

threepences 'on,' and betting tickets are sold for these sums. Thus gambling of the most insidious kind is placed within the reach of all and temptations are offered to even the young est.

We have thought it well, at a time when the attention of Christian people is being called sorrowfully to the consideration of a great social evil in our midst, to point out in this way that betting and gambling are not the vices of the rich more than of the comparatively poor, and certainly not vices peculiar to a class. We believe that if gambling is wrong—and any gambling beyond one's means is certainly wrong, and dangerously wrong too—it is just as wrong to gamble for twopence as for two thousand pounds. We believe, too, that there is a serious and hitherto unsuspected danger in the degradation of our two national games if some efforts are not made to check the betting evils connected with them. We believe, lastly, that the Church and her clergy can do far more than the law, and we hope they will do it by setting forth in no uncertain voice the evils which such practices bring in their train. —*H. G. in Church Bells.*

[We fear that the evil referred to by this writer is all too intimately connected with the national game of lacrosse in Canada and with our winter sports.—*Ed.*]

BY THEIR FRUITS.

We are witnessing a deliberate attempt in many quarters to prove that the moral fruits of Christianity owe nothing to its beliefs; that were the creed of Christianity gone, its works might and would survive; that men of the most opposite schools, from the extreme Calvinist to the extreme agnostic, are equally lovable in character and equally great and generous in their devotion of self-denying aims and labours for human good; that men can be Christians in act and fact though they deny almost every truth which Christians have held sacred; and that, in fact, what we call religious beliefs may be put aside and yet leave all that is most attractive and generous in human nature. This, as you know, is the insidious teaching of the books which are having a popular run—'Robert Elsmere,' 'John Ward, Preacher,' 'A Story of a South African Farm,' and in a somewhat less degree Edna Lyall's works—all of them full of pure and tender thought, suffused with the finest Christian sentiment, and pointing to unexceptionable moral ideas. But the conclusion to which they lead throughout is that it is of no consequence what you believe, or how much of Christian doctrine the age rejects, life will be just as gracious and human love just as dear, and philanthropy just as active, and purity of life just as rigidly preserved as before. And there are solitary instances which bear out this conclusion. One cannot deny that there are Robert Elmeres who still carry through life the mellowed character and beautiful thoughts which were begotten in them by Jesus, though they have ceased to believe in Jesus except as a man who lived and died and rose no more. There are agnostics like Raeburn in 'We Two,' who have buried all their faith, yet have clung to its sweet human affections and purity of vision.

There are few who have cut themselves off from the original source of inspiration, yet carry with them still some, or all, of its moral effects, and unbelievers point to them and say: "See what great and generous and true lives men can live without your Christian beliefs! Yes, but what was it that made those lives great and true! Many a man remains noble, though the mother who trained him to that nobility is dead. But if there had been no such mother, what then? Is any one so foolish as to say that the mother had nothing to do

with it because she is no longer present to influence that life? Last year one of my plum trees had a branch laden with fruit nearly smitten off by the storm. It hung on by a mere strip of fibre and bark, yet the fruit showed no decay. I gathered it a month afterwards sweet and ripe. But what insanity it were to suppose that the fruit owed nothing to its living connection with the tree. The effects of forces often remain long after the forces have ceased to operate. The locomotive does not suddenly stop when the steam is shut off; the tidal wave still flows for a while, though the attraction of the moon is no longer felt; and the glory of a summer evening lingers on gliding into tremulous and beautiful twilight, long after the sun, which was the source of the illumination, has vanished below the horizon. The fruits of Christianity are often found in those who have drifted from Christian beliefs. They appear even in the next generation. The godly father has an unbelieving son. He has rejected his father's faith, but he has inherited the moral qualities which his father won in the school of faith. And the world says: See what a sterling and upright character a man can show without being a Christian!—forgetting that the goodness in him has had a distinctly Christian origin. You cannot judge the fruits of unbelief and compare them with the fruits of Christian faith from these instances. You must take any society, community, or nation from which Christian beliefs have been almost banished, and compare with the community or nation in which Christian sentiments and beliefs are strongly held. You must take the Church as a whole and take the unbelieving world as a whole—set on one side the great company of those who hold the distinctive doctrines of Christian faith, and on the other side the greater multitude who either deny these doctrines or pay no regard to them. Compare them in any age, in any land, whether Catholic or Protestant. Take any number of Christian worshippers, no matter what section of the Church they belong to, and weigh them against any equal number of people who are living alongside of them in neglect of religious exercises or in acknowledged defiance of Christian truth. The instant that Christianity and unbelief are brought face to face in this way and challenged to show their respective fruits, the question is settled beyond all doubt. Which of the two classes contain the high minded and honorable members of the community? Who fill the positions of trust? Where do the active philanthropists come from except from the Churches? Who are foremost in all educational matters? Who are they that labor among the poor, and stretch out helping hands to the criminal and the outcast? To whom do widows and orphans apply? Whose contributions support hospitals and infirmaries? Who carry on the war against drunkenness and the social evil? From what homes do the sober and industrious young men go forth, and the maidens who make the sweetest and the most helpful wives? Really, it is almost absurd to ask the question, because the answer is so self-evident. If you wish to know the fruits of unbelief, look at the betting ring, the low amusements, the social evil, the gin palace, the frightful chasms which open between rich and poor, the national vices and the hatreds of classes. If you would see the fruits of Christian belief, look at the missions, orphanages, hospitals, the host of self-denying laborers in any sphere of human service, the noble endeavours to bridge over social chasms and grapple with the evils that infest social life. If it were not for the Church, and the moral restraints which it everywhere imposes, and the salt which it infuses through society, there would be one universal scramble of selfishness and sin.

We are always confessing our inconsistencies as Christians, always lamenting that our Churches are not sufficiently awake to their calling, that our Church members fall far below

their professions; and this is right. It is a necessity of our position. Our ideal is so great that the performance must always seem poor and incomplete. We are always apologising for the scantiness of our service, because we set it against the claim of a perfect Master. But set the Church against the world and it has no need to apologise at all. If unbelievers and sceptics can find a man in their midst who lives a beautiful life, a life of heroism and solid worth, they trumpet his praises as if he were some unaccountable miracle. We have thousands of such men and women, and take them all as a matter of course. If a Christian falls and becomes a scandal a thousand voices proclaim it. It was so unexpected there, yet the same thing is happening every day in the ranks of unbelievers, and the world takes it as a matter of course. No one looked for any particular fruits of righteousness there. The very eagerness with which the sins and failures of Christians are fastened on by the world is a confession of the general superiority of their lives. The black sheep would not be noticed out there among the crowd of black sheep. He is only a conspicuous object because found among those who are fairly white.—*Rev. J. G. Greenhough in The Pulpit.*

THE PRAYER BOOK.

The following extracts from well known writers show how thoroughly the Prayer Book of the Church of England is appreciated:—

"One thing I note in comparing old prayers with modern ones, that however quaint, or erring, they are always tenfold more condensed, comprehensive, and to their purpose, whatever that may be. There is no dilution in them, no vain or monotonous phraseology. They ask for what is desired, plainly and earnestly, and never could be shortened by a syllable."—*Ruskin.*

"I enjoyed the fine selection of Collects read from the Liturgy. What an age of earnest faith, grasping a noble conception of life, and determined to bring all things into harmony with it, has recorded itself in the simple, pregnant, rhythmical English of those Collects and the Bible."

"An admirable book, in which the full spirit of the Reformation breathes out, where beside the moving tenderness of the Gospel, and the manly accent of the Bible, throb the profound emotion, the grave eloquence, the noble-mindedness, the restrained enthusiasm of the heroic and poetic souls who had rediscovered Christianity, and had passed near the fires of martyrdom."—*Taine.*

"There is no fear of the most excellent minister who ever preached making me desert the Church of England. Every time I go I feel more strongly how beautiful our services is."—*J. Hare.*

"The Prayer Book was placed in the hands of the people as an educating, elevating influence, whose intention was to raise the laity to a sense of their equality with the clergy, as participants in the spiritual priesthood of all Christians. There have been few things which have affected the character of the modern English more than the Liturgy."—*Allen.*

"The English Liturgy indeed gains by being compared even with those fine ancient liturgies from which it is to a great extent taken. The essential qualities of devotional eloquence, conciseness, majestic simplicity, pathetic earnestness of supplication, sobered by a profound reverence, are common between the translations and the originals. But in the subordinate graces of diction the originals must be allowed to be far inferior to the translations. And the reason is obvious. The technical phraseology of Christianity did not become a part of the Latin language till that language had passed the age of maturity and was sinking into bar-