

Notes & Queries.

ANSWERS.

PAGANISM.

In reference to "Queries" in the January number of the *FREETHOUGHT REVIEW*, I will answer them briefly. No. 1.: "What was Julian the 'Apostate's' true object in attempting to restore Paganism? Does he deserve the opprobrious title?" No. The character of this great Emperor has been the object of various and contradictory judgments, according to the religious or political spirit of the various writers. Let us take a common sense view of his character. His father, Constantius, A.D. 353, favoured the Arian Church—called a heretical sect—who taught that Jesus Christ was not "very God of very God," but persecuted what were then called the Orthodox—the Nicæans—for their dogmas (see the Nicene creed). Julian, his successor, was taught the Scriptures. His father intended him for a priest of the Arian religion, but he had no inclination for that profession, and at a very early age abandoned the various doctrines of belief called Christian, who were then fighting with each other for the ascendancy. When proclaimed Emperor in December, A.D. 361, he reformed the pomp and prodigality of the household, issued several wise edicts, corrected many abuses, instituted a court of enquiry to investigate the conduct of those who had abused their influence under the preceding reign. He then openly professed the old religion of Rome, sacrificed as high priest to the gods, ordered the former "heathen" temples to be re-built. This was a signal for a fearful reaction against Arians and Nicenes. Frightful persecution arose against them. Both the Emperor and the people found that the court and the nation under the old religion had deprecated immorality, that the masses were then comparatively happy and free, and that justice was dispensed. These were denied them under the reign of Arians and Nicenes, but Julian restrained and punished the persecutors. But because this great persecution happened in his reign—and he was admitted to be a sceptic—hence the nickname of the "Apostate"—a foolish name, indeed, as he never had changed his views, or pretended to teach anything else than hatred to the persecutions that emanated from the bosom of the early Christian Church. He died on the 26th June, 363, in perfect calmness and composure, surrounded by his friends, conversing on philosophical subjects, expressing his satisfaction at his own past conduct. A writer says:—"He had many brilliant and amiable qualities. His morals were pure and even austere."—A.

MASONRY, WHEN FOUNDED.

No. 3A: "When was the first Grand Lodge of Masons founded?" In the commencement of the 14th century, when Pope Clement V. and Philip le Bel, King of France, abolished the order of Templars. Many of them organised a secret society—first called in Scotland by the absurd name of Freemasons—said to be an organisation vowing implacable hatred and eternal vengeance against papacy and royalty.—A.

LEGENDARY ROME.

No. 5: "About what date does the history of Ancient Rome begin, as distinguished from the legendary or pre-historic period?" Roma (Rome) was founded B.C. 753 (legendary) by Romulus. His death is recorded as marvellous, as was his birth. Whilst reviewing his people, he was taken up by his reputed father, Mars, and carried into Heaven, but he soon afterwards appeared as a glorified hero to Proculus Julius, and bade him inform his people that he would watch over them as the god Quirinus. Period 1, from the building of the city to the establishment of the Republic from 753—510 B.C. Period 2, from the establishment of the Republic to the Dictatorship of Sulla 510—82 B.C. Period 3, from the constitution of Sulla to Augustus, 82—30 B.C. Period 4, the Empire to its downfall, 30 B.C.—476 A.D. It will be seen that any account of Rome previous to 753 B.C. must be legendary; that at

about that time, which includes the legendary account of Romulus and Remus, cannot be accepted as history. From that time till 510 B.C., history and legend are mixed up, but from 510 B.C. till the present date authentic history can be found.—AGNOSTIC.

DEFINITION OF GRAVITY.

In answer to No. 2, in your journal No. 5, "What is the best definition of gravity?" The act of matter "falling" to the earth, or the act of one body being attracted towards another. Whether on this earth, or other earth, or all other earths, drawn towards, or attracted to, one another, would define the word gravity. But I do not think this is the querist's trouble; it seems to me he, like others, sees the effect and wishes to know the cause! No doubt he knows that matter does not "fall" to the earth, for if the earth was small enough it would "rise" to a larger body; they would be attracted to each other. Matter at a distance over London would seemingly fall there, but while doing so it would rise to us, so that rising and falling are only names, seemingly opposite, but both expressing the same act. Gravitation or attraction is an inherent principle pervading all matter in the universe so far as our telescopes can reach, and by analogy to all matter contained in the eternity of space—the repulsion of magnetism of the same quality, or the repulsion of various bodies in the chemist's laboratory need not be mentioned here. What attraction or gravity is (cohesive or other) life, electricity, or other mysteries are, are beyond the ken of man and are likely to remain so. We know that the magnetic atmospheres surrounding the North and South poles of the earth extend as far as the equator, and there, as in other parts of the earth's surface, attracts the atmospheres of the mariner's compass, repelling one and attracting the other pole, forcing it into the magnetic meridian, drawing and repelling in horizontal lines; but whether the vertical or radiant lines emanating from the earth or other earths or suns meet each other half way, embracing each other there, and continuing the embrace until the bodies themselves were united—which they are sure to be if not coerced by some other power—is not known. When I use the word atmosphere querist will observe it is not the matter we breathe that I allude to, but something more akin to the ether which pervades all space; the atmosphere that surrounds all matter of various qualities, extending indefinitely in all directions, but attenuated in the distance. For instance, the various atmospheres surrounding iron, copper, lead, flowers, bread, &c., are distinguished by the smell. A grain of musk will fill a room with its atmosphere for many years, should it contain thousands of cubic feet of space, without sensibly diminishing its weight. The earth's atmosphere extends into all space; other atmospheres do the same. If there they unite, and continue the embrace till their principals meet, we are as much in the dark as ever as to the cause of gravity. The next question naturally arises, Why do they unite?—and so on. Querist will observe that the entire mass of the earth together constitutes the attracting power to another body. There are some parts of the earth where attraction varies. For instance, there is no attraction whatever at the earth's centre; but having regard to the editor's space I must stop here.—Yours respectfully, AN AGNOSTIC. Greymouth, Feb., 1884.

Mr. Emerson wrote to a friend in 1829:—"I suppose that prosperity is always dangerous, especially for the very young. In college I used to echo an ejaculation of my wise aunt: 'Oh, blessed, blessed poverty!' when I saw young men of fine capabilities, whose only and fatal disadvantage was their wealth."

Mr. Cross has almost finished the "Life of George Eliot," and it will be published by Messrs. Blackwood early this year. The work will contain a great deal of correspondence of the very highest interest. Mr. Cross has luckily been able to recover almost the whole of his wife's letters, among them being a series extending over several years, written to some of the friends of her younger days.