

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub Editor--J. M. Wheeler.

Vol. V.—No. 1.]

JANUARY 4, 1885.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 103.



ELISHA'S PRIZE TRICK.

"And when they came to Jordan, they cut down wood. But as one was felling a beam, the ax head fell into the water. . . And the man of God said, Where fell it? and he shewed him the place . . . and the iron did swim."—2 KINGS vi. 4-6.

OUR NEW YEAR.

HUMAN imbecility is seldom more strongly marked than in the fashion of making good resolutions for the new year. These resolutions are never more than wishes, and the vanity of human wishes has been a fertile theme for moralists of all schools. Wishing forwards is silly enough, but wishing backwards is simply idiotic. Yet that is precisely what "good resolution" people are always doing. Their future intentions are simply the shadow of their past failures. They live in a perpetual state of foolish regret, alternated with delusive hope. They fancy that the past can be annulled by a thought, and the future determined by words—all which means that they are weaklings, made of soft human dough and never properly baked. Far be it from me to join the swarm of these simpletons. My purpose in this article is neither to deduce cheap lessons from the old year nor to make cheap promises for the new, but simply to state what has been and to point to what is.

Last year opened for me in Holloway Gaol; this year opens for me in liberty of thought, speech and action. Then I was caged up like a wild beast; now I am free as the air. Then I was doomed to inaction; now I am in the full swing of hard work. Then I vegetated; now I live.

Ten months of freedom! And how I have revelled in it none can realise except those who have suffered its deprivation. Ten months of incessant work! And how I have enjoyed it none can imagine except those who have known the horror of compulsory idleness. I have

No. 178.]

travelled through Great Britain from Plymouth to Aberdeen, and delivered, I believe, more lectures than any other man on the Freethought platform; in addition to some pamphlet work, all too little for my wishes, the conduct of *Progress* and the editing of the *Freethinker*, from which my pen has never been absent for a single week, to say nothing of the two special numbers. This is not all, however; for I have devoted a good deal of time and energy to our publishing business. Altogether my "record" is a pretty full one; and if I am beginning to feel rather tired and anxious for a little rest, it will not appear surprising.

A word as to *Progress*. Since its reduction in price it has considerably increased in circulation; but, as I have already explained, the reduction was too great financially, and I have been obliged to raise the price to fourpence. This will not, however, be a great tax on its subscribers. Commercially, it is not a dear fourpenny-worth, and I believe its readers will find its contents increase rather than diminish in interest.

The printing and publishing in which I am engaged with my brother-martyr, Mr. Ramsey, was forced upon us by our persecutors. They frightened Mr. Whittle, the first printer of the *Freethinker*, into "selling" us one Tuesday evening, when the formes were nearly ready for the press; and the result was that, despite the most desperate efforts on my part, this journal was unprocurable that week by its subscribers. There has been no suspension since, but we had plenty of trouble with printers, and we were never free from anxiety until we brought all the mechanical arrangements for producing the *Freethinker* under our own roof. Up to the time of our release from prison, we only possessed printing type. This still left us at the mercy of others; and as soon, therefore, as we received the handsome testimonial presented to us by the Freethought party, we purchased machinery. Since then we have composed and machined every publication issued from our office. The *Freethinker* is thus absolutely safe. The bigots cannot now hope to suppress it. They cannot intimidate our type and machinery, and they have proved that they cannot intimidate us.

Until recently our printing was carried on at St. John Street Road, but we were obliged to quit our premises there at Christmas. We have taken the lease of a five-story block on Clerkenwell Green (No. 14), where we have superior accommodation and every convenience for a flourishing business. Our compositors are in full swing on the ground floor, and below them our machines are being driven along merrily by a fine new gas-engine. The first floor is divided into offices for myself, Mr. Wheeler, Mr. Ball, and the rest of the staff. This is our "blasphemy" factory, where we sit, as Shelley says,

Plotting dark spells and devilish enginery.

The two upper floors are used for other purposes. Our friends are welcome to call and see us as soon as we are completely settled down, which will not be for a week or two yet; and they may bear in mind that we are ready to execute any printing orders in addition to our own work. I say this once for all, as it is not my policy to be always talking about our business in the *Freethinker*.

We have not been idle, and those who subscribed to our testimonial will probably think we have made good use of the money. We shall now do our best to "catch up all our previous efforts." Mr. Ramsey "means business," and I intend not only to conduct the *Freethinker* as vigorously as possible on its old lines, but to see that we issue a constant succession of Freethought books, and pamphlets. And now let us cease talking about ourselves, and get on with our work.

G. W. FOOTE.

TWO VIEWS OF LIFE.

IN passing a fresh milestone in life, as we may be said to do at the beginning of a year, it is well to look back on the ground we have passed over as well as forward to what lies in the future. And the look-out to the Freethinker is a satisfactory one. Although we have not fully won that position before the law to which we are entitled—although to be an avowed Freethinker is still to incur ostracism, obloquy and punishment, direct and indirect—we have reason to congratulate ourselves, not only on our own emancipation from the superstitions of orthodox theology, but on the extent to which our views are spreading and leavening society around us. Dogmas once generally accepted are becoming more and more challenged every year. Priests, to retain their places, refine and modify their creed to suit the exigencies of modern thought, so that neither Jesus, Paul nor Augustine would recognise the Christianity which is preached in the majority of pulpits. Society is gradually taking the Secular view of life. While nominally Christian, it is practically Atheistic. Trust in providence is giving place to attention to material conditions. We no longer admire those who retire from the world and give their thoughts to vain prayers and meditations on deity, but those who strive to improve the lot of their fellows in the world we know. Work is superseding prayer, science displacing theology. The divine command to “love not the world, neither the things that are in the world” (1 John ii., 15) is happily inefficacious, and the theologians have to trim their sails accordingly. They have never been able to square their conduct with their professions. The so-called “believers” do not act as if they really believed that “God hath chosen the poor of this world.” They endeavor to find a comfortable nook in this vale of tears, and are by no means anxious for notice to quit the vale for the plains of heaven. Like us, they lament when dear ones are removed “out of the miseries of this sinful world,” as the Burial Service expresses it, and most would barter a crown of glory hereafter for half-a-crown here. They are not more ready than us to relieve every beggar or to give their cloaks to persons who take their coats. *Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret.* Nature is too strong for religious beliefs.

In the view of the early Christian, care for this perishing earth was a mistake. The whole world lay in wickedness. Soon would come the day of wrath, when God should appear in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who knew him not. The business of the Christian was to save his own soul; to give up father, mother, wife and child, for this purpose; to fix his heart on things above, and lay up his treasure in heaven, not on earth. Mr. Lecky (“European Morals,” vol. ii., p. 133) tells us: “To break by ingratitude the heart of the mother who bore him, to persuade the wife who adored him that it was her duty to separate from him for ever, to abandon his children, uncared for and beggars, to the mercy of the world, was regarded by the true hermit as the most acceptable offering he could make to his God.”

Theology teaches that man is under a curse, and human nature a thing depraved, justly deserving eternal punishment. It relies for salvation on the sufferings of an innocent person crucified ages ago. Its dogmas have descended from ancient and barbarous times, the very purport and purpose of them having evaporated on the road. Unsupported by reason, it has striven to sustain itself by the stake, the rack, and the gaol. Science teaches that man, instead of being a little lower than the angels, is a little higher than the brutes. It sees in human crime the remnants of animal selfishness and ferocity, to be obliterated by civilisation. Its golden age is not in the past, but in the future. It teaches that humanity must both think and work out its earthly salvation, not with fear and trembling, but with courage and hope. Instead of seeking to secure individual immunity from the eternal torments which have been supposed to be the legitimate punishment of Adam’s sin upon all his posterity, it looks forward to the amelioration of the lot of those who will replace us. It takes no heed of miracles or the alleged will of God, but bases itself on the verifiable facts of nature and the traceable needs of man. Culture is substituting for belief in the supernatural and the worship of deity a recognition of law and an animating devotion to humanity. The old object of life was to save oneself; the modern object is to save

all from the real hell of poverty, ignorance, crime, and degrading pursuits. Dynamic laws prevail no less in morals than in physics: to have force to use, some force must be set free. If a man is devoted to his self-development, his family, his business, and the welfare of society, he will not have much concern for any other heaven than he finds in these. The modern view tends to concentrate upon this world and its amelioration those energies which experience shows have only been wasted in futile endeavors to penetrate the mysteries of any other. Suppose the attention and organisation were bestowed on the welfare of the people here which are given to the safety of their souls hereafter, might we not hope for a condition in which the present glaring blots on our civilisation would have been effaced, and the masses raised above the fear of want and the temptations to crime? Had the riches, research, time, trouble, aspiration and devotion that have been wasted on supernatural speculations and theological trumpery been given to solve questions practically affecting the progress of our species, who can doubt that we should be in a better state to-day? Had we but served Humanity with half the zeal with which we have served our gods, our actual state might have approached our present ideal, and our ideal might have risen to an altitude we have not yet been bold enough to hope for or to conceive. J. M. WHELFER.

ACID DROPS.

GENERAL BOOTH wants 30,000*l.* for the new year. He will expend it himself (if he gets it) under the guidance of the Holy Ghost, who informs him what to do with the profits of Salvation watches, tea, soap, sugar and castor oil. He protests that his motives are as pure as driven snow, and signs his own certificate of character so as to place it above suspicion. Nobody suspects him, according to his latest report, except “a vile infidel paper,” meaning probably ourselves, and a “still viler Christian paper,” meaning God knows whom. A significant commentary on this farrago of self-applause is the General’s action with respect to his Lieutenant in America. This gentleman made himself legal owner of all the Army’s property he could collect out there, intending, of course, to use it for God’s honor and glory exactly as Booth does. But this was more than the General could stand. He considers himself the sole rightful owner (under God of course) of all Salvation goods and chattels on the globe. He therefore deposed this American usurper, and sent out another officer from head-quarters to take his place. No doubt he will have to issue a fresh bull of deposition and excommunication as soon as the Army’s property out there is worth collaring again.

A “SALVATION ARMY” CONVERT.

I’M Scroggins, the noted house-breaker; I was thoroughly bad and depraved
Till I joined the Salvation Army, but now, thank the Lord, I am saved;
I never performed a good action, I always was tricky and mean, I was always indicted a nuisance in every place I have been;
I always was wicked and lazy, I always was drunken and low,
But I’m washed in the blood of my Savior, and now I am whiter than snow.
My parents are dead—they’re in heaven—for better no man ever had,
But my mother I sent to the workhouse, and kicked in the street my poor dad;
I murdered my wife by ill-treatment, though a truer the world never saw;
From the time I was only a nipper I’ve never kept clear of the law;
But Jesus refused not to take me, though vile I had been for so long,
I now am as pure as a baby; if I wanted I couldn’t go wrong.

THE *Christian Commonwealth* asserts that animal food was not obtainable before the Fall of Man because “there was no death until sin brought it into the world.” No death, when geology proves incontestably the birth and death of innumerable living beings and the evolution and destruction of innumerable distinct species millions of years before the arrival of man upon the scene! The *C. C.* thinks itself well informed, and yet continues to deal out this preposterous falsehood as material whereof the bread of life is to be made. A Christian correspondent indeed corrects this notion, but the shocking ignorance of the editor is invincible. He still deliberately maintains that death did not enter the world till after the fall of Adam, and the proofs to the contrary put forward by geologists he describes as “assumptions” and “guesses.”

THE same paper, with the courtesy so preëminently characteristic of religious people when dealing with other sects than their own, speaks of the Church of Rome as the “Mother of Harlots.” As the Church of Rome is undeniably the mother of the Church of England and of our Protestant sects generally,

this polished epithet really reflects more discredit upon the daughters—the Protestant sect, for instance, to which the editor of the *C. C.* belongs—than to the original mother Church.

THE above expression of the Christian charity which always esteemeth others better than itself, is called forth by a ritualistic announcement in the *Church Times* under "Deaths," which says: "Of your charity pray for the repose of the soul of John Richard Gaston Magrath. . . . Jesu, mercy. Ladye, help." The ritualistic daughter of the Mother of Christian Sects is certainly far advanced along the road that returns to the parent Church.

A PIOUS contemporary says that "infidelity not only offers the world nothing, but it absolutely takes away the material blessings which we possess." "Infidelity" would at least save the country some millions per year now worse than wasted on parsons, it would abolish religious persecution, and it would divert energies and affections from God to man, from falsehood to truth, from awful and degrading superstitions to unfettered progress towards a happy and well-ordered state of society. Is this nothing? And does the editor of this print really believe that Freethought "absolutely takes away" food and clothing and Christmas cheer and all the other "material blessings which we possess?" Does a house crumble into dust immediately a Freethinker enters it? Do books fade into nothingness in an Atheist's hands? Or do the laws of nature, seed-time and harvest, sun and rain, life and joy, remain unto the Atheist even as unto the Christian? Why must Christian editors take leave of their senses when they deal with "infidelity"?

THE same journal has a leading article on the proposed rendering of the word "soul" by the more correct term "psyché" as in the Greek. It wants to know how such texts as the following will sound: "Bless the Lord, O my psyche." "And man became a living psyche." "He that loveth his psyche shall lose it; and he that hateth his psyche in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." Perhaps, if biblical innovators can have their way, we shall by-and-bye hear Christian toppers singing about Old King Cole being a merry old psyche.

"PASTOR CHINIQUY" has been mobbed and prevented from lecturing at Montreal by the Roman Catholics. Benches and windows were broken wholesale. The police had to clear the hall and drive the people back while the lecturer escaped in a carriage, pursued by howling Christians, who hurled stones and curses and threats of death after him in a thoroughly biblical and religious style. These Christians do love each other most wonderfully. How fondly they delight to show their Christian affection in the form of scowls and oaths and flying brickbats!

A CORRESPONDENT wants to know if Tubal-Cain made tubes of iron and brass, and was also the father of such as handle the organ—this organ being of course Pan's-pipes, or the primitive mouth-organ, made of reeds or hollow bamboo cane. We refer him to Gen. iv., 21, 22. Jubal was "the father of all such as handle the harp and organ;" and as he was the father of Tubal-Cain, we may assume that the latter handled the organ—that is, played on the primeval flute or squeaker. Tubal-Cain was "an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron;" so that he may have manufactured metal tubes. But although God protected the murderer from vengeance and made his life seven-fold as sacred as that of other men (Gen. iv., 15, 23, 24), this descendant and namesake of the original Cain never made the death-dealing tubes with which Christian nations now take life wholesale under the régime of universal love.

THE *Christian Herald* has two pictures and two accounts of converted infidels. Mr. Rogers, of Europe, Asia, Africa, America, or Australia, is converted by a Mr. Bowers of the same address. The date and other particulars needed for verification are equally specific. The second infidel and his converter are alike anonymous. Inquirers into this case must apply to Mr. Some One or other, who lived Somewhere or other at some date apparently within the present or preceding century. Is "Christian journal" merely a synonym for "retailer of religious lies?" Some, at least, of our readers will be tempted to re-name Mr. Baxter's religious catchpenny the *Christian Liar*.

THE Very Rev. A. W. West, Dean of Armagh, went bankrupt for £11,000, and paid a dividend of 1s. 3d. in the pound. Having given himself an incumbency worth £800 a year after paying a curate to do the work, he compromised with his creditors in the Dublin Bankruptcy Court by assigning £600 a year of this surplus towards paying off his debts. He now breaks his bargain and declines to pay. Judge Walsh severely censured the "Very Reverend" culprit, and said that his conduct in setting the law at defiance and repudiating his own undertaking was revolting. He refused to hear the Dean's counsel, and ordered immediate payment.

THE upper classes, says a Christian paper, while "affected" in the matter of Church rites and ceremonies, are "woefully deficient" in following sound apostolic and scriptural teaching. As John Bright said, the working classes care no more for the dogmas of Christianity than the upper classes do for its practice.

BUT if our Christianity is a mere husk or hypocrisy, and if the religion of the majority only consists of a "vague idea that there is something meritorious in going to church very often, and in receiving the holy sacrament as a sort of charm, and in visiting the poor as a good work," why do the saints make such a fuss about "infidels" who outrage the feelings of the few real Christians by the satire and ridicule which such a state of things invites and deserves?

AT Port Novo, on the West African coast, there is an annual religious ceremony called "Banishing death from the town." This "fetish" lasts several days and nights, and is accompanied with dancing, drinking, shouting, the performance of many religious rites or incantations, and the worship of thousands of idols, which are subsequently cast into the lagoon. Five of the priests were so zealous in keeping religion up and the death-rate down, that they died of exhaustion and drink.

ACCORDING to the *Tablet* there are eight millions of Roman Catholics in the United States. As it is the boast of the priests that their flocks follow them like sheep, it is evident they are an important force in political matters. We look to the spread of education and Freethought to ward off the danger to the Republic arising from its numerous Roman Catholic immigrants.

ARTHUR SHAW, recently executed at Kirkdale for the murder of his wife in Manchester, wrote before his death on the scaffold a very pious letter to his brothers, in which he mentions the name of God seven times. He expects to meet his wife in realms of eternal bliss, and concludes his letter with the words: "I hope to meet you all in heaven." No doubt Arthur Shaw will find himself quite at home with God's favorites in the celestial mansions.

AT a skating accident which has just occurred near Preston, two men and a young lady fell through the ice. The brother of the young lady rushed in to save his sister, but the two men, one of them a Wesleyan minister, seized him and nearly drowned him, grappling with him in their selfish terror while he saw his sister sink before his eyes. One of these hopeful specimens of British manliness was saved, while the young lady perished through their frantic cowardice and want of presence of mind. We see by the action of the sky-pilot how brave and cool and unselfish Christianity makes men.

"THE attention of the committee of the Havenhill Literary Institute and Reading Room having been called to a copy of a blasphemous publication, entitled the *Freethinker*, which had been found on the Reading-room table on the 11th instant, and several similar publications having been seen in the hands of John Turpin, jun., in the rooms belonging to the institute, and he having also shown them to members of the society, at a meeting of the committee held the 18th instant, it was unanimously resolved that he be forthwith expelled. Any member bringing any such, or similar, papers into the rooms will also be expelled.—By order of the committee." The Suffolk worthies who drew up the foregoing were, we are informed, a parson, two churchwardens and a church clerk. One individual, a Roman Catholic, expressed an opinion that the said John Turpin, jun., ought in addition to be tied to a stake and burnt. No doubt he would have fared badly in the days when the Church was dominant, since such are Christian notions of freedom at the present day.

HENRY VARLEY is doing a tour in America with his lecture "to men only," which the *St. Louis Evening Chronicle* describes as just similar to the quack "Marriage Guides" with which the country is flooded. This outspoken journal wants to know what is the use of a lecture on such a subject by a physiological ignoramus like Varley, censures the evangelical churches for encouraging him, and says that a repetition of his lectures will be "simply an insult to the common sense and common decency of the city."

THE *Times* finds an argument for Christianity in the fact that its festivals "bind the generations together in mutual love and common joys." What a brilliant discovery! Why, as a matter of fact, nearly every one of its festivals is of Pagan origin. Christian festivities were enjoyed for a length of time quite unknown before they were associated with the supposed birth of Christ. Perhaps the *Times* will explain the connection between Jesus Christ and holly and mistletoe.

THE Ritualist organs celebrate the increasing number of churches in which the festival of the sun is celebrated with altar service, candle-grease, flowers and genuflexions. Surely the Church is falling into its sacerdotalage, or priestly second childhoodness.

THE Vicar of St. Bartholomew's Church, at Whitworth, near Rochdale, has been displaying his Christian spirit during the season when Christians are supposed to be "extra good." He took occasion to refer to a testimonial which had been presented to one of the lady Sunday-school teachers, declaring if she were honest she would never use it. The schoolmistress returned the

testimonial, and there followed "a scene of hooting, hissing and groaning without parallel in the history of St. Bartholomew's"—though perhaps the scene hardly equalled that on a certain memorable St. Bartholomew's Day, which was also the occasion of a great religious demonstration.

A WRITER in the *Freeman* declares that Christianity is opposed to war. Why, then, did Jesus say, "Let him that hath not a sword sell his garment and buy one." The religious wars of Christians alone have been computed to have cost over five hundred million lives.

THE Railway Mission must have a low estimate of the intelligence of railway employes, judging by the mental pabulum supplied by their official organ, the *Railway Signal*. The number for December contains, among other trash, the story of an infidel whose wife had a Bible given her:—"When the husband came home, he instantly caught sight of the book, and seeing what it was, it roused him to fury. Seizing the volume with one hand and his axe with the other, he laid the former on the chopping-block and cut it through," giving one half to his wife as her share of the property. Cutting a book through with an axe was a curious feat, but something as curious followed. Months after, wanting something to read, he took half the volume, and got interested in the story of the Prodigal Son, but in cutting the book in two it had exactly divided this in half, and he could not finish it. This circumstance converted him, and he is now a servant of Christ.

THE *Hampshire Telegraph* refuses to insert the letters of the Rev. H. Sidney Young as merely containing "vulgar abuse."

CARDINAL MANNING, in a recent sermon reported in the *Catholic Times*, declares emphatically "there is no alternative between Rationalism and Rome." We must be either critics of Revelation or followers of the Pope. He says the question with Protestants now is not a new form of Christianity, but whether Christianity itself be credible or not. The Church of Rome alone stands firm amid the waters of infidelity, because founded on the rock of authority.

The *Weekly Dispatch*, in an article on "Free Trade in Religion," says that the evidence taken by the Royal Commission in 1879 "unfolds such horrible tales of perjury and fraud committed by those to whom the Government entrusts the care of our souls that every reasonable person must be disgusted as he reads it. . . . Some of the men who, by purchasing livings, have had the legal right to force themselves upon unwilling congregations, and who have not only violated the laws of simony, but have afterwards perjured themselves by swearing that they have not, would have lowered the standard of morals in any place outside a gaol, and would certainly not have raised it even within the prison walls."

THE Rev. A. L'Argent Bell, vicar of Eling, Southampton, after conducting the service and assisting in ringing the bells on Christmas Eve, suddenly fell dead. What an awful warning against keeping up heathen practices at Christmas!

A MR. BURNARD having spoken at a meeting of the Farmers' Alliance in favor of the abolition of tithes, this proposition has been denounced as "robbery" by the Rev. S. W. E. Bird, who quotes Malachi iii., 8, 9, in justification of that term.

THE Rev. E. Compton has been lecturing at Hastings on the Astronomy of the Bible and of Modern Science. His arguments and statements are ridiculously absurd. He says, for instance, that the Bible is "far in advance of boasted modern science" because Moses thought the moon "did something on the earth besides giving light," and what this something is science has not yet discovered. "Moses was, therefore, far in advance of modern science." As a writer in the *Hastings and St. Leonards Times* asks, "Is not this the veriest child's play?"

A CHRISTIAN hymn on the Atonement is quoted in one of our pious contemporaries. It runs thus:

"Jehovah lifted up his rod,
Oh, Christ it fell on thee;
Thou wast sore-stricken of thy God,
There's not one stroke for me.
Jehovah bade his sword awake,
Oh, Christ, it woke 'gainst thee;
Thy blood the flaming blade must shake,
Thy heart its sheath must be."

Some ministers are getting too squeamish to allow these elegant verses to be sung. One preacher says that such descriptions convert the Atonement "into a most hideous crime." They do not convert it into a crime—it is one already. They only depict it too painfully as the murder of a son by a horribly vindictive father. Moral Evolution is going on. Presently the doctrine will be abandoned and denounced as well as old-fashioned and too outspoken enunciations of it.

THE Pope, in a published Encyclical, announced three Spanish saints, Giacomo, Anastasius and Theodorus, in each of whose

bodies had been discovered a compound of much virtue. An indulgence of two years consecutively is granted during the feasts celebrated in honor of those saints!

THE Toronto public press reports a case of the elopement of a female captain of the Salvation Army with a male soldier of the rank and file, who leaves a wife and children in the city. Perhaps he heard a divine voice saying, "Except ye be ready to leave wife and family for my sake, ye are not worthy of me."

POOR PRAYING.—The *Christian Advocate* (U.S.) says: "In a suit for separation in Canada, brought by a wife against her husband—a minister—among other charges it was stated that at a family prayer he would frequently crawl across the floor on his knees, keeping up his prayer all the while, and administering blows to his children for supposed inattention. This method can hardly be commended. Better have no prayers than scenes like that."

AN exchange thinks the missionaries in the Cannibal Islands must feel Fiji.

AT Leeds a number of Salvationists, men and women, were summoned for making an intolerable noise in the public streets with horns, drums, cymbals, tambourines and rattles. Happy Leeds, it appears, is blessed with three rival armies—the Salvation Army, the Mission Army, and the Salvation Mission Army. The latter is led by a colored gentleman named Harris, who seceded from the original Salvation Army and set up in the business on his own account. His performance, aided by "grotesque gesticulations and amusing antics," brought in the coin, but the noise became unendurable, and he and his noble army of cymbal-clashers had to be brought before the police-court, in consequence of his refusal to discontinue the hideous row, which he justified by quoting the text, "Praise the Lord with brazen instruments." ("Brazen instruments," we fancy, must mean the captains of the Salvation Army.) Defendants were fined two shillings each and costs.

DR. PARKER preached on Christmas morning at eleven o'clock, instead of at the usual Thursday hour of twelve, so as to suit the railway arrangements for Christmas Day. According to the newspapers, his sermon was delivered to a crowded audience, who found railway trains better conveyances than the wings of prayer. With a peculiarly unconscious irony, Dr. Parker held forth vehemently on miracles, which he said were very easy of belief to a Christian, and "the greater the miracle, the easier it ought to be to believe it." In our opinion, the greatest miracle of this age would be an honest Christian who sincerely believes what he professes and proves it by his practice. There is, however, nothing miraculous in Dr. Parker's profitable compromise between present science and ancient superstition. It is a vulgar phenomenon in every sense of the word.

THE Rev. J. P. Hopps, Unitarian minister, of Leicester, has been writing to the *Daily News* in favor of a State Church. He wants the present establishment broadened, so as to include everybody except Freethinkers; and he would effect this object by cutting away from the Prayer Book everything that any body of Christians object to. We venture to assert that if this were done the result would be a volume of blank leaves. A national union of Christian sects, would almost beat those happy families we see in cages in the streets. What Mr. Hopps really wants is a free-and-easy church which will supply a pulpit and a salary for free-and-easy sky-pilots who could not earn more than bread and cheese in the ordinary labor market. We hope the Freethinkers and Radicals of Leicester will keep a sharp eye on Mr. Hopps. The Liberalism of a Dissenter who believes in a State Church if he can get inside it, is certainly open to grave suspicion.

THE man Marshall, accused of the shocking murder of his sweetheart at Woolwich, was a Sunday-school teacher at St. John's Church, Plumstead.

AND it came to pass that on the sacred day called Christmas the people of Spain made a feast unto the Lord in their dwellings. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against them, and he sent a mighty earthquake. And many villages were destroyed, and the people of the towns fled into the fields and market-places and dwelt in tabernacles; for their houses were shaken to and fro like unto men that are drunken, and the stones of their walls were loosened, and great was the fall thereof. And the Lord also smote his own temple at Seville, inasmuch that the veil thereof was rent in twain from the top unto the bottom; and many churches fell. So fierce was the anger of the Lord and so indiscriminate. And the number of them which died was more than one thousand. For earthquake followed earthquake and destruction followed destruction. And at Alhama alone three hundred and two score and ten persons when they arose in the morning found they were dead men, like unto the army of Sennacherib. For the Lord is terrible and wonderful in his ways, and he chasteneth the faithful land of *autos da fe* with frost and with earthquake for listening to the specious talk of the new Free Traders.—"Book of the Revelation of the Will of the Lord," chapter 1884, page 359.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, Jan. 4, Secular Hall, Milkstone Road, Roshdale; at 11, "The History of the Devil;" at 3, "Darwin v. Moses;" at 6.30, "Will Christ Save Us?"

JANUARY 11, Huddersfield; 18, Milton Hall; 20, Walworth; 25, Milton Hall; 27, Walworth.

FEBRUARY 1, Claremont Hall, London; 8, Hall of Science, London; 15, Milton Hall; 22, Liverpool.

MARCH 1, Manchester; 8, Claremont Hall; 29, Glasgow.

APRIL 19, Hall of Science; 26, Hall of Science.

CORRESPONDENTS.

All business communications to be addressed to the Manager, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C. Literary communications to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, directly from the office, post free to any part of Europe, America, Canada and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3s.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS:—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—R. Walker, G. Morgan, F. Claydon, J. Wilson, F. Wilcockson.

R. F. GILLAN.—The story is Mark Twain's. We do not pay for suggestions for sketches, having an artist on our regular staff.

G. LOXSTONE.—Perhaps we shall deal with the matter some day.

We venture to remind our readers that they render us a signal service by sending us any notices of *Progress* or the *Freethinker* in their local press, as well as any reports of sermons, lectures, or other matter which might be of interest to our readers when passed through "our mill."

A. H. BURN.—We are very much obliged to you for your defence of our Christmas Number against Mr. Rossiter. He is an able and amiable gentleman, but he is all at sea on this question. Still, if he likes to go about advertising us gratuitously, we suppose we need not complain.

ARGUS.—Thanks. You shall have the next number that arrives.

A FATALIST.—Your good wishes are very welcome. We have done as you request.

A. LIPPER.—We do not expect Mr. Rossiter to like our Christmas Number, and it was not published to please him. If his "blood boils" we are very sorry. A hundred degrees is a high temperature. How does he survive two hundred and twelve?

W. NIXON.—Another copy of Sept. 14 number has been forwarded. Packets sometimes go astray in the post. See "Sugar Plums."

SIGNALMAN, R.N.—Always glad to hear from you. The joke, however, is an old one. It has already appeared in our columns, with a slight change of the circumstances. Keep the ball rolling.

M. H. BUNTON.—A copy of *Progress* is regularly sent. We wish you would send us any notices you may see.

W. C. S.—Probably the hall was closed on account of the holiday, and not out of respect for the memory of J. C. Shall appear.

S. BROWN.—We agree with you that the Leeds Freethinkers ought to be far better organised. Why not see how you can help them to improve?

H. H. S.—Thanks for your good wishes and suggestions.

F. ADAMS.—You cannot send us too many cuttings.

All orders for literature should be sent direct to Mr. Ramsey. Sending them to Mr. Foote wastes his time and causes delay; and he will not hold himself answerable for them.

J. LAWLINSON.—There was a good deal of human nature in the old farmer who complained that at church he had to "sit without fire and sing without ale."

C. BRAZIER.—Thanks for the cuttings. That story of Joseph's cock crowing at Peter is an old one. It is splendidly told in James Thomson's "Satiros and Profanities."—The Camberwell Branch of the N. S. S. will by-and-bye have a large hall on the south side of the Thames.—Apply to Mr. R. Forder, 6 Cambridge Terrace, Islington, for all information as to the N. S. S.

A. C. B.—We are obliged for the extract. Of course we are glad to receive any suggestions for fresh Bible Sketches from our readers. Go on with your Bible reading, and you will soon read yourself out of it. True believers know very little of it except the covers. We do not believe in a future life, for the simple reason that we see absolutely no evidence of it. A Freethinker is primarily one who thinks freely; but as thinking freely on religion generally ends in utter scepticism, a Freethinker has come to mean, usually, one who rejects theology of every kind.

PETER SIMPLE.—There is no account of instituting the marriage ceremony in the Bible. In patriarchal times the purchased consent of the parents was all that was necessary. The priests got their fingers in the pie afterwards. McLonnan's book on "Primitive Marriage," and Wake's "Evolution of Morality," will give you further information on the subject.

G. BRONIS.—The story of the man in Kentucky struck dumb while swearing is curiously like another in regard to a soldier in the south of England, which upon investigation proved to be a fiction.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Manchester Evening News—Hastings and St. Leonards Times—Leeds Evening Express—South Australian Advertiser—Lucifer—Herts and Essex Observer—Western Morning News—Truthseeker—Duch Argus—Woolwich Gazette—Portsmouth Evening News—Dublin Express—Boston Investigator—Catholic Times—L'Europe—Liberator—Anti-Christian—Winnowing Breeze—Philosophic Inquirer—Protestant Standard—Western Times—Young Socialist.

EDITORIAL.

OUR Christmas Number having run out of print, many intending purchasers were of course disappointed. We have, however, printed a fresh supply, which will probably meet our customers' demand. If it does not we shall be happy to go on reprinting until our machines are worn out.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE Northampton Secular Club and Institute was formally opened on Saturday evening, Dec. 27. Mr. Foote, who travelled from London to christen the big baby, was met at the station by a crowd of sympathisers, who escorted him to the Club premises in Gold Street. Mr. W. W. Collins, of Birmingham, was also present and received a very cordial greeting. Punctually at five o'clock Mr. Foote, Mr. Collins and several members of the Committee entered the large hall, where a numerous company had assembled to tea. Loud and protracted cheers were given as the little procession marched to the head of the tables. After tea the tables were cleared away, and the hall was thrown open for the meeting. During this interval Mr. Foote had an animated conversation with the Committee, and interviews with friends who had travelled in from neighboring places to attend the ceremony, a large deputation from Wellingboro' being very conspicuous. Soon after seven o'clock the chair was taken by Mr. Allen, who delivered a remarkably neat little speech. Mr. Foote's rising was the signal for lusty cheering, again and again renewed. His inaugural address was listened to with profound attention, only interrupted by laughter or applause. We regret that we have no room for a full report. Mr. Collins followed with an admirable speech, brief and pointed, which excited much enthusiasm; and after a vote of thanks to the Club guests, moved by Mr. Scott, the platform was vacated and the hall cleared for dancing. Altogether the ceremony was a great success, and it would be impossible for any assembly of men and women to show a more intelligent enthusiasm.

THE Club already numbers more than four hundred members, over a hundred of whom are full members, belonging to the Secular Society; surely a capital result of a few weeks' work. Nearly all the promoters are workmen, scarcely any assistance having been rendered by wealthier persons. This, however, is really no misfortune, for self-help is the best help, and those clubs are always the most flourishing that rely entirely on the support of their members. Besides the rooms for refreshment and recreation, there is a fair-sized reading-room being fitted up; and the large hall, which is used on Sundays for Freethought lectures, will hold over a thousand people. We congratulate the Northampton Freethinkers on their very successful start, and we hope their new Club will long flourish to promote the great principles of liberty and progress.

A FREE Sunday Reading Room has been opened at 68 Dudley Street, Walsall, under the superintendence of Mr. E. A. Scholey, who assures us that all schools of thought, including our own, are placed on an equality. Donations of books and pamphlets will be gratefully received.

THE Children's Annual Party at the Hall of Science, London, will come off on January 14. Funds are of course needed, and every Freethinker with a soft heart for children (all who have not may hang themselves) will send a trifle for their evening's amusement. Big children will be privileged to witness their enjoyment. Tickets can be obtained of the Honorary Secretary, Mr. W. Cookney, 1A Willow Street, Paul Street, Finsbury, E.C.

MR. W. W. COLLINS lectures this evening (January 4) at the London Hall of Science. His subject is "Without God." We hope Mr. Collins will receive from a large audience the welcome he deserves.

A MEETING of the Freethinkers of Finsbury will be held in the Hall of Science, Old Street, on January 7, at 8 o'clock, with a view to organisation for political action. The district contains a large number of active Freethinkers, and we trust they will take care that, under the new Redistribution Bill, they have their share of political influence.

THE *New York Herald* says that the "Sunday Law" in that State is obsolete. The prosecutions "got to be a nuisance," but to-day the Sunday Closing League is no longer heard of, and trade is carried on as if no law for enforcing closing on Sunday were in existence.

MR. SYMES has already drawn upon himself a prosecution in Australia. A certain Henry Benn sues him for £600. We gather that the money is claimed as a fine for taking money for Sunday lectures. Mr. Symes has our heartiest wishes in the struggle.

THE *Manchester Evening News* finds fault with French Freethinkers for observing "religious forms and ceremonies" in the shape of "civil baptisms." It thus describes one of these ceremonies which took place at Vineuil, near Blois:—"An altar was raised on a hillock in the centre of a vineyard. The baby was dressed in white and wore a tricolor scarf; it was escorted by a choir of little boys and girls who sang a sort of 'civil hymn.' The parents had invited their friends and acquaintances, who formed a kind of pious *cortège* winding through the vineyards. They stood around the altar which was formed by a large stone on which was a bust of the Republic wearing the Parygian cap. The mayor, who was the officiant, then went up to the altar; the sponsors presented the child to him, and swore in its name on an open volume of Rousseau's 'Contrat Social' that he would, later on, be a good citizen and an excellent Freethinker. Then the officiant, solemn and collected, baptised him very civilly by pronouncing some cabalistic formula of which I don't know the text. During that time the young women knelt down, made the sign of the cross, and piously told their beads. A strange mixture of rural innocence and ignorance! Many of them took the bust of the Republic for a statue of the Virgin. I do not see how these mummeries can free the mind of the peasants from superstition. In their eyes there was, behind the mysterious formulas and hanky-panky doings of the Mayor, something unknown, in the name of which he anointed and baptised the child. And it was to that unknown that they knelt with the same devotion as if they had knelt in a church. If that is what the French Freethinkers are going to substitute for the Christian religion, they had better go back to Pagan rites at once; that would be something definite and preferable to the mumbo-jumbo doings I have just described."

THIS writer is as unreasonable and unjust towards Freethinkers as Christians usually are. Because ignorant people import objectionable superstitions into a public or official ceremony, he professes to think that the superstitions should be corrected or put down by publicly or officially adopting them, or by resorting to still more ancient and ridiculous superstitions. Probably he holds, in the idiotic Christian style, that Freethinkers are gratuitously wicked and blasphemous when they "parody"—i.e., celebrate—human ceremonies which Christians have appropriated to themselves for ever. Freethinkers must not publicly name their children, or be married, or have funeral services—these being Christian patents with all rights reserved.

ONE of our correspondents in the "Queen's Navee" writes: "We had several copies of your Christmas Number, and it did go round properly. I think bluejackets can enjoy a joke." We are glad to hear it, and very glad to furnish them with the opportunity.

OUR lively contemporary, the *Western Figaro* of Plymouth, says that "The Christmas Number of the *Freethinker* tells the story of Abraham's Sacrifice in its usual happy vein." So far so good. But our good-tempered critic is wrong in supposing that the Public Prosecutor will go for us *again*. He has never taken the first step yet. He did not prosecute us two years ago; he simply *allowed* Sir Henry Tyler and the City Corporation to proceed against us, in accordance with the Newspaper Libels Act. Anyhow, we have no fear of Sir John Maule's mauling, any more than we had of our old enemies.

WHEN we issued our first Christmas Number we announced that "parsons and paupers" could have a free copy, and a few of each sort made application. We have never renewed the offer; but a few days ago we received a letter from an inmate of a Lancashire workhouse, asking us to send him a free copy of our reasonable budget of "blasphemy," and of course we cheerfully complied with his request, forwarding at the same time a copy of all our recent publications. Our correspondent, who is an old Freethinker, disabled from work, thanks us for the parcel, whose contents are to him and his circle of friends in the workhouse "a happy relief from the thralldom of priestcraft and superstition." On Christmas night he read out to the inmates of his ward "The Devil's Christmas" and "Priestcraft Exposed" from our Christmas Number, and "there was great clapping and laughter at the conclusion."

ON Christmas Day over a hundred poor people were entertained at dinner in the Secular Hall, Leicester. One old gentleman of ninety made considerable inroads on a rabbit pie; other guests did ample justice to the beef, mutton, plum-pudding, apple-tart, cheese and ale, which in the best sense of the word adorned the tables. The dinner was eaten to a pianoforte accompaniment, and followed by a concert. Messrs. T. Wright, Voss, Savage, Holyoak, Dixon, Cartwright, Kearsley, Bunton, and Sharman were conspicuous in attending to their visitors' wants. It was a pleasant time for all.

ONE of our subscribers, who holds an official position in New South Wales, writes to say that he has distributed all the "Freethinker Tracts" he got from our office when he was in England a few months ago. He suggests that we should have some printed on one side only, so that they might be stuck up here and there. Not a bad idea. He also informs us that, although

he has to keep more quiet than he altogether likes, he has converted a neighboring schoolmaster and some other friends. Our correspondent is a Freethinker of forty-five years' standing, and we feel flattered by the sympathy and good wishes of such a veteran.

In his preface to "The Cenci," Shelley remarked that amongst the Italians (and the observation is partly true of every other people) religion "has no necessary connexion with any one virtue. The most atrocious villain may be rigidly devout, and, without any shock to established faith, confesses himself to be so. Religion pervades intensely the whole frame of society, and is, according to the temper of the mind which it inhabits, a passion, a persuasion, an excuse, a refuge; never a check." A singular confirmation of this truth is furnished by a correspondent of the *Daily News* in describing a visit to a convict establishment at Santa Stephano, a volcanic island of the Ponza group, where the worst criminals of Italy are confined, many of them being unexecuted murderers. Whatever their general conduct may be in prison, their behaviour in chapel is always exemplary, as "even the most violent Italian criminal rarely dares to break with the observances of his religion." Italian brigands are said to be especially devout. They do not mind robbing a traveller or cutting his throat on a Friday, but nothing will induce them to eat meat; they start on a fresh expedition with greater alacrity after attending Mass; and they usually give a fair portion of their unholy gains to Mother Church.

A PRIEST ON THE PROTESTANT BIBLE.

THE Rev. Father Alexius Mills has been lecturing or preaching on Sunday evenings in the Catholic Church of Saint's Mary and Joseph, Poplar, on "The Bible," and on the "immense harm" Protestants have done in sending their versions of it all over the world. A hundred and fifty millions, he said, had been mentioned as the circulation of this book, and a hundred million pounds have been spent, in this "labor in vain" of the Protestant missionaries. He regarded the whole business of Bible-distributing as a "gigantic swindle."

The preacher went on to remark that Protestants had no means of proving their Bible to be the work of God, because they did not believe in the infallible Church. The Catholics' reason, and their only reason for saying that their Bible was sacred and divine, was, like their reason for everything else in religion, the decree of the Infallible Church. Protestants complained that Catholics condemned Protestant Bibles; some Catholics he was happy to say, went so far as to burn them. He compared the case to that of a shopkeeper, who on taking a bad half-crown returned it, or nailed it to his counter, or, if he suspected the person who handed it to him of being a felonious utterer, put him in communication with the police. How, apart from an Infallible Church, could a particular interpretation of the Bible be known to be right? The Bible was the most difficult book in the world to interpret, and it was evident from this that it was never meant to be the rule of faith. The Protestant Bible was "a false, interpolated, mutilated, corrupted, pirated copy of the Catholic Scriptures," and though the present race of Protestants did not steal the Catholic Bible, their ancestors did, and "the receiver was as bad as the thief." The Protestant Bible was a translation of a translation, or as a satirist said, Protestants "took the Bible out of one language and did not put it into another."

Father Mills says that the Protestant cry of "The Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible" ought to rank with stupid and infatuated expressions like "We won't go home till morning," "Britons never shall be slaves," and so forth. "The outrageous circulation of the Bible" in 170 languages was a "sad, sober fact." "Immense harm" was done by the enormous number of Bibles distributed by Protestant missionaries, who relied on the book to do their work for them. Yet, according to the evidence of Protestants, little or no effect was produced in China and Malacca by the many thousands of Bibles given away, and "in India the state of things was even more ridiculous." Five hundred thousand copies of the first Chinese Bible secured one convert in a year, "and that one was an impostor." Natives who could read the book usually returned it with this remark: "The style is so barbarous that it is perfectly unintelligible." The New Testament was sometimes (and not unreasonably, it seems to us) taken as a book about magic. In one version "Lamb of God" was translated "Young sheep of God"; and in another, "Judge not that ye be not judged" was rendered, "Do no justice that no justice be done to you."

"In New Zealand Protestants forced the Bible on the natives. The agent compelled the people to buy it of him, although he received it from England for nothing to give away. . . . A Bible was sold for a pig and a sack of potatoes."

The motto "Nothing but the Bible," had been the means of destroying Christianity. It required "five impossible things" of the Protestant:—

1. He must read it *all*; it was the *whole* Bible that was his rule of faith.
2. He must be *able* to extract from what he reads his rule of faith and morals.

3. He must construct a perfect and uniform system for the general guidance of mankind, and yet this could not be, because everything was settled by each individual's own interpretation.

4. The "unprovable and infallible" must be discovered and adhered to; and yet Protestantism boasted of its powers to progress and change.

5. Protestants who could not read must have an infallible voice to read the Bible to them and interpret it correctly.

Protestants, we may add, cannot be sure that they have the genuine teachings of God before them unless they know that every word of their Bible is inspired and is infallible, and that no portion whatever of it has been lost or forgotten. They must be sound scholars in the Hebrew and Greek in which their inspired books were written, or else the translation into the common language of the day must be divinely guaranteed and inspired. Even the compositors and proof-readers would have to share in the inspiration if blunders in God's Word are to be rendered impossible.

W. P. BALL.

A CHRISTMAS CAROL.

"On earth peace, good will towards men."—LUKE ii., 14.

This is the season Christians most affect,
When prayers and solemn anthems seldom cease,
When churches and cathedrals are bedecked
With fawning mottoes to the "Prince of Peace."
Oh hypocrites! At home you sing and pray,
The altar to your God with light you flood;
In other lands afar your soldiers slay,
And dye the burning sand with heathen blood.
You lift your hands, and cry, "Oh Lord of Hosts,
Have mercy upon us, this we entreat;
Let not the savage with his idle boasts
Escape annihilation and defeat;
Let reeking ruin desolate, and roam
Unchecked and rampant over vale and glen,
While we, secure and happy in our home,
Sing peace on earth, and good will unto men."

If you have any shame, the burning blush
Will fly from heart to face and back again.
Think while you pray and sing! Our soldiers rush
Dealing out death upon the sandy plain,
And sinking down themselves in death, look up
With glazing eyes towards the stars above,
While in your Christmas homes the loving cup
Is passed round while you murmur *God is love*.

Is *this* your Christmas Carol? O! reflect!
Think of the Arab lying stark and still;
His wife and babes forlorn; his homestead wreck'd
This Christmas night, and by Jehovah's will.
Denounce the phantom drunk with blood and hate;
Embrace a brighter creed, a nobler plan!
Dismiss the "god of battles" to his fate,
And raise the glorious brotherhood of man.

HENRY R. WRIGHT.

A STOLEN DEVIL.

"Stop thief!" cried a foreign-looking gentleman one evening last week as he rushed after a clergyman who had just emerged from Exeter Hall, and was making his way hurriedly down the Strand in the direction of Charing Cross. "Stop thief! There he goes—stop him!"

In a few moments a large crowd had gathered round the gentleman, and "soiled doves," whose constant attention to the members of the Young Men's Christian Association after religious meetings is remarkable, came up in groups, supported in the rear by professional pugilistic gentlemen who are specially retained to do "execution" on the well-dressed flats as often as emergency arises, which is pretty frequently. The crowd was swelled by a multitude of gaping idlers who are always to be found in the Strand when "something's up."

Surrounded and wedged in by so large and mixed an assemblage of people the foreign gentleman seemed bewildered, not to say amazed; which feelings were somewhat intensified when one of the ladies wished politely to know "What the h—l he had lost?"

"Not that at all," said the gentleman, stammering excitedly. "Something more important; the Christian priest dat ran away has stolen our Devil."

"Is that all?" murmured one of the "doves."

"Oh, I thought it was a 'ticker,' Bill, the gent had lost," growled one of the roughs. "Come on. Come on, old pal, we've got some business on. Won't do to waste time. Here comes the 'slop,' too."

Bustling into the crowd, the energetic police-officer demanded to know what the gentleman was making all the "row" about.

"He's lost a devil," said a chorus of the painted daughters of 'fallen man.'

"A what?" asked the puzzled constable; "a devil? Oh, I see, he's been drinking and has lost one of the blue-devils."

"Not dat at all," indignantly retorted the foreign gentleman.

"Dis priest has stolen my devil—my own country's devil."

"Indeed," said the constable; "I can't lock him up for that, religious thefts don't come under my jurisdiction. No; parsons can do what they like, providing they do it in a religious way."

"Don't say anything against the parsons," murmured some of the "darling doves;" "they are always very kind to us."

"Yes; and forgive us too until we are nailed," chimed in the pugilistic gentry.

"What shall I do?" said the foreign gentlemen, in a great rage. "What shall I do? De Devil stolen!"

"You had better summon the gentleman," said the constable. "You can get his name at the hall."

"So I will," said the other. "So I will. De parson lectures here to-night. I will have his name—I will have his blood!"

"You mustn't say that," observed the constable, with a dignified air, "or I shall have to summon you for threats. Come, move on, now!"

After a little chaffing from the crowd the foreign gentleman consented to "move on," upon the distinct understanding that he could go to the magistrate and have the matter settled before him.

Through some misunderstanding of the magistrate, who understood the foreign gentleman to complain that somebody had called him a "Stolen Devil" and had assaulted him, the summons was granted, and came on for hearing on Monday afternoon. The court was crowded.

The defendant, who was allowed a seat among the solicitors, was accompanied by various gentlemen of the religious persuasion.

On being called forward, the plaintiff bowed to the magistrate and his clerk, looked round the court, smiled graciously to the reporter, kissed the usher in mistake for the Testament, and deposed as follows:—Having arrived in England but a few weeks ago, he was unacquainted with the habits and customs of the people, but, if what he had seen in the Strand, the Promenade Concert and Exeter Hall, was a fair sample of the people's behavior, he thought that the sooner he returned to his native land the better.

At this point the magistrate interposed and said that he did not see that the plaintiff's remarks were relevant to the matter at issue.

The plaintiff proceeded: The other evening, having nothing to do, he thought he would like to go to a place of amusement. He saw some posters announcing a religious performance at Exeter Hall, and mustered up courage, despite a natural aversion to such things, to go. He went. There he heard the defendant talking about the Devil, and before he had proceeded far he was convinced that the Devil was a stolen one and belonged to the Persian nation.

The magistrate, in a jocular fashion, remarked that it didn't matter much where the Devil came from. If either his Satanic Majesty or the plaintiff had been libelled or assaulted that would be a proper matter for investigation.

Mr. Goodlaw, a popular solicitor, in constant practice at police-courts, here rose and, apologising for his interruption, said that he thought he could explain what the foreign gentleman meant. Being well read in controversial literature dealing with theological subjects, he knew, as a matter of fact, that it was maintained by all the best European scholars that the Christian Devil was not born of Jewish imagination, but had been borrowed by the Jews during their Babylonish captivity 600 years before the Christian era. It was, he thought, about 540 years before Christ, when Cyrus, King of Persia, surprised and slew Belshazzar, then King of the Chaldeans, at a feast, put a period to the independence of the Kingdom of Babylon, and founded the Persian Empire, which soon stretched from the Mediterranean to the Indus. Very early in his reign Cyrus gave the Jews liberty—if they chose—to return to their own country, and it was very easy to understand that during their subjection the Jews adopted many of the popular religious beliefs of the Persians, and when they returned to their own country incorporated them into their own, and among them was the idea of a devil, or "evil principle at war with the God." "This," said Mr. Goodlaw, "is what I think the foreign gentleman means."

To this the plaintiff replied by declaring that what he meant was the Devil of the Christian priest was the Ahriman of the Persian nation.

"Quite so, quite so," ejaculated Mr. Goodlaw, turning to the magistrate. "Exactly as I have explained to your worship."

"I daresay," said the magistrate "there is a good deal of truth in what you have said, Mr. Goodlaw, and I can understand the plaintiff feeling somewhat chagrined at what seems to him a palpable theft by the defendant of one of the religious notions of his nation; but whether this contention is true or false it is not for me to decide. It might be settled in a higher court."

Mr. Goodlaw suggested amid a roar of laughter that Mr. Justice North might decide it. To which the magistrate smiling, replied: "Or convocation." "For my part," he added, assuming his usual gravity, "I cannot decide it, and therefore the matter is dismissed."

"And the Devil too," murmured Mr. Goodlaw in an audible whisper. The court then adjourned.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

PROFANE JOKES.

"HALLELUJAH, 'tis done!" was the hymn unwittingly given out, at a recent Sunday-school meeting in Chicago, upon the conclusion of an especially long-winded address.

The minister was telling the story of Mary Magdalene having seven devils, to the children. When he had finished he wished to ascertain if they had been listening attentively, so he asked: "Now, children, what did Mary have?" A boy yelled out: "Mary had a little lamb!"

RELIGIOUS EXAMINER: "Now, my boy, where did Christ go after his resurrection?" "To heaven, sir." "Right, my child. And whom did he leave to look after the people?" "The bobbies, sir."

"Ah," said a Sunday-school teacher. "Ah, Caroline Jones, what do you think you would have been without your good father and pious mother?" "I suppose, mum," said Caroline, who was very much struck with the soft appeal, "I suppose, mum, as I should have been a orphan."

A HAPPY old Democrat in a town near Boston, flushed with his party's victory, sought out his old church last Sunday, and was greeted with surprise by acquaintances who had missed him from the services for years. "Why, how does this happen?" asked one. "Well," answered the Democrat, "the Lord has got around on to the right side again, and I thought best to give him my encouragement."

"COME!" cried the exhorter to the landlord, "come! In the father's house there are many mansions." "And they don't have to be repaired?" asked the landlord wistfully. "Never a repair," said the exhorter. "Well, then, I'll come!" shouted the landlord, and in two minutes he was the loudest among the rescued sinners on the anxious seat.

A RACING man was having rather a warm theological argument with a parson. The reverend gentleman, dilating on the terrors of the last judgment, remarked that at the close of that awful day the world would be burned up. "Yes," replied our sporting friend, I suppose you will call that the 'final heat.'"

A POOR curate sent his servant to a chandler's shop, kept by one Paul, for bacon and eggs for his Sunday's dinner on credit. This being refused, the dame, as she had nothing to cook, thought she might as well go to church, and entered as her master, in the midst of his discourse, referring to the Apostle Paul, repeated—"What says Paul?" The girl, supposing the question addressed to her, answered: "Paul says, sir, that he'll give you no more trust till you have paid the old score."

S. HARTMANN,
8 LONG LANE, ALDERSGATE STREET
LONDON,
WHOLESALE BOOT & SHOE
Warehouseman,

And Importer of Foreign Boots & Shoes.
A large and well-selected stock always on hand
Most advantageous place for cash buyers.

H. HAMPTON,
TAILOR, 14 Gt. Castle Street, W.
THREE DOORS FROM REGENT ST.
(Late with J. Dudge, Conduit St., W.)
Best possible value given for cash, with first-class
style and fit.

Price 2d. —NOW READY— Price 2d.
The Strange History
OF **Joshua Josephson**
EIGHTEEN REMARKABLE ILLUSTRATIONS.

Price 6d.] —NOW READY— [Price 6d.
PAINE'S AGE OF REASON.

No. 3. PROFANE JOKES. 1d.

FOR SALE, Vol. 4 of the *Freethinker*, including
Holiday and Christmas Numbers; also a quantity
of back numbers and a few old copies of the *National
Reformer* in its original size. Cheap.—H. Reeve, 99
Ex. ter Street, Ardwick, Manchester.

TO LET, Parlor and First Floor: open and airy
locality.—Apply T. Stedman, 22 Rackham Street,
Ladbroke Grove Road. Freethinker preferred.

Now Ready, price 1d., the
REPUBLICAN for January, containing a Cartoon;
also, Some Socialistic Proposals, by O. J. Garria;
The Emperor's Left Eye, an allegory; The History of
the Aristocracy; Suburban Loyalty, Editorial Notes,
etc., etc.—28 Stonecutter Street, London.

Second Edition Now Ready.

THE CHRISTMAS NUMBER

OF THE

"Freethinker"

—1884—

PRICE 3d. PRICE 3d.

Best Special Number ever issued.

ILLUSTRATIONS:

The Christian God. (Full page).

Joseph's Brethren. (Full page)

The House of Prayer.

Gabriel and Mary.

The Imitation of Christ. (Booth's edition).

Abraham and Isaac. (A series of eight
comic woodcuts, showing how the old man
didn't sacrifice the young one).

ARTICLES:

God in a Cradle. By G. W. FOOTE.

Bible Stories Revised. By J. M. WHEELER.

Christmas Eve in the Upper Circles. By
JAMES THOMSON (B.V.)

Joseph's Coat. (Renovated).

Full Report of the Last Supper.

The Devil's Wedding. By ARTHUR B. MOSS.

Curious Police Case.

Dod Grile's Sermon.

The Deluge, or Wicked Teetoto.

Etc. Etc.

VERSE, Etc.

The Devil's Christmas. By H. G. SWIFT.

Holy Moses. By W. P. BALL.

The Creation Pantomime. By SCOFFER.

Cosmogony. By G. L. MAC.

The Parson's Call. By LUCIANUS.

Priestcraft Exposed.

A Bible with Advertisements.

Profane Conundrums.

Profane Rib Ticklers.

To Facetious Correspondents.

Fragments that Remain.

Order at once to prevent disappointment.

Progressive Publishing Co., 28 Stonecutter St.

SATIRES AND PROFANITIES.

BY THE LATE

JAMES THOMSON (B.V.)

With a brief Introduction by G. W. FOOTE.

The most Brilliant Volume of Freethought Wit
and Satire ever Published.

192 pages. Handsomely bound in cloth

Price 2s. 6d.

"Dean Swift represents Irish profanity; Voltaire is the greatest master of French ridicule; while Addison embodies English pleasantry. To these will be added, when his singular merits receive adequate recognition, the name of James Thomson, the Scotch satirist. Whether Swift or Voltaire, whether Addison or Thomson, has the superior power of compelling laughter would be very difficult if not quite impossible to determine; and no critic in whose nature the coveted powers of all the four wits are not blended ought to sit on the umpire's throne. Among four such kings of laughter it is doubtful who shall be emperor; but it is certain that each in his own domain is supreme.....James Thomson's 'Satires and Profanities' recall to our mind more vividly than any other pieces of the same class some of the raciest passages in the *Spectator*. Though Thomson is tinged with Voltaire, and more than tinged with Swift, there are a few combinations which, for dainty satire united with poetic beauty, neither Voltaire nor Swift could have produced.....'Satires and Profanities' are written in a style which is as without being loose and thoughtless without being furious. They contain a maximum of satire with a minimum of profanity. They are exquisitely seasoned with Attic salt, and yet have not the slightest flavor of 'spice'.....Thomson's satire is real and sparkling. His power over irony is truly sublime. We cannot spare space for illustrations of what Mr. Foote, in his charming little preface, justly calls Thomson's 'tremendous display of sustained irony.' —*Secular Review* (Ignotus).

Progressive Publishing Co., 28 Stonecutter Street.

Price Fourpence.

PROGRESS

A Monthly Magazine.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

The JANUARY NUMBER contains—
Radical Prospects. By the Editor.
Freethinking in Ancient Republican Rome. By
Ethicus
Astronomical Problems. By Edward Aveling.
The Dreamland of Politics. By G. Temple.
Savage Faith and Its Survivals. By J. M. Wheeler.
Our Drama and Our Life. By J. Robertson.
Prisoner for Blasphemy. VII. By G. W. Foote.
Geology and Evolution. By W. W. Collins.
Swinburne's "Midsummer Holiday" and Brown-
ing's "Feristah's Fancies." By Philip Sidney.
Night Voices. By E. V. W.

MR. FOOTE'S WORKS.

Arrows of Freethought. 112 pp. ... 1 0
Blasphemy No Crime. The whole question
fully treated, with special reference to the
Prosecution of the *Freethinker* ... 0 1
The Folly of Prayer. New edition; with
fresh Introduction ... 0 1
Atheism and Morality. New edition; fresh
Introduction ... 0 1
Secularism the True Philosophy of Life. An
Exposition and a Defence. (*In Wrapper*)... 0 4
Death's Test, or Christian Lies about Dying
Infidels ... 0 2
Atheism and Suicide ... 0 1
The God Christians Swear By ... 0 2
Was Jesus Insane? ... 0 1
Brown's Story; or, The Dying Infidel. 16pp. 0 1
Law and Gospel. Letters to Lord Coleridge,
Judge North, Gaoler Harcourt, and Lawyer
Giffard ... 0 1

BIBLE ROMANCES (1d. each).

(1) The Creation Story. (2) Noah's Flood. (3) Eve
and the Apple. (4) The Bible Devil. (5) The Ten
Plagues. (6) Jonah and the Whale. (7) The
Wandering Jews. (8) The Tower of Babel. (9)
Balaam's Ass. (10) God's Thieves in Canaan
(11) Cain and Abel. (12) Lot's Wife.
First Series, bound in elegant wrapper, One Shilling.
Second Series—13, Daniel and the Lions; 14, The Jew
Judges; 15, St. John's Nightmare; 16, A Virgin
Mother; 17, God in a Box; 18, Bully Samson.
19, Gospel Ghosts; 20, A rising coast.

"FREETHINKER" TRACTS.

Large size, two pages each.

No. 1, Bible Blunders, by G. W. Foote; No. 2, Who's
to be Damned if Christianity be True? by J. Symes;
No. 3, A Few Words to a Christian, by G. W. Foote;
No. 4, The Salvation Craze, by G. W. Foote; No. 5,
How a Fairy was Transformed, by J. Symes; No. 6,
The Bible and Testotalism, by J. M. Wheeler; No. 7,
The Fanatical Monkeys, by Charles Southwell; No.
8, Salvation by Faith, by Col. Ingersoll; No. 9, The
Death of Adam, by W. Nelson; No. 10, The Clothes
of the Bible, by Annie Besant; No. 11, "The
Atheist's Grave" and "I Sometimes Think" (poems);
No. 12, The Devil's Doom, by A. Moss; No. 13, Is
Unbelief a Crime? by J. E. W.; No. 14, What Must
it be to be There? by "Scoffer"; No. 15, Christian
Murderers, by W. P. Ball; No. 16, "The Real
Trinity" and "The Parsons' Idol" (poems)—6d.
per hundred, or by post 8d., assorted or otherwise.
Progressive Publishing Co., 28 Stonecutter Street, E.O

EDWARD CLARE,
WINE & SPIRIT MERCHANT.
"COACH AND HORSES."

POMEROY STREET, PECKHAM.

Freethinker and the *National Reformer* taken.

Thwaites' Liver Pills

Are acknowledged to be the best Family Medicine in
the World by the many thousands that are using them
in preference to all others. It is almost impossible to
enumerate in an advertisement what they are good
for; it would take up too much of your time to read
it, and after you had read it you might say it was
only advertising puff; but I ask One Trial of the
LIVER PILLS; if not better than any you have tried
before, I cannot expect a continuance of your custom.
I recommend them for INDIGESTION, LOSS OF APPETITE,
DIZZINESS, BILIOUSNESS, COSTIVENESS, NERVOUSNESS,
PALPITATION OF THE HEART, PILES, ETC., all of which
are, in many cases, caused by the Liver being inactive,
or what we call a sluggish Liver. Try some of the
LIVER PILLS as soon as you can, as they are PURE
HERB PILLS, and may be used at any time by anyone
without any change of diet or danger of taking cold.
Prepared only by GEORGE THWAITES, 2 Church Row,
Stockton-on-Tees. Sold at 1s. 1d. and 2s. 9d. per box,
or by post for 1s or 3s Penny Stamps. A Price List
of Herbs free.

TEETH, 2s. 6d. each, on vulcanite; upper or lower
set, 2l. Best quality, on vulcanite, 4s. a tooth;
upper or lower set, 2l. No extras. Completed in four
hours when required. Best teeth on Platinum, 7s. 6d.
each; on 18-carat gold, 15s. Painless extraction daily,
with gas, 6s.; without, 1s.; stopping, 2s. 6d.—MR.
STANTON, R.D., 128 Strand, London. Hours nine to
eight.

J. WORSTER, WINE AND SPIRIT MERCHANT, "Duke
of Ormand," Princes Street, Westminster. The
"National Reformer," "Freethinker," and other Free-
thought journals at the bar.

Printed and Published by G. W. FOOTE at 28 Stone-
cutter Street, Farringdon Street, London, E.C.