was connected, it was a common experience for the purely religious service to have less than fifty present. Mr. Popplewell's statement enables one to estimate at their true value the stories told by some other clergyman we could name.

The "Morals Committee" of the Newcastle-on-Tyne Presbytery decided that it could not proceed with investigations concerning a charge of profanity in the Army, as the charge was not substantiated. So the Newcastle Presbytery treats swearing in the Army as an open question. It has never heard of it, it does not know it exists, it has no reason for believing that a British soldier ever swears. What a sweet, innocent lot the Newcastle Presbytery must be! For our own part, we should prefer to associate with the man who used an oath than with such people as constitute the Presbytery.

The Bishop of London says he is looking for a new Church. Maybe; but we are quite sure it will embrace the old jobs, with the old men, and the old salaries.

The Bishop, as a good follower of the Prince of Peace, told a meeting of women at Plymouth:—

What a position was before England in a few years' time! Neutrals, however powerful, however much they might have made out of the war, were going to be despised.

He is evidently anxious that all the rest of the world should go to war without delay. The warfare is not general enough for this stay-at-home, fire-eating, episcopal swaggerer. We are not surprised that the *Western Daily Mercury* remarks: "The Bishop's ideas are ethically what they may be; politically they are, to put it quite plainly, fatuous. If he wants to make a Piccadilly 'sensation' at The Hague or in Copenhagen, let him take steps to get this speech published in those capitals—if the postal censorship will allow him. But if he wants to serve his country, he will make no more speeches of the kind."

The Bishop of Chelmsford says that our drink bill, Slumlands, and infantile death-rate, the spirit of greed, and other

national failings, are due to our "largely" forgetting God. Unhappily, our remote forefathers had most of these failings before they were introduced to the Christian Trinity.

It is a sound rule for the shoemaker to stick to his last. General H. Smith-Dorrien, who has been very active in criticizing the morals of the theatre, has now turned to the pleasing subject of venereal diseases, and presided recently at a Y.M.C.A. meeting "for men only," at which the matter was discussed. Cannot the gallant soldier leave these matters to the clergy? They have plenty of leisure, for they do not fight.

"It has been the Grace of God which has given England her finest men. Wilberforce, Shaftesbury, Gladstone, Salisbury, Gordon, Roberts, were, what they were, because of the spirit of Christ within them." So says the Bishop of Chelmsford, who ought to re-read the history of England. Gladstone, one of "God's finest men," disestablished the Irish Church, and the "Hotel Cecil" will be interested to hear that Salisbury was a "saint."

The hymn tells us that the heathen in his blindness bows down to wood and stone. And keen-sighted Catholic Christians bow down to plaster images—and pay for the privilege.

In the *Nation* of November 18 the Rev. R. L. Gales, referring to the theism of the Kaiser and of Captain Colthurst, says that their god "is a non-existent being, a monstrous idol, the projection of their own arrogance and prejudice." So far as we can see, the Kaiser's god is not the only one that might be described in similar terms. The difficulty would be to discover the exception.

The wife of the Vicar of St. Michael's, Cricklewood, has collected 233,842 farthings, to reduce the debt on the church building. As an example of misplaced energy, this would be hard to beat.

Mr. Horatio Bottomley characterizes the clerical purity crusade as "an emotional nightmare." Just so! But we wonder what kind of a nightmare is Mr. Bottomley's god, which he so assiduously parades, much to the amusement of the more intelligent of his readers?

What queer people there are in the world! Dr. A. W. Fuller, M.D., writes in the *Sunday Times* in reply to the statement that a large infant mortality means "hideous suffering," that it is better to have lived and died as an infant than never to have lived at all. The basis of this nonsense is, as one might expect, religious, for, says Dr. Fuller, only on the assumption "that there is no future life" can the argument "claim to be common sense." It used to be said—and we believe there is still truth in the saying—out of three doctors, two Atheists. Dr. Fuller represents the third, evidently, and we sincerely hope that his professional duties exhibit a higher level of rationality than his religious belief.

Another clergyman, the Vicar of St. Barnabas, Warmley, near Bristol, has been fined, under the Defence of the Realm Act, for ringing his church bells during prohibited hours. The calm way in which numbers of the clergy set themselves up as superior to the law is amusing. And the incident is another lesson that, in the case of a Zepp raid, the authorities regard what one may call secular precautions as of far greater importance than a prayer-meeting.

Journalists are using bold headlines to inform their readers that numbers of women-carpenters are being trained to assist in Government contract work. There is nothing alarming in this. Some gods have done a little carpentry in their time, and plenty of "gods" have been made by carpenters.

The Rev. Hugh B. Chapman, Chaplain of the Savoy, complains, in a Sunday paper, that the girls of the present day are "soldier-mad." Women have been clergy-mad for centuries, so the change is a welcome one.

"Heaven is silent in our hours of tribulation," says that distinguished convert to the Church of England, the Rev. R. J. Campbell. We all wish that the clergy were as quiet.

We take the following from the *Bedfordshire Express* of November 11:—

Serious charges of offences against young girls in the Okehampton (Devon) district were made against the Rev. Charles Henry Chaplin, aged 43 (minister of Halwil Baptist Church, and formerly of Biggleswade) at the Devon Assizes on Tuesday. On a charge of assault against a little girl named Webber at Murchington on August 19, prisoner was sentenced to twelve months' imprisonment with hard labour.

The Judge, in passing sentence, said he had formed the opinion that this was not prisoner's first offence, but that he had habitually committed them in various parts of the country. He would be arrested on other warrants when he came out of prison and tried upon new charges.

Prosecuting counsel had previously stated after the jury's verdict of "Guilty" that there was a warrant out for a man, believed to be the accused, for similar offences in the Stratton area.

Giving a history of accused, the police stated that there had been a charge against him while at Biggleswade, but this broke down for want of identification. Then there was a suspicious circumstance at Gloucester, but there was no warrant issued.

London Opinion is responsible for the following:—

Every soldier in the Tsar's mighty armies, so far as is possible, is to receive a card shortly. These cards, each of which depicts one of our men in the distinctive uniform of his regiment, and bears a greeting printed both in Russian and English, are now on their way from this country to Russia, and are being distributed by the million. The message from "Tommy" to "Ivan," which is printed on each card, runs as follows: "Forward, comrades! Forward, friends! Let us struggle on undaunted—struggle on till death in the name of Christ and Truth. From your friend, a soldier of the ——— division."

A "message from 'Tommy'!" Now, we wonder how many British soldiers would write thus "in the name of Christ" if they were sending an actual message to the Russian soldiers? And would it not be as well in a struggle for truth to utilize some of it in this message?

The Literature Committee of the National Mission has grouped its publications into three classes. One represents the evangelical school, a second the High Church group, and the third the moderate liberal school. We suggest that in order to complete the survey a couple of pamphlets should be written from the Freethought point of view. We are quite willing to write them—free, gratis, for nothing.

The Rector of Shelley, near Ongar, has been compelled to pay damages and costs for injury done to crops by his fowls. It was said in court that the Rector was in a state of constant warfare with his parishioners, and his fowls were an intolerable nuisance. Other actions are threatened, and by this time this particular parson may have realized that being a representative of God does not absolve him from the courtesies of ordinary citizenship.

In a circular letter in connection with the Mission of Repentance and Hope, the Bishop of Chelmsford says that "the spirit of sacrifice is in the air." So far as the clergy themselves are concerned, it is likely to remain permanently "in the air." These gentlemen are "too proud to fight," and are almost the only persons whose salaries are unaffected by the War.

The veteran reformer, Mr. Joseph Arch, who has just celebrated his ninetieth birthday, has some bitter things to say of the present-day Nonconformists. "Some of these Dissenters," he remarked, "are caving in to tyranny quite as much as Church people." Doubtless, there is more Stiggins than Spurgeon in the present Free Churchmen.

It is said that German soldiers wear asbestos clothing when going into action. Simple folk will regard this as a further proof that the Huns are Atheists.

Mr. R. E. Prothero, M.P., justifies the Mission of Repentance and Hope on the ground that the nation is now "living closer to high moral and spiritual ideals than it has lived within our memories." One is used to this kind of balderdash from parsons, but our legislators really ought to be above it. They should at least know the facts of the case, and the man who can take the present state of things as favourable to high moral ideals is either a fool or a knave. If true, it contains all that is needed to justify everything that the most militaristic of German writers have said in praise of war. If universal bloodshed and the cultivation of the bitterest spirit of hatred between nations is productive of "high moral and spiritual ideals," the less we have of peace the better. Mr. Prothero's doctrine embodies the old falsehood that peace ruins a people, and war purifies and ennobles them. And a viler teaching than that it is impossible to conceive. It puts hate and strife in the place of friendship and co-operation. We suggest that Mr. Prothero give up Parliament and enter the pulpit.

We are really pleased to see the *Sheffield Independent* raising a protest against the indiscriminate and unlimited begging going on, professedly on behalf of wounded or discharged soldiers. It quotes from one appeal which asks for "a good second-hand overcoat, or a half-worn suit, or cap, or boots," as being of real service. We agree that such appeals are nauseous. They degrade the recipient, and are an insult to the nation. We are not in love with militarism, as our readers are aware, and we dissent utterly from the teaching which places the soldier on the pinnacle of our civilization, but we do feel most sincerely that while we have armies, their care should be one of the first charges on the nation. It is disgraceful that they should be, when wounded or discharged, in need of charity, and if the charity is not needed, the Government should take prompt steps to see that it is stopped,

We do not know the private opinions of the Lord Mayor of Sheffield, but he is evidently a man of liberal opinions. On taking his seat for the first time, and in reply to an address of welcome, he said in the course of his remarks:—

He was reminded of the great American advocate, Ingersoll, who was much maligned by the Church because of his wide views, but who in respect of his advocacy had a notice put up outside his house that no guilty man need enter. On the other hand, however, he was always ready to defend a prisoner, even at his own expense, when he believed him to be innocent.

The Lord Mayor did not know if Sheffield legal men had attained "that high standard." We should say not; and we hope the reference will send some of those who are unacquainted with Ingersoll to a study of his writings.

A *Glasgow Herald* review of a recent work by Dr. Henry Maudesley remarks that "it is marred by its tone of sarcasm and hardly concealed antagonism to the Christian belief and Christian institutions." Of course, everyone has the same right to disagree with Dr. Maudesley that Dr. Maudesley has to disagree with him. But how can a work be "marred" by its opposition to Christianity? It is solely a question of whether the antagonism is justifiable. The *Herald's* comment is sheer impertinence. Intelligent and fair-minded men and women readily recognize the right of others to disagree with them, and are concerned only with whether the disagreement is warranted by the facts.

As so many of the Christian clergy are acting as recruiting sergeants, it is only fair to notice the instance of the Rev. Campbell Stephen who recently told the Ardrossan U. F. Presbytery that as a Christian he would do nothing to help on the cause of war. The rest of the clergy will doubtless inform Mr. Stephen that Christ's teaching of non-resistance really involved the use of dreadnoughts and high explosives.

Christian philanthropy is a fearful and a wonderful thing. The Y.M.C.A. has been advertising for "voluntary helpers" for the munition workers' restaurants. They also request subscriptions for the good work—and get them. Yet the food supplied at these restaurants is not given away.

C. Cohen's Lecture Engagements.

December 10, Leicester; January 7, Chesterfield; January 14, Nottingham; January 28, Swansea; February 4, Abertillery.

To Correspondents.

- J. T. LLOYD'S LECTURE ENGAGEMENTS.—December 31, Abertillery.
- W. FITZPATRICK AND OTHERS.—We are greatly obliged for the many cuttings received. They lighten our labours considerably.
- T. MAY.—We hope to meet you on some future occasion when we are in Sheffield, or near there.
- J. BLACKHALL.—See this week's list.
- BENAN MANN.—Sorry that pressure on our space prevents the publication of your somewhat lengthy communication.
- S. MAINS.—We have been sending free copies of the *Freethinker* and other literature out to the Front ever since the War started. So far as we are concerned, we have seen to it that, so far as possible, no soldier should go without his weekly copy of the paper.
- C. EDWARDS.—Many thousands of people, we should say, have taken the trouble to investigate the truth of the question submitted by Sir Oliver Lodge, and have decided negatively or remained unconvinced. It is really painful—in the circumstances—to say all that one thinks of Sir Oliver's latest "proof" of survival.
- N. RAJA.—The imbecility of the religious tract you send us is too great for criticism. One can only wonder at the state of mind of people who write and circulate such things.
- T. MORRIS.—Charmed to learn that you think we are "doing more injury to the nation than a German invasion," for you clearly imply that we *are* injuring Christianity. Thanks for the compliment. We hope we shall continue to deserve it.
- "A DUTCHMAN" sends a contribution to our Sustentation Fund, "with thanks for the past and good wishes for the future." Quite a pretty way of putting it.
- SPECIAL PROPAGANDA FUND.—Mr. and Mrs. S. W. B., 35.
- G. BAILEY.—We do not think you will suffer any unpleasantness if the request to affirm is made courteously and adhered to firmly. Your friend should not have given way on that point, as he was well within his legal right. Often the recruiting officer is unaware of the provisions of the Oaths Act. Church attendance, once one is in the Army, is a different matter. One *must* attend church parade, unless excused by one's superior officer. In these matters we can only point out possibilities. The final choice must rest with the individual himself.—Thanks for good wishes.
- COR CORDIUM.—Your warm appreciation of our work is indeed encouraging.
- F. W. B. suggests that the shortage of agricultural labour might be eased by employing the exempted clergy on the land. He also suggests that the people in the country who have most cause for repentance are the clergy. We agree on both counts. But what Gibbon said of the primitive Christians (it was not in this world they aimed at being either happy or useful) applies—certainly as far as utility is concerned—to the modern clergy.
- MR. G. RULE writes to inform us that a South London paper declined an advertisement of the Brixton meetings "during a time of war." In all probability the real cause, was fear of offending religious patrons.
- D. THOMAS (Renfrew) in forwarding contribution to Fund says, "I would really like to see the shilling and half-crown readers coming along." If they did they would make a brave show.
- N. M. DEWAR.—A very large quantity of the tract was put into circulation by the N. S. S. some years ago, but it is now out of print.
- 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.*
- Lecture Notices must reach 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C., by first post Tuesday, or they will not be inserted.*
- Friends who send us newspapers would enhance the favour by marking the passages to which they wish us to call attention.*
- 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.*
- Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed to 61 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.*
- 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.

The contest with the L.C.C. over the sale of literature in the Parks under its control has now entered on a new phase. Although, as a result of the agitation carried on since we first wrote on the subject in our issue of June 11, the votes in favour of maintaining the old arrangement had increased from two to thirty-three, the majority on the Council declined all offers of peace. It even negatived the recommendation of its own Parks Committee in favour of suspending the prohibition till the end of the War—a decision of peculiar and sinister significance. For it proves, as clearly as such a matter is capable of proof, that the reactionist majority on the Council hopes to take full advantage of War conditions to sacrifice this popular liberty along with the others that have already gone.

We may, therefore, take it that the Council intends to exercise its powers so far as public opinion, or the law, will allow it to do so. Summonses will, in all probability, be issued against those who have been selling literature—for the sale has gone on in spite of the Council's prohibition; and we shall see with what result. And we fancy that in both directions the Council may find that it has miscalculated. It is quite true that it possesses powers to regulate the conduct of meetings in the Parks; but the exercise of powers vested in a governing body is open to a challenge in the Courts, and, without posing as a legal authority, we think we are quite safe in saying that these powers must be exercised with due regard to the convenience, and the established privileges of the public. There is, too, such a thing as Equity, which often overrides the mere letter of the law. What is to be done in this direction must, however, be determined by the steps taken by the Council. Meanwhile the sale of literature is going on.

With regard to public opinion, we are quite certain the Council has miscalculated. The Joint Committee of Protest that was formed has now the adherence of about fifty Metropolitan organizations, including the London Trades Council. Mr. Frederick Verinder, a staunch fighter where liberty is at stake, is Chairman of this Committee, and Miss Vance is acting as Secretary. Mr. Cohen is also on the Committee. The Rationalist Press Association is represented by Mr. Gorham. And so far, the Committee is quite unaware of any body of public opinion that has either called for or justifies the Council's action. Not a single newspaper has said a word in its support, and the *Star*, at least, has repeatedly called attention to the tyrannical nature of the resolution. And we venture to predict that, when the issue is brought squarely before the public, general opinion will support the stand made by the Committee against an unwarrantable interference with a privilege that is old enough to have become a right.

Everyone may rest quite assured of two things. First, the ultimate aim of the reactionists is to stop the meetings altogether. That has, in fact, been practically admitted by some, although disclaimed by others. But appetite grows by what it feeds on, and success here will encourage to further effort. Secondly, there is nothing in the situation that calls for the new regulation. Literature has been offered for sale in the Parks and open spaces ever since the Parks and open spaces have existed. The Council already exercises a veto over the literature sold. Every pamphlet must be submitted before it is offered for sale. The Council admits that no request, or complaint, has been received from the military authorities in connection with the sale of literature. So that War conditions cannot be pleaded in extenuation. Finally, in a report to the Council, the Park officials declare that the old arrangements have worked without friction, and quite satisfactorily. There is not, then, the slightest justification in any direction for disturbing the public mind in this matter. It is entirely a matter of a handful of reactionaries exploiting their moment of power in the furtherance of their own retrogressive tendencies, and trusting to the War to crown their tactics with success. The motive is apparent and the issue is clear. The Council has attempted this kind of thing before, and has been defeated. It is for

lovers of liberty of opinion to see that the present attempt meets with no greater success.

There is one other point of immediate and pressing importance. It is desirable that the Council should be made to realize the strength of the opposition against its action. To that end it is essential to organize at once a band of people who are ready to undertake to sell literature in defiance of the Council's ruling. The larger the number who are summoned for this "offence," the better. It will show the Council we mean business. The Courts may fine, but a public liberty is not to be lightly thrown away for fear of that contingency. Freethinkers are never backward when there is a fight on, and we now ask all those who are willing to act as literature-sellers in connection with the N. S. S. meetings to send their names at once to Miss Vance, at 62 Farringdon Street, E.C.

We are very pleased to learn that Mr. Lloyd had a good meeting at Birmingham on Sunday last. In spite of the "vile" weather, the audience, Mr. Partridge writes us, "was splendid." We are quite sure that those who attended wouldn't regret it.

A correspondent writes, with reference to our notes on Sir Ray Lankester's fantastic claim on behalf of "Christian morality":—

DEAR SIR,—I am an Agnostic Deist, not an Atheist; but an old subscriber to, and sincere admirer of, the *Freethinker*. I agree entirely with your remarks about Christian morality. No greater blight and sham and taboo-laden injustice has ever descended on this suffering earth. No unbiased mind can ultimately support it. I have lived nearly fifty years, and the deeds done in the name of Christian (sex) morals have made me weep at the extent of their enormity. There is no more room for Christian morality than for "Christian" mathematics. Whatsoever makes for the happiness of sentient life on the globe is good; and conduct that augments the mixing of mankind is bad. That is the datum of scientific morality.

CRIMINOLOGIST.

We are without information as to the meeting at Brixton on Sunday last, but to-day the lecturer is Miss Kough, and as lady speakers on our platform are not numerous, this should form an added attraction. The lecture hall is in Avondale Road, within three minutes of Clapham Road Tube Station. The Chair will be taken at 6.30.

We are greatly obliged to those of our readers who have sent on the names of newsagents who stock the *Freethinker*. While we are about it, we may also thank those who have induced their newsagents to display the posters. This has invariably led to sales, and we are hoping to see a much larger display of these in the future. All the *Freethinker* needs is to be known. Once bought, always bought.

Our Sustentation Fund.

THE object of this Fund is to make good the loss on the *Freethinker*—entirely due to increased cost of materials, etc.—from October, 1915, to October, 1916, and to provide against the inevitable further losses during the continuation of the War.

LIST OF SUBSCRIPTIONS.

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Failure seems to be the trade-mark of Nature? Why? Nature has no design, no intelligence. Nature produces without purpose, sustains without intention, and destroys without thought. Man has a little intelligence, and he should use it. Intelligence is the only lever capable of raising mankind.—*Ingersoll*.

The Partiality of God.

MRS. SMALL, of Cleveland Street, Birkenhead, is not the first favoured person in history "to have been warned of God in a dream"; but at the time of writing she is the latest. She and her daughter, according to her statement, were on a visit to Armagh, and had arranged to return on Friday night (Nov. 3) by the Greenore steamer. In the early hours of Thursday morning Mrs. Small had a vivid and terrible dream. She dreamed that she sailed in the Greenore steamer on a stormy night. Something happened, and she clearly saw an explosion, and steam rushing from broken pipes. She found herself and her daughter in the water, with pieces of the vessel and people floating about. Whilst in the water she became so weak she could no longer hold her daughter up, and the latter sank from her grasp. She shrieked aloud, and awoke. The same morning she told her friend of the dream, and declared she had been *warned by God*, and would not sail that night for a thousand pounds, as she was sure something would happen. Her friend laughed; but Mrs. Small unpacked her trunks, and was thereby saved from death on the ill-fated *Connemara*.

This passage is redolent of journalistic ink; but as it stands it affords proof of three things:—

1. The undoubted partiality of God for certain persons;
2. Mrs. Small's conviction of her selection for a special mark of Divine favour; and
3. The growing unbelief in supernatural revelations.

Why, her friend *laughed* when Mrs. Small told her the story! *But Mrs. Small unpacked her trunks*. Put that in your pipes and smoke it, you pre-condemned unbelievers.

There is one circumstance about the story, however, which does not seem to redound to Mrs. Small's credit. Was it not her duty to have stationed herself at the quayside, and to have pleaded with intending passengers by the *Connemara* on Friday not to put a foot on board? But probably she would have been flying in the face of God by doing so. This dream was his stunt, and if God had wanted to warn the others, why, of course, he would have done so! We may yet learn of a great future for Mrs. Small.

A perplexing consideration for Rationalists is that staying in this world should necessarily be regarded by Christians as something highly desirable. According to their hymns, heaven (not the world) is their home. They yearn for the Better Land—in song. But it is to be doubted if any Christian has faced death passively with more resolute composure than the self-judged Jap who actively commits *hara-kiri*.

It would be interesting to hear what one of the company which was drowned had to say—if he or she could return—about Mrs. Small's story. It would be more interesting to have his or her opinion about Mrs. Small's God, who is evidently trying to keep up to date by communicating his revelations by pictures instead of by word of mouth. But he ought really to consider the feelings of his elect when he subjects them to a particularly trying nightmare. Nobody likes nightmares. We wonder what Mrs. Small had for supper that Thursday night; or had she been seeing something particularly appalling at the "movies"? How was she so sure it was the *Greenore boat* she was dreaming about? The rest is "explosion," "broken pipes," and she is in the water with her daughter—not very unlikely elements in anybody's nightmare. But though her friend *laughed*, *Mrs. Small unpacked her trunks*. Glory be! Amen.

But in this Irish Sea disaster, as in some others, the Devil has apparently got the better of God. For there is *another* story about it. On Wednesday, November 2, when Patrick Killen, one of the cattlemen, was coming

ashore from the *Connemara*, a large rat jumped from a hamper he was carrying ashore. "That's a bad sign for the crew," he observed to a Greenore railwayman, "and it is time for us all to leave the ship." And here is apparent proof that the Devil was in what followed: *the incident impressed Killen so much that he had to be coaxed to make Friday night's journey.* But, alas, he *did* make it! Why wasn't he directed to Mrs. Small? Or, better, why was no special revelation communicated to him?

What are thinking people to conclude about the mental make-up of those who snatch and gloat over such stories? It is depressing to survey the drivel that is daily set before the reading public for their consumption. Are they a public whose intelligence *cannot* be insulted? The most of them, we are to understand, are terribly *pious*! They are certainly as primitive in mind as the most unlearned savage, and quite as superstitious. God's face can only be saved in respect of impartiality on the assumption that the lot of the drowned is as good as, or better than, that of Mrs. Small.

IGNOTUS.

Bertram Dobell as Poet and Critic.

II.

(Concluded from p. 747.)

It is, however, as a critic of English literature that Dobell stands the best chance of being remembered by what, I trust, will be a grateful posterity. His best work was, let me say, more practical than theoretic. Unlike our over-praised academic writers, he had both the good fortune and the good sense to discover genius before singing its praises. We are all of us under a debt of gratitude to him for what he did for James Thomson (B.V.). Without Dobell's generous, persistent, and loving help, it is just possible that Thomson's poems would be unpublished or inaccessible, as it is practically certain that his critical and biographical essays, so admirable alike in breadth and sanity, would now be resting quietly in the forgotten pages of obscure journals. Dobell's immediate recognition of the magnificently sombre power of *The City of Dreadful Night*, when it appeared in the most unlikely of all places, the pages of the *National Reformer*, is proof enough of, at least, a fairly independent critical judgment. Yet it must be remembered that he was, no doubt, attracted by the poet's sincere and melodious despair which seems to have fitted in with his own philosophy of life—a temperamental pessimism strengthened by failure, and misfortune, and ill-health. It must also be remembered that on the formal side of Thomson's art there was nothing to shock the most devout believer in the traditions of English verse. Thomson walked contentedly enough in the way of his less adventurous predecessors. He made no attempt to revolutionize poetic practice, as did Patmore, Meredith, Swinburne, and a host of later men, by challenging traditional and conventional rhythms, by creating new and infinitely more complex patterns of verse. Even his Freethought, the "fundamental brain-work" of his poetry, was merely the democratic counterpart of Arnold's aristocratic scepticism. However that may be, we have here no desire to minimize the genius of the poet who so well expressed the personal, rather than the intellectual aspect of Mid-Victorian pessimism, and whose poems of the simple joys of life, "Sunday up the River," and the love poems are a striking contrast to his pessimistic work. But it seems to us, as it must seem to others, that Dobell's final estimate of Thomson in the concluding couplet of one of his sonnets is singularly unbalanced. "Few names," he says, "in Time's great book of bards shall shine more brightly in the years to come than thine." He would have done better to have

left the lines as they stood in the earlier version of the same sonnet, where the poet's fame in letters was happily enough compared with Omar's and Fitzgerald's. Loyalty to one's friends is a good thing, but, like all good things, you can have too much of it, and here Dobell was so unwise as to allow his friendship to get in the way of his literary judgment, or to put it more correctly, it prompted him to talk something not unlike nonsense.

Dobell's openness to new ideas in the form and substance of poetry was thoroughly tested when he came to read Whitman. He did not share the tempered enthusiasm of W. M. Rossetti, Symonds, and James Thomson himself for the American poet of democracy. For the splendid *Leaves of Grass*, even at what he is pleased to call their best, he could feel only a lukewarm admiration, finding the poetry shapeless because, presumably, it was too far removed from traditional forms. This inability to react sympathetically to the stimulus of the more complex and subtle rhythms of modern verse lasted, apparently, to the end of his days. It was due, I think, to the habit of writing verse in conventional forms, and more especially to facile versifying when there was really no creative impulse. The critical intelligence became inflexible. It is both amusing and instructive to find him wasting his ingenuous enthusiasm upon the maudling sentimentality of the love-music of Gounod's travesty of *Faust*, and even writing a poem in praise of that operatic abortion which is to *Tristan and Isolde* what the *Sorrows of Satan* is to the *Mayor of Casterbridge*. It is equally instructive to know that he was wearied and exhausted by Wagner's music (nowadays so clear and simple, that we wonder how we could have thought *Lohengrin* anything but transparent), and recreated in spirit and in sense by Mozart. Yet, in fairness, it must be remembered that Dobell had enough openness of mind to appreciate Mr. Ernest Newman's *Study of Wagner*, and, what is more, enough courage and generosity to risk his money in publishing it at a time when books of solid musical criticism by writers unvouched for by the Universities were not exactly jumped at by publishers.

Apart from the little book on Thomson, *The Laureate of Pessimism*, the only solid volume of criticism we have from Dobell is *Side-lights on Charles Lamb*, and the only really good thing about it is the title. On the whole, it is a dull piece of work on a promising subject. It reads more like the materials for a study than a study itself. Two chapters deal with Thomas Griffith Wainwright, who began his career as a man of letters in the *London Magazine*, and ended it as a notorious poisoner and forger. He figures as Varney in Bulwer's *Lucretia*, and is the principal character in a wretched pot-boiler by Dickens. Dobell's researches add nothing to our knowledge of the man; they are disappointing, because no attempt is made to do justice to a writer who was obviously a sincere and intelligent lover of art and letters. Some ethically minded people seem to think that a man who allows his superabundant energies to run to crime must always find life on that giddy and dangerous level. But we all need some relaxation, and if I turn from the strenuous and exciting labour of beating my wife to a quiet game of billiards, am I less sincere than was Wainwright when he found pleasure in reading the poetry of Wordsworth? Where would have been the question of sincerity if it had not been for the poisoning and forging, which seems to have upset all the people who still persist in mixing up morals with literature? Another item in the ethical indictment of Wainwright is that Oscar Wilde once wrote a brilliant article on him.

It is, however, in connection with Thomas Traherne that Dobell's fame as a critic of literature is raised on an indestructible foundation. Here, I am glad to say, there is no question of mental or expressed reservations, but

rather one of praise and of gratitude to a critic who, by rare literary intuition, has added another jewel to the already resplendent crown of our English prose. To those Freethinkers who are also lovers of seventeenth century prose style I say buy Traherne's *Centuries of Meditations* and become possessed of a more precious and a rarer thing than gold or jewels. It was discovered by Dobell, and first printed by him from the author's manuscript in 1908. Traherne (1636-1674) was a clergyman of the Church of England, a man of singular purity of life at a time when there seemed to be no middle way between asceticism and licence. He was also, which is much more to our purpose, a poet and a mystic, with a leaning, Dobell thinks, to a sort of Berkeleyan idealism. His poems, which were first printed by Dobell (second edition, 1906), are stiff in movement and laboured in expression when compared with his prose, which has an elemental grace and lightness. I give myself the pleasure of quoting a passage that has won the unqualified admiration of every lover of sincere, fine prose, no matter what his belief or unbelief. The outlook is that of a child who found the world and all that is in it entrancingly beautiful, and ever new; it is that of the poet-mystic who has succeeded in keeping the illusions of childhood, the "pure and virgin apprehensions" of young life.

All appeared new and strange at first, inexpressibly rare and delightful, and beautiful. I was a little stranger, which, at my entrance into the world, was saluted and surrounded with innumerable joys. My knowledge was Divine. I knew by intuition those things which, since my apostacy, I collected again by the highest reason. My very ignorance was advantageous. I seemed as one brought into an estate of innocence. All things were spotless and pure and glorious; yea, and infinitely mine, and joyful and precious. I knew not that there were any sins, or complaints, or laws. I dreamed not of poverties, contentions, or vices. All tears and quarrels were hidden from mine eyes. Everything was at rest, free and immortal. I knew nothing of sickness, or death, or exaction. In the absence of these I was entertained like an angel with the works of God in their splendour and glory; I saw all in the peace of Eden; heaven and earth did sing my Creator's praises, and could not make more melody to Adam than to me. Is it not strange that an infant should be heir of the whole world and see these mysteries which the books of the learned never unfold?

The corn was orient and immortal wheat which never should be reaped, nor was ever sown. I thought it had stood from everlasting to everlasting. The dust and stones of the street were as precious as gold; the gates were at first the end of the world. The green trees, when I saw them first through one of the gates, transported and ravished me; their sweetness and unnatural beauty made my heart to leap, and almost mad with ecstasy, they were such strange and wonderful things. The men! O what venerable and reverend creatures did the aged seem! Immortal cherubims! And young men glittering and sparkling angels, and maids strange seraphic pieces of life and beauty! Boys and girls tumbling in the street were moving pearls; I knew not that they were born or should die. But all things abided eternally, as they were in their proper places. The City seemed to stand in Eden or to be built in Heaven. The streets were mine, the temple was mine, the people were mine, their clothes and gold and silver were mine, as much as their sparkling eyes and ruddy faces. The skies were mine, and so were the sun and moon and stars, and all the world was mine; and I the only spectator and enjoyer of it. I knew no churlish proprieties, nor bounds, nor divisions; but all proprieties and divisions were mine, all treasures and the possessors of them. So that, with much ado, I was corrupted and made to learn the dirty devices of this world, which now I unlearn, and become, as it were, a little child again.

I do not think that anyone is likely to challenge my

judgment when I say that this passage—and it is only one of many—is as beautiful as anything in Jeremy Taylor or Sir Thomas Browne. Although Traherne was a member of the Church of England, his religion was less dogmatic than mystical, and the mystic in all ages has been a sort of religious Freethinker. His only guide is his inner sense of truth. Traherne has less in common with orthodox religious poets like Keble than with a Freethinker like James Thomson who, I may point out, wrote with sympathy and insight on the various stages of mystical experience. While I am praising Traherne and Thomson, it will be remembered I am equally praising Dobell, whose name is inseparable from theirs. I end here on a note of gratitude to a writer who had the rare faculty of literary intuition and the courage of his opinions.

GEO. UNDERWOOD.

In the Storm.

THE MEADOW.

Of these am I, Coila my name.

—Burns, "The Vision."

AND not strictly *in it*; not, in our peculiar idiom, *out in it*; but it was all around. A certain erection of wood, glass, etc., sheltered me, and I saw, heard, felt, enjoyed—all but the discomfort of the storm.

This is one of my favourite days in the citadel. The brown stream overflows, the meadow is sheeted with wind-swept pools, the skies frown, the wind raves, the inland gull luxuriates in the green archipelago as the pools shiver in the blast. But it is mild, if wild. It is but mid-October, and the russet and gold of the meadow herbage is changing every day to more sweet and sad and solemn, sentimental, melancholy tints, and lovelier with every passing day, to fade at length in winter's uniform decay. This corner of the meadow is most sweet there, where those changeling colours dream and die. The freshet floods the faithful roots, the wind makes merry in the flags and rushes; but they have done with the world. Nirvana calls; they go.

A horse and cow, friendly but forlorn, sole occupants of the meadow, patiently endure the wind and wet; uncomplainingly, at least; perhaps because they know no better—pathetic dumb endurance of the herd, but dignified and natural compared with some human herd, articulate but irrational, unreliable on each self, depending for direction on gods and "supermen."

THE MOONLIGHT.

The visit to Glasgow to hear the lecturer from London, to lease new life, to glimpse a grander destiny, to revive old memories, to peruse the old familiar faces! Ah, those vanishing days, and features of inevitable change! The poignant procession of the years

That faded away so still and slow.

There is the Pleasure and the Pain, and the proneness to err; but through it all the Purpose shines—broken, intermittent perhaps, but constant, insistent. There is much loss, but some gain; some happiness remains—nay, much! There is a richer glow in the sunset cloud. The glories of Shakespeare grow more rich in colour with age and understanding; he pleases more, at length, because he dazzles less.....

Why, I asked lately, why do I advocate peace even at a time like this? For a purely selfish reason; for a purely natural reason—for the very *raison d'être* of sweet life itself. For life is sweet to me; and the older I grow it is the sweeter, because I understand it more—because I am one with the world, with the very stocks and stones; and even the meagre landscape of a common neighbourhood—those unresentful, unobtrusive, inanimate, but

useful things! With the seashore and the wise old voice of the sea; with the massed cloud and glimpses of the moon upon the wave, while beyond and beneath is gloomily opaque—a background for the ivory phosphorescent foam—and overhead the curtains close and part as the radiant satellite steals away across the stage of night!

Because the death of one man, though a small matter in the tale of empires, is to that man, not loss of empire merely, but—the extinction of a universe!

So much, then, men have given for a cause and for a country. But we must see to it that such sacrifice, boundless and supreme, is not made in vain. COILA.

Correspondence.

RUSSIA AND THE DRINK QUESTION.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

SIR,—In your issue of November 12, under "Acid Drops," appears a paragraph quoting, inter alia, a comment by the *Church Times*, as follows:—

In Russia the sale of Vodka, or spirit, which was a monopoly of the Government, is stopped; but no new restriction has been put on the sale of other beverages containing Alcohol.

I have recently travelled from China across Siberia, Russia, Finland, and Scandinavia, and previously I spent the month of August in Wladiwostok in Siberia. In conversation with British and Russian friends in many towns, I learned that no alcohol in any shape or form is obtainable. The *only* drinks to be had were lemonade, soda-water, and kvass—the last being brewed from stale bread and tasting very much like what our mother's called "nettle beer." Whilst in my hotel in Petrograd, a Russian friend asked me if I wanted whisky or champagne, because, he said with a wink, they could be got on the strict Q. T.—at a price. I forget the price quoted for whisky, but for champagne the price mentioned was 50 roubles per bottle. The rouble in pre-war times was about 9'80 to the £, but at the present it is in the neighbourhood of 16 roubles, this being the exchange I got when in Wladiwostok. Certain friends with whom I dined in Wladiwostok had whisky in the house, but this had been obtained surreptitiously from British or other vessels lying in the port. There is not a single bottle of lager beer to be bought anywhere in Russia. Candidly, I do not think alcohol is to be had in Russia. In many towns there was a shortage of sugar, and on several occasions I was offered jam, or common pear-drops, to put in my tea. Russian friends informed me that this was occasioned, not so much on account of the shortage in supplies, but because the people had discovered that alcohol could be manufactured from sugar, and the authorities in order to put a stop to this, had inaugurated a system limiting the quantity of sugar to be supplied to each householder. There is not the slightest doubt that official Russia is determined to put a stop to the production and sale of alcohol in any shape and form. My friends said it had been a splendid thing for Russia, at least, some of them whom I have known for nearly sixteen years, and not teetotalers by any means. They would be the last to deprive any man of his "peg." I have no feeling one way or the other. I am a Freethinker and have never tasted whisky in my life, although I occasionally take wine or beer when dining out. I stand my "round" for friends like any other sociable being, and look with equanimity on their progress from sobriety to the state known as being "merry."

I am returning to China *via* Russia next month, and will make close inquiries and probably drop you a few lines—that is, if you would be interested.

MASKEE.

[We do not question the good faith of our correspondent, and his testimony is important, so far as it goes. But it does not go far enough. Thus the Budget for 1917 just presented to the Duma, calculates the sale of Vodka at fifty million roubles. This is a great reduction on the pre-war sales, but it is still a sale. In the next place, Vodka is almost entirely the drink of the lower classes, and

for many years the leaders of the people had asked the Government to control the supply. Next, there is in Russia, at present, no prohibition of alcoholic drink in general. Finally, it would indeed be a miracle if a whole people had been made sober by a mere ukase. Where such an attempt is made, secret drinking is inevitable, and where one form of alcohol is prohibited, other forms gain in favour.—ED.]

Now, Adam was a Dinky Boy.

Now, Adam was a dinky boy—

Before he had a girl

He lived upon the fat of joy

And made the welkin skirl.

I don't know what a welkin is,

Or if it ever skirls;

But rhyming is a tricky biz.,

And few words rhyme with girls.

Perhaps you haven't marked it much,

But words that rhyme with boys

Have quite a cute, descriptive touch, ~

As "joys," "destroys," and "noise."

And if you've had to do with girls,

You will agree with me,

Their rhymes—like "skirls," "whirls,"

Just hit them to a "T." ["curls"—

Well, one day Mr. God said, "Man

Is looking very lonely;

I wonder if there is a plan

To help my one-and-only."

Said Mrs. God, "You take the bone!

Before you started thinking

You *knew* man could not live alone—

Unless he took to drinking.

That you should wonder at it *now*,

Looks very much like shirk."

Jehovah said, "Well, anyhow,

We'll have to set to work.

I did intend to think a mate,

A good one, who'd have lasted;

But trade has been so brisk of late,

My thinkings are exhausted."

Said Mrs. God, "Well, use old stock;

Subtract a bit from Adam.

A tiny chip of the old block

Would make a decent madam."

Said Mr. God, "Suppose I did,

He'd break his heart with weeping;

But I will hypnotise the kid

And pinch it while he's sleeping."

So God put Adam in his crib

And then he took a knife,

And sliced out Adam's seventh rib

And made of it a wife.

Now, Adam was a dinky boy—

Before he had a girl;

But with her came "domestic joy";

She caused his heart to dirl.

She showed him how to cheat the Lord,

And how to steal the fruit;

She taught him how to break his word,

And sport a Sunday suit.

She took up with a stranger pal,

And flirted on the sly;

And, like a Suffragetty gal,

Was always asking WHY?

Until for Adam came a dearth

Of peace—he lost his billet;

And 'stead of loafing on the earth,

He had to start and till it.

F. L. B. G

Where to Obtain the "Freethinker."

The following is not a complete list of newsagents who supply the "Freethinker," and we shall be obliged for other addresses for publication. The "Freethinker" may be obtained on order from any newsagent or railway bookstall.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, Etc.

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

LONDON.

INDOOR.

AVONDALE HALL (Landor Road, Clapham, S.W.): 6.30, Kathleen B. Kough, "The Church Against Itself."

NORTH LONDON BRANCH N. S. S. (St. Pancras Reform Club, Victoria Road, off Kentish Town Road, N.W.): 7.30, J. K. Harris, "Genesis and Geology."

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