

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.



HOLY HOSPITALITY.

“And Jael went out to meet Sisera, and said unto him, Turn in, my lord, turn in to me; fear not. And when he had turned in unto her into the tent, she covered him with a mantle. . . . Then Jael Heber's wife took a nail of the tent, and took an hammer in her hand, and went softly unto him, and smote the nail into his temples, and fastened it into the ground: for he was fast asleep and weary. So he died.”—JUDGES IV., 18, 21.

Blessed above women shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be. . . . So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord.—JUDGES V., 24, 31.

GOD AND THE WEATHER.

WITH characteristic inconsistency the Christian will exclaim “Here is another blasphemous title. What has God to do with the weather?” Everything, sir. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without his knowledge, and do you think he fails to regulate the clouds? The hairs of your head are numbered, and do you think he cannot count the rain-drops? Besides, your clergy pray for a change in the weather when they find it necessary; and to whom do they pray but God? True, they are getting chary of such requests, but the theory is not disavowed, nor can it be unless the Bible is discarded as waste-paper; and the forms of supplication for rain and fine weather still remain in the Prayer Book, although many parsons must feel like the parish clerk who asked “What's the use of praying for rain when the wind's in that quarter?”

We might also observe that as God is omnipotent he does everything, or at least everything which is not left (as Dr. McCann would say) to man's freewill, and clearly the weather is not included in that list. God is also omniscient, and what he foresees and does not alter is virtually his own work. Even if a tile drops on a man's head in a gale of wind, it falls, like the sparrow, by a divine rule;

and it is really the Lord who batters the poor fellow's skull. An action for assault would undoubtedly lie, if there were any court in which the case could be pleaded. What a frightful total of damages would be run up against the defendant if every plaintiff got a proper verdict! For, besides all the injuries inflicted on mankind by “accident,” which only means the Lord's malice or neglect, it is a solemn fact (on the Theist's hypothesis) that God has killed every man, woman, and child that ever died since the human race began. We are born here without being consulted, and hurried away without the least regard to our convenience.

But let us keep to the weather. A gentleman who was feeding the fish at sea heard a sailor singing “Britannia rules the waves.” “Does she?” he groaned, “Then I wish she'd rule them straighter.” Most of us might as fervently wish that the Lord ruled the weather better. Some parts of the world are parched and others flooded. In some places the crops are spoiled with too much sun, and in others with too little. Some people sigh for the sight of a cloud, and other people see nothing else. Occasionally a famine occurs in India which might have been averted by half our superfluity of water. Even at home the weather is always more or less of a plague. Its variation is so great that it is always a safe topic of conversation. You may go out in the morning with a light heart, tempted by the sunshine to leave your overcoat and umbrella at home; and in the evening you may return wet through, with a sensation in the nose that prognosticates a doctor's bill. You may enter a theatre, or a hall, with dry feet, and walk home through a deluge. In the morning a south wind breathes like zephyr on your cheeks, and in the evening your face is pinched with a north-easter.

“Oh,” say the pious, “it would be hard to please everybody, and foolish to try it. Remember the old man and his ass.” Perhaps so, but the Lord should have thought of that before he made us; and if he cannot give us all we want, he might show us a little consideration now and then. But instead of occasionally accommodating the weather to us, he invariably makes us accommodate ourselves to the weather. That is, if we can. But we cannot, at any rate in a climate like this. Men cannot be walking almanacks, nor carry about a wardrobe to suit all contingencies. In the long run the weather gets the better of the wisest and toughest, and when the doctors have done with us we head our own funeral procession. The doctor's certificate says asthma, bronchitis, pulmonary consumption, or something of that sort. But the document ought to read “Died of the weather.”

Poets have sung the glory of snowy landscapes, and there is no prettier sight than the earth covered with a virgin mantle, on which the trees gleam like silver jewels. Yet what an abomination snow is in cities. The slush seems all the blacker for its whiteness, and the pure flakes turn into the vilest mud. Men and horses are in a purgatory. Gloom sits on every face. Pedestrians trudge along, glaring at each other with murderous eyes; and the amount of swearing done is enough to prove the whole thing a beastly mistake.

It seems perfectly clear that when the Lord designed the weather, two or three hundred million years ago, he forgot that men would build cities. He continues to treat us as agriculturalists, even in a manufacturing and commercial country like this. Why should people get drenched in Fleet Street because the Buckinghamshire farmers want rain? The arrangement is obviously stupid. God Almighty ought to drop the rain and snow in the country, and only turn on enough water in the cities to flush the sewers. He ought also to let the rain fall in the night. During the day time we want the world for our

business and pleasure, and the Rain Department should operate when we are snug in bed. This is a reforming age. Gods, as well as men, must move on. It is really ridiculous for the Clerk of the Weather to be acting on the old lines when everybody below can see they are behind the time. If he does not improve we shall have to agitate on the subject. Home Rule is the order of the day. We need Home Rule for the globe, and we cannot afford to let the weather be included in the imperial functions. It is a domestic affair. And as the Lord has considerably mismanaged it, he had better hand it over to us, with full power to arrange it as we please.

G. W. FOOTE.

CHRISTIAN SOCIALISM.—II.

THE ANABAPTISTS.—MUNSTER, 1534-5.

(Concluded from p. 162).

MUNSTER is in the hands of the Christian Communists. Now for the reign of justice and brotherly love. First we confiscate the estates of the fled; next order the faithful to lay their valuables at the apostles' feet. This common wealth is deposited in a public treasury, and deacons are named to dispose of it for the commonweal. In each parish three deacons are to collect and store the food, which is served at common tables. So great at first is the enthusiasm that even little children run about pointing out hidden stores. Twelve judges are set to rule over Israel, but God is to be the real ruler. The Bible alone shall be guide. All other books are ordered to be burnt.

Then there is the defence of the city; magazines must be collected, fortifications repaired. All without distinction shall work in their turn. To strengthen the walls what fitter than the stones of these idolatrous churches, whose spires serve to direct the enemy's cannon? Paintings and images are destroyed. Barbarous: aye, but my lord-bishop is destroying human life outside in the villages. He, the murderer of the Syndic, drowned five Anabaptist women in Welbeck; he burnt five at Bevergem. Saints wending their way to the New Zion find short shrift if they fall into his hands. Convents too may be of use as homes for the crowd of Anabaptist strangers. The nuns do not all depart. Two communities flock to be baptised. Longing for a wider communism than that of the cloister, they elect to share in the joys of the New Jerusalem.

His grace of Münster having with the aid of the Archbishop of Cologne collected a considerable army, advances to besiege the city. Matthijzoon leads a sortie; returns victorious with ammunition and spoil. God is with his people! Intoxicated with success, in the midst of a feast the prophet is moved by the spirit: "Not as I will but as thou wilt, O Father!" he exclaims. Like Gideon of old he must go forth with a handful of men and smite the host of the ungodly. Thirty rush out through the gates with him—to death.* Despair seizes the Christian Socialists. Young Bokelszoon rises: Matthijzoon has died like the Maccabees, but God's arm is not shortened. He had foreseen the death of the prophet in a vision, and the voice of God bade him take the lost prophet's place and his wife, the beautiful Divara, as his own.† "Grant it, O Father," they cry. Henceforth John of Leyden is chief in Zion.

Unfortunately it is known John is already wed. Revelation decides the matter. John finds the command "increase and multiply" cannot always be followed with but one wife. Were not Abraham, Isaac, David and Solomon polygamists? He reads to them Isaiah's prophecy that when Zion is established seven women shall take one man. None shall remain single, but every Anabaptist rear children to be saints in Zion and heirs of eternal glory. A party rise to resist this license, but the unmarried women (surely the nuns were among them) drag cannon to the market-place and are mainly instrumental in suppressing opposition. Sixty-six insurgent monogamists are decapitated. Let the will of God and his handsome young prophet be obeyed! Amid rejoicing, John weds the fair

Divara on Good Friday, 1534, and from that date his wives increase till they reach a total of fourteen. All are provided with husbands, but the wives do not always agree.* The twelve elders are ceaselessly employed with divorce and matrimonial causes.

Meanwhile the bishop's army prepares to storm the city. Men, women and children flock to the walls. From every rampart boiling oil and water, melted lead, lime and tar are poured on the foe. Anabaptist Amazons batter with sticks and missiles those who mount scaling ladders. The besiegers' pluck fails. They retreat. The saints fall on their knees and sing "Honor to God on high. Our God is a fortress of strength." John, whose daring has inspired the people, is declared King of Zion by a new revelation, and prepares to ascend the throne of David with as much of the pomp of Solomon as the place affords. Arrayed in purple, gold and lace, spoils of the churches, our tailor-poet-actor-prophet-king plays his rôle to perfection. "Mock monarch" historians call him, yet few crowned heads had better proof of the "divinity that doth hedge a king." He sends out prophets in all directions to preach the kingdom of God and to urge the elect to come to the relief of Zion. They go with alacrity, at the risk, and to the loss, of their lives. Two pages attend him, one bearing an open Bible, the other a drawn sword. One of these pages is a natural son of the celibate bishop outside. A new Constitution is promulgated. Adultery, drunkenness, and gambling are to be punished with death. Note one article: "No person shall marry who is subject to any hereditary disease, and all before marriage shall submit themselves to medical inspection." For our kingdom of God is to be established on this earth.

But a new prophet appears—gaunt, imperious, and impassable—Famine. The Bishop, profiting by experience, will wait and starve them out. Emissaries are sent to Holland for help from Anabaptists there. But the hand of the ungodly is against them. In Amsterdam all Anabaptists are seized, chained in rows, and have their hearts torn out and flung in their faces. In vain does John of Leyden buoy us up with hopes of assistance from without, and with theatrical shows within. In vain he tells how God relieved Samaria, and fought for Israel of old. "O, dear brethren, the same God still lives." Still lives, but we are starving! Prophets walk naked like Isaiah, or dance like David through the streets. Traitors appear—one of them a wife of the prophet, who promptly executes her publicly, amid the singing of hymns by her fellow-wives. Lust, murder and madness run riot, which let who will read in the pages of Corvinus, Ottius and Kerssenbrock. Socialism breaks down, or shall we say spreads to a simple "take who can." At length by treachery the bishop effects an entrance; most of the Anabaptists die fighting, the rest are taken prisoners—among them John of Leyden. For a week the town is given up to rapine. Children and men are alike massacred. Outrage and death is the lot of the women.

"Art thou a king?" sneers my lord bishop, when the passion-torn and now tawdry prophet of Zion is brought manacled before him. Simple but deep is the retort, "Art thou a bishop?" Ponder that, if thou canst, thou successor of the apostles, fresh from massacre and ready for the torture-chamber.† My Lord of Münster proves his claim to episcopacy by placing John of Leyden in an iron cage and causing him to be carried from village to village, "the show and gaze o' the time, to be baited with the rabble's curse." After a six months' tour John is taken back to Münster to be tortured to death. A scaffold is erected with a throne opposite, whereupon my lord bishop can enjoy the spectacle. The prophet for a whole hour is lacerated with red-hot pincers, which carry off his flesh in smoking pieces. He is then cut open and after being exposed to the sight-seers replaced in his iron cage and hoisted to the tower of the church of St. Lawrence, where to this day you may see the iron bars of his cage—a grim relic of this experiment in Christian Socialism.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE Folkestone National Art Treasures Exhibition is to be opened on Sunday, despite threats of legal proceedings being taken by the Lord's Day Observance Society.

* One Catherine Kolenbeck thinks it fitter women should have several husbands than *vice versa*. She is decapitated.

† Wit ripples out when John is asked how dare he take so many wives. "I took no wives. I took virgins and made them wives."

* Many others like Matthijzoon were Bible-inspired. One Hilla Feichen, an Anabaptist maiden, had heard the story of Judith and Holofernes, and resolved to go and do likewise. Dressed in her best, she went out to the enemy's camp and asked audience of the bishop, only, poor girl, to be tortured, to confess, and to pay for her enthusiasm with her life.

† He adhered to this statement under torture.

ACID DROPS.

TWO Lincolnshire sky-pilots, who are also justices of the peace, have fined a man £1 8s. 9d. for picking a few primroses in a wood. Their names are the Rev. C. A. Allington and the Rev. J. A. Gaussen. This worthy couple would have made short work of Jesus Christ himself for plucking corn-ears with his disciples. What a pity the Lord does not call these blackbirds home. They would be ever so much more comfortable in heaven, and we should enjoy their room so much more than their company.

VOLUNTARY contributions to denominational schools only amount to £755,000 a year, yet they receive Government grants to the extent of £1,762,750 annually, without national control or supervision. Surely it is time this injustice should cease.

THE famous father, Origen, took the hint which Jesus Christ gave, and made himself a eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's sake. It would, perhaps, be a happy thing if all the zealots and fanatics of religion followed suit, but the counsel is too hard for them, and they continue to multiply and replenish the earth. Here and there, however, a weak-brained creature follows the rest of the Savior's advice as to self-mutilation. A poor woman, living in Crayford Road, Holloway, was recently admitted into Gray's Inn Road Hospital. She had plucked out one of her eyes with a meat-hook, and she explained that the Lord had commanded it in his Holy Bible. If the Lord had any sense of shame he would provide that woman with a fresh eye, and while he was performing the divine surgery he might also give her a little fresh brains.

THE Rev. H. C. W. Phillips, Vicar of the Lye, near Stourbridge, having been announced to preach in the local Congregational Chapel, has been prohibited from doing so by the Bishop of Worcester. A "Country Rector" also writes to the *Daily News*, complaining of the same kind of tyranny. What beautiful harmony Christianity induces among the saints! It is a "breach of ecclesiastical law" to take part in the ministrations of other sects of Christianity.

THE *Church Times* rejoices at the interference of the Bishop of Worcester, and adds: "An even worse case is when a prelate visiting Scotland (the Bishop of Sodor and Man, for instance) deliberately forsakes his brethren and holds forth at a Presbyterian 'diet for worship.' We are glad to see that the Bishop of Aberdeen has not let this conduct of Bishop Rowley Hill pass without a serious protest."

THE Bishop of Truro asked all who agreed with him in his diocese to "pray earnestly to Almighty God (especially on the 24th inst.) that this motion [in favor of legalising marriage with a deceased wife's sister] may again be defeated." The Bishop's parenthesis is delicious. Pray to God, but refresh his memory especially on the 24th., for the vote is taken on the Bill that evening. Yet God is omniscient! And these God-reminding mystery-men call us "blasphemer."

By the way, how do the Bishops square Jacob's domestic history with their opposition to this Bill? Jacob married Leah and Rachel, lived with them together, and had children by both, as well as by their handmaids. Yet God loved him, and the chosen people sprang from the fruit of this triangular union. According to the Bible, it is all right if you marry two sisters at once. According to the Bishops, it is incest if you marry them in succession.

THE Annual Census of Wesleyan Methodist membership shows a decrease of 698 persons during the past year. More significant still is the admission of the *Methodist Times*, "our theological colleges are half-empty."

ACCORDING to the newspapers, a Young Men's Christian Association at Belfast has commenced rifle practice. It has formed a rifle club in which 200 of its members have already enrolled themselves. The Christian antipathy between Protestant and Catholic is at the bottom of this manifestation of Christian meekness and non-resistance to evil.

THE *Manchester Evening News* has a couple of columns describing the "Enthronement of the Bishop of Manchester." There was a procession of the Mayor, the magistrates, the fire brigade and some police. The fire brigade might perhaps be appropriate as symbolically putting out the flames of hell kindled by Christianity. Meek and mild regiments of Christian riflemen were also to have marched in the pageant, but the commanding general refused to allow them to attend. The usual mummeries and mockeries were gone through and the high and mighty Moorhouse was duly installed as representative of the penniless fishermen of Galilee, and of their vagrant leader who lived as a mendicant and had not where to lay his head. Will the Bishop now proceed to obey his master and sell all that he has and give to the poor? It seem to us that Christian dignitaries are more inclined to sell all they have in the shape of principle and consistency than to part with any worldly advantage or temporal possessions.

BISHOP MOORHOUSE begins his episcopal work with a fearful jeremiad on the want of funds. He finds that out of a population of two million three hundred thousand in the diocese of Manchester only one thousand subscribe anything for Church work. The Church Building Society and every other society in the diocese show decreased income and increased deficits.

THE effects of Christianity on social intercourse has received a little illustration at Astbury, in Cheshire. A gentleman, named Wilson, inspired by Christian feeling, tore down certain inscriptions in Astbury Church, which requested the congregation to pray for the souls of the dead. The parson has also filled his family with similar Christian sentiments directed against Mr. Wilson, who now writes again to the Bishop of Chester, complaining that on Sunday while leaving church the Rev. John Colyer, the rector's son, exclaimed in a loud voice, "You are watched, you scoundrel!" Mr. Wilson replied, "Very likely, and I am come to see if any more Popish trash is put up in this porch. If it were I should take it down." Mr. Colyer said, "You dare not, you scoundrel," to which Mr. Wilson answered, "And you dare not put it up again, you Popish idiot." Mr. William Colyer, another brother, then exclaimed, "If I had caught you at it, you scoundrel, I would have half-murdered you." Mr. Wilson made an angry retort, and some members of the congregation then interfered. Who shall say that religion does not promote civility and kindness?

MR. GLADSTONE asks the Rev. Charles Beard whether "there is a true antithesis between authority and reason." Of course there is. Mr. Gladstone would admit it himself in politics. We go farther, and admit it in theology. Reason means thinking for yourself; Authority means taking things on trust. Englishmen grow up Christians, Turks grow up Mohammedans. Their religion is settled for them by Authority. And the Authority is not that of experts, but of common men who become priests as others become tailors, for a living; and who teach what they do simply because they were taught it themselves. Tom tells Dick, Dick tells Harry, Harry tells Bill, and Bill tells Bob! Most people are caught in this vicious chain, but the sceptic boldly asks, "Who the devil told Tom?"

SOME person is advertising that "Satan is Coming to Govern the Entire World, June, 1886." This is something like a prophet. He does not, like the Bible prophets, keep us waiting indefinitely but promises us "Universal war and great Financial Crisis," together with the "Arrival of the long-anticipated Jewish Messiah, Satan," in the coming month. We have long had a curiosity as to the disputed personality of Satan, as well as of his divine antagonist. We did not expect to see Mr. Ball's article on the identity of God and the Devil corroborated from a Christian source.

AT Canterbury police-court two prominent members of the Salvation Army, named Pitcher and Paine, were fined £1 8s. 6d. for assaulting a youth named Gower while standing against a wall waiting to get a seat at one of the Sunday services. Defendants took hold of him and threw him down the stairs, and Paine afterwards punched his head.

A QUAKER is reported to have been sent to prison in Jersey for refusing on religious grounds to serve in the militia.

AT the City Temple conference one of the clergymen demanded the abolition of "the Sankey abominations, of maudlin hymns to mollicoddle tunes." Can he not abolish the Christian abominations of eternal torture and salvation by blood?

A FEW weeks ago Messrs. Reeves and Turner advertised in our columns a reply to the *Crimes of Christianity*, and we have just received a copy of the work thus announced. It is a threepenny pamphlet by Edward Poulson, "honorary open-air preacher of the Gospel, under the auspices of the Christian Evidence Society." The title it bears is *The Crimes of Atheism*. Turning over its pages, we find not a single word in reply to our own work which was to be answered. Mr. Poulson tries the *argumentum ad hominem*, or the "you're another" trick. By way of defending Christianity against the awful impeachment in our own work, he prints a number of paragraphs in mosaic, made up of all sorts of sentences from all sorts of Freethinkers during the present century, every one of which is violently wrested from its context. Listen to one of the most foul-mouthed of Mr. Engstrom's underlings at an outdoor rostrum, and you will have a fair idea of Mr. Poulson's pamphlet. There is not a single *Crime of Atheism* in the whole of its thirty-five pages; in fact there is nothing but small tittle-tattle about Mr. Bradlaugh, Mrs. Besant, Mr. Foote, and others, and much weak abuse of the *Elements of Social Science*, which is represented, with what inaccuracy we need not say, as the canonical scripture of the Freethought party. Mr. Poulson appears to think this little budget of scandal and slander a fair set-off against the forcible suppression of Paganism, the murder of Hypatia and the practical annihilation of literature and philosophy, the infamous traffic in pious frauds, the cruel extermination of heretics, the unspeakable crimes of the Popes, the murder of millions of witches, the massacre of myriads of Jews, the wholesale tortures and burnings of the Inquisition, the frightful slaughter in the Netherlands, the

monstrous persecution of the Anabaptists, the destruction of twenty million aborigines in America, the dragonnades of Louis the Fourteenth, the fires of Smithfield, the murder of Calas and De Labarre, and all the rest of the inexhaustible list of Christian infamies. What a remarkable sense of proportion Edward Poulson must have! For the rest, his pamphlet is about the most unreadable we ever met with, the very look of the pages being enough to frighten the ordinary reader. It takes something more than dull, cold, feeble malignity to make even a pamphlet interesting. We only wonder that a respectable firm like Reeves and Turner stooped to publish such stuff.

A YEAR or two ago some men engaged a hall in Manchester for a dancing party. The police got wind of something wrong; they made a raid on the place, detected indecencies which are familiar to every reader of the Bible, although we cannot pollute our pages with them, and arrested as many of the rascals as they could catch. Nobody, however, thought of blaming the lessee of the hall, who let it in the ordinary way of business, and was absolutely ignorant of his customers' character. Six years ago a similar occurrence took place at Leeds, and unfortunately it was the Secular Hall, in North Street, which the filthy gang chose as the scene of their orgies. Arrests took place, but we need not say the culprits were not Freethinkers. Some of them were known Christians, and the others belonged in some degree to the same fold. Mr. Joseph Symes was then stationed at Leeds. He published an exposure of the enemy's tactics in fastening the guilt on the Secularists, simply because a band of Christians treacherously defiled their hall. But all his efforts were of little avail. The respectable Christians of Leeds preferred prejudice to evidence, and despite the testimony of witnesses in court they continued to shake their heads and say "Ah! wicked people those Freethinkers." Naturally the sky-pilots improved the occasion. The Rev. John Hanson published *his* account of the affair in a pamphlet, mixing up extracts from the Leeds papers with his own words in a truly pious manner. From this production Mr. Poulson quotes two pages; after which we daresay he reads with great gusto the famous panegyric on Charity in *Corinthians*.

IMAGINE our disgust at seeing this long extract from the Rev. John Hanson's pamphlet reprinted from Edward Poulson's in last week's *Secular Review*. The editor of that journal has a perennial quarrel with Mr. Bradlaugh, into the merits of which we will not enter, and he reproduces this vile stuff from Christian enemies as a specimen of the fruit of Mr. Bradlaugh's teachings. Such may be his notion of fair play; it is not ours. Mr. Ross is a man of education and ability, and the master of a vigorous style. Why does he degrade his talents by defaming the Freethought party for which he writes? Why does he constantly assert what the slightest inquiry would correct, that Freethinkers generally meet in public-houses, and discuss theology amid beer and smoke? His feud with Mr. Bradlaugh is not our business; both parties have the means of publicity, and we shall continue to leave the matter severely alone. Yet we venture to remind him this once, and this once only, that it injures any man to be possessed by the object of his hate. He will understand us, we hope. In any case, we shall not be tempted into a controversy; this is our first and last word on the subject.

MRS. JOSEPHINE BUTLER has done a good work in connection with the repealed Contagious Diseases Act, but she did not shine to great advantage in the Armstrong case, and her coquetting with the Salvation Army seems to have weakened her mind. When religion is the subject, she seems to lose her head in no time. In a recent letter to her favorite journal, the *Pall Mall Gazette*, she speaks of "the Coliseum, where Nero delighted to throw Christians to the African lions." We should like to know whence Mrs. Butler obtained this information. There was no general persecution of the Christians in Nero's reign, and certainly that strange emperor did not habitually indulge in torturing them. Suetonius devotes only two lines to the subject. Tacitus has a longer and well-known passage, according to which Nero massacred a number of Christians to divert suspicion from himself as the incendiary of Rome. Tacitus describes the sufferings inflicted on them. Some, he relates, "were sewn up in the skins of wild beasts, and exposed to the fury of dogs." The *lions* exist in Mrs. Butler's pious imagination, and the whole tone of the sentence shows that she prefers romance to history.

THE Church Missionary Society is highly indignant because it is not allowed to force its religious views upon the Hindoo artisans at the Colonial Exhibition. Respect for the feelings and scruples of these employees is about the last thing such societies think of. Here is food for conversion brought to their door and put nicely under the Christian thumb, and then the ardent missionaries are compelled to leave the promising harvest un-reaped. How tantalising it must be to have to abstain from annoying and insulting devotees of other religions placed at the mercy of the Christian majority in a foreign land.

LAST week we published a letter which Mr. Robert Forder addressed to the *Echo* and the *Daily News* respecting the case of William Coutts. Mr. Forder informs us, as we had already seen, that neither of those journals has inserted his letter, although

their report has been copied into most of the country papers. This is a fair sample of Christian "charity." The *Echo* and the *Daily News* are both edited in the interest of Christianity, the proprietor of the former being pious Passmore Edwards, and the chief proprietor of the latter pious Samuel Morley. They circulate a most abominable report respecting the *Freethinker* and the Freethought party, and when the secretary of the N. S. S. makes inquiries and corrects the report, they think it beneath their dignity to insert his brief letter. Freethinkers should bear this in mind, and not be deluded into fancying that they have secured honest recognition because a paper like the *Daily News* gives prominence to a political meeting convened by Mr. Bradlaugh. The St. James's Hall meeting happened to be in favor of the Government policy; otherwise Mr. Bradlaugh might have gone to the Devil. You can no more drive bigotry out of a Christian than change the Ethiopian's skin or the leopard's spots.

THE Salvation Army is going it mad with its bills. One of these has just reached us from Whitworth, where "Captain" Ireland fights the Devil for what he can get out of Booth. According to this precious document, Wednesday night's "Potatoe-pie Concert" is sandwiched between Tuesday night's "Breach of Promise Case" and Thursday night's "Fair Maiden's Dance." The Army must become more and more sensational, and before it dies out the great Booth will have to go in for a ballet.

THE entertainment provided by the Salvation Army at its International Congress is of a choice description, well calculated to attract the pious. There is advertised for positive appearance Staff-Captains Jai Bhai, Wong Oek, and Ching Wong from California, Captains Arramezzer and Weresoorye with "a world-wide Selection of Salvationists, who have been notorious Drunkards, Prize-fighters, Runners, and Blackguards of every description." Oh, what must it be to be there!

THE *Daily News* admits there is a general impression in England that "the spread of education in India has been hostile to the old religions of the country, and not favorable to the spread of Christianity." According to the same journal, Mr. Cotton, who resided for eighteen years in Bengal, has said that "he had not met with a single instance of the conversion of a respectable native gentleman to Christianity." All the missionaries can say in reply is that they were never treated with so much "respectful sympathy" as now. They admit, however, that the educated classes give them few adherents, but they boast that their success among the lower castes is large and increasing. What they mean is *outcasts*, who remain Christians while they are maintained. We venture to assert that more Christians are made Freethinkers in Europe every year than the heathen converts to Christianity the missionaries make abroad.

SOME of the American Church Associations who strongly object to the working men using the boycott have passed resolutions to boycott the Sunday newspapers. The joke is they only object to the papers which are dated Sunday. They never think of boycotting the Monday morning papers the work for which is done on Sunday.

Home Words, which circulates as a parish magazine, in an article on Elizabeth Moutat the Heroine of the "Columbine" says: "Had not the 'Columbine' been steered by an invisible yet Almighty Hand she would never have got clear of the thousands of rocks." How would the editor like to be out in a boat and trust to the steering of an invisible yet Almighty hand?

A CORRESPONDENT sends us a pamphlet which was given to him in the train. It is written by J. Taylor, a Christian lecturer at Stockton-on-Tees, and is entitled "A reply to Mr. G. W. Foote's BLASPHEMOUS PAMPHLET, *Was Jesus Insane?*" Mr. Taylor's lucubration is hardly worth a reply, but we notice it in order to show what extraordinary notions of fair play Christians entertain. Mr. Foote remarks in his pamphlet that crazy women followed Jesus in all his wanderings, watched his agony on the cross, and were the first to visit his sepulchre; one of whom (Mary Magdalene) was clearly mad. "All this language," says Mr. Taylor, "indicates a bitterness of spirit, and the most persecuting tendency of a malicious heart." To which we reply, that if the Christians visit us with no greater persecution than doubting our sanity, we shall never take the trouble to complain of *their* malice. Curiously enough, the gentleman who has such a strong scent for persecution that he detects it in criticism, actually thinks that Mr. Foote was *not* persecuted while he was in Holloway Gaol. Mr. Taylor's logic is too high for us, and we therefore leave his pamphlet to whatever fate it deserves.

"THE Pope recently received a number of children, and told them that, after repeated researches, it was hoped that the bodies of the Apostles St. Philip and St. James had been discovered in the Church of the Holy Apostles! We are particularly glad that they *think* they have found Philip, as we have had grave doubts if he ever came down to earth again after the spirit flew away with him for converting the Ethiopian. It was a 'black job' at the best, though the termination was certainly elevating." — *Boston Investigator*.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, May 30, Hall of Science, Old Street, London, E.C., at 7, on "Doctor Jesus."

JUNE 6, Oldham; 13, N. S. S. Conference; 20, Milton Hall; 27, Ball's Pond.

JULY 4, Rochdale; 11, Milton Hall, London.

AUGUST 15, Milton Hall; 22 and 29, Hall of Science, London.

CORRESPONDENTS

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. W. J. Ramsey, 28 Stonecutter Street, 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. 3d.; 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.—V. Maunder, H. Jones, E. Anderson, L. Field.

H. BRUCE.—It would occupy too much space. Many of the lines do not scan.

H. J. SANDERS sends us an extract from Professor Huxley, and asks us how we reconcile it with our view as to the frequently pernicious influence of the Bible on the minds of children. The first part of the extract runs thus: "Take the Bible as a whole, make the severest deductions which fair criticism can dictate for shortcomings and positive errors; eliminate, as a sensible lay teacher would do if left to himself, all that is not desirable for children to occupy themselves with; and there still remains in this old literature a vast residuum of moral beauty and grandeur." This very passage corroborates instead of contradicting our own view. We are not quite sure about the "vast residuum," but we agree with Huxley that if all the objectionable parts of the Bible were eliminated there would be nothing left to object to. But eliminating those portions would be a frightful process, and it would leave the book quite unintelligible. Besides, only a Freethinker could take such a liberty with the blessed book, and we venture to assert that no Freethinker will take the trouble to do it.

J. CROSSLEY informs us that there are now two newsagents in Heckmondwike who expose the *Freethinker* for sale in their windows. Our correspondent adds: "It is now three years since I became a Freethinker, and I am glad to see a change here since then. I have just distributed all my back numbers, and I believe they will do a great deal of good."

ONE WORLD AT A TIME says that he does his best to push the *Freethinker* to the front in Nottingham. "I have," he continues, "sold it in the market-place and given away many back numbers. When I first began to do so I used to be assailed by many sons of God who spent their time in abusing Mr. Bradlaugh and Mr. Foote. But in the end I managed to sell all my *Freethinkers*, and I think a large number are now satisfied that there are two sides to the question."

WALTER H. HAYES.—Ecclesiasticus is one of the books of the Apocrypha, quite distinct from Ecclesiastes. Paine is quite correct in his quotation, as you can see on obtaining a copy of the Apocrypha, which used to be bound up with the Bible, as it still is with those used by Catholics.

W. H. HARGREAVES.—Much obliged, but hardly of sufficient interest to-day.

W. JACKSON.—There is scarcely room in the *Freethinker* for what you desire, and articles "to be continued" are out of place in a weekly paper. When the *Crimes of Christianity* is finished Mr. Foote intends to re-write and amplify his *Heroes and Martyrs of Freethought*. That will exactly meet your want.

M. DUNCAN.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

J. WHEBELL.—We gave one specimen of Mr. Bachelor's manners, and we cannot burden our pages with more. Exposure seems useless. Some of Mr. Engstrom's underlings are incorrigible, and he sanctoriously protests that he never heard them say a naughty word.

A. H. BURN.—John xi, 49, speaks of Caiaphas being "high priest the same year," while Luke iii, 2, speaks of "Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests." According to Jewish law there could only be one high priest, and his office was for life. Josephus mentions Ananias as high priest about this time, but does not mention Caiaphas.

J. H.—Such things are always welcome.

J. S. JONES.—You ask us a number of questions about Paine's opinions. The only way to answer them is to read Paine's works, which you can do as well as we. In reply to the question "Where did he obtain the high standard of morality which he professes?" we say that he found it in his own heart.

ANXIOUS.—Edward Clodd's *Jesus of Nazareth* is an excellent book. We can also recommend Constance Howell's *Biography of Jesus Christ*. You will likewise find her *After Life of the Apostles* and *History of the Jews* very useful volumes.

J. C. CREBBIN (Bradford) says that he has read all he could get hold of on the Irish Question, but he considers *Gladstone's Irish Stew* as the best he has met with for "grasp of the subject, conciseness and lucidity." Our correspondent hopes that every M.P. will be supplied with a copy. We have not much faith in M.P.'s. We write to influence their masters.

W. HARDAKER.—We are obliged for your note, though we care little about the literature or the politics of the *St. Stephen's Review*.

R. S. FENGELLY.—The cutting is amusing, and we hope to find space for it.

F. H.—Not bad, but a little out of our way.

T. OLIVER.—The passage which we suppose you refer to occurs in Romans xi, 30-32. See also 1 Tim., 1, 13.

GODFREY HOOPER says that many people are buying W. R. Bradlaugh's *Anti-Infidel* under the impression that it is edited by the junior member for Northampton. They will never buy it twice in the same belief.

J. K. SYKES.—Pleased to hear from you. Thanks for the cuttings. Both Bishop Moorhouse and the unspeakable sky-pilot of Seaton Carew have already been dealt with.

T. SHARP.—Neither Mr. Bradlaugh nor any other Atheist has to our knowledge said "There is no God." The phrase occurs in Shelley's "Queen Mab," but it is put in the mouth of one of the personages.

F. W. ELLIS.—The suggestion will be considered.

YOUNG FREETHINKER writes to us from one of the Navy training-ships: "Having read one of your pamphlets, I was much struck with it, and through a dear friend on board I was introduced to the *Freethinker*, thanks to which I am now able to understand many things I was ignorant of." We refer "Young Freethinker" to the answer to T. Sharp.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Manchester Evening News—Weekly Freeman—Boston Investigator—Birmingham Daily Mail—Evening News—Dover Standard—Sydney Freethinker—Truthseeker—Staffordshire Sentinel—Detroit Free Press—Liberal—Chat—Manchester Courier—St. Pancras Guardian—Chudleigh Weekly Express—Burnley Express—Manchester Guardian—Christian Herald—Indian Mirror—Stroud Journal.

CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current number. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

A CATALOGUE of the Progressive Publishing Company's Works can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THIS evening (May 30) Mr. Foote will deliver a new lecture at the London Hall of Science on "Doctor Jesus."

OUR Summer Number is on the stocks and will be launched before the end of June. Those who have read our previous special numbers will know what to expect. There will be the usual profusion of illustrations, racy articles, and plenty of witty pieces of every variety. No pains will be spared to provide our thousands of readers and their liberal-minded friends with another splendid "budget of blasphemy."

Gladstone's Irish Stew is having a good sale. To those, however, who have not yet perused it, we may say that the author advocated Home Rule for Ireland before the Premier took up the question; but he considers that Mr. Gladstone's measure will not do as it stands. He thoroughly analyses the two Bills, and discusses the chief points of difference between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain.

THE June number of *Progress* is an exceptionally interesting one. "The Latest Apostle of Socialism," by Mr. Foote, is a searching review of Mrs. Besant's *Modern Socialism*. "Gladstone and Chamberlain" is the title of another article from the editorial pen, which will be interesting to many at the present crisis. Mr. Wheeler continues his "History of Freethought in England," and Mr. G. Standing concludes his Series of American Humorists, dealing with James Russell Lowell, who is again on a visit to England. Dr. Aveling writes on the Shelley Society's performance of *The Cenci*. J. M. Harvey contributes a striking poem, entitled "A Vision of God," and H. J., in an article on "Christian and Pagan Morality," contends for the superiority of the latter, giving many striking passages from the Pagan moralists. S. Britton writes in his usual bright vein on Loyalty, with particular reference to the Queen's visit to Liverpool.

MR. W. W. COLLINS has started a *Freethinker* at Sydney, of the same size as our own journal, the price being twopence. It promises to fight theology all along the line, and amongst the contents of the first number is a reprint of Mr. Foote's tract on Bible Blunders. Perhaps the most significant thing is a picture from the French *Bible Amusante* representing God in chaos before he began business.

WHEN we began our Comic Bible Sketches there was a loud shout of disapproval which has since subsided, although a few dainty Freethinkers still "hint a doubt and hesitate dislike." We paid the penalty of our policy, but we persist in it, and we are converting the whole Freethought world to our side. The New York *Truthseeker* follows in our wake with two illustrations in each number. Even the *Liberal* (Missouri) occasionally bursts out with a picture. Mr. Symes has begun to illustrate his *Liberator*, and now Mr. Collins illustrates the first number of his *Freethinker*. A further proof of the wisdom of our policy lies in the fact that all the Freethought journals that begin to illustrate are obliged to go in for comic Bible sketches.

AT Springfield, Missouri, an "Evangelist" named Graham brutally murdered his wife. The citizens marched him outside the town, hanged him to a tree, and pinned a document on his body, setting forth their reasons for this summary execution of the wretch, as "a warning to ex-convicts and murderers who may hereafter invade our country and impose upon our credulity." They also stated that any person who tried to discover the actors

in "this tragedy" would be "surely and speedily despatched to hell, where all things are revealed to the curious."

A DERBY local preacher "improved the occasion" after the burning of the theatre. Preaching in the market-place, he thanked God for removing the house of sin, although three persons lost their lives in the conflagration. Derby is a very pious place, but this was more than the crowd could stand. They therefore proceeded to "move on" the man of God, and they did it so "gently" that it was impossible for him to make another public appearance without obtaining a new suit of clothes.

THE *Truthseeker* issues, with acknowledgment, a copy of our Comic Bible Sketch, entitled "Elisha's Prize Trick." We are well pleased that our designs should afford amusement to the faithful in America.

We gladly notice the advent of a new lady apostle of Free-thought in America, Mrs. C. B. Reynolds, wife of the ex-minister who has for some time adopted the Freethought platform. We gather from the *Truthseeker* also that Mr. J. E. Remsburg is opening up new gospel ground in Texas, while Mr. Putnam, the energetic secretary of the American Secular Union, is out at Salt Lake, evangelising the Mormons. He reports that the Mormons are ready at any time to debate with a Christian, for they can pummel him to pieces with his own Bible, but they will not combat the infidel.

At a Conference of Northern Secularists held at South Shields on Sunday, April 11, a paper on District Federation was read by Mr. M. Weatherburn, of Shankhouse, who honorably distinguished himself by winning the Gladstone prize in his locality. The paper is now printed as a pamphlet and published by R. Simpson and Sons, 4 Dean Street, South Shields. It is fresh and interesting, and it advocates a scheme which, in some form or other, is certain to be realised in the future. Mr. Weatherburn's essay may be recommended to all interested in the question of Secular organisation.

We trust the N. S. S. Branches throughout the country will make a special effort to be represented at the Glasgow Conference on Whit-Sunday. It is a long way for delegates from the South of England, but the Northern delegates will have a chance of mustering in strong force. Those who do attend will have the honor of shaking hands with Robert Ferguson, the hero of the Blasphemy prosecution; and as the old gentleman is nearly eighty, they may never find another opportunity. There will be a public meeting in the Albion Hall in the evening, and addresses will be delivered by Mr. Bradlaugh, Mrs. Besant, Mr. Foote and others.

ONE of our Edinburgh readers writes to us as follows:—"Allow me to thank you for the published report of your recent successful debate with the Rev. Dr. McCann. It is very interesting, especially the latter half, and I would express my admiration of the ability you exhibited in the defence of a rational philosophy, and in the exposure of the absurdly gratuitous assumptions of Christians. Dr. McCann is no novice in apologetics as testified by his dexterous wriggling defence—such as it was—of Christianity. Your exposition of such intricate questions as free-will and morality, in harmony with causation was, considering the time at your disposal, masterly. I apprehend much good will result from quiet study of the debate. It is surely absurd to say they have little value. They have roused many minds to diligent inquiry and finally to Freethought. I am a case in point, and in my experience I know of others. I have sold several copies of the debate, and I will push it here as far as I can."

ON Sunday last, Mr. Gerald Massey lectured at St. George's Hall on "Paul and his Christ." Paul, he contends, was a Gnostic, not believing in the historical existence of Christ, but in the spiritual Christ of the mysteries. He never even mentions the name of Jesus of Nazareth. His Gospel was antipodal to that of Peter, and according to the dates given in the Galatians and the Acts of the Apostles, he must have been converted to Christianity before the death of Jesus, into whose life or miracles he never made inquiry. Mr. Massey brings a deal of research to bear upon his theory of the totally unhistoric character of early Christianity.

THE *Inquirer*, commenting on Mr. Justice Grantham's decision in the case of the libel on Dr. Pankhurst, remarks: "One thing is quite certain, that it is high time Mr. Courtney Kenny's Bill for the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws was carried, and that judges learned that it is not within their province to lay down the law on what they, rightly or wrongly, may conceive to be the essentials of Christianity."

IN a case of drunkenness and wilful mischief at Hammersmith, a boy who was the chief witness objected to being sworn. Mr. Paget: "Why?" Boy: "I have no belief in religion." Mr. Paget: "Are you going to speak the truth?" Boy: "Yes." Mr. Paget: "Then why do you object to be sworn?" Boy: "Because I have no belief in religion." Mr. Paget then directed

the officers to take the boy's affirmation, which was accordingly done. This boy's courage and truthfulness puts to shame many of his supposed "betters." If his example were imitated by all who shared his opinions Freethinkers would find their path through life much easier. Cowardly and hypocritical conformity is a deadly foe to truth and progress.

CHRIST'S BROTHERS.

(Concluded from page 167.)

It is remarkable that none of Christ's brothers believed in him. Christ complained (see Mark vi., 4) that "a prophet is not without honor, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house"—by which of course he meant his father's house, for he had none of his own. Not one of his brethren were among the twelve apostles. Though these included two Jameses and two Judases or Judes (Luke vi., 14; Matt. x., 3), the James and the Jude who were brothers of Christ were certainly not among the number.* It was only strangers who had faith in Christ during his lifetime. Why was this? Did his relatives know him too well? Does it not seem evident that they thought him more or less mad or impracticable in his religious views, and that his character and teachings were not such as to make any moral or emotional or religious impression on his brothers and sisters, or even on his own excellent mother? Sublimely affectionate acts, kindly words of practical wisdom, beautiful instances of "sweet reasonableness" and genial tact, and striking miracles of mercy, † if such had occurred, would surely have converted his brethren into ardent admirers. The conclusion forced on one is that Christ was only an ordinary mortal with ordinary failings and weaknesses, and hence his brothers rejected his absurd claims to supernatural gifts. John expressly tells us (vii., 5) that "neither did his brethren believe on him." As we know on infallible authority that "he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark xvi., 16), it is clear that the brothers and sisters of Jesus would go to hell unless subsequently converted. The Gospels tell us nothing very definite of such conversions, but it is understood that two at least of the brothers were thus saved—James, surnamed the Just, who became Bishop of Jerusalem and who wrote the deistical Epistle of James, and Judas, or Jude, who is supposed to have written the canonical epistle bearing his name. Neither of these, however, claim relationship to Jesus in the commencement of their epistles. James merely claims to be "a servant [slave] of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ," and Jude simply styles himself "the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James." Suspicion has been thrown on the Epistle of James "because of the good Greek in which it is written, and because of the absence of the essential doctrines of Christianity." It is hardly probable that a Galilean peasant or carpenter's son, as James was, would be so well educated as to produce such an epistle. As Jesus certainly was unable or unwilling to leave written documents behind him, it seems strange that two of his brothers should write well in a foreign tongue in times when learning was so little diffused. Perhaps a special miracle was vouchsafed, as was apparently also the case with Peter and John, who according to the Bible were "unlearned and ignorant men" (Acts iv., 13) but who nevertheless spoke all manner of languages at Pentecost (Acts ii., 6), and subsequently wrote in Greek the portions of the Bible bearing their names. Fisherman Peter and Fisherman John must have educated themselves very fairly out of their ignorance before they could have written the works ascribed to them. Holy Ghost is evidently better than Board School. Why don't the clergy procure us a larger supply, and so save school rates?

James, who is sometimes styled *adelphotheos*, or "brother of God," and also the "Lord James" as his brother was called the "Lord Jesus," is supposed to have been stoned to death for blasphemy by the Jewish high priest Annas or Hanan, A.D. 63. Of the history of Jude and of the other brothers and sisters of Jesus, Scripture is silent and even tradition has scarcely a word to say. Why is God so strangely silent, or why are his saints so hopelessly con-

* Paul, however, makes "James the Lord's brother" one of the apostles (Gal. i., 19). But this was after Christ's death.

† Two of the uncanonical gospels narrate how Jesus and his brother James were in a wood when the latter was bitten by a viper. Jesus blew upon the bitten place and instantly it became well.

fused, uncertain and conflicting on all these little matters of interest?

Vereschagen, the great Russian painter, has carried the wonderful realism with which he depicts battle scenes into a picture of the Holy Family in the home at Nazareth, in which he represents Christ's young brothers and sisters as well as Jesus. Many religious people are shocked at this outrage upon their feelings, and they occasionally remonstrate with the daring painter who faithfully follows the Bible narrative and presents a domestic scene of so true and simple a character without haloes and studied omissions and preternatural glorification. When urged to remove the scandalous figures of the commonplace offspring of the ever virgin Mother of God he is said to have replied that they were in the Bible and that he had accordingly put them in his picture and they would have to remain there, and what was more there was no doubt of their legitimacy. Probably the religious people found this reference to the illegitimacy of Jesus a further insult. Fortunately Vereschagen is a power and a genius, and the time is past for burning him for the irreverent truthfulness which is so painful to religious susceptibilities and so dangerous to religious pretensions.

W. P. BALL.

CHRIST IN LONDON.

JESUS VISITS THE NATIONAL GALLERY.

I have paid a visit to the above Gallery to look at my portraiture, and am astonished at the many liberties the artists have taken with the representation of mother and me. I find our likenesses are ruled by geography. For instance, Rembrandt has made my mother a Dutch frau and myself a rather full-blown square-built Amsterdam youth of stolid demeanor. Turning to Reubens, I notice mother and I are, without knowing it, of decided Flemish extraction, surrounded with Antwerp accessories, mostly attended by ridiculous old gentlemen in elaborate costume, with ornamental crooks, the old images generally studying an open book with looks of hypocritical fervor, and appearing as if a good square meal wouldn't have done them any harm. As for Murillo, his portraiture of myself and mother is really very beautiful, but still distinctly Spanish and rather dirty, which is rather hurtful to my feelings after my known proclivities for water—neat and otherwise. I must protest against the early Dutch and Flemish painters. Such wooden-looking children, invariably balanced by mother in such ungraceful attitudes, attended by such dirty old saints, are almost enough to give a child the blue horrors to look at. Mother would have presented them with a bar of soap and a flesh-brush, she being a stickler for neatness, as became a carpenter's wife; and besides Joe liked it. At another part of the Gallery I was depicted by Boccacino carrying the Cross—which of course I never did, as the gallows was always a fixture. You might as well tell me that every latter-day criminal carried his own drop and cross-beam. This representation made me look as if I was doing it for a wager and was doing my second or third "lap" attended by my bottle-holder.

There was one very comic picture of mother and self by Margaritoni of Arezzo, a Tuscanese early painter—very early—with a vein of later-date humor about him. Mother looks exactly like a ruddled Mrs. Judy, with such a marionette stare; and as for myself—well, the kindest thing the Magi could have presented me with, would have been a substantial crust of bread and cheese. If there had been any old saints standing round, no doubt they would have represented Mr. Punch clutching his historical stick preparatory to striking the attendant Shalluballa on the cranium. The Flemish painters are the worst culprits. Lombardi paints my "Deposition from the Cross" as if I was in a very limp state of inebriation; and another artist of the same school makes me so rigid that thoughts of a poker down my back or of having been clear-starched took possession of me and set my risible muscles in action.

"The Mother and Child" by Raphael is very beautiful, especially the mater; but the position on her lap of your humble servant shows she must have kept her eyes well skinned, for I seem to be in the act of trying levitation before the proper time. "The Virgin and Child" by a Flemish artist depicts mother, myself and Liz, sitting in a garden, and by a very small tax on one's imagination any one would think we were paying a visit to a suburban tea-garden—tea and shrimps ninepence. I am held by mother in all kinds of attitudes, but the position that most annoys me, is that of being seated on the mater's hand and held partly from her, as if she was saying "Here! who'll have this lot for tuppence?" It's very derogatory. Mother never held me like this; neither did she give me lacteal nourishment in public to the evident satisfaction of a number of mouldy old fossils.

Mother's "Enthronement" is perfectly absurd. Our family, as every one knows, was very poor. The old man was only a journeyman carpenter. Ercole di Guilio Grandi has perched mother under a very ornamental archway, right up to the roof. It makes you tremble at the thought of the giddy young thing falling. She is attended by sundry old effigies, trying to look as solemn

as a washerwoman who has inadvertently swallowed a quarter of water thinking it spirits. One fellow standing by is attired in a complete suit of European armor—rather warm clothing for an Eastern sun.

Francia's "Dead Christ" is really very touching, but why did he make my hair a lively red? Bad luck to him; I'm rather vain about the color of my thatch.

Raphael Sanzio's "Enthronement" of Mother is not bad, especially in color; but why is my friend Jack such a simple-looking joskin and rather inclined to be dirty? And what are those two red bell-pulls each side of mother's chair? Surely Sanzio does not wish to infer they communicate with up above.

Michael Angelo's picture of myself is absurdly comic. I am represented as a sweet young cherub but rather fat, pointing to a paragraph in a book, calling attention to same; and both mother and friend Jack are evidently surprised, and well they might be, for I seem to be of the mature age of about four years. It makes me ridiculous, as I look such a young prig. And if I'd done such a thing, no doubt Joe would have made life rather bumpy to me.

St. Christopher carrying me as an infant is very funny. I'm on his shoulders. He is standing in the sea, as if he had taken the berth of a Margate bathing-woman and was engaging my infantile attention previous to sousing me, having been advised that sea-bathing was good for my legs—for most of the Flemish school have made my legs mere sticks, but haven't forgot to put full-weight feet on the enas. In most of my Flemish portraits my feet are number tens at least, and such a preponderance of big toe!

It would be tiresome to go through the ludicrous portraits of the Gallery, but I cannot help noticing that the whole of the old painters had not the slightest knowledge of a Syrian landscape. Whatever country the artist belonged to, that to him was quite good enough for a juvenile carpenter God. Your modern painters are a trifle more consistent. Long especially can paint an Eastern scene. Doré is rather too flowery, although his angels are very beautifully draped. But those wings, they puzzle me, as I can't help thinking that if they retain their arms also, two sets of bladebones would be required.

But enough of my harum-scarum notes at present. Your readers will understand they are written by one who has not had the advantage of an artistic education. Some of the other planets are far in advance of you, both in art and philosophic thought. Mother and I are rather afraid of these planets. We tried them a few thousand years ago, but they were barbaric. It won't do to-day. Newer planets are more in our line. Oh, those dreadful Board Schools!

SYDNEY, Australia, is blessed with at least one sensible magistrate in the person of Judge Forbes, who, when Mr. Williamson, an attorney, was badgering a young witness as to whether she knew the nature of an oath, interrupted. The following ensued:—Mr. Williamson: "Surely, your honor, I can ask the witness whether she knows where she will go to when she dies if she tells a lie?" His Honor: "Do you know?" Mr. Williamson: "Oh! well." His Honor: "I don't think you do, or any one else." Mr. Williamson: "But the law allows us to anticipate." His Honor: "You would be satisfied, I suppose, if the child said, 'If I tell the truth I will go to heaven, and if I tell a lie I will go to hell?'" Mr. Williamson: "Yes." His Honor: "It is all claptrap—absurd!" The attorney abandoned the question.

A LITTLE pamphlet comes to us from Bristol entitled *Who was Cain's Wife? The Cain Difficulty Explained*. The explanation, it seems, has been endorsed by the Men's Bible Class at the Hebron Primitive Methodist Chapel, Barton Hill, Bristol. Coming with such high recommendation it deserves serious consideration. The explanation must be given in the author's own words. "Does common sense teach us that Adam and Eve lived a hundred and twenty-nine years and had only two children? No. And is not this idea borne out by the fact, that Moses, without enumerating persons, tells us that Cain had a wife; and it is a certainty that unless Adam had children, other than those spoken of by Moses, Cain could not possibly have had a wife. Now, just suppose that, up to the murder of Abel, Adam's offsprings [*sic*] amounted to six males and six females, who in due course married, you will then easily see that it is possible there were thousands of persons living." Our difficulty-remover sees no difficulty in God producing thousands of persons as the "offsprings" of incest.

OBITUARY.—Another link with the early days of Socialism has departed in the person of Mr. Lloyd Jones, who died at his residence at Stockwell last Saturday, May 22, aged 75 years. Lloyd Jones was born at Bandon, County Cork. Early in life he embraced the views of Robert Owen and soon won his way to the front rank as a social missionary. In that capacity he had numerous debates with ministers, notably one upon "The Influence of Christianity," with Joseph Barker, then a Methodist, at Manchester in 1839. Since the collapse of the Socialist movement Mr. Jones has continually employed his voice and pen for the furtherance of education and co-operation among the working classes. He was well known as a speaker at trades and co-operative congresses, and as a writer both in the metropolitan and provincial press used an active pen in the cause of advanced Radicalism.

PROFANE JOKES.

A GENTLEMAN said to the minister, "When do you expect to see Deacon S. again?" "Never," said the reverend gentleman, solemnly, "the deacon is in heaven."

"Yes, Job suffered some," said a melancholy Long Island farmer, "but he never knew what it was to have his team run away and kill his wife right in the busy season, when hired gals want three dollars a week."

SMALL boy, pointing to a picture of some angels: "Are those angels, mamma dear?" Mother: "Yes, my child." Small boy: "How do they get their night-dresses over their wings?"

GRANDSON: "Who was Queen Scheherezade, that's mentioned in the story on the second page of this paper?" Grandfather: "Why, don't you know that? I am astonished. Don't you read the Bible?"

AUNT MATILDA: "Dear me! that's my minister, the Rev. Ananias Howler, knocking; and he does so dislike dogs." Miss Pretty-pert: "Never mind auntie; I'll be off. Good-bye!" Aunt M.: "Well, if you wouldn't mind, dear, I shouldn't like Jingo to bite Mr. Howler." Miss P.: "Certainly not. He's a most unwholesome-looking man."

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