

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 120.



NOAH'S CATTLE. :

"Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female."—GEN. vii., 2.

LIVING BY FAITH.

WHAT is Faith? Faith, said Paul, "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." This is a faith that sensible men avoid. The man of reason may have faith, but it will be a faith according to knowledge, and not a faith that dispenses with knowledge. He believes that the sun will rise to-morrow, that the ground will remain firm under his feet, that the seasons will succeed each other in due course, and that if he tills the ground he will reap the harvest. But his belief in these things is based upon experience; his imagination extends the past into the future, and his expectations are determined by his knowledge. The future cannot indeed be demonstrated; it can only be predicted, and prediction can never amount to an absolute certitude; yet it may amount to a height of probability which is practically the same thing. Religious faith, however, is something very different. It is not belief based on evidence, but the evidence and the belief in one. The result is that persons who are full of faith always regard a demand for evidence as at once a heresy and an insult. Their faith seems to them, in the language of Paul, the very *substance* of their hopes; and they often talk of the existence of God and the divinity of Christ as being no less certain than their own existence.

Properly speaking, faith is trust. This involves a wide latitude beyond our knowledge. If we trust a friend, we have faith in him, and we act upon that sentiment. But we are sometimes deceived, and this shows that our faith was in excess of our knowledge. Sometimes, indeed, it is

quite independent of knowledge. We trust people because we like them, or because they like us. This infirmity is well known to sharpers and adventurers, who invariably cultivate a pleasing manner, and generally practise the arts of flattery.

The same principle holds good in religion. It was sagaciously remarked by Hume that we ought to suspect every agreeable belief. The mass of mankind, however, are not so fastidious or discriminating. On the contrary, they frequently believe a thing because it is pleasant, and for no other reason. How often have we heard Christian advocates prove the immortality of the soul to the complete satisfaction of their auditors by simply harping on man's desire to live for ever! Nay, there have been many great "philosophers" who have demonstrated the same doctrine by exactly the same means.

Religious faith, to borrow a definition from Chambers's Dictionary, is usually "belief in the statement of another." There are a few mystics who profess to hold personal intercourse with God, but the majority of mankind take their religion on trust. They believe it because they were taught it, and those who taught them believed it for the very same reason. When you trace back the revelation to its beginning, you always find that it is derived from men who lived a long time ago, or who perhaps never lived at all. Mohammed vouches for the Koran. Yes, but who will vouch for Mohammed?

Thomas Paine well said that what is revelation to the man who receives it is only hearsay to the man who gets it at secondhand. If anyone comes to you with a message from God, first button your pockets, and then ask him for his credentials. You will find that he has none. He can only tell you what someone else told him. If you meet the original messenger, he can only cry "thus saith the Lord," and bid you believe or be damned. To such a haughty prophet one might well reply, "My dear sir, what you say may be true, but it is very strange. Return to the being who sent you and ask him to give you better credentials. His word may be proof to you, but yours is no proof to me; and it seems reasonable to suppose that, if God had anything to tell to me, he could communicate personally to me as well as to you."

In ancient times the prophets who were thus accosted worked miracles in attestation of their mission; but our modern prophets have no such power, and therefore they can scarcely claim our belief. If they ask us why we reject what they tell us on the authority of the ancient prophets who possessed greater powers, we reply that what is a miracle to those who see it is only a story to those who hear it, and that we prefer to see the miracle ourselves. Telling us that a man rose from the dead is no reason why we should believe that three times one are one; it is only proving one wonder by another, and making a fresh draft on our credulity at every step in the demonstration.

There are men who tell us that we should live by faith. But that is impossible for all of us. The clergy live by faith, yet how could they do so if there were not others to support them? Knaves cannot exist without dupes, nor the Church without subscribers.

Living by faith is an easy profession. Living on faith, however, is more arduous and precarious. Elijah is said to have subsisted on food which was brought him by inspired ravens, but there are few of God's ministers willing to follow his example. They ask God to give them their daily bread, yet they would all shrink with horror from depending on what he sends them. Mr. Spurgeon lives by faith instead of on it. He takes twelve hundred a year from his congregation, and trusts to the Lord for all the rest. Most of us could display as much faith in Providence.

G. W. FOOTE.

IS CHRISTIANITY USEFUL?

It is often said that whether Christianity is true or not it is at any rate a very useful religion. When this statement comes from its paid professors we can very well understand that they may have good reasons for their opinion.

That Christianity has been useful to its priests and ministers we should not think of denying. It gave them a position and authority beyond that accorded to the priests of Paganism. Into the hands of Peter, Jesus is alleged to have committed the "keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. xvi., 19). Its ministers became "holy men," mediators between God and man, awarding penance, granting absolution, and "pronouncing the remission of sins," a form to this day retained in the Book of Common Prayer. They assumed supremacy over all temporal authority, and claimed immunity from the jurisdiction of ordinary tribunals. "Know ye not that ye shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" said Paul (1 Cor. vi., 3), and his followers bettered his instruction. They have done their best to acquire the best for themselves below before taking up their mansions above. They have lived on the fat of this earth by promising the kingdom of heaven to others. No doubt they find Christianity useful.

But when this allegation is put forward by men of the world and indifferents, as a reason for not investigating or not pronouncing upon the claims of Christianity to be a divine revelation, we can but challenge it as applying to the mass of the people. In what way are they benefited by the devotion of so much time and money to the purposes of religion? What advantage do they derive from the emoluments of the Church and the easy life of its ministers? All that these consume others must produce. We dispute the idea that the proffered reward of another life can be any compensation for loss in this.

But it is said the sanctions of Christianity deter many from vice, and without them society would collapse, or, at any rate, something very dreadful would happen. The people who think that God makes a very good auxiliary to the policeman, would repudiate the idea that their own morality requires any such sanctions. They instinctively feel that the acknowledgment that their honesty depended on after-life considerations, would make other people very careful about their dealings with them. Christianity is very useful for *others*—the others presumably belonging to the criminal classes, or some other inferior grade of moral development. Just as you never find, outside of an asylum, a Christian who believes that he himself is going to hell, so you never find a cultured one who acknowledges he requires the sanctions which he deems useful for others.

But in truth these supposed sanctions are equally inoperative upon others. Heaven and hell are a little too far off for present conduct to be regulated by a consideration of the possible relative temperature of such remote regions. Their effect, if introduced, is only to disturb the purely moral considerations. The proof of this is written in the history of Christianity. After a career of 1,800 years, during the best part of which time it has not only had the sword of power at its command, but has freely employed it in its service, how much has it done to eradicate the evils from which humanity suffers? The Archbishop of Canterbury last Sunday declared in his cathedral that society is "as full of horror as anything in the heathen world." Christianity teaches intolerance and forbids the use of reason. It has not only permitted the existence of war, tyranny, bigotry and persecution, but it has nourished them to a greater development than they ever arrived at under any other system. No other religion has been the occasion of so much bloodshed and so much bitter, malicious hatred among men as Christianity. The slaughter of fifty million human beings in its religious wars is but one item of the misery it has inflicted. The gloom, dissension, terror, intolerance and insanity which have arisen from its dogmas are incalculable. It is those dogmatic and supernatural features, which moderate divines seek to keep out of sight, which alone distinguish it from Hinduism, Buddhism and Confucianism, all of which inculcated human duties with at least as much persistence as Christianity.

To these dogmas the most pernicious consequences can be clearly traced. The belief in the guilt of heresy led to

intolerance, which is countenanced by both Old and New Testaments; the doctrine of eternal torment made earthly torture seem a trivial affair; rewards offered to faith engendered superstition; the dogma of atonement encouraged the criminal to sin in person and to suffer by proxy; opposition to the things of this world led to the downfall of Pagan civilisation. When Christianity was dominant, to be wise, learned, rich, peaceful or happy was for the believer rather a snare than an advantage, and to the present day, as Mr. W. Rathbone Greg observes, "The entire theory of the Church is antagonistic to any concentrated or consistent scheme for raising the earthly condition of the suffering masses." It is to science and not to Christianity we must look for aid to grapple with the difficulties which beset us and which are lost sight of in a vain attempt to discover the secrets of the hereafter.

J. M. WHEELER.

IN GOD'S OWN IMAGE.

'Tis written "male and female made he them."
A wondrously constructed scripture gem,
Baffling all captiousness of shiftless wit;
For e'en incorrigible Atheists must admit
That, like the beast, the bird, aye e'en the flea,
We male and female must most surely be.
Or else there could have been no due fruition,
Unless he'd issued an improved edition
Without a finis, as a serial story,
To be continued to the end of glory
As angels are; and so no need of birth:
Then how could be replenished all the earth?—
The word "replenish" means to fill again
What once was full before; so here we find
Some error must confess, because creation
Is matter caused to be where was hiation,
Or naught had ever been. From the inane
All life and matter came. I would explain
This is not God's mistake, but rather owing
To mistranslation, till there's now no knowing.
He might have called those children to his aid,
Of such is heaven's kingdom, Jesus said,
And turned us out as Flemish dolls are made;
Or with the magic of an Aaron's rod,
Instead of pests of toads, raised sons of God;
Though, p'raps, to be released all further trouble
Seeing at last Creation was a bubble,
'Twas more convenient to make us double.
Moreover, he had vowed to knead some self
Into the very image of himself:
Not that we much can compliment his shape,
Run in the mould that had precast the ape;
Although we must not blame him too severely
For scamping his last work so limp and queerly:
His week's hard labor had so drained his vigor,
He sunk exhausted patching up our figure.
However, this as truth we may retain
In his own image he produced the *twain*—
Adam to be a sire, and Eve a mother.
Was God two sexes, then, or one and then the other,
Changing disguise according to his joke,
Will-o'-the-wisp at night, in day but smoke;
And last detected roaring from above,
An oracle like any "sucking dove?"
At any rate, astuteness can't discover
How this particular can be got over,
How one is both of so diverse a kind
Topples me almost over in my mind;
And God knows what my mental state will be
When coming to consider him as three:
A paradox that ruefully perplexes,
Especially if he's as many sexes.

A MYSTICAL work of little consequence, entitled, "Sympleumata," advocates the theory that deity is of both sexes. This the *Athenæum* terms "a piece of nauseous blasphemy, which is probably without parallel in modern times." In ancient times it was certainly said that man was made in God's image, and male and female created he them, and numerous Rabbis among the Jews have supported the androgyny of deity.

WITH all due respect to the subtle intellects on the *Athenæum* staff, we should be loth to believe that the theologians got to the end of their tether when they settled that God was a wifeless male, with a son and a ghost to keep him company. They may yet find out that God is feminine. The votaries of that profound science, theology, have made as startling discoveries ere this. Think what a number of wicked Atheists it would bring to their knees, praying—"We beseech thee to hear us, good Goddess!"

ACID DROPS.

THE *Christian World* declares that posterity will bless Mr. Gladstone's name as that of a "Christian statesman who did more than any one of his day to make the reign of the Prince of Peace an earthly reality." When we reflect on what the *Pall Mall Gazette* well calls "our devil's work in the Soudan," we are able to appreciate the rancid hypocrisy of this praise.

"STRIKE on thine own breast, doubter," says the Rev. Dr. Pressensé. An asthmatical simpleton took him at his word, and thumped. He has been coughing ever since, and declares he will never take a clerical recipe again.

A DEGRADED wretch, named O'Hara, with various aliases, committed suicide in Kirkdale Gaol, Liverpool, last week. By profession a surgeon, his malpractices in Belfast secured him a term of imprisonment. Being prevented from practising, he later on secured some employment connected with medicine in Liverpool, but, loosing that, he practised a system of extorting money from respectable women by trumping up charges of an abominable nature and threatening to make them public. For a charge of this kind he was at the recent assizes sentenced to penal servitude for ten years.

BUT, degraded as he was, he was pious! Before hanging himself in his cell he detached a picture of the crucifixion from a book and suspended it from the gas bracket before him. The Rev. Father Nugent testified that he was a Catholic—let us hope a "good" one—and the jury, although the evidence tended to show that he was sane, abstained from bringing in a verdict of *felo-de-se*, in order to secure him, we suppose, the "sure and certain hope of a resurrection to everlasting life." And of such is the kingdom of heaven.

SUPERSTITION can scarcely hold its own where there is a keen sense of humor. This accounts for the deadly animosity with which the clergy regard satire. It is humor which prevents a man acting in a ridiculous and absurd manner. The ages of superstition were almost devoid of humor, the so-called humorous works being generally grossly sensual or full of buffoonery. A grotesque instance of the absurd result of a want of humor, coupled with the influence of superstition, may be cited with regard to the Millennium which was predicted for the year 1000. Men of wealth and intelligence commenced their last wills and solemn documents with the words, "In the expectation of the approaching end of the world," etc. It does not seem to have occurred to these pious people that after "the end of the world," wills and property, real and personal, would be equally valueless.

WE are obliged to decline a good deal of passable verse for faults of composition, and sometimes we reject verses that are simply ridiculous. Now and then, however, we get an atrociously bad one, which we feel tempted to print as an awful warning. We are unable to resist the temptation in the case of the following quatrain, whose author's name we mercifully conceal, although we preserve the spelling and other peculiarities:

"there is a book the parsons hollow; and the kind of book you
can easy tell.
if the contence you cannot swallow; then of course you get L,
and when the truth you try to find of this book that none can
excel!
or to the world you tell your mind, you get twelve months in
holloway cell."

How's that for high? Our friend is a poor poet, though his heart seems in the right place.

THE Public Library Committee at Cardiff have declined the works of art, valued at £1,000, which have been offered to them by the high sheriff, Colonel Hill, on condition that the public are admitted to view them on Sundays. The Swansea Library Committee are about to hold a special meeting to see if they can secure the gift refused by the Cardiff saints. An interesting correspondence on the subject is going on in the *Western Mail*.

THE recorder in the Lord Mayor's Court has permitted a Freethinking jurymen to retire as being incompetent to take the oath. In dispensing with his services, however, the recorder might as well have refrained from the irrelevant discourtesy of saying, "I don't suppose the other gentlemen will have any objection to parting with your company."

DR. PYWELL, one of the medical officers of Lambeth, in bringing before the Southwark Police-court the case of a young woman rendered insane by her connection with Booth's Brigade, declared that "he had known numerous cases of young girls' minds being affected by their connection with the Salvation Army."

DR. PINEL, the celebrated alienist, says: "Nothing is more common in hospitals than madness produced by too exalted devotion or by religious terrors." It should be added that there is no more dangerous form of insanity than monomania on the subject of religion. The patient usually believes himself

inspired by a holy spirit or a holy something, and in this condition is ready to follow Abraham in his sacrifice of an only son or commit any vagary or atrocity from a sense of religious duty.

A CHRISTIAN contemporary holds that God designs by his providence to teach us the same lessons of docility and obedience that a bad-tempered elephant was effectually taught by its keepers, who hoisted it into the air by leather bands and pulleys whenever it began to be furious. But God doesn't hoist murderers or dynamiters, or hostile armies, into the air to render them harmless and tractable. He does nothing whatever to prevent crime. His threat of eternal torment at some distant date has no necessary reference to evil conduct, but only to unbelief. God is evidently a fool beside man. His methods are failures, besides being atrocious in their useless cruelty.

LORD RADSTOCK is disgusted with a Hindu saint who "said he was sinless, though he denied the Son of God." Only Christ's blood, of course, can wash away sin, and any other process, such as the five fires with which this fakir surrounded himself "to burn out the evil coming by five senses," is a wretched superstition. Rival religions have very little respect for each other. The fakir, we suppose, will describe Radstock as a curious fanatic, who had the audacity to say that his sins were all cancelled, although he had never gone through the sacred ordeal of the five fires. Well, they can pity and despise each other, and we can pity them both.

THE *Christian Commonwealth* has an article on "Church Foxes and School Geese." The Central Nonconformist Committee, it seems, has gathered a mass of evidence which "shows that our national system of education is being impudently and shamefully manipulated by ecclesiastics and their partisans." Nonconformists complain bitterly of the injustice their children suffer from Church tyranny, but they ignore the grievances of Secularists whose children suffer from the joint tyranny of Churchmen and of Nonconformists. The *C. C.* says indeed: "The schoolmaster is the hope of the nation, but only if the nation will set the schoolmaster free. We have seen too long all the pedagogic prizes of England in the hands of the clergy." Yet Nonconformists compel our State-paid schoolmasters to teach the Christian religion. They obstinately refuse to set them free. Freethinking teachers must either play the hypocrite or quit the profession. We retort upon the *C. C.* its own words: "The highest Christian minds among the clergy must surely be ashamed of the unfair advantage thus systematically and unscrupulously secured."

WE learn from the *Rock* that the Bishop of Bedford is commonly known as the "omnibus bishop," because he makes himself at home with everybody. Is he as suave and oily as the bishop popularly known as "Soapy Sam" used to be?

A "LANCASHIRE CURATE," writing in the *Rock* on "Parish Schools," shows what a "mixture of the sad and the absurd," the religious examination and the religious instruction are wont to be. In a "sing-song tone" the scholars pour out the "cram" poured into them for the occasion. "And what do they really learn from the ten plagues or from Daniel in the den of lions?" asks our sensible curate. "They learn nothing," he replies. "And worse still," he continues, "such subjects dealt with in this way only teach children to connect religion with matters which are quite outside their ken, and do not teach them to connect it with their homes, their lessons, their future work, and their daily life." Our reforming curate wants Christ's sayings, parables and miracles taught to scholars instead of the Old Testament incidents. We are afraid he has started on the road to Freethought. If he puts Moses and the prophets on one side he will be serving Jesus in the same way before long.

RELIGION and war are excellent friends out in Australia as well as in England. When the New South Wales contingent of volunteers was leaving for the Soudan, to help the greatest empire in the world conquer a few Arab tribes, there was a grand Sunday parade, all the churches being decorated and bearing such inscriptions as "God bless our soldiers." The Sydney Bible Society presented each man with a prayer-book, and the Wesleyans gave each a hymn-book. Evidently the volunteers left New South Wales well equipped for their bloody enterprise.

THE Sydney Secularists, we are glad to know, called a public meeting and protested against sending these troops. Nearly five thousand persons were present, and the resolution was carried unanimously.

ACCORDING to a pamphlet entitled "We Catholics," said to have been written by a Catholic peer, the religion of Rome claims a large proportion of men of note from Tracy Turnerelli to the editor of *Punch*. By the way, why doesn't Mr. Burnand employ his co-religionist Tracy. He is certainly funnier than most on his staff.

LIGHTNING once struck the building of the Young Men's Christian Association in Washington, but failed to hit the office

of Colonel Ingersoll, which is in the same block. Pagan Bob calls it mighty poor marksmanship. Perhaps Providence will try again.

THE Rev. J. Guttridge, of Holbeck, in a lecture to young men, declared that the young men who opposed Christianity had made no study of Church history "or of the discussions of the third and fourth centuries, but based unbelief on some article in the *Fortnightly*." Certainly a study of Church history, which is a welling mass of squabbles and crimes, or of the discussions of the third and fourth centuries, when Christians disputed and even fought over such questions as whether the Son was equally eternal with his Father, and whether he was of the same or only of similar nature, could hardly tend to draw a young man back to Christianity. The more he knows of its history, the more he will be disgusted with the evil effects of superstition.

THE town of Cardiff belongs to the Marquis of Bute, one of the wealthiest and most religious of our rich and pious peers. It contains some of the filthiest slums and worst-drained houses in the kingdom, from which the Marquis derives rents to devote to the support and propaganda of the Catholic Church.

"THE Gospel in the Mouth of an Oyster" is the heading of a paragraph in the *Christian Herald*. A professional diver, it would seem, found an oyster at the bottom of the sea, with a "Gospel tract" in its mouth, which he commenced to read through the goggles of his head-dress, with the effect of his being immediately converted and exclaiming, "I can hold out against God's mercy no longer, since it has pursued me thus." We are afraid the new convert displayed his gratitude towards the poor oyster by swallowing it, for he keeps the shell on his mantel-piece. Moral—Don't try to swallow the Gospel. If the hungry oyster hadn't tried, he might have been alive yet.

DR. MOON, who went to Norway to have his eyesight miraculously restored, says the reported cases of faith-healing by the peasant Boltzius are not at all exaggerated. The Doctor's sight is returning. "Both eyes are growing, and there is every probability of a perfect cure." A girl had had an eye-ball removed by a surgical operation, but "the lost eye-ball is now perfect," and there are "other cases still more remarkable;" for "the Church's gifts are being restored because the Church is learning to give full credence to the unfulfilling promises of her Lord and God." "What answer can infidels give to this?" triumphantly exclaims the *Christian Herald*. But what will the bishops say, first? We are afraid that educated Christians are as incredulous of present-day miracles as we are of ancient ones. We shall not be far out in assuming that Dr. Moon's report is all moonshine, except the broad bottom fact of human credulity on which monstrous crops of fictions grow like fungi on rotting wood.

OUR Court of Appeal has decided in favor of the legitimacy of a lady named Adelinda Concha, who thus becomes entitled to half of a fortune of £200,000. Her father and mother were cousins, and as no dispensation had previously been obtained, except one from the Vicar-Capitular of Lima, who was said to be without sufficient authority to grant it, a kind relative, who wanted all the money, claimed that the marriage was incestuous. The daughter, when nearly 15 years of age, was married to her father's brother, but no objection was taken to this marriage, which was valid because a proper ecclesiastical dispensation had been obtained. This case illustrates the disgraceful way in which the Roman Catholic Church interferes with human relationships.

THE *War Cry* of May 9 has a report from Spennymoor, signed "Happy George, the Reformed Atheist." This individual declares that he has written to the *Freethinker*. We know nothing of "Happy George" or his communications. He may have written to us, like thousands of others, but, judging from his style of expression, if he did so his letter or letters no doubt found a fitting place in the waste-paper basket.

THE *Christian Commonwealth* returns its "fervent thanksgiving to God" for the completion of the revision of the Old Testament. This "great and important" task has occupied fifteen years, and of the sixteen persons who commenced the work in 1870, only six now remain. The publishers refuse to issue the Old Testament separately except in the most expensive editions, on the plea that the circulation otherwise will not pay. People who have already bought the Revised New Testament will have to buy it again, or go without the Revised Old Testament. The *Christian Commonwealth* agrees with the *Times* that this is "a breach of moral faith," and it regrets "that there should be any conduct of a grasping or violent character in connection with the publication of the Word of God."

THE May number of the *London City Missionary Magazine* has a paper deploring the existence of workmen's clubs. The writer says: "What this movement may become I know not, but I confess I have a fear that its effect will be to drive our young men into godless secularism." He would fain make out that the members of these clubs spend their Sunday in drinking and gambling. We venture the assertion that this is no more true of workmen's than of other clubs. At any rate, all we are acquainted

with cater for something more than this, and in addition to reading-rooms, provide interesting political, social and literary lectures, and good music. The clericals cannot be expected to relish a movement which provides a counter attraction to the Church, but workmen's clubs are now so well established that they are beyond the reach of denunciation, and the part they will play in the future will be an important one.

THE Rev. N. B. Thompson says that dancing is not a sin because "David danced before the ark with all his might." Tripping on the light fantastic toe is all right, but if the worthy sky-pilot is going to take the man after God's own heart as a pattern, there will probably be some police interference. Times have changed since David, to the disgust of his wife, gyrated round Jahveh's travelling trunk clad only in a linen ephod.

THE Freethinkers' Congress at Rome commences on May 30, the anniversary of the death of Voltaire, and finishes its sittings on June 2, the anniversary of the death of Garibaldi. The *Journal de Rome* (Ultramontane) absolutely foams at the mouth at the prospect. It declares that since his Holiness the Pope has lost his temporal power and has become a prisoner he has suffered many indignities, but that "the party of Satan" should hold a congress in Rome of the enemies of the Church "is the most odious and revolting outrage yet imagined."

IF only his Holiness retained his temporal power, and the anti-clerical societies dared venture within the grasp of the Vatican, their members would not be made "prisoners" like the Pope, able to do their own work in a gorgeous palace, but would have substantial fetters on them. As it is, the Holy See, having lost its fangs, can only gnash its gums in the style of the *Journal de Rome*.

IT seems that even Boston is finding out Joe Cook. This once popular lecturer has given up for a season, the committee reporting that the receipts were some forty dollars under the expenses, allowing nothing for Mr. Cook! Joseph used to boast that, thanks to his lectures, even the barbers of Boston understood theology better than the divines of New York; but perhaps he will change his opinion now that the shekels are not raked in so easily.

JUDGE WILLIAMS having published a work entitled "Religion without Superstition," a writer in the Australian *Daily Telegraph* calls on friends of the Bible to assist in removing him from his office for publishing such blasphemy. Though the writer signs himself "*Esperance en Dieu*"—hope in God—he seeks human aid and ignores the omnipotence which is apparently unable to protect itself from the dreadful outrage of a fair criticism.

PASTOR CHINQUY, writing as an advocate for "liberty," denounces the persecuting spirit of the Church of Rome from which he claims to have suffered so much, and at the same time he says he would "have Atheists treated as murderers and thieves." The Protestant journal which publishes his remarks makes no protest against them. Christian martyrs appear to be just as bigoted as their persecutors. The only difference is that the latter have both the power and the will to inflict suffering, and the former have the will only without the power.

WE have received from Lahore, India, a notification from Mirza Gulam Ahmed that he is inspired to teach the true religion, which is that of Mohammed. He offers to give us heavenly signs of his supernatural inspiration if we will go out to him. The inducement is hardly sufficient for the journey. If any one wants to convert us by miracles he must try his hand nearer home. Gulam Ahmed's heavenly signs are not worth a rush if they cannot be seen in this latitude.

GULAM AHMED only understands one of the conditions of a miracle. It must not only have happened a long way off but a good while ago. Your miracle, like your port wine, is of little account when new. Only the flavor of age can pass a miracle down a modern gullet.

ON one occasion Sir Robert Peel's father invited John Wesley to breakfast. John Wesley said, "With the greatest pleasure; but I must bring my children with me." Sir Robert replied, not quite understanding what Wesley meant, "By all means," and rather to the embarrassment of his hospitable friend, John Wesley appeared upon the scene with thirty-six Methodist preachers. He was holding a conference at the time, and he brought the whole conference with him.

IMMEDIATELY under the usual weekly account of marvellous faith-healing in the *Christian Herald*, we find appeals for monetary subscriptions for a paralysed father of a family, and for a young man who is "helplessly lame." Surely this should be unnecessary. The Lord can heal even the "helplessly" deformed. Let them go to "Bethshan Faith-healing House" and be restored "in a moment," like the "sister from Spain." If they must beg, they should ask only for our prayers, or else their faith is of little account. The Lord will provide.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

We earnestly request that all letters to the Editor be addressed to him at our office, No. 14 Clerkenwell Green. Many correspondents persist in sending to No. 28 Stonecutter Street, at the cost of inconvenience and delay.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, May 17, Hall of Science, Old Street, London, E.C.; at 7, on "Christ's Resurrection and Ascension."
Wednesday, May 20, Secular Hall, New Church Road, Camberwell, at 8.30, on "The God of Battles."

MAY 24, N. S. S. Conference; 31, Milton Hall.
JUNE 7, Liverpool; 14, Plymouth; 21, Manchester; 28, Bristol.
JULY 5, Hall of Science, London; 12, Camberwell.

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, direct 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.—L. B.
- W. P. O.—We are not aware that Charles Dickens was a sceptic. That George Eliot was is a matter of general notoriety. See her Life, by Mr. Cross, and her Essays.
- F. GOULDING.—Always glad to hear from you. We hope, with you, that Freethinkers will heartily support Mr. Volckman, the Radical candidate for South West Ham. He promises to support every Radical measure, including the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws and the substitution of affirmation for oaths.
- W. STANLEY.—We regret that we cannot entertain the idea. Reprinting all the dirty passages from the Bible in a separate Tract is rather too nauseous an undertaking.
- MON-AMH.—Sir Charles Warren's theory would hardly explain the crossing of the Red Sea, for the text distinctly says that the Lord divided the waters for the Jews and brought them together again for the Egyptians. It was a miracle or nothing; probably the latter.
- HALF CONVERTED.—Paine's "Age of Reason" is published at 6d.; better edition, 1s.
- J. CLEGG.—You did use the word, but we accept your explanation. It is hardly necessary to reopen the subject.
- J. E. ROOSE.—Yes, it is a little too-too. Thanks; no extra postage.
- J. T. CONGREVE.—Glad to hear you "have just seen Comic Bible Sketches" and think it "the best thing we have yet done." You are mistaken about the Back View sketch. It appeared in the Christmas Number, and Sir Henry Tyler did not prosecute that. It was prosecuted by the City Corporation. You appear to forget that we were prosecuted twice, once with Mr. Bradlaugh, and once without him.
- J. W. CROWTHER.—Thanks for the cutting. Mr. Foote has not forgotten you. He will remember Halifax in making up his list of engagements after the summer is over.
- H. M.—Always glad to receive cuttings.
- J. T. RAMSEY asks us to announce that a meeting of the Committee for the Children's Summer Excursion will be held at the London Hall of Science this evening (May 17) at 9 o'clock. The ladies and gentlemen who assisted last year are requested to kindly attend.
- E. LOWE.—Thanks. See "Sugar Plums."
- A. POMEROY.—We will consider the suggestion, and if possible work it up; but (good God, man!) don't say that our eternal salvation will depend on our success.
- ELIMINA D. SLENKER.—We are always pleased to hear from you, and glad to hear of a new edition of "Little Lessons."
- H. JAMES declares that he finds little difficulty in some of the teachings of Christianity. He has known several instances of children born without a father, often hears asses talk, and believes in baptism because he has seen it done.
- W. HOOPER.—There is no complete translation of the Talmud. Max Müller has translated the first portion of the Rig Veda, and there is an English translation of the Sama Veda by the Rev. W. Stevenson. There is an English translation by Bleek of Spiegel's German rendering of the Avesta. The Rev. James Legge translates the works of Confucius under the title of "The Chinese Classics." The most important, "The Confucian Analects," is published cheaply by Longman. The others are expensive. Quaritch, 15 Piccadilly, will send prices.
- H. BEAUMONT.—We will print the full text of Mr. Justice Stephen's Draft Bill for abolishing the Blasphemy Laws next week.
- W. H. BARRALET writes that Mr. G. Howell, one of the Bethnal Green candidates, in his speech at the Shoreditch Town Hall last week, expressed himself in favor of the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws. Mr. B. Whitworth, M.P., a candidate for the new borough of Shoreditch, declared, however, that he would do nothing of the kind, as there was quite enough liberty in England already. If this is Mr. Whitworth's final answer, the Freethinkers of Shoreditch will know what to do with him. Surely so Radical a constituency as Shoreditch can find a better candidate.
- H. PREECE.—No doubt Mr. Foote's "Heroes and Martyrs of Freethought" would be useful to many Freethinkers, but the old edition, now several years out of print, will require to be rewritten. Mr. Foote hopes to issue a new edition before long. There is a constant demand for the work.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Hunslet and Holbeck News—Lucifer—Kirkcudbrightshire Advertiser—Liberal—Midland Free Press—Bristol Mercury—Liberty—Naval Brigade News—Boston Investigator—Monroe's Ironclad Age—Batley News—Truthseeker—Beverley Recorder—Winnowing Breeze—Holiness Advocate—War Cry—Kettering News.

"FREETHINKER" PRIZES.

We offer another PRIZE OF ONE GUINEA for the best Comic Bible Sketch, and a PRIZE OF ONE GUINEA for the best Religious Topical Sketch suitable for reproduction; the competition to close on June 1.

The drawing must be done on white cardboard or thick white paper in pure black ink. The lines should be bold and well distinct. Washes or colors must not be used. The size should be about one-third broader than our ordinary single or double column size.

SUGAR PLUMS.

TUESDAY night's mass meeting in St. James's Hall was a real success, and the People's League may be congratulated on its first annual gathering. Mr. Labouchere's speech from the chair was characteristically entertaining and witty, and Mr. Storey was in far better form than at the Peace meeting a few weeks ago. Professor Beesley elicited a hearty cheer by asserting that the goal of English reform was a Republic. Mr. Burt won the heart of the meeting by his unaffected sincerity, and his points gained rather than lost by his Northumbrian accent. Mr. Bradlaugh's name was greeted with marked enthusiasm, although he was unable to be present. Mr. Foote's reception was extremely flattering, the audience cheering and waving hats and handkerchiefs for a considerable period, and when he resumed his seat the applause was, if possible, still more enthusiastic. It is a sign of how the London press treats Freethinkers that of the two Liberal morning papers the *Daily News* gave Mr. Foote two words and the *Chronicle* suppressed his speech altogether.

We are requested by Mr. Sharman to acknowledge the following additional subscriptions to the National Association for the repeal of the Blasphemy Laws:—W. R. Munton, 2s. 6d.; R. C. Uglow, 5s.; H. Geo. Fordham, 10s. 6d.;—Cuerel, 2s.; Chatham, Brompton and Rochester Branch N. S. S., 5s.

In consequence of the withdrawal of the French Government grant from the five Theological Faculties of Paris, Lyons, Rouen, Aix and Bordeaux, twenty-eight theological professors have resigned. It is to be hoped they will employ their talents in a manner more profitable to the community.

The New York *Truthseeker* is following our example in bringing out illustrations. The number before us contains one entitled "The Modern Balaam." It represents the people as the ass ridden by priestcraft, and thrashed by a stick labelled "hell." In the way stands Freethought, with the sword of Reason in her hand. It is evident the donkey means not only to bray, but to kick, and the priest will have to go. Our contemporary promises more pictures "from time to time, as circumstances allow."

As a set off to Buchanan's article on Freethought in America, in the April number of the *North American Review*, the current number contains a discussion between Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Bishop J. L. Spalding, on the subject, "Has Christianity Benefited Women?" in which the Freethought lady fully shows the calamitous influence of the Church on woman's position.

"CRIMES OF CHRISTIANITY," by G. W. Foote and J. M. Wheeler, is well under weigh. The first part will be ready next week. Each part will contain sixteen pages, and be published at one penny. How many parts it will take to complete the work cannot be decided at present; but the number is sure to run to twelve, and it may run to eighteen or twenty-four. No pains will be spared to make "Crimes of Christianity" a standard work for Freethinkers for many a year.

BLASPHEMY is progressing wonderfully. General Booth has been working at it for a long time, and now the Temperance people are going it pretty strong. At Mossley they have issued a little handbill, in view of the approaching elections, soliciting everybody's "vote and interest on behalf of the Lord Jesus Christ." There is also a list of candidates, Mr. Jesus Christ standing first, and the World, the Flesh and the Devil, second, third and fourth. We observe that Mr. Jesus Christ is described as "the sinner's friend." The parson's friend, would have been a little nearer the truth.

A DEPUTATION (organised by the Liverpool Branch of the Sunday League) recently waited upon the Museum, Art and Libraries Committee of the Corporation, asking them to open the institutions under their charge (or some of them) for a few hours on Sundays. This was followed, of course, by a counter-demonstration on the part of the opponents of human progress, who were able to boast of a much larger number of signatures

to petitions. The committee, however, decided by 11 votes to 4 (the majority including a liberal-minded clergyman) to institute inquiries at Manchester and Birmingham as to the number of attendances and extra labor involved by Sunday opening in those towns.

THE friends of the movement naturally look upon this as a step gained, but it must not be supposed that the bigoted section of the community allowed the occasion to pass without an exhibition of their usual tactics. The *Liverpool Courier*, the only Tory paper of any standing in the town, considered it consistent with its ideas of propriety to insert anonymous attacks, containing gross misstatements respecting a gentleman who has worked assiduously in the movement, simply because he is a Freethinker.

THE Scottish Disestablishment Association have put out a reply to the Church Defence Committee, in which, in answer to the allegation that they propose to confiscate the *Quoad Sacra* Churches, the Established Church is reminded that at the disruption of 1843 it appropriated many of these churches which had been built by Free Church congregations.

THE Liberation Society has commenced its political campaign against the Established Church by issuing a number of electoral publications and leaflets for electors. Specimen copies of the latter may be obtained on application to the Secretaries, 2 Sergeants' Inn, Fleet Street, E.C.

THE Rev. Dr. Pigou, of Halifax, has been trying to answer the question "Why do not working men come to church?" The fact that they do not come is indisputable. Mechanics and artisans especially, says Dr. Pigou, rarely "join in Christian worship," and still more rarely "partake of the Holy Communion." The reverend doctor's explanation is worth noticing. Some trades, he says, from their sedentary nature, "give more leisure for the brain to work," and as a natural result there is "a good deal of scepticism among men who follow sedentary occupations," shoemakers being particularly prone to it, as Northampton sadly witnesseth. Dr. Pigou does not say why people with leisure become sceptics? But he allows that they do, and the fact is very awkward for his creed.

DR. PIGOU finds one cause of popular scepticism in "the new methods adopted for spreading the principles of scepticism." Instead of following the example of "infidel writers" in bygone days, who "addressed their blasphemies to educated persons in the higher classes," the Secularists "have popularised their infidelity," and "pamphlets containing their teachings are circulated among the poorer classes, and writings of this description are simply flooding England." Quite so. And those pamphlets are likely to circulate more widely than ever. If Dr. Pigou does not know why working men don't come to church we can tell him. It is because they have found the Church out, and they are now finding Christianity out too.

THAT interesting book, "The Woman Question in Europe," says in regard to Holland: "Irreligiousness is increasing daily, and great is the number of men and women who never go to church. Our cleverest women become more and more of the opinion that Calvinism is their worst enemy,—that Calvinism which orders them to be weak and to submit absolutely to men." Is it not evident that here for Calvinism we should read Christianity, since it primarily orders women to be weak and submissive—Calvinism being only one of its phases?

THE BANDIT'S PRAYER.

UNTO the priests thou hast ordain'd
We humbly have confess'd;
Now kneel we, Lord, before thy throne,
Now beat each troubled breast.

Sweet Jesu, thou wilt wash away
The crimes by which we live;
We come to thee, we seek thy aid;
We know thou wilt forgive.

O Virgin Mother, urge thy Son
To keep his holy word;
Rich golden gifts shall deck thy shrine,
If this our prayer is heard.

Thy sweet Bambino we will kiss,
Thy babe, the sacred doll;
And it shall have a jewell'd dress
And silken parasol.

Good Peter, too, help, we implore;
We will reward thee well.
Half our next capture shall be thine:
Thou hast the keys of hell.

Have pity, Saints; let not our deeds
Torment us any more.
Your shrines shall gleam with sparkling gems
And candles by the score.

With streaming eyes and anxious hearts
We cry aloud to heaven;
God's promises are sure, and so
We know we are forgiven.

We are absolved! Oh, glorious truth!
We bless God's holy name,
The comfort of the comfortless,
For evermore the same.

The tortured soldier whom we bound
As target to a tree,
Whose riddled corpse we hid by night
Where never man shall see,

The travellers by our shots laid low,
The traitors I have slain,
The plunder'd farms, the murder'd maids,
Leave on our souls no stain.

Religion is our dearest friend;
Without its blessed aid
To lay the spectres of our thoughts,
How could we ply our trade?

Thank God! the worst of us can live
A life of sinless crime;
Thank God for boundless license given
While life is in its prime;

For feasting and for revelry
Midst blood soon washed away
By Christ's red blood, and by the priest
Whose goodly fees we pay.

Thus we are freed from all the sins
That on our souls have lain:
Lord, when we have committed more
We'll come to thee again.

One shriek still pierces through my soul—
Fair as the dawn was she—
The precipice was deep as hell—
Why should she turn on me?

Snatched from her murder'd parent's side,
O God, her tears, her sighs!
Her murder'd modesty, her shame,
The lightnings of her eyes!

How oft I would have given my soul
To keep her in my cave,
A noble bandit's willing bride,
And not a vengeful slave.

Her and her child—I see them still:
The cruel gashes bleed,
But nay, she was a heretic:
Mine was a holy deed.

Thou dost approve: thou didst command
Many a deed like this;
And those who did them thou wilt raise
To everlasting bliss.

W. P. BALL.

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS.—After a residence of nearly a third of a century in India and Burmah, and a close and intimate acquaintance with Christian missions of all sects, I can only state that I have never yet seen a converted man, *i.e.*, one who has been *reasoned* over to Christianity from his own faith. I have seen many who for a time and an object, or owing to certain circumstances have adopted Christianity, but *no independent reasonable man*. As a rule, the Christian converts are those reared in the faith, or old and weakly men and women who have lost their relatives from one cause or another, and desire to make friends of "the mammon of unrighteousness," or the converts are wild, ignorant, superstitious Santals, or other barbarous tribes, ready to adopt anything which respectable looking people urge upon them. The fact is, that Christianity, like all faiths resting on miracles and bare assertion that "its truths are direct and miraculous revelations from God," has nothing to recommend itself to man's reasoning faculties! For safety's sake, it must avoid reasoners and all who are sceptical, and all wise Christians do so. I speak as one who for years preached publicly and privately to natives, until I came to see the weakness and unsoundness of my then foundations.—Major-General J. G. R. Forlong, "Rivers of Life," vol. i., p. 11; 1883.

COLONEL INGERSOLL'S LATEST.

Boston, the Hub of the Universe has been shaken by a lecture from Pagan Bob on "Blasphemy." The Boston theatre was crammed with an enthusiastic audience. For the benefit of our readers we reproduce a portion of the racy lecture from the pages of the *Boston Investigator*:

"There is an old story of an Indian and a missionary. After the missionary had laid before the Indian the scheme of salvation, with the appurtenances thereto belonging, the Indian finally said, taking a stick and making a little circle in the sand,—'That is what Indian knows.' Then he made a little larger circle, embracing the smaller one. 'That is what white man knows.' Then he said: 'Outside this circle, Indian knows just as much as white man.' (Applause.) A great many of my remarks to-night will be outside the widest circle, where no human being knows anything, and probably never will. (Applause.) But I take my ground that that which is too sacred to be discussed is too absurd to be believed! As to the great question of whence and where, I know just as little as any cardinal or any Pope who ever lived, and just as much as all of them put together. (Applause.) Now, most religionists have believed that there was somewhere in the sky, they do not know exactly where, but somewhere—(laughter)—a God who was wonderfully quick tempered, flying into a passion before one had time to explain; who was always watching for an opportunity to catch one of his children on the hip. It has always been believed that this God would hold a community responsible if that community allowed a thoughtful man to live—(applause)—for religionists have generally regarded an investigator as a gentleman who meant mischief. They have told him that if he discussed this question, he insulted God. On that fear the religious world has built its temples and erected its awful shrines. Now, I think you are honest in this. Every man to-day in the world who preaches orthodox religion is, in my opinion, reasonably honest, for otherwise he would not in this enlightened age assert such an intellectual absurdity. His mental pride would prevent the utterances unless he really and absolutely believed. I really imagine that all the religions of this world have been substantially built by believers, and that all who have contributed to the support of these religions—that is, the paying members—have been substantially honest. Take the idea first that there is a God who can be flattered; who, with a few words, can be made perfectly happy, and who, with one or two words, can be turned into a spasm of rage. Do you know that any man who depends for happiness on me is to that extent my slave, and if there is any God who depends for happiness on man, he is even beneath man? (Applause.) There is some mistake in that logic. If one believes in that God, of course he will believe in the crime known as blasphemy. Now, if there is a God who is sacred, then he makes known his will to some people, and of course the people he selects are sacred. You must not touch them. You know how it is. God selects ministers. He used to do it. He does so still. He surprises us sometimes with the choice he makes. (Tremendous applause.) The things which God told to those people were sacred, and they wrote them down and the writings became sacred. Then these people must have some place to live in, and so the temple became sacred. Then it was necessary that the people should bring sacrifice to the gods, because the priests could not eat without something to eat. They would not have wanted sheep had not the ministers been fond of mutton. And then the pots and pans about the altar became more sacred than human flesh. This is a form of fetishism. It was wicked to touch the temple built of stone. You remember in the Bible the history of the holy box. I believe it has been called the Ark of the Covenant. It was simply a box, that was all, in which some manna which had been left over, and the rod of Aaron and the tablets of stone, on which God had written with his finger, had been placed. They were sacred. You remember this box was carried away by the Philistines, and hundreds and thousands were killed because they had touched it with unholy hands. And you remember the young man, as it was being carried back to the Jewish people, who, when he thought it was going to fall, attempted to save it by touching it with his hand. He was struck dead. He had not confidence that God would preserve his own. Yet did God keep the box from being carried away by the Philistines? What a warning to the handlers of baggage of the present day! (Applause and laughter.) You will find in the good book that God made a sacred hair-oil and made a certain kind of perfumery, and it was punishable with death to make any perfumery that smelled at all like it. That was carrying protection a little too far. (Applause.) To touch a sacred thing was sacrilegious; to try and understand the sacred dogma was blasphemy. You must not put profane hands on the one, and you must not examine with profane brains the other. All writings have been divided, you know—the sacred and the profane. All the scientific books that are absolutely true are profane. The great poems, that filled the heart of man with hope and joy, are simply profane. There is nothing sacred except the Bible; nothing sacred except inanimate matter which has been transformed from some useful thing to a useless altar or something connected with the wor-ship of ghosts."

The remainder of the lecture dealing with Christian blasphemy can for the most part be read in our issue of the lecture "Real Blasphemy."

BOARD SCHOOL ESSAYS.

JESUS CHRIST.

JEZUS CRIST hour lorden savyer woz a chozen peepul ov the lord and woz borne in a bark with a nolive brantch in is beek among all the cowes donkys wize men an osses witch is why is farther is name "gee-over" and is muther mare-y. He woz atcht by wun mother and three farthers, like briangum yung, name gee over, gee-osif an gee-ost (Appendicks.—Prernouns it gost a spirit), but wen he dide he ony ad to paters (this is furrin), as he givd up the lasst-menshund. Jezus an Moziz woz bruther an cister an woz to yers holder than eatch huther, witch maid em very unnappy. They livd by makin mirrykles and turnin henythink inter henythink, also summersaltz an catering for fish suppers, mirryklin the def an dum by makin em sea their hysite and usin *barm* of gally lee to raize the dead—an bred, witch calld there-selvs the ot crosst nites an livd on bunz to fite the Krusade tirks fore the scratchy-combs ov Egip. Jezus coodn't lay hegs, but cood lay is hans on peepul an kure em from the devil by turnin em inter piggs, also kurin a narab shriek of the dessert wot ad the leepers an jumpers by a feedin im on pils an hointment. Jezus woz now a wondrin tribe of every nown and unnown kuntry of the Yewniverce, haysher hafricker and hamerriker, avin no relashuns but is starvin harry wot lived on manner an unlevel bred cent by God, who maid em a goalden hass to warship four there savyer, thereuntoo Jezus bein prints o peaces cutted the worter a part till the dry land a pierd, an drowndid em all in the bray o brisket sparin none so the streets run with blud witch cride a loud four venjents. Jezus nex roaded on a cherrybrim to God makin sum potatum witch he rubbd on the lord's balld an cilvry lox, sayin beold I am thursty, my throte is dry. He then struk the lord on is forrad with a roc an worter gushed fourth (praps from the lords hize no dout), so the lord rord like he was shot an opund the winders o the grate deep sos he cood sea, an kust is ony sun an air, viz. Jezus, to sit on a crowd o thornz all his life an wear sac cloze an winder sashes an drink gin an bitters, so that Jezus lifted hup is voyce witch woz is ouy luggidge an wep crine out, hod annoy, I'd annoy heed any, meanin the spirit will bee to strong as my flesh is meet. But a offul time was cumin four hour savyer by is makin a sham pain supper for the twelve apostrifiz ov bred an fish witch must a bin wales an see cerpints, for knot avin enuff monster ov the deep he cride o that this ear sollid flesh woz smelt, but it woodn't smelt so the apostrifiz said you've livd a *strate* life but must now be a mess sire to dye on the *crosst* an save the whirld from sin. But offul! offul! my pen is choakt with tiers, four after a bludy fite with Jezus by his crusoe-fiding meny thousands he woz tide with a nale roun is neck to dye the breth o life maid by God. An there he lade an dide B.C. xxx. pale juss as day an is brace button woz a brakin like henythink leftin a knobul name an menny widders an muthrinlors to worter is grave an kut is cloze down four the jungsters.

"Sum day, sum day, sum day wheel meat the
Ded four a duc-hegg, ded!" BILLY BROWN.

REVIEWS.

Chants for Socialists. By WILLIAM MORRIS: Socialist League Office, 27 Farringdom Street, E.C. One Penny.—The Socialists are to be congratulated upon having their Chants written by a poet of such genuine power as Mr. Morris, whose "Voice of Toil," "All for the Cause," and "Message of the March Wind," have the lilt and fire that stir the blood. They are, however, unfortunate in having the production of a man of taste and refinement so execrably printed.

Fashionable Belief v. the Logic of Fact. By JAMES MANDERFIELD. Watts and Co.—A vigorously written little work which is well worth reading. The author is a thorough-going Freethinker, but he is a little apt to overstate his positions. When he says that it is not what men think, but what they do, that makes them virtuous or vile, he forgets the great truth so admirably stated by Marcus Aurelius, that "the mind is dyed by the thoughts." We cannot agree with the author's history either in some places; especially where he asserts that "Constantine did not establish Christianity," and that "Christ, Paul and the apostles were political reformers."

National Paper Money. By MARTIN BOON. Reeves.—Mr. Boon, who imagines that he is the greatest boon ever conferred by Providence on humanity, besides being one of the grandest writers that ever lived, is an unceasing advocate of paper money, as though we were ignorant of such currency. As a matter of fact, our gold and silver coinage bears a small proportion to our national trade and commerce. Mr. Boon has a craze about the Guernsey market, which he holds was built for nothing because the authorities paid the contractor in State pound-notes. Mr. Boon is also a poet. Probably our readers will be satisfied with one specimen of his immortal song:

Bid harbors open public works and ways extend,
Bid temples worthier of art and science ascend.

PROFANE JOKES.

A WOMAN in humble life was asked on her way back from church whether she had understood the sermon, a stranger having preached. "Wud I haa the presumption!" was her Christianlike answer.

KEPT ON A TROT BETWEEN THE WORLD AND THE MOURNER'S BENCH.—"It's a powerful hard matter for me to keep my religion," said a church member to his minister. "Every time I think I've got an everlastin' holt on it, something turns up to make me cuss, so I am kept on a trot between the world and the mourner's bench. This morning I lost all the religion I had while trying to shoot Tom Green. The gun wouldn't go off, and I had to cuss."

WHY SATAN DIDN'T GET BEHIND HIM.—"Ah, my young friend," waited a preacher to one of his congregation, "you waste very valuable time at the skating rink." "Oh, I don't know about that," the young man replied; "I have very pleasant exercise, and have nothing else to do." "That is where you are mistaken. You could do much better. Temptation ever comes in alluring form, and the pleasantest things may be the most dangerous. You should take courage and say, 'Get thee behind me, Satan.'" "I did that at first, sir." "And did it not strengthen you?" "Not that I could observe." "And do you know why?" "Well no, not exactly; but I always suspected that Satan knew what a dangerous position he would be in if he accepted such an invitation from a beginner on the rollers, and wisely declined." The minister looked agast at the sinner on wheels.

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