

THE FREETHINKER.

REGISTERED FOR]

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

THE ATHEISTIC PULPIT.—SERMON IV.

"Be not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding: whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee."—Psalms xxxii., 9.

"WHICH have no understanding!" David should have gone to an Arab tent; or, better still, he should have paid two shillings to attend Myers' Hippodrome; for in those places he might learn more of horses in one night than the Holy Ghost, or the whole blessed Trinity, could teach him in a life time. No sorts of persons are more ignorant of nature than saints and deities; and the young and rising generation of them are no better instructed than their progenitors; they know no more of geography, astronomy, or biology than Jupiter, Pachacamac, or Jehovah Elohim knew. Books are an abomination to them, and their first public school has not yet got its foundation laid; the very site is covered with temples and ruins of temples.

Horses show evidences of memory, high emulation; depression of spirits seize them when beaten in a race; and friendship and sympathy are traits in their character. Did David think they had "no understanding" because they never "danced naked before an ark," or because they did not meanly murder husbands for the possession of their wives? Mules, too, I am told, have a far greater fund of intelligence than they often get credit for.

However, there is a piece of good advice in the text, none the worse for flowing through such a channel as David: pure water is no worse for flowing through an old spout. Not that good advice is of very much use; there are shiploads of it lying around idle; most people have enough and to spare; and it is about the only good thing they seem anxious to give away.

The horse and mule, for practical human purposes, require to be ruled—their "mouth must be held in with bit and bridle." But it is not so in nature. Horses and mules could work out their own economy and do their own work without bit or bridle. It is only when enslaved by man that they require "breaking in" and subjugating by brute force.

Just so it is with men. If men were not slaves or blind, this advice would be unnecessary; in a properly regulated society bits and bridles for human beings would not be known. Where all men did their own work, and every one got his full rights, and no one took more than his share of the community's wealth and pleasure, brute force would not hold sway. But, as society now exists, the few rule, and the many are slaves. Hence the multitude are treated as horses and mules and kept down by bit and bridle.

1. The government exerts its will and the slaves obey. Ay! the slaves assist the government to tyrannise. But when men are men, enlightened, wise, and free, they will obey no government but of their own manufacture—indeed, the government will be nothing more than a body of delegates industriously executing the popular will. Now the government commands its slaves to go and cut the throats of slaves to other governments, or get their own cut in the attempt—and the slaves do it.

In this, horse and rider are too much alike. The horse will rush to battle, if his rider urge him that way, though he knows no more of the causes and reasons of the fight than the man on his back. But I suppose the horse will not go to battle unless ridden; that is, the horse will go to battle provided his tyrant also will go. And herein the horse, my reader, shows himself vastly superior to men; for men will allow their tyrants to ride them, and thus rule them, or to rule them without riding. Hence man's rulers slip off his back as their beast of burden is going into battle; they hide while he fights and bleeds; and the moment he returns

from the encounter, up they vault again, ride their poor beast home in triumph to boast of a victory they did nothing to win, or to bewail a defeat they did their best to bring upon the nation. Then the poor beast that fought gets all the blame, if blame there be, and the tyrant pockets all the glory, if a victory be won! Well! well! The "people love to have it so." And horses never felt half so proud of their tyrants as men feel of theirs.

2. Big purses are another kind of tyrants. Dick Digglewiggie is a poor laboring man, but he has cunning, and gets money. Henceforth his old companions work for him, and he allows them just enough to keep them alive and able to slave, and pockets the rest himself. He removes from their midst, and lives successively in a fine house, a mansion, a hall, or a castle. In old times, it was "Good morning, Dick"; then "Good morning, Richard." Next comes "Mr. Digglewiggie"; then "Sir Richard"; and henceforth a mere working slave must on no account address his master till master has spoken to said slave, and then only with "fear and trembling, as unto the Lord." Why? The fools have made him rich, and bent their necks to his yoke. Mules and horses are not quite so foolish as that. They probably feel no more reverence for a baronet or lord than for a chimney-sweep; if anything, they should, of course, feel less.

3. But man's worst tyrant is the religious one. He deals only in bribery and intimidation. He cannot now hang or burn his slave—and, indeed, he finds it more profitable to live upon him. But he promises heaven and glory to the poor and destitute. Thus their cupidity is roused, and they part with their good hard pennies in return for promises of untold and endless riches in Utopia. And "herein is a marvellous thing," viz., if you promise a woman she shall marry a nice husband (not an impossible thing, either), and take sixpence for telling her fortune, you may be prosecuted and punished for getting money under false pretences! But if you insure people in the "Trinity Association," a bogus company with unlimited capital, against the "fire never to be quenched," and promise your dupes to insure them an endless annuity in the New Jerusalem, though you should get all they have from them, there is no law to prosecute you; but there will be when justice is evenhanded.

However, intelligence is better than "Acts" of Parliament or Apostles, and independence than the prosecution of swindlers. "Be not as the horse," etc. Be men, and then all tyrants and fortune-tellers must vanish; and truth, if you trust it, will perfectly satisfy you. J. SYMES.

DOLET,

THE FREETHOUGHT MARTYR.

II.

DOLET was born at Orleans in the year 1509, probably on the 3rd of August, the day on which Saint Etienne's relics were "invented." Little is known of his parentage. One absurd story represents him as the natural son of Francis the First; but, as Mr. Christie observes, "at the date of Dolet's birth Francis, then Duke of Valois, was not quite fifteen years of age." Voulte, one of his enemies, says that his father died at the hands of the public executioner. This, however, is probably a slander. Dolet himself says that his parents were "in no mean or low position," and that his father attained to civic honors. Both appear to have died while he was still young. Yet they, or other relations and friends, secured for him a liberal education.

His studies at Paris began at the age of twelve. There he learned Latin, and contracted that deep admiration of Cicero which he always retained. He studied rhetoric



under Nicholas Berauld, "one of the greatest masters of eloquence and of Latin scholarship of the time," a man who was much greater than his books, and who had the signal honor of being tutor to the three great Colignys. Berauld was suspected of sympathy with the reformers, and it is probable that his toleration and breadth exercised a beneficial influence on the mind of Dolet.

At the age of seventeen Dolet went to Padua, to pursue his studies still further at that renowned seat of learning. The intellectual atmosphere of this place profoundly affected him. "At Padua," says Mr. Christie, "an independence and freedom of thought existed which would have been sought in vain elsewhere." At Padua, wrote Paleario, in 1530, "dwell poets, orators, and celebrated philosophers. Learning has taken refuge there from choice, and has there found an asylum where Pallas teaches all the arts: in short, there is no place where we can better gratify a taste for reading and learning." One of its chief figures at that time, Cardinal Bembo, was a thorough Pagan, who refused to read the Epistles of St. Paul lest they should vitiate his Greek style! Padua was a centre of Freethought.

"The University of Padua was at this time, and during the whole of the century, the head-quarters of a philosophical school altogether opposed to the doctrines of Christianity, but which was divided into two sects, one pantheistic, and the other, if not absolutely materialist, at least nearly approaching to it. Both professed adherence to the doctrines of Aristotle, and in terms acknowledged him as their only master and teacher. But as in the Christian Church we have read of some who followed Paul and others Cephas, so among the Aristotelians of Padua there were some who followed the commentaries of Averroes, and others those of Alexander of Aphrodisias. Both disbelieved the immortality of the individual soul, the former on the ground of its absorption. The other sect was in fact, if not in terms, materialist, and absolutely denied the immortality of the soul; nor could its doctrine, so at least its opponents asserted, be distinguished from pure Atheism. Of this latter school Pietro Pomponazzo, better known under the Latin form of Pomponatius, the most distinguished philosopher of the day, was the acknowledged representative. Born in 1462, he studied both medicine and philosophy at Padua, where, being still young, he was appointed one of the professors of philosophy, and distinguished himself by maintaining the pure doctrine of Aristotle (that is, as he interpreted it, materialism) against his older colleague Achillini, who followed the doctrine and teaching of Averroes. It was in 1516 that he published his treatise, "De Immortalitate Animæ," in which he maintains that the doctrine of immortality is not to be found in Aristotle, is altogether opposed to reason, and is based only on the authority of revelation and of the Church, to both of which, when his work was attacked, he professed unbounded reverence. His book was replied to by his pupil Contarini, and was attacked by the Inquisition and publicly burnt at Venice. But it met with a defender in Bembo, the constant friend and protector of freedom of thought, and by his influence the book was permitted to be printed with some corrections and a statement by Pomponatius that he submitted wholly to revelation and the Church, and did not in any manner oppose the doctrine of immortality, but only the philosophical arguments which were generally used in its support. This, however, as Hallam remarks, 'is the current language of philosophy in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries which must be judged by other presumptions.' Pompanatius died in 1525. His celebrity and influence long continued, and were at their height when Etienne Dolet arrived at Padua, where for three years he sat at the feet of the disciples of Pomponatius, drinking in without doubt those materialistic doctrines which, if they did not entirely harmonise with the doctrines of his master Cicero, were at least contrary to Mediævalism and superstition, and therefore congenial to his mind."

We are thankful that Dolet pursued his studies amid such surroundings, but we also reflect with a sigh that his after-sufferings were only its natural result. At Padua there was ample toleration, for its scholars and thinkers were numerous enough to ensure their safety; but when the heretical ideas born and nourished there were carried abroad to less favored cities, they brought upon the possessor the bitterest persecution and often a cruel death.

But "literature and not philosophy was Dolet's mistress." After learning from the latter how erroneous was the orthodoxy of his day, he turned lovingly to the former, which he again wooed under the guidance of Simon Villanovus, whose learning, industry, and genius were praised by the best judges of the time, including Rabelais himself. This distinguished man died at the early age of thirty-five, and was deeply mourned by Dolet, his most attached pupil. An epitaph composed by the affectionate young scholar on his master is worth citing as a mental index. The original is in Latin, but Mr. Christie gives us an English rendering:—

"I bid you welcome, reader, and ask your attention for a

moment. That fate, which mortals consider to be a misfortune, namely to die early, I think a most happy lot. Wherefore congratulate me on my death and do not lament me, for by death I cease to be mortal. Farewell, and pray for my repose."

M. Boulmier remarks that "one feels in these few lines, mournful and icy as the bronze they cover, that incurable dissatisfaction with the world, that bitter contempt of life, that cold and sombre aspiration towards the repose of death, which forms a distinctive trait in the character of the unhappy Dolet." Mr. Christie, however, demurs to this, and says that to him Dolet appears to have been of a joyous temperament, and fond of life, for the sake of cultivating his own mind, and also for the sake of producing works that might procure him the fame for which he so eagerly longed.

An elegiac poem in Latin on Villanovus gives us a further insight into Dolet's state of mind at this time. We again take Mr. Christie's English version:—

"O thou whom probity and sincerity made my friend,
Thou who wast joined to me in an indissoluble union,
Thou whom kind fortune gave to me for a comrade,
Thou my companion, now taken from me by cruel death;
Art thou wrapped in eternal sleep and in profound darkness,
So that in vain I mournfully address thee in my song?
Yet what love compels me to do I shall sing, though thou
may'st be deaf to it,
I am not ashamed to be accused of too tender an affection.
Farewell, dear friend, the one whom I have loved more than
my own eyes,
And whom love compels me to love for ever more and more.
May thy nights be tranquil and thy sleep quiet,
For ever silent, but for ever well.
And if in the land of shadows there is any perception,
Do not reject my prayers, but love one to whom thou wilt
always be dear."

This poem, which Mr. Christie describes as one of Dolet's best, both as to language and sentiment, reveals his intense scepticism. His heart yearns after his dead friend, but his intellect cannot trace his presence beyond the tomb. The hinted possibility of continued life is little more than a poetic artifice, and at the utmost it does not exceed the *grand peut-être* of Rabelais—a great Perhaps!

G. W. FOOTE.

HEAVENLY ARITHMETIC.

THE other day I lit upon an advertisement of a book with the above figurative title. The writer is Mr. Stevenson A. Blackwood, secretary of the Post Office and amateur preacher, obviously a man of letters, and presumably efficient in sums. Now, I said, here is the very thing the world has long been in need of. For lack of a few standard rules, the heavenly dimensions and calculations have always been a puzzlement to the faithful soul, and a handle to the scoffer. At last there has arisen, in the fulness of time, a Cocker of the New Jerusalem, a guide to the arithmetic of a realm in which three times one is one, and six of one, as a matter of course, will be less than half-a-dozen of the other. When we have ciphered a little on the heavenly plan, and learned the new multiplication table, what problems may we not solve! The schoolmen didn't find paper or slates enough to figure up the number of angels that could dance on the point of a needle; we will now do it as a little exercise in mental arithmetic. But this would be interesting rather than useful, and I am entirely in favor of the heavenly arithmetic being made a practical thing.

There is, for instance, that matter of the ark. It is plain that Noah must have effected a considerable saving of timber by working with a heavenly foot-rule and measurements, and I take it Mr. Blackwood's system would initiate all interested. As near as may be, the ark was five hundred feet long, one hundred feet broad, and fifty feet high. In this erection Noah placed a pair of every description of animal then living. How did he manage his space? It is a question of arithmetic. I wish to be accurate, and I at once exclude the insects from the calculations. Probably they settled on Noah and the other beasts, or attached themselves to the roof of the shanty, and thus are not to be counted as occupying cubic space. But it is estimated that about 50,000 other creatures, quadrupeds, bipeds, and snakes, went into the ark. Many of them were huge beasts, like the elephant and mastodon; and, keeping this fact in view, an average of the space required by the 50,000 animals must be struck, and a result obtained

by long division. If mundane figures are used, it seems as if Noah had under-estimated considerably, and spoilt the contract. Not so; we are constrained to believe that even the sloth was inside the ark when the door was shut and the trouble began. I suspect that a foot on Noah's rule measured sometimes a good deal more and sometimes a good deal less than twelve inches. Hence the value of the heavenly arithmetic. Perceive?

Take a more complex case. From many good books I have learned that in the beginning the earth was launched into space from the right hand of God. In trying to work this out my figures have hitherto become confused. The mode of launching is a minor concern; whether the Almighty first swung the earth round his head to give it an impetus, bowled it from the shoulder like a cricket-ball, underhand or overhand, these are matters of detail. My trouble is to realise the dimensions of the hand, the approximate length of the fingers and of the opposable thumb. Observe that a terrestrial ball of the circumference of 24,897 miles has been launched. I can see that the ball had either to be grasped or supported on the palm of the hand; if the former, how many thousand miles of digits enclosed it; if the latter, what was the breadth of the "loof"? Further, I cannot think of a hand without thinking of an arm and of a body to which it belongs. Given a hand that can hold and cast a ball 24,897 miles in circumference, or say in round numbers, for ease of calculation, 25,000 miles, what will be the length of the arm, and the size of the arc described in touching the nose?—but this carries the imagination within measurable distance of paralysis. The calculator gives it up, or if a result must be stated begs the printer to apologise to the shade of Mr. Montague Tegg, and beginning with a figure 1 to set up as many ciphers as the line will contain. Now the heavenly arithmetic, I am confident, would tell us at once to the square root of the matter in hand.

Moreover, it is not unlikely that the new scheme would supply a method of fixing the dimensions of the windows of heaven computed upon the amount of water required to make the flood, and so give a clue to the size of the celestial tank. Yet I almost fear this would require algebra. Mr. Blackwood should not overlook heavenly algebra. The post-office could spare him to the work as the official accounts are still managed according to the first Cocker. And if he would give the world heavenly logarithms and a table of quarter squares he might at once claim his harp. Meanwhile, I await a presentation copy of his work, as its value cannot be expressed in any arithmetical terms at my command.

M.

ACID DROPS.

DR. BEGG asks "who salted the mighty sea?" Probably the great Cook knows something about it. We would also like to learn who seasoned the years, and garnished the plains, and if it is the same artist that is just now stewing the Boston people.

HASTE wife, put on the Ascension robe,
You made last Christmas tide,
Christ's second coming shakes the globe
And Heavenward you must ride.

Strange signs are in the noon-day sky
Of ghastly orange hue,
Like verdigris the grasses lie,
Your nose is wondrous blue.

O husband dear, how can I float,
Full sixteen stone or more,
I thought we were to go by boat
Unto the happy shore.

I dread a sudden rise in life,
Exposed in muslin things,
At least you'll try to find your wife
A decent pair of wings.

Don't leave me sprawling in the dirt
When the last trump is heard—
Get in, and doff that blooming shirt,
The Ascension is deferred.

La Vérité gives a few samples of Bible names in Paris and the trades their possessors are engaged in. *Adam* is an attorney of the first rank. *Eve* is a tobacconist in the Rue

de Sèvres. *Cain* is a butcher in the Rue de Flandre—naturally. *Abel*, sweet Abel, sells moist sugar: he is a grocer. *Noah* is a wine merchant. Is it necessary to add that he does not spare the water? *Moses*, the Lord's chosen one, sells glasses. God of Israel, what a fall!

RECENTLY at the Stockton Borough Police Court, William Bethell, ex-clergyman and late curate-in-charge of Holy Trinity parish, was ordered to pay twenty-five weeks' arrears of a weekly sum of five shillings, due by him to Rebecca Winterburn, the mother of a child of which he had been adjudged the father, or to go to prison for two months. The elect are always persecuted by the children of this world.

MONCURE D. CONWAY, in his recent book on Carlyle, gives the following characteristic anecdote of the heterodox sage:—

"Many years ago he was persuaded by some friends in the south of England, where he was visiting, to go to a Nonconformist Chapel on Sunday. It was, I believe, the first time in many years that he had entered either church or chapel and was destined to be the last. 'The preacher's prayer,' he said, 'filled me with consternation.' 'O Lord, thou hast plenty of treacle up there, send a stream of it down here.' That was about the meaning of it. He did not seem in the least to know that what such as he needed was really a stream of brimstone."

THE Rev. J. P. Egbert, writing to the *Catholic Presbyterian*, from San Jose, California, describes the Chinese immigrants as "*Mahomedan* hordes." He appropriately winds up his letter with the words "Reader, pray for us."

THERE was "a night of prayer" at Whitechapel on Monday to which little children were invited. The pious announcement to the "little soldiers" of the Salvation Army said, "Tell mother you will stay in bed all the next day if she will let you come." This sort of thing should be stopped. Children ought not to be kept up all night praying any more than they are allowed to work in factories. Salvationism goes in for saving souls and ruining bodies.

A CLERGYMAN who has written some very scurrilous letters about Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant, was recently invited to attend one of Mr. Foote's lectures. He replied that he would not venture near the editor of so abominable a paper as *The Freethinker*. Yet he seems to be a devoted reader of this awful print. Another clergyman who is very wroth with us has just sent in a year's subscription. If the parsons all hate us and read us we shall do well. We should like to know that a thousand parsons read *The Freethinker* every week. It would do them a power of good.

A HANDSWORTH clergyman the other Sunday, finding the hymn selected for the drenching rainy morning, commenced "Summer suns are glowing," remarked from the pulpit that "owing to the unfavorable state of the weather we will commence at verse four." "Heavenly streams are flowing" would have been more appropriate.

AT Bedminster a Salvation meeting was broken up by the sudden death of Mrs. Exell, who had just delivered an address. If a similar occurrence had happened at a Free-thought meeting it would have been called a stroke of Providence and cited as an instance of "God's judgment on infidels."

THE Queen has built John Brown a residence within the grounds of Balmoral. She has only now to provide him with a private chaplain and dear John would be in perfect clover. Plenty of clergymen would be glad of the post.

A PASSAGE from one of Talmage's recent sermons:—"Infidelity says, 'I'll just exterminate the Bible,' and the scriptures were thrown into the street for the mob to trample on, and they were piled up in public and set on fire, and mountains of indignant contempt were hurled on them, and learned universities decree the Bible out of existence." We should like to know where all this happened. Talmage appears to run a history of his own.

THE great preacher also refers to an infidel who plucked the Bible from his wife's hand, and, although it contained a lock of the hair of their dead child, flung it into the fire, stirred it up with the tongs, spat on it, cursed it, and told

her not to have any more such damnable stuff in the house. How funny! But, as a matter of fact, most infidels possess a well-thumbed Bible, and are able to find Christians the text when they can't find it themselves.

AT one of the noon prayer-meetings in Aldersgate Street, a North American Indian, the Rev. H. Sayer, indignantly repudiated the idea that white men have a monopoly of prayer; for, said he, "the red man frequently prayed for whole hours at a time to his Spirit, especially when entering on any great undertaking. Never did he wage war, never did he scalp an enemy, before being first satisfied that the Great Spirit approved the deed." This ingenuous gentleman puts the case very neatly. It is perfectly true, all over the world, that people manage to get the sanction of their gods for any amount of bloodshed and villainy.

The *Christian World* seems to have changed its opinion of Calvin. A few weeks ago it twitted Freethinkers with their readiness to call Calvin a torturer because of his "contributing" to the death of Servetus. Yet it now says that "Calvin only fled from a prison and a stake in Paris to imprison and burn Servetus in Geneva." So the infidels are right after all.

THE Rev. T. P. Hughes, of Peshawar, says:—"Day after day missionary agents, some of them very imperfectly instructed, stand up in the bazaars of Indian cities, and their so-called preaching is nothing but a miserable wrangle, which serves no other end than to create very strong prejudices against the foreign missionaries and their teaching." In face of all this, it is amusing to find a Methodist missionary boasting of the spread of Christianity in the East, and prophesying that before long "Christ will be the only ruler of India."

"THERE are," says a religious contemporary, "open-air preachers without tact, intelligence, or true sympathy, who would render much more service to the cause of Christianity by holding their tongues than they do by their fussy talkativeness." We recommend this to the Christian Evidence lecturers in London. It exactly fits them.

MR. WALTER of the *Times* is visiting America. Mr. Walter of the *Times* has delivered himself to an interviewer on various subjects. The Land Act, he informs a listening world, contains "mischievous and dangerous principles," and is certain to end in "failure and discontent." So says the *New York Herald*. After this it is not surprising that Mr. Walter of the *Times* gives his opinion on the Bradlaugh case. The following extract is at least entertaining:—

"Don't you think Bradlaugh was treated harshly?" "Oh, dear, no," was Mr. Walter's eager response. "That's all nonsense about his having erysipelas and having been so brutally treated. He's a perfect ruffian. A fellow-passenger on the 'Bothnia' told me of Bradlaugh and some of his comrades violently disturbing some religious services held on board the 'Parthia,' so that Captain Watson was compelled to threaten him with putting him in irons before he would stop."

Now as Mr. Walter of the *Times* is the most eminent representative of British respectability, we cannot for a moment suspect him of lying. We therefore conclude that he was just having some fun at the expense of his interviewer. If, however, he meant what he said, we strongly advise him to stay in America, in order that he may enjoy the reputation of being the biggest liar in the States.

A CORRESPONDENT calls our attention to "the Bible trick." Two men, he says, do a street together, each taking one side, with Bibles to sell. The price is three guineas, to be paid in monthly instalments. If you should ever take it to your "uncle's" he will lend you about eight shillings on it, and tell you that the market price is only twenty-five. Rather a profitable trade in the Word of the Lord!

THOMAS HUGHES'S "Coöperative Christian Colony" in America has proved a failure, as most people expected.

POOR President Garfield is dead at last after a gallant and wonderful struggle for life. He was murdered by a scoundrel who says that God told him to do it, and who spent most of his time in gaol reading the Bible.

ACCORDING to Sydney Smith, the French say there are three sexes—men, women, and clergymen.

A DEAD VETERAN.

WE regret to announce the death of Mr. Michael Wright, of Leicester, which took place last Sunday morning. Mr. Wright commenced life in very poor circumstances, but by dint of industry, intelligence, and thrift, he rose in the social scale, and established the firm of elastic web manufacturers which bore his name. He was always an active politician and social reformer, and he imported into every cause which had his sympathy a singular earnestness and devotion. His face was the index of a mind absolutely sincere and fearless; no one who looked into his eyes could ever mistrust him; and if the ardor of his enthusiasm sometimes provoked a smile, it only deepened the affectionate respect of those who knew the childlike candor of his mind and the rich tenderness of his heart. Long years ago he was a fervent Socialist; later he was as fervent a Chartist; and to the last he remained a true Radical, and the sworn friend of every forlorn hope of progress. He was a Freethinker nearly the whole of his life, and he worked heartily with Mr. Gimson and others to establish the noble Secular Institute which does so much credit to the Freethinkers of Leicester. He leaves behind him a wife, and four sons who inherit his principles and something of his character. May they walk in his footsteps, and live lives as honorable and useful as his! Michael Wright has taken his chamber in the silent halls of Death, but the fruit of his goodness remains. Leicester has lost a familiar figure, his wife and sons have lost a kind husband and father, and many friends will long miss the look of those soft loving eyes, which seemed to have contracted infinite tenderness from a deep sense of human misery, and to shed a benediction on all around.

ATHEISTIC SONNETS.

By John Rowell Waller, F.R.H.S., Author of "Unstrung Links," "Wayside Flowers," "Rambles and Musings," "Men we Meet," etc.

V.—PROPHETS.

Sublimest knaves of all the godly race,
Whose senseless pratings ruled a mighty tribe,
Who, for the baseness of a kingly bribe,
Would sell your gifts and honor foul disgrace;
Some one fair hit among a thousand lies
Threw wide the portals of the faithful's eyes,
Your great sky-mission magnified to trace:
What dubious ethics in your bathos taught,
Retailled to-day by half-believing priests,
Disgrace cold Christianity's half-pagan feasts,
And only live with toothless mischief fraught,
While dying daily with advancing thought;
Ye frantic rascals of barbaric fame,
The world must execrate your sacred name.

MUSINGS BY A WOULD-BE PHILOSOPHER.

WHAT HAVE I DONE TO BE DAMNED?

THE "thinginess of things," as the Hegelians say, is decidedly queer. At the outset we are pitched and pulled into this wondrous world *volens volens*, in most distressing manner. Instinct for life (a power not ourselves that makes for much besides righteousness) makes us struggle, squeal, suck, slobber, and sleep; and our after career is little more than a repetition of these processes. We live and learn, outgrow our infant clothes and creeds, discard our toys, and strive to adapt ourselves to our surroundings. Impelled by inherited instincts, we seek in various ways for a happiness that ever escapes us. We interest ourselves in one thing after another, only to find fresh old sawdust in our fresh new dolls. Most of us have a constant struggle to stave off starvation. Many strive might and main to be true to the best they know. Others "go it blind." All are more sinned against than sinning. We love and aspire—to have our loved ones torn from us, and see our aspirations tumble in the mud. Our utmost endeavor reaches but to build some sand-castle, soon to be swept away by the incoming waves of time, our best satisfaction contriving to reproduce our miserable selves. At length some joint of our decaying machinery gets loose, and out the soul bursts from its prison-house of clay, only to find itself hurled headlong hellwards, and cry out in despair, "What have I done to be Damned?"

JEHOSHOPHAT GRIMES.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE lectures three times to-day (Sunday, September 25th) in the Camden Hall, Camden Street, Liverpool: At 11 o'clock, "Poverty, Priestcraft, and Privilege;" at 3 o'clock, "The God the Christians Swear by;" at 7 o'clock, "Infidel Death Beds."

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

October 2nd, Birmingham; 5th, Secular Choral Union Concert, Hall of Science; 8th and 9th, West Hartlepool; 10th, Middlesboro'; 11th, Spennymoor; 12th, Blaydon; 13th, Jarrow; 14th, South Shields; 16th, Newcastle; 23rd, Claremont Hall, London; 25th, Walworth; 30th, Edinburgh.

November 4th, Paisley; 6th, Glasgow; 13th, Hall of Science, London; 20th, Sheffield; 27th, Manchester.

December 4th, Huddersfield; 11th, Claremont Hall, London.

CORRESPONDENCE.

ALL business communications to be addressed to Mr. W. J. RAMSEY, 28, Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

LITERARY communications to the Editor, Mr. G. W. FOOTE, No. 9, South Crescent, Bedford Square, London, W.C.

G. IMESON.—The subject is unfortunately worn threadbare.

G. SANDERS.—Thanks.

H. S. BRÆKSTAD.—Cutting received. See "Acid Drops." We are too busy to attend "a night of prayer," although we have no doubt it would afford a good deal of fun.

W. HARRIS.—The story is an old one. We thank you for your good wishes. The *Freethinker* is on the high road to full success.

B. DAWSON.—We are always glad to receive cuttings or jokes, and gratified to know that our readers are "highly pleased" with what we provide them.

A. HODGSON.—Mrs. Besant's name is pronounced with the accent on the first syllable, and Dr. Aveling's in the same way. The Doctor's name has only two syllables, not three. It is impossible to tell you in writing how to pronounce Mr. Foote's name. Vowel sounds cannot be properly described, and they vary in different parts of the country.

J. MORRIS.—We are *always* obliged by the receipt of newspaper cuttings. Contents sheets shall be forwarded. Mr. Foote will write you about lecturing for your Branch of the N. S. S. as soon as possible, but he is afraid he can scarcely visit Birmingham again this side of Christmas.

L. VICKERS.—It was indeed gratifying to Mr. Foote to meet so large and intelligent an audience last Sunday at Manchester.

H. PARKER objects to Laon's statement that the "upper scum" are Atheists, and says they are too much engrossed in folly, vice and idleness to be what it requires years of deep and earnest thought to attain to. He also points out that they are now getting up a fund to assist a man who is acting against an Atheist. He highly praises the *Freethinker*, which he thinks will be read in many cases where other papers will not; and he explains the hatred of it by the Christians on the ground of its sprightliness, which they dread more than anything else.

G. BRYDON.—Circulars sent. We thank you for your offer to distribute them.

J. R. W. says "The *Freethinker* is the best pennyworth I get."

W. HEATH.—Received with thanks.

H. SPENCER.—Such cuttings are always serviceable, and we are obliged when our readers send them.

C. B. BOND.—Ingersoll's "Some Mistakes of Moses" has not yet been reprinted in England, but we believe it soon will be. Publications sent as desired.

J. W. H.—We are too busy to correspond privately with you on the subject. Besides, in defending Mr. Bradlaugh's right to take his seat, you are not called on to defend all his ideas in religion or in politics. His opinions have nothing to do with his right, and you should insist on discussing the main question without being dragged into side issues. If Mr. Bradlaugh were the worst man in England (a great stretch of fancy), or the most wrong-headed man in it, neither his character nor his principles practically concern anybody except the electors of Northampton. They have (twice) chosen him, and that is enough.

H. BURNLEY.—You can perhaps do some good by distributing a few circulars of this journal. The joke is a very old one.

W. SOWDAR.—See "Acid Drops."

A. B.—Hardly in our line.

EDITORIAL.

SOME of our readers were disappointed last week. The *Freethinker* was sold out soon after publication, and some orders could not be executed. We have printed a larger edition this week which will doubtless meet the increased demand. Our readers are only just beginning to realise that we have changed *The Freethinker* from a MONTHLY to a WEEKLY. We are happy to state that, with a very few exceptions, our editorial policy gives general satisfaction, and we look forward to a considerable increase in our circulation during the winter.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE Manchester Secularists are going ahead in fine style. Their audiences have wonderfully increased, and the Assembly Room in Grosvenor Street is now filled at nearly every visit of a special lecturer. The premises next door have been just rented by the society for the purpose of holding small meetings and carrying on classes for the study of science and literature, bills of which have been posted all over the city. There are some good workers on the present committee, who are making the society felt as a political and social force. They labor for the cause with an energy and an enterprise that cannot be too highly esteemed. By and bye the whole South Lancashire district will be completely organised.

THOSE Science Classes should be heartily supported by the Freethinkers of Manchester. The terms are exceedingly moderate, and we believe the teaching will be thoroughly efficient. Biology, chemistry, physiology, and French are some of the subjects included. The classes are just commencing, and intending students should enrol themselves without delay.

A CORRESPONDENT writes, "We have heard a great deal of late about the three F's, but they fade away in the brilliant light of the smartest of all F's—the *Freethinker*." Ahem!

FREETHOUGHT GLEANINGS

A CHRISTIAN EPIGRAM.

I DEARLY love the Jews, upon my word,
They played the second part in our salvation,
Had they refused to crucify the Lord
We sons of Eve had not escaped damnation.
So, having thank'd his Saviour, who'd refuse
His thanks to Pontius Pilate and the Jews?
From R. Carlyle's "Lion."

CHRISTIANITY AND SLAVERY.—In 1783 the managers of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel absolutely declined, after a full discussion, to give Christian instruction to their slaves in Barbadoes.—*Dr. Darwin*, "Erasmus Darwin," p. 47.

THE BIBLE AND SCIENCE.—The myths of Paganism are as dead as Osiris or Zeus, and the man who should revive them, in opposition to the knowledge of our time, would be justly laughed to scorn; but the co-eval imaginations current among the rude inhabitants of Palestine, recorded by writers whose very name and age are admitted by every scholar to be unknown, have, unfortunately, not yet shared their fate, but even at this day are regarded by nine-tenths of the civilised world as the authoritative standard of fact, and the criterion of the justice of scientific conclusions in all that relates to the origin of things, and, among them, of species. In this nineteenth century, as at the dawn of modern physical science, the cosmogony of the semi-barbarous Hebrew is the incubus of the philosopher and the opprobrium of the orthodox. Who shall number the patient and earnest seekers after truth, from the days of Galileo until now, whose lives have been embittered, and their good name blasted, by the mistaken zeal of Bibliolaters? Who shall count the host of weaker men whose sense of truth has been destroyed in the effort to harmonise impossibilities—whose life has been wasted in the attempt to force the generous new wine of Science into the old bottles of Judaism, compelled by the outcry of the same strong party? It is true that, if philosophers have suffered, their cause has been amply avenged. Extinguished theologians lie about the cradle of every science, as the strangled snakes beside that of Hercules; and history records that, whenever science and orthodoxy have been fairly opposed, the latter has been forced to retire from the lists, bleeding and crushed, if not annihilated; scotched, if not slain. But orthodoxy is the Bourbon of the world of thought. It learns not, neither can it forget; and, though at present bewildered and afraid to move, it is as willing as ever to insist that the first chapter of Genesis contains the beginning and the end of sound science, and to visit, with such petty thunderbolts as its

half-paralysed hands can hurl, those who refuse to degrade Nature to the level of primitive Judaism.—*Professor Huxley*, "Lay Sermons," pp. 277-8.

THE CHRISTIAN GOD.—I have a hundred times heard him [his father, James Mill] say that all ages and nations have represented their gods as wicked, in a constantly increasing progression, that mankind have gone on adding trait after trait till they reached the most perfect conception of wickedness which the human mind can devise, and have called this God, and prostrated themselves before it. This *ne plus ultra* of wickedness he considered to be embodied in what is commonly presented to mankind as the creed of Christianity.—*J. S. Mill*, "Autobiography," pp. 40-41.

GOSPEL HARMONY.—These Gospels, so important to the Church, have not come to us in one undisputed form. We have no authorised copy of them in their original language, so that we may know in what precise words they were originally written. The authorities from which we derive their sacred text are various ancient copies, written by hand on parchment. Of the Gospels there are more than five hundred of these manuscripts of various ages, from the fourth century after Christ to the fifteenth, when printing superseded manual writing for publication of books. Of these five hundred, and more, no two are in all points alike; probably in no two of the more ancient can even a few consecutive verses be found in which all the words agree.—*Dean Alford*, "How to Study the New Testament."

BIBLE MIRACLES.—The time has come when the minds of men no longer put as a matter of course the Bible miracles in a class by themselves. Now, from the moment this time commences, from the moment that a comparative history of all miracles is a conception entertained, and a study admitted, the conclusion is certain, the reign of the Bible miracles is doomed.—*Matthew Arnold*.

SCEPTICISM.—We have the act of doubting as the originator, or at all events, the necessary antecedent, of all progress. Here we have that scepticism, the very name of which is an abomination to the ignorant; because it disturbs their lazy and complacent minds; because it troubles their cherished superstitions; because it imposes on them the fatigue of inquiry; and because it rouses even sluggish understandings to ask if things are as they are commonly supposed, and if all is really which they from their childhood have been taught to believe. The more we examine this great principle of scepticism, the more distinctly shall we see the immense part it has played in the progress of European civilisation. . . . It may be said that to scepticism we owe that spirit of inquiry, which, during the last two centuries, has gradually encroached on every possible subject; has reformed every department of practical and speculative knowledge; has weakened the authority of the privileged classes, and thus placed liberty on a surer foundation; has chastised the despotism of princes; has restrained the arrogance of the nobles; and has even diminished the prejudices of the clergy. In a word, it is this which has remedied three fundamental errors of the olden time; errors which made the people, in politics too confiding; in science too credulous; in religion too intolerant.—*Buckle*, "History of Civilisation," Vol. I., p. 308.

A PARSON IN A STORM.

It is reported that on one of the occasions on which a late Church dignitary crossed from Calais to Dover, soon after sailing a pretty stiff breeze came on. When the steamer had left Calais about an hour the parson getting a bit anxious sought out the captain, whom he found pacing the deck, and asked him if he thought there was any danger. They were just then passing the sailor's fore-castle, and the captain's ear catching the sounds of the sailor's voices through the ventilator, he bade the parson put his ear to the pipe, and tell him what he heard going on in the fore-castle. The parson, after fulfilling the captain's desire, replied that the sailors were cursing dreadfully. "Oh, then," said the captain, "we're all right, for you know that if the sailors apprehended any danger they would not be cursing." The captain at this stage of the proceedings was relieved by the first mate, and went to his berth. The parson—uneasy—paced the deck all night, several times going to the ventilator with the same news to chronicle as at first. Just as the English coast was sighted the wind rose to an awful pitch, the parson sprang to the tube, put his ear to it, heard them blaspheming worse than ever, dropped on his knees and thanked God that they were at it yet.

DEATH-BED RECANTATIONS.

A CELEBRATED philosopher died a few days ago in Paris. Like Voltaire, he was a Freethinker, and like Voltaire his deathbed was watched by ghouls in clerical robes. When the breath was gone they lost no time in telegraphing over the world that he had recanted and acknowledged the divinity of his saviour.

Whether this actually occurred, we, of course, cannot tell. And so far as its significance is concerned, we do not care.

We never read of these death-bed recantations that we do not recall Mark Twain's story of the Sandwich Islander and his great shark god.

Before their conversion the Sandwich Island heathen had a superstitious respect for the shark. They believed him the representative of the great shark god, and to draw his blood was the blackest offence against that god conceivable, an offence invariably punished by instant death.

When the missionaries had made a few conversions it occurred to them that ocular proof of the fallacy of this belief would greatly facilitate missionary work. Accordingly they selected one of their most promising converts, whom they induced to strike a knife into a shark that had been captured. By having this performance take place in the presence of the heathen populace they supposed that the new convert's escape from death would prove to the satisfaction of the people either that there was no great shark god or that he was actually powerless to punish.

The principal actor in the pious drama hesitated a long while before consenting to risk the vengeance of the deity he was asked to defy, and at the last moment he approached the fish with fear and trembling. But urged by the missionaries, he spurred himself to the desperate deed, and plunged in the knife to the hilt.

The missionaries were congratulating themselves, and about to point with triumph to their protege's safety, when, to their astonishment he fell upon his knees, imploring forgiveness of the great shark god, and in an agony of terror dropped over dead.

Had the faith of the parties been reversed, that incident would be pointed at as the strongest evidence of the divinity of the Christian religion, and the vengeance of god upon blasphemers.

As it was, it had no other effect than to delay the conversion of the Sandwich Islanders.

This terrified heathen did not differ from men generally. In the fear inspired by the presence of unknown evils, real or imaginary, man naturally seeks refuge in the religion of his childhood.

We never hear of an infidel recanting if he has not been educated in any religious faith. We never hear of an infidel, originally a Catholic, recanting to Protestantism, or one originally a Protestant recanting to Catholicism, or one originally a Christian recanting to Mohammedism, or one originally a Mohammedan recanting to Christianity.

Death-bed recantations, like that of the Sandwich Island convert, are invariably to the religion of childhood.

They are due to the influence of early training upon minds naturally weak or weakened by disease and the approach of death.—*New York Truth*.

SCOTCH NOTES.

ARE the Edinburgh Secularists to get the use of St. Giles Cathedral next winter? A course of Sunday evening lectures to be given in that historic edifice seems very much in their way. The object of the course is to found an "exposition of the 'Faiths of the World'—a subject which has seldom been presented in a comprehensive manner before general audiences." Principal Caird is to lead off with two lectures on the "Religion of India: Vedic period—Brahminism and Buddhism," and ten other lights of the Scotch Kirk are to follow with discourses on Confucianism, Zoroaster and the Zend-Avesta, Religions of Ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome, Teutonic and Scandinavian Religion, Ancient Religions of Central America, Judaism, Mahommedanism, and Professor Flint is to wind up by showing "Christianity in relation to other Religions." Bravo, priest-ridden Scotland! The hour of thy redemption is surely at hand. When the "Faiths of the World" have been comprehensively and popularly exhibited the Scottish mind will perceive that Christianity is only episodic, that the externals of religion are geographical accidents, and that its permanent truths existed before Christ, and will exist when the God of Christendom is as dead as the gods of ancient Greece. The Scottish ministers are now following what Mr. Mill long ago said was the most effective method of breaking down the pretence of Christianity; they are popularising the history of World Religions. Do they know what Dr. Begg of the Free Kirk will say to all this? He

will say that if his brethren of the Establishment had a living faith in their own religion they would not concern themselves with the faiths of the Hindoos and Chinese, or use God's Sabbath to illustrate the religion of Central America before the time of Columbus, or of Egypt in the days of the Pharaohs—let us pray.

THAT there is a decrease of vital religion is precisely what is being said of the clergy of another Scottish Church. The United Presbyterian friends, whose words are for once merely candid, instead of sugar-candied, assert this to be the explanation of the now notorious fact, that the membership of the Church is decreasing. Alarmed by the painful fact, the Synod has taken steps to overhaul the whole citadel, batteries, and outworks, and meanwhile a number of voluntary investigators are at work. This comes of the worship of the golden calf, says one; another opines that working men cannot afford the luxury of maintaining so many churches, a third hints at lack of enterprise, which permits other churches to snap up the fruits of the vineyard, and a fourth, as we have said, charges the clergy with weakening faith. A brighter reason is suggested by members of the Edinburgh Presbytery for the sad declension—the habit of reading sermons. Scotland's worshippers will receive double-barrelled charges of extempore orthodoxy and live, but they cut and run from forty pages of manuscript. We think we know what empties the pews, but we do not mean to tell except for a consideration. The increasing number of square yards of plain deal may be depressing to some minds, but we cannot pretend to great sorrow. The avowal seems harsh, but we will not deceive.

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BLASTS FROM THE NORTH.

ORTHODOXY will find me a bitter cold wind. I wander among the hills and dales of the counties lying North. I purpose whispering to the *Freethinker* in the South the whisperings I catch on the banks of the Tyne and the Wear.

RICHARD WEAVER, "the converted collier," is holding revival services in Newcastle-on-Tyne. If he tries the reviving dodge within earshot of me, I shall revive the memory of "a pair fatherless wean," by reading him an extract from "Japhet in Search of a Father."

JOHN HORSLEY, of Darlington, thinks "the crucified one" such a good subject that he has set about crucifying his fellow-man by inflicting upon him a volume of pious rhyme of a painful character, containing, among other things, "The Sabbath Night Services," "Paradise Ladies' Sewing Meeting," "Lines on the Centenary Gathering of Dissenting Sunday Schools in Darlington." I should be glad to hear of Mr. Horsley's recovery.

THE *Middlesbro' News* has recently published a series of very atheistic and Republican papers, by one of your contributors, and has likewise admitted Freethought rhymes. I creep gently round the corner of the *Middlesbro' News* office, and keep away from the chinks.

MR. JOHN WRIGHT WAYMAN, of Sunderland, has been abusing Mr. Bradlaugh. Mr. Wayman is a fat and pious man. He managed a Building Society in Sunderland a few years ago, and the management was hardly satisfactory. The affair broke; and I heard one working man, who lost £100 in it, curse the name of John Wright Wayman. Mr. W. is a Wesleyan local preacher, however, and contributes largely to the cause of God.

THE Rev. William Bethell, of Stockton-on-Tees, has learnt some of the tricks of the Holy Ghost. Miss Rebecca Winterburn, his landlady's daughter, recently bore the rev. gentleman a babe, and he was ordered to pay 5s. per week for sixteen years and to settle the doctor's and the solicitor's accounts. The rev. gentleman shirked payment and ran away (another trick of the

Ghost's). She had her little one's pa brought back from London to Stockton, and sent to jail on Wednesday, 14th, for two months with hard labor. Rebecca has been more fortunate than Mary of Bethlehem—that lady couldn't find her boy's sire. Mr. Bethell is now in the position of the blasphemous liar Peter. I wonder whether the Ghost, who *must* have a fellow feeling, will send an angel to liberate him. Perhaps some of the Lord's elect will soothe his prison hours by kindly sending him some tracts.

THE NORTH WIND.

PRIZE BIBLE QUESTIONS.

A copy of "The Freethinker" will be sent regularly on the usual terms to any Christian minister or other person supplying satisfactory solutions to these questions. N.B.—All answers to be prepaid.

OLD TESTAMENT.

1.—How did the earth bring forth grass, etc. (Genesis i., 11), before the sun was made? (Genesis i., 14).

2.—Instead of which of Adam's ribs was "the flesh closed up thereof?" (Genesis ii., 21.)

3.—How did the serpent perambulate before condemned to go upon its belly? (Genesis iii., 14.)

4.—In what relation did Cain stand to his wife? (Genesis iv., 17.)

NEW TESTAMENT.

1.—How are the fourteen generations, from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ, made out? (Matthew i., 12—17.)

2.—Was Zorobabel the son of Salathiel (Matthew i., 12), or of Pedaiah (1 Chronicles iii., 19), or of Neri? (Luke iii., 27.)

3.—What relation was Joseph to the Holy Ghost? (Matthew i., 18, 19.)

4.—How was the star fixed that "came and stood over where the child was?" (Matthew ii., 9.)

When these initial questions are answered more will follow.

PROFANE JOKES.

A BLACKSMITH, who had been a very wicked and profane man all his life, was lying, unrepentant, upon his death-bed. They told him that if he wished to enter Heaven he must send for a parson. "All right!" said the blasphemous blacksmith. "I know I'm booked! Send for the parson if you like!" So the vicar was sent for and promptly came. "I am told that you can get me into Heaven!" said the blacksmith. "Oh! we can't say that," replied the vicar. "We must pray with you and try to get you truly converted. But as a first condition you must believe implicitly in this book"—laying his hand upon the Bible. "I can't read," retorted the blacksmith. "Then I will read to you," said the vicar. And he opened the Bible and read out the story of Jonah and the Whale. The blacksmith raised himself in bed upon his elbow and listened with deep interest. "So I've got to believe *that* before I get into heaven, have I?" said the blacksmith. "Yes," replied the vicar, "you must believe implicitly." "All right," said the blacksmith, "I believe. I don't question the facts at all. Pass on to the next story. I believe, mind!" So the vicar opened the Bible again and read the story of the escape of Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego from the fiery furnace. The blacksmith listened with increased interest, for the story touched him on a professional point. "Wait a minute," he said, when the vicar had finished, "I want to know about this. You say that those three coves walked out of that furnace without being burnt?" "Not a hair of their heads was singed," replied the vicar. "Well, now," pursued the blacksmith, "how *hot* was that furnace. Was it as hot as the old furnace in the shop downstairs, where I have been working for the last thirty years?" "Oh, no comparison," replied the vicar, shrugging his shoulders, "a thousand times hotter!" "It's a lie!" broke in the blacksmith fiercely; "if I've got to believe such stuff as that before I get into Heaven, I give up Heaven as a bad job." Then he turned with an afterthought, and said, "I'm hanged if I believe that *fish* story now!"

"How do you like the character of St. Paul?" asked a parson of his landlady one day, during a conversation about the old saints and the apostles. "Ah, he was a good, clever, old soul, I know," replied the landlady, "for he once said, you know, that we must eat what is set before us, and ask no questions for conscience sake. I always thought I should like him for a boarder."

DR. THOMSON, taking once for his text, "Look not upon wine when it is red in the cup," enlarged upon the evil effects of drinking upon the head, heart, and purse. As the congregation departed, two old cronies, given to taking more than a "wee drap," talked over the sermon, "Did you hear yon Johnnie?" quoth one. "Did I heart 't? Wha didna heart? I ne'er winked an e'e." "Aweel, an' what thought ye o't?" "A deed, Davie, I think he has been a lad in his day, or he couldna ha' ken'd so weel about it; he's been a sly hand, the minister!"

AN old lady visiting the Antiquarian Museum in Edinburgh the other day, on inspecting the old weapons very earnestly, and

failing to find what she was apparently looking for, asked a visitor if he could tell her whereabouts they kept the Axe of the Apostles.

"ARE ye no tempted to gang a-fishin' o' the sawbeth?" asked one Scotch parson of another, "No, mon," returned the other, "I'm no tempted lang, I just gang."

In a Highland village the bellman one day made this announcement:—"O yes, O yes, O yes: ye mun a' tak' notice, that there will be nae Lord's Day here next Sawbeth, because the laird's wife wants the kirk to dry her claes in!"

A DYING Irishman was asked by his priest if he was willing to renounce the devil and all his works. "Oh, yer honor," says Pat, "don't ask me that; I'm not sure what road I shall take, an' don't want to make myself inemies."

"THE missionaries complain of intolerance," said Sydney Smith, "A weasel might as well complain of intolerance when he is throttled for sucking eggs."

A METHODIST parson, who was a little "screwed," gave out his text thus,—"It is easier for a needle to go thorough a rich man's eye, than for a camel to enter the kingdom of heaven."

A YOUNG lady fresh from reading the Revised Version of the New Testament, astonished her young man by asking if it was true that Byron swam across the Hadespont.

A COUNTRY curate recently gave effect to the impressive narrative of the denial of Jesus by his chief apostle, by reading: "And immediately the cock wept, and Peter went out and crew bitterly."

"If the devil got his due, Pat, where would you be?" "Alone, yer reverence."

MIKE RAFFERTY told the priest in confession that he had stolen Tim Flanagan's pig. "You must restore it," said his reverence. Mike demurred—the pig was bacon. "Do you not know," said the priest, "that Tim will appear against you at the Judgment Day?" "And will the pig be there in evidence?" "Well, yes, the pig will appear against you." "Shure, then, I'll say, Tim, there's your pig."

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S FREETHOUGHT OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

LECTURERS FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER, 1881.

STATION AND TIME.	Chairman	4	11	18	25
MIDLAND ARCHES, ... 11.30	Leekey	Job	Forder	Moss	Job
CLERKENWELL GREEN 11.30	Hilditch	Forder	Symes	Ramsey	Haslam
VICTORIA PARK ... 8.30	Jones	Footo	Symes	Thurlow	Moss
GIBRALTAR WALK, ... 11.15	Ramsey	Ramsey	Moss	Haslam	Grout
MILK END ROAD, ... 11.15	Reeve	Haslam	Ramsey	Job	Moss
STREATHAM COMMON, 11.15	Vesey	Moss	Thurlow	Norrish	Ramsey
BALHAM, 6.30	Vesey	Moss	Thurlow	Norrish	Ramsey

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