

# THE FREETHINKER.

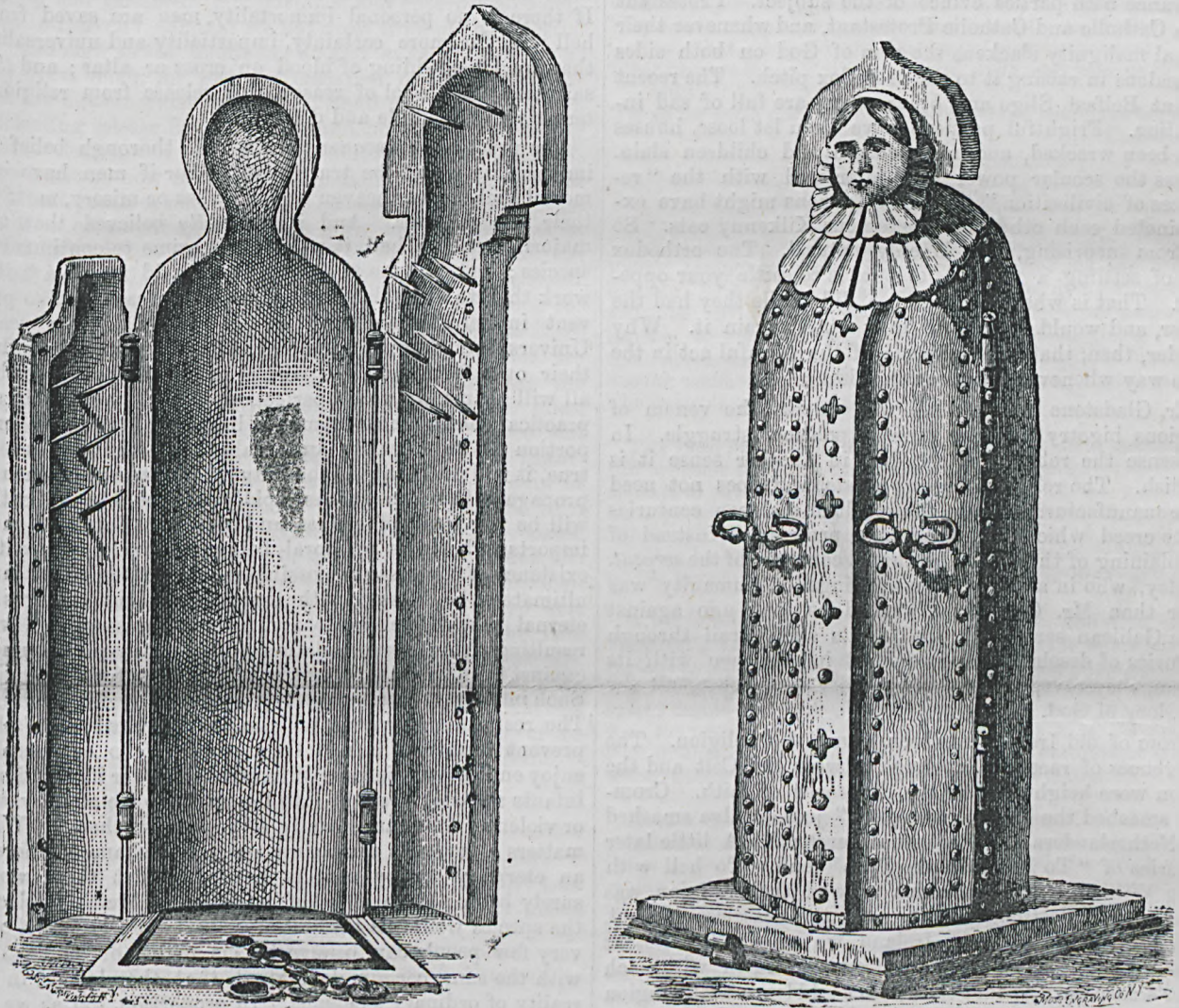
EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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THE IRON VIRGIN.

Beneath the town hall of Nuremberg, in Bavaria, in a vaulted chamber dug out of the solid rock, stands an image of the Virgin Mary. When a spring is touched it flings open its arms, which resemble the doors of a cupboard, the insides being planted with poniards about a foot long. Into this horrid machine an obstinate heretic was sometimes thrust, and the Virgin closed upon her victim, the poniards going him through the head and breast. The murder being completed, the floor of the image slid aside, and the mangled corpse dropped through a perpendicular shaft into a canal that communicated with the Pegnitz.—*Crimes of Christianity*, p. 249.

## IRISH RELIGION.

A FEW months ago we published a cartoon entitled "The Real Home Ruler." It represented a Catholic priest triumphantly riding an Hibernian pig. Without wishing to insult our Irish brethren, but rather with a desire to help them, we take this opportunity of repeating that the priest is the greatest evil in Ireland. For the moment he is patriotic, because English tyranny is Protestant; but when Ireland is politically free, he will use all his sinister influence to keep her in spiritual bondage. The number of illiterate voters in that unhappy country is alarming, and in some parts the mental condition of the people is a scandal to civilisation. Naturally the priest is well satisfied with this state of things. Ignorance is the mother of devotion, and that is what he lives on. When the Protestant has to knuckle down instead of domineering, the Catholic priest will have it all his own way, at least until Free-thought has sapped his power. Lord Spencer tells us that there is no wish, much less any intention, on the part of the Irish hierarchy, to usurp privileges; and Mr. Sexton lays his hand upon his heart and swears that religious per-

secution is hated in every Irish cottage. Perhaps both speakers mean what they say, yet their words should not deceive us. The voice of History declares that Rome always strives for dominion. She has never abated her imperial claims; on the contrary, she strenuously asserts them; she still brands all who doubt the least of her dogmas as heretics, and she affirms her right to control education, and to enjoy legalised privileges and State endowments. To tell us that the Irish contingent of the Papal army will not strive for these things is to ask us to disbelieve history and blind ourselves to the most obvious facts.

Let it not be supposed, however, that this constitutes a plea against Home Rule for Ireland. Whether Protestant lords it over Catholic, or Catholic over Protestant, is to us a matter of indifference; nay, as the Protestants have had such a long innings, and have so unscrupulously used their power, there might be a poetical justice in their feeling the smart of persecution themselves. Our object is simply to point out that the Irish priest is a tremendous power, and that as soon as it is safe to do so he will intrigue and bully for the sovereignty of holy Mother Church.

Some day or other Freethought will spread from England to Ireland, and perhaps also from France. Then the priest will turn pale. It will be the beginning of the end of his reign. The Irish are a quick-witted race, and when Freethought once creeps among them it will spread like fire. Meanwhile every English Freethinker must hope that Irish education will be extended and deepened. That is the great emancipator. Superstition lives on ignorance, and priestcraft on both.

Until then, however, we are likely to see some lively developments of Irish religion. There is something peculiarly venomous in religious quarrels, according to the general rule that disputes are acrimonious in proportion to the ignorance both parties evince of the subject. Protestant hates Catholic and Catholic Protestant, and whenever their mutual malignity slackens the men of God on both sides are zealous in raising it to the orthodox pitch. The recent riots at Belfast, Sligo and other places are full of sad instruction. Frightful passions have been let loose, houses have been wrecked, and men, women and children slain. Unless the secular power had interfered with the "resources of civilisation," the rival factions might have exterminated each other like the famous Kilkenny cats. So far from surprising, this is only natural. The orthodox way of settling a religious dispute is to settle your opponent. That is what the Churches did while they had the power, and would do again if they could regain it. Why wonder, then, that the multitude of the faithful act in the same way whenever the occasion arises?

Mr. Gladstone blames those who import the venom of religious bigotry into the present political struggle. In one sense the rebuke is just, but in another sense it is childish. The religious bigotry exists, and does not need to be manufactured. It is the result of eighteen centuries of the creed which Mr. Gladstone professes. Instead of complaining of the *venom*, he should complain of the *serpent*. Shelley, who in all the highest things of humanity was wiser than Mr. Gladstone, warned us long ago against "the Galilean serpent." We see its slimy trail through centuries of desolation, and when it infects men with its venom, they rave, quarrel, and murder each other, all for the glory of God.

From of old Ireland has been cursed by religion. The differences of race and language between the Celt and the Saxon were heightened by the difference of faith. Cromwell smashed the Irish as "Papists," just as Alva smashed the Netherlanders as "Protestant heretics." A little later the cries of "To hell with the Pope" and "To hell with King William" in Irish cities showed that religion was still the most distinctive feature in the ceaseless quarrel. And now, in the North of Ireland, we see the Protestant and Catholic factions ready to strew the earth with each other's corpses. Would that both could learn that religion is their common enemy, the nurse of ignorance, the fomentor of bigotry, the divider of peoples. It waves its lurid torch when Wisdom and Humanity bid them clasp hands; at once the sky darkens, and the only light left is of the hue of blood.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE Rev. W. Marshall, writing against Women's Rights, declared "It is one of the judgments of God upon a guilty land that women shall be its rulers." Is this a reflection on her Majesty? Another writer in the *English Churchman* attributes the moral decline in England to the Education Act and the series of Married Women's Property Bills.

A NEW London paper called *Travel and Talk* has a number of gossipy paragraphs, which are about the smallest we ever remember to have seen. They are all written in the first person and Mr. "I" asserts himself in every other line. He assumes an air of immense importance, but probably if his identity were published he would turn out to be some little journalistic whippersnapper, utterly unknown to fame, and perhaps the derision of his acquaintances. One of the things this great Mr. "I" is mightily concerned about is the existence of this journal, which "holds up to ridicule the holiest of persons and occurrences." "Surely," says Mr. "I," "it should be easy to prevent the sale of such things." Perhaps it *should* be, but as a matter of fact it *isn't*. Every attempt in that line has ignominiously failed. Even Mr. "I" will not try his own hand at the business; he commends it to the attention of "anyone with time, influence, and courage enough to take it up." There is a good deal of self-portraiture in this sentence. We dare say Mr. "I" has plenty of "time," but he has no "influence" and no "courage."

#### SOME SERIOUS ASPECTS OF IMMORTALITY.

If immortality were a fact ought men to rejoice over it or to grieve? Seeing that few go to heaven and the enormous majority take the broad path that leads [to the everlasting bonfire, would truly good people be satisfied with an immortality that necessitated misery of so useless, so interminable and so horrible a character? Despite the happier condition of the blest in a brighter realm, would they not feel that, on the whole, immortality caused more suffering than joy? Would not their tortured sympathies make them ardently long to sacrifice their own prospects of personal happiness if the universal loss of immortality saved billions of shrieking fellow mortals from further agony? If there is no personal immortality, men are saved from hell with far more certainty, impartiality and universality than by any shedding of blood on cross or altar; and *this* salvation, *this* gospel of reason, this release from religious terrorism, is credible and defensible.

The practical consequences of a real, thorough belief in immortality would be truly awful. For if men have immortal souls, either heaven or hell, bliss or misery, must be their fate for ever. And if we *really* believed that the majority went to hell it would be a crime to continue the species; and genuine philanthropists could not do a better work than to annihilate the whole human race, and so prevent intolerable suffering on an almost infinite scale. Universalists, however, imagine, without any evidence but their own fond belief in wishes as future realities, that all will ultimately reach perfection and be happy. If so, practical consequences of such a belief will follow in proportion to its intensity and reality. If Universalism is true, it will evidently be the duty of all men and women to propagate their species as rapidly as possible. Chastity will be the worst of crimes, and the first duty and most important business of moral beings will be to ensure the existence of the greatest possible number of souls that must ultimately be blessed with the transcendent raptures of eternal joy. The temporary poverty, misery, and vice resulting from overpopulation will furnish no argument against the attainment of universal happiness for all eternity. Such infinity of bliss outweighs any worldly consideration. The restraints of virtue will be cruel wickedness if they prevent immortal beings from coming into existence to enjoy endless happiness. What does it matter if illegitimate infants are only brought into the world to die of starvation or violence, when an eternity of joy awaits them? What matters a mother's temporary guilt and shame if thereby an eternally happy soul is created? But there would surely be no shame if belief were real. Multiplication of the species would be the first of virtues. Fortunately, only very few people can believe in the reality of immortality with the same certain definiteness that they believe in the reality of ordinary existence. In proportion, too, as we are guided by intellect in shaping schemes of conduct resulting from our beliefs and instincts, we also are led by the same intellectual ability and energy to overcome, or mitigate, or evade those beliefs and instincts so far as they are opposed to the general welfare. False hopes and fears of another world mislead us and distort our lives and efforts to some extent, but the worst mischief is usually prevented by practical obedience to the requirements of this present life.

If orthodox teachings be true, the separation of families will be most distressing. Wives and husbands will often be torn apart. "One shall be taken, and the other left." Parents will lose their sons and daughters, and children their parents. There are few families without their black sheep, fewer still without their unbelieving goats. Hardly a family will be complete in heaven, and usually only one or two of the most superstitious in each home will be exalted to the heights of glory. If these callous saints can be happy under such circumstances, their hard-heartedness deserves hell if anything does. No human being worthy of the name could covet such atrocious honor and bliss as these glorified wretches exult in.

Immortality in heaven is to be the reward of credulity. The best minds and noblest souls are excluded by their want of faith, while bigots, fanatics, fools, converted murderers, redeemed hypocrites, and sanctified ignoramuses will tread the golden floor in ever-increasing numbers. Is such a heaven worth going to?

Are we sure that the promised bliss is of a desirable kind? Will bowing and scraping, and twanging a golden

harp, be sufficient to occupy our minds for all eternity? Will not *ennui* of the most oppressive kind make us long to seek relief in an impossible suicide as the only means of escape from so monotonously childish and absurd a life? What occupations are possible, wherewith to fill up eternity with comfort and pleasure? Our habits are various. Some cannot be happy without their pipe and glass, their whist or *solo misère*, their Shelley or Shakespeare, their microscope, bicycle, gun, fishing-rod, and so forth. How can all these idiosyncrasies be provided for? What are we to do to fill up the time for ever? Life on earth is mainly—perhaps only—palatable from the spice of novelty and variety in its slowly changing stages. How will this needed novelty and variety of circumstance and enterprise be supplied in heaven? Should we not grow tired of the celestial life, and sigh as the Buddhists do and as most men do as they grow older, for rest, for cessation of stale pleasures that are but laborious vanities? Shall we not long for an everlasting release from troubles and outworn joys alike? Swift's description of the "struldbrugs" in *Gulliver's Travels* shows how revolting immortality would be without perpetual youth or manhood. Who can say what the actual condition of perpetual life in the individual or the species would be? What reason have we for supposing that the eternal life would be better and not worse than the present life? Who can guarantee that the coveted existence for ever is worth having? The horrible descriptions of it as a curse, as a series of agonies in hells and purgatories, are far more vivid and realizable to the mind than are the illogical and untenable descriptions of inconceivable bliss. Is not the belief, the certainty, of everlasting peace and rest, a surer, and certainly a truer, consolation than nightmare dreams of everlasting torture, broken by gleams of selfish joy and baseless hope? If on behalf of all men we had the choice and could give or withhold the irrevocable boon or curse of immortality to the race, who, under the sobering influence of so fearful and enormous a responsibility, could decide to accept so doubtful a gift? In this uncertainty, would not thoughtful wisdom avoid the leap in the dark and prefer to secure for all alike the certain impartial and universal boon of endless repose, free alike from bliss and agony, from hopeless toil and the unendurable but irremediable *ennui* of a life that would never be ended?

W. P. BALL.

#### 'TIS ALL FOR SOME GOOD PURPOSE.

'Tis all for some good purpose that good God Almighty racks  
The earth, and finds full oft a scourge wherewith to flay our backs.  
Bow down, proud man, and thank the Lord, who—after giving  
brains—

To falsify the things they teach, has taken wond'rous pains.  
You talk of things as "good," or "ill," such words 'twere sin to  
use;

When *everything* is for the best, pray what is there to choose?  
Grieve not, then, sufferer, that the Lord has formed your mind  
awry:

'Tis all for some good purpose that he makes you think a lie.

"'Tis all for some good purpose," is the Christian's ready song:  
Our senses tell us different, but we may be sure they're wrong.  
When cruel calamities befall our stricken human race

'Tis for our good, although it may not seem to be the case.

And while dark horrors fill the pages of our news each day,

"'Tis all for some good purpose," is what everyone should say.

'Tis all for some good purpose! Ah! why weeps that mother  
there?

"You've lost your babe—your only one? Well, well, I do  
declare.

That's bad—at least—no, no! I mean, that's very nice indeed."  
(Alas, poor me! Such things do play the devil with one's creed.)

"Arise, good woman! Thank the Lord who gave that babe and  
knew

'T would be for some good purpose soon to snatch it back from  
you."

'Tis all for some good purpose that a famine now and then  
Is sent to strike down sinless babes, their mothers, and the men,  
Who cannot help themselves, nor earn the food for which they  
crave,

And so are left to starve and moan for succor or the grave.  
Some millions thus in India fall—down-trodden hapless race!

And in gay London far too many fill too small a space.

But stay, great heaven, I do blaspheme! Why strain I at a gnat?

'Tis all for some good purpose: I had quite forgotten that.

'Tis all for some good purpose that the earthquake too is sent:  
We may be sure when houses rock 'tis with some good intent.

When mountains heave, and towers crash, and sufferings ensue,  
We know the great Almighty has beneficence in view:

'Tis all his work, for does he not the universe control,  
As each must earnestly believe, or lose his precious soul?

'Tis all for some good purpose that the fever-plague careers  
Around the world and stretches many on untimely biers.

Then lives, and homes, and treasures dear, the ruthless flood  
destroys,

The lightning lays its victims low—these are Jehovah's toys.

But there I go again, forgetting God sees all is well—

I *know* my wretched memory will drag me into hell.

"'Tis all for some good purpose!" Ah! sweet sceptic-flouting  
phrase!

What soul-perplexing riddles rest 'neath thy convenient glaze?

Why idiots, cripples, rogues are born is not for us to ask;

God sees that it is good, and dares us to remove the mask.

What matters though pain, grief, and strife, still hold us in their  
yoke:

'Tis all for some good purpose, and the Lord *must* have his joke.

C. DEANE.

## ACID DROPS.

BLACK fever and scarlet fever have been raging in the Rhondda Valley, having apparently been widely spread by the prayer-meetings held in the homes of all persons dying from these maladies. After a conference of medical men, ministers and laymen, it was resolved to discontinue the meetings. They think absence of the body better than the presence of the Lord. Secular common-sense has abolished a dangerous religious custom. The doctor has defeated the minister.

THE Lord has pacified Etna a little, though violent earthquakes still continue to terrify the inhabitants of the neighborhood. He appears to have passed over to the other side of the globe with his fiery tricks. New Zealand now suffers from his presence. Whole villages have been buried in the ashes of the volcanic eruption he has caused in the Tarawera district. Twenty-six bodies have been recovered, but the total loss of life is unknown.

A FRESH inhibition was served on the Rev. Bell Cox, of St. Margaret's, Liverpool, on Sunday morning, but it was again disregarded, and the service was "ornate." The congregation is large and fashionable, and the probability is that this is to a large extent due to the fact that the majority of those who comply with the mandates of Mrs. Grundy wish to do so in the manner least disagreeable to themselves. Music and decorations are not without their attractions and influence in this matter.

RUSKIN has answered a letter from the Rev. J. J. Ellis in a very characteristic style. The reverend gentleman appealed for funds to clear off the debt on his chapel and the great writer replies:—"Sir,—I am sorrowfully amused at your appeal to me of all people in the world, the precisely least likely to give a farthing! My first word to all men and boys who care to hear me is, 'Don't get into debt. Starve, and go to heaven—but don't borrow—try first, begging. I don't mind, if it's really needful, stealing! But don't buy things you can't pay for! And of all manner of debtors, pious people building churches they can't pay for are the most detestable nonsense to me. Can't you preach and pray behind the hedges, or in a sandpit, or a coal-hole first? And of all manner of churches, those idically built iron churches are the damnablest to me. And of all sects of believers in any ruling Spirit, Hindoos, Turks, Heathen Idolaters, Mumbo Jumbo, log and fire worshippers, who want churches, your modern English Evangelical sect is the most absurd and entirely objectionable and unendurable to me! All which you might very easily have found out from my books. Any other sort of sect would, before bothering me to write it to them.—Ever, nevertheless, and in all this saying, your faithful servant, JOHN RUSKIN."

THE Bishop of Dover has to own that there are "black sheep" in the ministry who are a "disgrace" to their profession. He advises responsible people to carefully test every clergyman's character before permitting him to preach.

THE Christian Evidence Society prints the testimony of 617 "students" of the sciences on the back of its lecture hand-bill for June. These religious scientists declare that in their opinion it is impossible for the Bible and the facts of Nature to contradict each other "however much they may appear to differ." The curious certificate of pious faith in things hoped for concludes thus: "We confidently believe that a time will come when the two records will be seen to agree in every particular." A time will come! That is, these students own that at present the two records disagree. Why these biassed witnesses damn their own case. And the C.E.S. prints their admission of actual discordance and their blind but confident hope of reconciliation as evidence in favor of the Bible!

THE Rev. Joseph Cook says: "He who has lost personal normality finds the universe fighting against him. All reality is

resisting him. If he has attained personal normality all reality is for him. All reality is only another name for the pressure of God's right hand." We hope our readers feel enlightened. The reality of strangulation by the garrotter's fingers, or the hangman's cord, is simply the pressure of God's right hand.

MR. COOK holds that "every soul is indisputably in contact with God, wherever it is in contact with reality." So when you knock your head against a hard post, you are in contact with God. A well-delivered snow-ball or a back-fall on the ice will likewise bring you into immediate contact with God.

THE *Rock* has an advertisement which runs thus:—"Urgent prayers during this month are entreated from all Christians for the recovery and conversion of a young man now lying seriously ill in hospital, who is in dire need of Divine mercy." The advertiser evidently believes that prayer in sufficient quantity will work miracles. Faith will outdo the physician. But doctrine is better than doctorin', and this patient needs both. The urgent prayers so modestly requested of all Christians during the month ought to furnish sufficient dynamic power to convert and heal a thousand black sheep instead of being concentrated on one.

THE Rev. Rowland Kiley, of Plymouth, has decamped, leaving behind him 1. O. U's to the tune of over nine hundred pounds for money lent him by various members of his congregation. A correspondent who sends us the newspaper account of the affair adds: "Kiley, God's messenger, robbed my daft old brother of £6, and he a chimney sweep. The Lord's will be done."

KILEY'S estate, such as it is, is being realised, and it was stated before the Official Receiver that the absconding sky-pilot had taken ship for Melbourne, where his wife had arranged to join him. According to the latest information the ship had gone down with all hands. The Official Receiver, however, suspected that the news came from Kiley himself, and one of the creditors doubted it on the ground that "Kiley would never sink." No doubt this gentleman thinks, or at least hopes, that Kiley was not born to be drowned.

THE *Church Times* turns the tables against the promoters of the Marriage with a Deceased Wife's Sister Bill in a way which bespeaks its truly Christian conception of human nature. It says if such marriages were possible "it would instantly deprive orphan children of their aunt whenever their father did not wish to marry her." No such complaint has, however, ever arisen in America or the colonies where such marriages are legal.

THE *Church Times* is overcome by the heresy of certain people who "have actually started a church as a memorial of Elizabeth Fry." It declares that "to dedicate a Christian church to a woman who, strictly speaking, was not a Christian, is a strange proceeding." The parents of Elizabeth Fry being Quakers, she was never baptised, and consequently, in the eyes of the *Church Times*, could not be a Christian.

THE pusillanimity of those Unitarians who refuse to join in the movement for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Act of William III. appears the more conspicuous to those acquainted with the history of the passing of that Act, which was mainly directed against Unitarians. In 1693 a "brief but clear confutation of the doctrine of the Trinity," by William Freeke, was brought before the notice of the House of Commons, and the author was sentenced to pay a fine of £500 and to give bail for good behavior for three years. In 1695 another Unitarian, John Smith recanted under threat of prosecution. In 1697 "the Dissenters with Dr. Bates at their head, requested King William, in an address presented to him, to shut the press against the Unitarians" (*Lindsey's Historical Account of the Unitarian Doctrine*, p. 302). In the following year the ferocious statute was passed, which, because in part repealed in their favor, some Unitarians are well content should remain in force against "infidels."

A CURATE, writing in the *Church Times*, describes the Church Army as a "miserable caricature of the S. A." Mr. Carlile, the Church Army head, describes his captains as sheep-dogs, who bring the sheep to the shepherd. The curate declares that they worry the sheep into the false declaration that they are "saved."

THE Rev. S. Macnaughton, in a published work on *Doctrine and Doubt*, puts forward a new theory of Genesis. His idea is that all the days before the fourth, when the sun was appointed to divide the day from the night were long periods of time, but from the fourth day to the end of the week, the days were literal and successive of twenty-four hours each. It is needless to say Mr. Macnaughton's theory does not satisfy the demands of science any more than those of other reconcilers.

MR. H. C. RICHARDS must surely have sharpened his wits in his unsuccessful contests with Mr. Bradlaugh. Speaking at Southend, he electrified a Tory meeting by saying, "Depend upon it, ladies and gentlemen, we should not have heard of Mr. Herbert Gladstone if it had not been for his father!" Reasoning from analogy, we may charitably infer that we should never have heard of J. C. had it not been for Joseph the carpenter.

ALLELUIA—or whatever may be the correct exclamation under the circumstances! General Booth's steam yacht has gone to the bottom of the Humber. The Lord's people seem very unfortunate when they quit their native element. Noah got drunk immediately after his long voyage, and cursed, and many a sailor has since followed his example; Jonah's adventures might have been "told to the marines"; the twelve apostles, albeit fishermen, were shocking bad sailors, and Peter could not swim; whilst Paul had a narrow escape of it. Yet, after all, they seemed "destined for a drier death on shore."

A CONTRIBUTION on "Sunday in Liverpool," from the pen of "R. M.," which recently appeared in the columns of the *Liverpool Mercury*, has attracted some attention. The writer visited St. George's Church on a recent Sunday morning, and gives a graphic description of the almost empty and deserted fabric, which, owing to Corporate jobbery in the past, is still maintained, together with several other churches, out of the local rates. A description is also given of the recitals of "sacred" music at St. George's Hall on the grand organ, and of an evangelical meeting at the Rotunda Lecture Hall, which was crowded with wretched people, attracted by the promise of a loaf to be given to each at the close.

THE *Liverpool Courier* entertains the ridiculous notion that "the Freethinking community are quarrelling among themselves." It deduces this idea from the fact that Mr. Foote and Mr. Ball (whose name it spells Boll) have been criticising Mrs. Besant's Socialism. We beg to inform the Christian enemy that the Free-thought party is not split up so long as it agrees on the main purposes for which it is organised. Freethinkers are not sheep. They are generally more individual than their Christian neighbors, and as they take the trouble to exercise whatever intelligence they possess, they naturally disagree on outside questions. But disagreement and quarrelling are not the same thing. It is quite natural for a Christian to think so, owing to his foolish dogmas and his wretched training; but Freethinkers have a different standard of judgment, and when they cannot agree they can at least agree to differ.

ANOTHER clergyman, the Rev. Henry Moffatt, giving an address at Whiston, Northamptonshire, has been charged with the peculiarly clerical offence of indecency towards boys.

MR. G. M. SCHOLEY ends a letter to the *Folkestone Express* as follows: "Not very long ago Mr. Foote was imprisoned for his atheistical notions. How so talented a man can declare himself an atheist I cannot understand. Still he had a right to do it. There are plenty to dispute atheism—I most fervently do for one. Mr. Foote has but to look round by day and by night, and he must see infinite evidences of infinite power." Mr. Foote's eyes are not big enough to see infinite evidences of anything. While he was in Holloway Gaol, however, he saw plenty of evidences of power in the shape of stone and brick walls, iron doors and rigorous officials. Yet it did not tend to remove his Atheism. On the contrary, he was obliged to reflect that any God who knew his proper business would have prevented the necessity for gaols thousands of years ago.

THE influence of religion in promoting peace and concord has been recently exemplified in the north of Ireland. We read of Catholic mobs meeting Protestant mobs with the usual result, of houses of leading Protestants being burnt or wrecked, and of riots resulting in a number of deaths. Religion, instead of harmonising political opponents, only embitters their fierce contentions. Gladstone, in his Election Manifesto, does well to deprecate the introduction of "the venomous element of religious bigotry" into the Irish question.

REFERRING to our "Acid Drops" of last week in regard to the petition of the German Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals against the Jewish method of slaughter, a correspondent, who is himself a butcher, gives us full details of the Shechita, which he describes as of the most brutal and cruel description. It appears that they place four rope-shackles round the feet of the bullock or heifer, and then the feet of the poor animal are drawn tightly together until it is tripped down on its side. A Christian is hired to hold the head while the Jewish butcher cuts the throat from ear to ear. The blood flies out in torrents and almost covers the Christian, whose expletives usually fly in the direction of the Jewish operator, who after some further ceremonies pronounces the meat either Kosher and fit for Jews, or unclean and only fit for Christians.

AN acquaintance of ours, who has a bright, keen little girl in her family, related to us the following incident:—The family were dining, when the conversation turned upon an excursion about to take place. A clergyman at the table spoke to the little girl, and asked her if she could repeat the alphabet backwards. She said, "No, sir," when the gentleman remarked, "Then you can't go on the excursion." She looked very demure for a moment, when she asked, "Can you say the Lord's Prayer backwards?" "No, dear." "Then," replied the girl, "you can't go to heaven."

## SPECIAL NOTICE.

## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, June 20, at 11.30, Clerkenwell Green; at 7.30, Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town, N.

JUNE 27, Ball's Pond.

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

AUGUST 8, West Hartlepool; 15, Milton Hall; 22 and 29, Hall of Science, London.

SEPT. 5, Liverpool; 19 and 26, Hall of Science, London.

Look out for our SUMMER NUMBER. Ready next week. A rare treat.

## 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.—C. Doeg, W. Carter, T. Evans, S. Noble. H. P. BOWDEN.—Thanks. Froude has a paper on Lucian in his *Short Studies on Great Subjects*. There is a translation by Franklin, and another edited by Dryden.

J. D. LEGGETT.—We cannot see our way to carry out the suggestion. You could easily take a French paper every week yourself. But after all there is no short cut to learning. You can only master a language by assiduous application.

J. E. R.—No room. We have too much copy on hand at present.

TELEMACHUS.—There have been dozens of reviews of Professor Drummond's book in the magazines. We have not the slightest idea which one you refer to.

J. R.—See *Crimes of Christianity*, pages 45, 46, where you will find an account of the destruction of the Alexandrian library, with historical references.

T. WILSON.—Thanks, but we have written on the subject ourselves.

G. LUCAS.—Cuttings are always welcome.

W. C.—Our readers cannot do us a better service than by sending us interesting items from the newspapers.

J. BENSON.—We subscribed something for Mr. Smith when we were at Leeds, and we should be glad to assist him again, but we cannot insert what you ask in the editorial part of this journal. If, however, you draw up an advertisement in proper form we will insert it gratuitously.

A. PAYER.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

J. BROUGH.—You will see that we have booked the date.

J. WILSON.—The law of libel is not likely to be strained to our advantage. We hesitate therefore to publish the statements you send us. If they are true the absconding sky-pilot will soon figure in the newspapers, and we shall then be free to express our sentiments. Your Christian friend who asked you why we date our paper from the (supposed) birth of Christ, might be asked in return why he calls the first day of the week after the Sun and all the other days of the week after the names of heathen deities. The era and the names of the days were settled before we came into the world, and as it is a mere matter of convenience, involving no principle, there is no need to worry ourselves about it. Your friend seems short of brains, and he appears to have a maggot in the little he possesses.

J. T. EMBLETON.—We take your letter in the spirit with which you are evidently animated, although we do not quite understand what you mean by saying, "You only want to be a little braver." Does it not require more courage to resist a popular current than to flow with it? Besides, you quite mistake our views. We wrote in favor of Home Rule (see *Progress* for January) before Mr. Gladstone took up the subject and while many of his loudest supporters were openly hostile to anything of the kind. So far from not wishing "justice to Ireland," we are ready to vote for complete separation to-morrow if the Irish people desire it. If, however, Ireland is to remain a part of the United Kingdom the question becomes a British as well as an Irish one. From this point of view we say—and we have defended our position in the pamphlet you allude to—that Mr. Gladstone's Bills as they stand (and there are no others) would lead to constant misunderstanding, quarrel and collision, unless Ireland is content to sink into the position of a mere dependency, which we will not do her the dishonor of thinking possible. The real question at issue between Liberals is not Home Rule or no Home Rule, but what kind of Home Rule is it to be? Nor does it follow that those who run the fastest are the bravest. People often run into danger, not because they are brave, but because they are blind. We follow no man in this matter. We do our own thinking, form our own conclusions, and stand by them. When you ask us just to follow the gentleman you call "Labby" you must surely be joking.

YOUNG FREETHINKER.—We cannot enlighten you on the subject of Cain's wife. Perhaps the Lord made him one, and forgot to record it when he dictated the Bible. Or perhaps Cain found a female missing link in the land of Nod. If you want further information, apply to the nearest parson.

ATHENIST (Nottingham) writes that he has just read the Foote-McCann Debate and considers our part of it—well, we omit the adjectives. What is more to the purpose, he says: "I have sold one copy and lent another, and this is what every Freethinker should do."

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Pittsburgh Truth—Travel—Rationalist—Star of Gwent—Boston Investigator—Liberator—Lucifer—Truthseeker—Liverpool Post—Natal Newcastle Post—Hamilton Advertiser—Birmingham Daily Mail—Modern Owl.

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.

OUR Summer Number will be published next week, when the complete bill of fare will be duly advertised. The Bible series, to which readers of our special numbers are now accustomed, fills two pages of illustrations. It is entitled "Captain Noah's Menagerie," and the subject, being somewhat watery, is well suited to the summer season, when everybody who can afford it spends a few days at least at the seaside. There are many other illustrations, besides the usual quantity of humorous and witty letterpress. Altogether we can promise our readers a treat such as they will find in no other publication of the season.

WE shall publish next week our promised statement as to the Ferguson Defence Fund. The report of the Conference and other matters crowd it out this week.

MRS. BESANT has written a rejoinder to Mr. Foote's article in the current number of *Progress* on her *Modern Socialism*. It will appear in the July number with a reply from Mr. Foote.

IN order to give a fillip to the open-air propaganda of Free-thought in London, Mr. Foote has determined to deliver a gratuitous lecture at each of the principal stations. This morning (June 20) he will occupy the out-door platform on Clerkenwell Green, just outside our "blasphemy factory." There is sure to be a crowd, and we hope the members and friends of the Finsbury Branch will attend for the purpose of assisting to keep order.

THE question of religious instruction in the Communal schools of Paris has again been brought on the tapis. We are pleased to note that the Municipal Council affirmed the proposition of M. Hovelacque, who affirmed that all gods were of equal value; the god of the Church and the god of the University, the gods of the pagans and the god of the Christians, and that consequently no instruction respecting any of them ought to be given to children. M. Hovelacque is a distinguished scientist and author of a work on Language, which has been translated into English.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Times* points out that the Bishop of Lichfield's order that licenses for marriages shall only avail until the hour of noon is illegal and invalid, like all other edicts based on the canon of the Church when in opposition to the laws of the realm, and that the licenses to marry are *ipso facto* licenses to marry within the legal hours, whatever may be printed on them.

A BRANCH of the Sunday Society has been formed in Liverpool, with influential support, and it is proposed to give lectures on Sunday afternoons, in imitation of those in London.

THE Parliamentary election affords a valuable opportunity for agitation in favor of the Abolition of Religious Prosecutions. Candidates should be questioned by letter or at public meetings. The Rev. W. Sharman, 29 Frenchwood Street, Preston, will send copies of Mr. Courtney Kenny's Bill and Dr. Hunter's pamphlet to any elector wishing to receive them.

As a set-off to our article on Unitarian Fossils, we are pleased to record that at the annual meeting of the Provincial Assembly of the Presbyterian and Unitarian ministers and congregations of Manchester and Cheshire, held in Manchester on June 10, a resolution of which the Rev. W. Sharman had given notice in support of the Bill for the Abolition of Religious Persecutions, was proposed by the President—the Rev. S. A. Steinthal—from the chair, and unanimously adopted.

"BLASPHEMY" is so rife in the north of Italy that the Archbishop of Genoa has published a charge against it, in which he specially denounces the *Secolo* of Milan as a blasphemous print, which all in whose hands it may fall should burn, lest they themselves be burnt in everlasting fire.

MR. BELL, of London, having, in the course of lectures on Temperance at Abercarn, taken occasion to malign Freethinkers, Mr. Ned Morgan sends a temperate and well-written criticism to the *Evening Star of Gwent*.

THE *Pittsburgh Truth*, commenting on a statement that the Bible is to be printed in shorthand and illustrated, says: "We suggest that the work of illustrating it be given to the London *Freethinker* and the New York *Truthseeker*."

MR. SAMUEL P. PUTMAN, the enthusiastic secretary of the American Secular Union, has been evangelising the Mormons at Utah, and reports very considerable success.

FERGUSON DEFENCE FUND.—G. Alward, 3s.; C. Blyton, 6d.; T. Bird, 6d.; T. Darrell, 6d.

## UNFULFILLED PROPHECIES.

(NEW TESTAMENT.)

THE unfulfilled prophecies of Jesus have been so thoroughly dealt with by Mr. E. P. Meredith in his *Prophet of Nazareth*, that it would be unpardonable in me to write upon the subject without acknowledging my indebtedness to that too little known work. The most prominent prophecies of Jesus are those referring to the destruction of Jerusalem and his own second coming immediately following. The attempts which have been made to disprove these prophecies will not hold water. Nor can Christians escape from the glaring evidence that Jesus predicted the Final Judgment and the end of the world as about to take place during the lifetime of his contemporaries on earth.

Speaking of the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, Jesus says: "Immediately after the tribulation in those days shall the sun be darkened and the moon not give her light," etc. (Matt. xxiv., 29). This passage gives us the date of this part of the first Christian gospel. It was the outcome of the religious fanaticism which attended the destruction of Jerusalem. Not only is Jesus reported as declaring—"Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled," but he directly enjoins his disciples, "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter." "They shall deliver you up to be afflicted." "Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here who shall not taste of death till they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom." So clear and explicit are these declarations that the Swedenborgians declare they were fulfilled and that Christ did come a second time, only his second appearance was a spiritual one. The only objection to their allegorical method of interpretation is that it would prove too much. It would lead us to infer that the first coming, no less than the second, was an entirely spiritual one, and that if there was no actual coming in the clouds in the second case, so there was no actual birth from a virgin, no actual walking on water, raising the dead, or ascension into heaven.

Every one of the early Christians believed in these plain declarations of the near approach of the end of the world, when, as Paul said, "we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." The fanaticism which this belief engendered was the secret of the early success of Christianity. The Messiah was shortly to return with legions of angels to destroy the old world and establish the kingdom of heaven. This doctrine sufficiently accounts for the fearlessness with which some of the early Christians met "labors, dangers, tribulations and sufferings," not as Paley would have us believe, in attestation of the gospel miracles, but in attesting their own faith in and fear of the near approach of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. Time and the unconscious globe, however, rolled on, giving the lie to the prediction, and thereby divesting Christianity of every possible pretence to Divine origin.

That Jesus ever predicted his own death there is abundant reason to discredit. The disciples act as if they had never heard any such prediction. Far from being prepared for his violent death, they did not realise that he would be arrested, for no sooner was their master seized than, with the true spirit of Christians, "they all forsook him and fled." As Jesus, if God, could not die, even this simple prophecy was unfulfilled.

The alleged prediction of Christ that he should rise on the third day deserves a separate investigation, as its true explanation involves an understanding of the Egyptian astronomical myths. A sufficient answer to its being a prediction divinely fulfilled may be given from the fact that, according to the Gospel narratives, Christ was crucified on Friday and rose before early dawn of Sunday morning. There was thus only one clear day, a part of Friday and perhaps an hour or two on Sunday. That his followers had never heard of the prediction is evident from their embalming the body. If Mary Magdalene had heard of these predictions, surely when she found not the body she would have concluded that the promised resurrection had taken place. Instead of this her suggestion is that he is stolen (John xx., 2). When the women tell the story to the apostles "their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not" (Luke xxiv., 11). Such incredulity is inexplicable if they had heard his prediction. To make the matter more ridiculous the words forgotten by the disciples

are represented as remembered by the scribes and Pharisees who ask for a watch to be set by the grave on that account.

In delivering his final words to his disciples before levitating skywards, Jesus is reported to have predicted the signs which should follow those who believed in him. In my name, he says, they shall "cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark xvi., 17, 18). The Catholic Church still claims the power of performing miracles, and certain fanatics are found among Mormons and Salvationists, who think that only sufficient faith is needed to enable them to perform the miracles mentioned as the signs that follow believers. Very good, let them try. Let each drink a glass of prussic acid, or take up a *cobra di capello*. If they remain uninjured we may then acknowledge them as true believers. If not, we fear all Christians must be classed as unbelievers, doomed to everlasting damnation. J. M. WHEELER.

## THE GLASGOW CONFERENCE.

THE National Secular Society's Annual Conference was held last Sunday at Glasgow, in the Hall of the local Secular Society. The following places were represented: Cardiff, Deptford, Leeds, East London, Leicester, Central London, Portsmouth, Crystal Palace, Plymouth, Brighouse, Wigan, Sheffield (No. 1 Branch), Huddersfield, West Auckland, Rochdale, Heywood, Halifax, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Grimsby, Edinburgh, Oldham, Hull, Manchester, Paisley, Staleybridge, Glasgow, Hamilton, Cramlington, Sheffield (No. 2 Branch), North-West London, Bolton, Bradford, West Central London, Hackney, Perth, Bermondsey, Ball's Pond, Liverpool.

Owing to the great distance, the Midlands and the South of England were poorly represented. The fact is the Branches voted in favor of Glasgow this year simply because of Mr. Ferguson's prosecution. Next year it will be advisable to hold the Conference in the centre of England.

After the Secretary had called the roll, Mr. Bradlaugh read the President's report on behalf of the Executive. It dealt with matters familiar to our readers. Those who wish to read it in full will find it in the current number of the *National Reformer*. The most interesting item in the report was the fact that several bequests to the N. S. S. had been notified. Of course there is many a slip betwixt the cup and the lip, but some of these sums will doubtless be available for the future work of the Society. We may add that the names of Mr. Joseph Symes and Mr. W. W. Collins were received with marked applause, so that in their case out of sight is not out of mind.

The Treasurer's report was most satisfactory, showing a good balance in hand, although the year's expenditure had been rather heavy. The balance-sheet simply included the moneys received and expended by the Executive. Some years ago it was decided that the balance-sheets of the Branches should be summarised in the yearly report, but as the majority do not take the trouble to send them in, and a partial statement would be misleading, it has been thought best to omit them altogether.

The election of President then took place. Being himself a candidate, Mr. Bradlaugh vacated the chair, which was taken by Mr. Foote. Mr. Thomson (Glasgow) proposed that Mr. Bradlaugh be President for the forthcoming year. The motion was seconded and supported by the delegates from Oldham and Central London. Each speaker eulogised Mr. Bradlaugh warmly, and others were about to follow suit when Mr. Foote closed the discussion on the ground that the three speeches already made might be regarded as typical of all the rest. Mr. Bradlaugh was unanimously re-elected, and resumed the chair.

All the old Vice-Presidents were re-elected with the exception of Mr. Forster, of Darlington, who, having ceased to take an active interest in the cause, was not proposed again by the Executive. Mr. John Robertson (of the *N. R.*) had been nominated by the West Central London Branch, but the nomination was without his knowledge and he did not at present desire to stand. Mr. Bradlaugh thought the nomination premature. He did not wish to see the Vice-Presidencies made cheap. He had the highest respect for Mr. Robertson's ability and character, and had no doubt of his future; but the time for his election had not yet arrived, although it would surely come.

The previous Treasurer, Assistant-treasurer and Auditors were re-elected, and Mr. Robert Forder was continued in his office of Secretary.

Mr. G. W. Foote then moved the adoption of the revised prospectus, which had been prepared by himself, Mrs. Besant and Mr. Robertson, and approved by the Executive. A good deal of discussion followed, and amendments were proposed which in every case were clearly shown to be wrong or unnecessary. The point of chief interest was on the proposal to omit from the principles the clause "It [Secularism] excludes supernatural hopes and fears." It was thought that the expression excluded every Theist, but Mr. Foote explained on behalf of the Executive that any person who subscribed the principles could still

entertain any speculation he pleased about the universe; belief being one thing, and hopes and fears determining conduct in this life quite another. Finally, and happily, the revised prospectus was carried clause by clause without an alteration. Mr. Fisher, of Leeds, proposed a number of amendments, but owing to a misunderstanding as to the requisite notice, they were mostly out of order. Whatever alteration, therefore, the Leeds Branch contemplates will have to run the gauntlet of another Conference. This part of the proceedings closed with a warm and unanimous vote of thanks to the Revision Committee.

The Cardiff Branch took up the matter of funerals, and it was resolved that every Branch should appoint one of its members to attend funerals in the district, the expenses to be defrayed from the general fund. It was understood that a list of the persons so appointed should be published, so that application for their services could be made direct without loss of time. The resolution is a wise one, yet we pity the members who are appointed to this task, unless their term of office is very brief.

This concluded the morning sitting. At one o'clock dinner, which was none of the best, was provided at a temperance hotel, the price being two-and-sixpence. The price was high, and the place was wrong. Some of the delegates were not teetotallers, and this was carrying local option a little too far. All licensed houses in Scotland are closed on Sunday, yet at the Edinburgh Conference special arrangements were made for the delegates' dinner at any ordinary hotel, where each could please himself as to the color of his liquor. Perhaps this mishap accounted for the small number of the delegates who patronised the half-crown dinner.

The AFTERNOON SITTING opened with a vote of thanks to the Glasgow Branch for its trouble in arranging for the Conference. A Manchester veteran, Mr. Ridgway, performed the grateful task, and Mr. Allen suitably responded.

The Paisley Branch then proposed that the N.S.S. should issue a manual setting forth our principles, with their applicability to daily life. One of their delegates read as much as the Conference would hear from an essay he had prepared on the subject. It was carefully written and energetically delivered, but it threw little light upon the proposed manual. Much discussion followed, in which the pro's and con's were supported by Messrs. Thompson and Gilmour (Glasgow), Pomeroy (Cardiff), Fisher (Leeds), Harris (Manchester), and Newcome (Liverpool). Mrs. Besant also opposed the motion. She thought the principles just accepted were enough, at least for the present. A manual would be a book, and no book could be worth anything if written by a number of people. Besides, the manual would become a kind of creed. The resolution was lost.

Then our old friend the badge turned up again. Mr. Hubble (West Central London) proposed that the N.S.S. adopt a distinctive mark. He suggested the letters N.S.S. on a pin, and his heart was so much in the business that he had brought specimens with him. When this question was first mooted at Edinburgh it was received with some favor, until Mr. Foote jestingly proposed that the color should be green and worn on the first of April. Since then the proposal has reappeared but with diminishing success. It is now fairly played out. Mr. Hubble found practically no supporters, and we trust the "badge" will now be decently buried.

This was followed by a motion in favor of establishing Secular Sunday-schools for the moral training of the young, which gave rise to considerable discussion. The advantages of Sunday-schools were generally considered to be nullified by the Education Act, which provides five days' schooling for every boy and girl, while the difficulty of imparting "moral education" to children was felt to be tremendous. Mr. Foote appeared to speak the common sentiment of the Conference when he declared that the only moral training of any value which a child received was at home, example being so much more powerful than precept. The motion was lost.

Mr. Pomeroy (Cardiff) moved that the Conference express its regret and indignation at the Liberal Government's proceeding against Mr. Bradlaugh for the legal penalties he incurred in his struggle with the House of Commons. The motion was carried unanimously, after an interesting explanation from Mr. Bradlaugh as to the present state of the case, and copies were ordered to be sent to Mr. Gladstone, the Attorney-General, and the Lord Chancellor.

Mr. Foote proposed "That the best thanks of this Conference be tendered to Mr. Courtney Kenny for introducing into the House of Commons a Bill for abolishing so-called offences against religion." This was seconded, in a neat and pertinent speech by Mr. John Robertson, who urged the necessity of petitioning in favor of the Bill, if only to show Mr. Kenny and his backers that we are resolved to give them all possible support.

Mr. Forder and Mr. Reynolds urged the advisability of withdrawing children from religious education in public schools. Mr. Nicholson (Edinburgh) remarked that his Branch had been active in this matter, and Mr. Pomeroy (Cardiff) said that he had induced his wife to look favorably on the withdrawal of their children by observing that it gave her half-an-hour longer to get them ready in the morning.

Then came the most interesting feature of the Conference. A handsomely-framed portrait of himself, with a little purse, was presented to gallant old Robert Ferguson, the hero of the latest struggle against the bigots. When his name was called and he

mounted the platform, everybody scented what was coming and there was a great shout of applause. The old man was overcome; he stood not knowing what to do with himself, until he was gently pressed into the chair. His great age had scarcely bowed his tall figure, and his face was as ruddy as a plough-boy's. At Mr. Foote's request Mr. Bradlaugh made the presentation. In an earnest, brief speech he said that we should not discuss questions of taste in face of the enemy. It would be time enough to talk about politeness when Christians no longer replied to us with prosecution and imprisonment. While the essential right of Freethought was attacked it was our duty to defend it. Mr. Bradlaugh was followed by Mr. Foote, who read portions of the following letter from Mr. Angus Campbell, who so ably and energetically conducted Mr. Ferguson's case:—

"109 West George Street, Glasgow, June 12, 1886.

"GENTLEMEN,—Having now received payment in full of my own and Edinburgh correspondents' accounts connected with the prosecution of Mr. Ferguson, and the relative appeal, I have now much pleasure in handing you my cheque for twenty pounds for presentation to Mr. Ferguson. My reason for taking this course is that I consider Mr. Ferguson to have suffered largely in health and in mind in consequence of the prosecution, the imprisonment following thereon, and his attendances at Edinburgh, all which to a man of his advanced years must have been very serious indeed. Another reason, personal to yourselves, is the hearty support and sympathy I received from you in connection with the discharge of my duties as agent in the case.

"It may be that certain of your number may not altogether have approved of the line of action I took, but when I inform you that, from a legal point of view, I was bound to act as I did, you will understand that the course I took was perfectly justified alike by the requirements of the case, and the present disgraceful condition of our laws, as well as by the result of the appeal. So long as there remain on the Statute Book, laws against profanity and blasphemy, these must, to some extent at least, receive effect—hence was I driven to the necessity of adopting a technical course in the process of Suspension and Liberation.

"One good thing will doubtless result from the case, and that is that, after the distinct enunciation of opinion from the Judges of the High Court of Justiciary, there is little or no likelihood of any similar prosecution ever being again raised in Scotland.

"Again thanking you all, and in this connection let me include the name of Mr. Foote, to whose indefatigable industry is in a considerable degree to be ascribed the success which has been attained,—I am, yours very truly,

"ANGUS CAMPBELL"

Mr. Ferguson acknowledged the present in a little speech which was cut short by emotion. "This"—here he bowed and scraped at the audience and gasped for breath—"is"—another gasp—"this is the proudest moment of my life." After thanking Mr. Foote for the appeal on his behalf and the party for responding to it, he said, "I'd better just sit down, I'm not fit to say more." The old man did sit down, and the audience nearly rose. It was an affecting incident which those who witnessed are not likely to forget.

The sitting then closed with a speech from Mr. Bradlaugh, thanking the delegates for re-electing him, and hoping that if he was not destined to work for another thirty years as he had for the past, he should retain their trust until he could no longer strive.

The public meeting in the Albion Hall at half-past six was a splendid success. The place was crammed by an audience of nearly two thousand. The speakers were only three—Mr. Bradlaugh, Mrs. Besant and Mr. Foote. We have no room for any adequate report of their speeches. Suffice it to say that each appeared in good form and stirred the meeting to a high degree of enthusiasm. It was a worthy conclusion of the day's labors.

## REVIEW.

*The Hindus as they are.* By A. RUTHINASWASNY MUDALIAR, B.A. Published by the Madras Secular Society, 1886.—Mr. Mudaliar is no flatterer of his countrymen. Acquainted with western civilisation and science, he sees how far the Hindus are still sunk in the slough of ancestral custom. He does not believe in reviving the study of the ancient Vedas and Shastras, or in attempts to reconcile them to modern knowledge, but in Freethought and education as the means of their elevation. The pamphlet is calculated to do good in India and might be read with advantage in this country.

THE author of a great reformation is almost always unpopular in his own age. He generally passes his life in disquiet and danger. It is, therefore, for the interest of the human race that the memory of such men should be held in reverence, and that they should be supported against the scorn and hatred of their contemporaries by the hope of leaving a great and imperishable name. To go, on the forlorn hope of truth is a service of peril. Who will undertake it, if it be not also a service of honor? It is easy enough, after the ramparts are carried, to find men to plant the flag on the highest tower. The difficulty is to find men who are ready to go first into the breach; and it would be bad policy, indeed, to insult their remains because they fell in the breach, and did not live to penetrate to the citadel.—*Macaulay.*

