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THE FREETHINKER

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.
Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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COMIC BIBLE SKETCH.—No. 276.



THE HOLY HOSPITAL.

NO MORE HOSPITAL SATURDAYS AND SUNDAYS.

And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: so that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.—ACTS XIX, 11, 12.

MR. GLADSTONE'S BLUNDER.

UNLESS Mr. Gladstone is falsely reported he has made a very grievous mistake. His visit to Italy was one to stir the imagination. It is not quite true, as a Gladstonian paper asserts, that many years ago he annihilated Bomba's tyranny with a pamphlet. The sword of Garibaldi, which itself derived its keenness and force from a great national movement, had something to do with shattering the despotism of Bomba and of other Italian vampires. Yet Mr. Gladstone's pamphlet held a peculiarly infamous government up to the execration of Europe, and thus helped to enlist civilised opinion on the side of Italian liberty. For this service the Italians have always been grateful. Mr. Gladstone's name has become almost a household word with the Liberals of the Mediterranean peninsula; and when, crowned with the snows of eighty winters, he repaired to sunny Italy for a few weeks' recreation of body and mind, it was natural that he should be welcomed with enthusiasm. Unfortunately Mr. Gladstone has, by a most gratuitous blunder, chilled the national feeling. His restless mind would not permit his giving himself up to simple enjoyment. He took to reflecting on the internal affairs of Italy; and, instead of holding his

tongue till he returned home, he has blurted out a piece of advice to the Italians on a burning question which they rightly regard as purely domestic, and as to which they are very jealous of foreign interference. Mr. Gladstone has actually suggested that the difference between the Monarchy and the Papacy might be decided by international arbitration. It almost takes one's breath away to see such a suggestion emanating from a statesman of Mr. Gladstone's position and influence. One can scarcely believe that he realises the gravity, or indeed the nature of his proposal. Arbitration is a most excellent method of settling disputes, but it cannot determine the conflict of opposite principles, and it certainly cannot be applied unless the contending parties are willing to accept a compromise. Now in the Papal difficulty both these conditions are absent. To deny it is to show a deep ignorance of the problem. The Pope, representing the Church, and the King, representing the State, cannot possibly embrace Mr. Gladstone's sentimental proposal. They are irreconcilable antagonists. They are animated by opposite principles, between which there can be neither treaty nor truce; and both want something which cannot be divided. Century after century, from the days of Charlemagne, when the temporal power of the Vicar of Christ was established by the most shameless

fraud, the Papacy has sat at the very heart of Italy, prospering as much by the magic of the name of Rome as by its subtle and far-reaching organisation. Politically and socially it was a consummate pest. But gradually, as Italy recovered from her long abasement, the Papal power was lopped, until at last only the Eternal City was left. That was lost when Mazzini and Garibaldi planted the Republican flag on the walls of Rome; but it was recovered when the French Republic, at the instigation of Louis Napoleon, sent an army to fight against Italian freedom and set the Papacy on its legs again. This infamy sealed the fate of the French Republic itself, and there is a touch of poetic justice in the fact that it was when France lay prone at the feet of Germany that Victor Emmanuel planted *his* strong foot, backed by an Italian army, within eyeshot of the Vatican, with a firm determination to keep Rome as the capital of United Italy. Since then the Pope has been "a prisoner." The Vatican is left him, with its lovely gardens and its priceless art treasures. Inside those sacred precincts he has his own body-guard, and is free to assume all the airs of a temporal sovereign. But outside, he and his priests are no more than any other Italian citizens. There is the situation, and now look at the principles at stake. The Pope claims a divine right to rule over Rome, not simply as a priest, but as a king. How can he compromise a principle like that, a principle asserted for a thousand years, a principle which cannot be modified without making the Papal infallibility the laughing-stock of the whole world? On the other hand, King Humbert claims to rule in Rome as the sovereign of Italy. To leave it would be to leave his capital. He will not go until the armies of Europe force him away—and when will they begin the expulsion? Mr. Gladstone's suggestion, in face of a conflict like this, is little better than asking two hostile armies to sit down to cakes and ale. He is not worse, perhaps, but certainly not better than the perfumed gentleman who annoyed Harry Hotspur by remarking, among other things, that the sovereign's thing on earth was parmaceti for an inward bruise. He does not understand, apparently, that whether Signor Crispi, the Freethinker, or some Christian premier holds the reins of government in Italy, no responsible statesman could for a moment harbor the idea of making Rome, or any part of it, a present to the Pope. United Italy is a fact. Thousands of patriots have suffered and died for it, and sooner than it should be wrecked the manhood of Italy would drench the beloved soil with their heart's blood. Arbitrate! Compromise! Surely Mr. Gladstone has taken leave of his senses for once. The Pope himself must be laughing at such an addled egg of diplomacy. But the worst is that Mr. Gladstone is not incapable of sitting upon it with a grave face, and that too before the civilised world. Why is this? What has darkened his fine intelligence? The answer is simple—Religion. A High Churchman himself, Mr. Gladstone has leanings towards Catholicism. Cardinal Newman, in replying to his pamphlet on the Vatican Decrees, remarked that "Catholics may in good measure thank themselves, and no one else, for having alienated from them so religious a mind." Mr. Gladstone's polemics in favor of Christianity show the depth of his orthodoxy. He is far nearer to Rome than to Unitarianism. And what he is he will remain. A man's religion does not change at eighty. Mr. Gladstone has never been a man of ideas. He has moved forward slowly in politics, guided by a statesman's eye, and taking up one question at a time. But outside that sphere he has exhibited no sign of growth. Thus it is that he speaks so wildly on the Papal question. He looks at it with a general eye; and Mr. Gladstone's general eye sees everything in the light of religion.

G. W. FOOTE.

P.S.—Since the above was in print Mr. Gladstone has telegraphed as follows to the editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*:—"My letter is not new. It is re-translated, and the version published is untrustworthy. The statement is incorrect under the present circumstances." From this it appears that Mr. Gladstone did suggest arbitration, or he would plainly deny it; but as the letter is "not new" it is not connected with Mr. Gladstone's visit to Italy, and that is reassuring.

It is always dangerous for a Christian to enter into controversy with a sceptic. Father Lambert, whose *Notes on Ingersoll* made him somewhat notorious, is now accused of heresy by his bishop, and both have gone to Rome to lay their case before his infallibility Joachim Pecci.

DR. STANTON COIT ON "THE FEAR OF DEATH."

THE doctrines and services held by the Ethical Society at South Place Chapel are so superior to those put forward by the orthodox churches and chapels, that upon going to hear the permanent successor of Mr. Moncure D. Conway, I felt inclined to suppress as Anarchistic my troublesome doubts as to whether, after all, it is any more sensible to listen to disquisitions and exhortations in regard to conduct in this life than to exhortations or disquisitions in regard to some future one. South Place Chapel forms, no doubt, an excellent half-way house for those on the road from supernaturalism to naturalism, but to one who has completed the journey everything, from the organ to the minister's white tie, has the air of half-and-half, and when the sermon or address was over, one doubted whether a benediction would be most appropriate or not.

Dr. Coit's subject was "The Fear of Death," and he prefaced it by reading extracts from Job, Kingsley, Browning and Bryant. He began his discourse by remarking on the absence of the thought of death in animals and children. Men, he declared, systematically ignored death because too cowardly to face it. According to Dr. Coit we avoid thinking of dying as we avoid a distasteful person. We are like spendthrifts, who put off looking into their accounts because they will not bear examination. To me this view is purely fanciful. Men do not think of dying for the simple reason that no good comes of pondering on the inevitable. Spinoza well said, "A free man thinks less of nothing than of death." The work of life is sufficient to absorb all our attention without spending time in constantly thinking of its end, as Dr. Coit would have us do. For his corrective of what he calls our "overweening love of life" is the accustoming ourselves daily to the idea that we may die, and that this day may be our last.

I object to this doctrine altogether. To my mind it is decidedly immoral. To meditate upon death is, for the masses who are terrified at the unknown, to play into the hands of the priest, who has for ever thriven on this terror. If death be considered but as the entrance to eternal life, such a consideration must so dwarf this life that its duties at once become a secondary affair. Dr. Stanton Coit's recommendation has been historically tried. Christian monks and nuns have adopted the discipline he recommends, of daily meditating upon death. The result, as far as this world is concerned, has only been loss and ruin.

Disregard of death is wholesome. Everyone, of course, must be aware of it as inevitable, and should make such provision in the way of life assurance, settling his affairs by will, and so forth, as to ward off as far as possible injury to those dependent upon him. But to meditate upon death daily is simply waste of time. We might as well meditate upon sleep, or upon the condition of God before there was any universe. Dr. Coit said, of course, "I do not mean that meditation should be gloomy or morbid"; but he failed to give any indication what shape our meditations should take, save that he spoke of detaching our minds from the cares of life, and disentangling our affections from worldly things. To me this doctrine is an immoral one. To one who believes in another life, to which the present one is but infinitesimal in importance, the position is logical; but it cannot be held without danger to human morality. We cannot detach our minds from life's cares without detaching them from its duties. Shall we care less for our loved ones because we must be severed? Shall we restrain our devotion in order to lessen the shock of loss? "Death," says Dr. Coit, "is the mightiest preacher of morality. He will help us to renounce the world and the flesh." This is the old and most objectionable doctrine of Christianity. The world and the flesh cannot and should not be renounced. The effort to do so results in disaster, and in the long run is of no more use than seeking to mop out the Atlantic with a broom. I must confess that as I left South Place Chapel all my old misgivings returned, and I am now more sceptical than ever as to the efficacy of ethical culture which does not come from those old preachers, Example and Circumstance.

J. M. WHEELER.

FOR ways that are dark and tricks that are vain, the Romanising clergy run the Heathen Chinese extremely close. We see in the *English Churchman* that a Bristol vicar sends out circulars direct to the young boys and girls of his parish, urging them to "communicate," and inviting them to preliminary "confession." This without any sanction from their parents.

ACID DROPS.

THE chief bit of Christmas news from the Continent is this. The Germans say their new explosive will completely destroy any French fort in six or eight hours, while the French claim to have discovered a new powder ever so much stronger than the old stuff, which can be soaked in water for twenty-four hours without losing its explosive force. What a fine comment on that fabulous old text, "Peace on Earth." Those herald angels evidently made a mistake. They didn't understand the nature of Christianity, or they would have sung quite another song to "the new-born king."

COMMENTING on this new French gunpowder, the *Pall Mall Gazette* says that "keep your powder dry" is out of date, but "trust in God" can never become obsolete. Indeed! Then why all this competition in the art of destruction? Why not leave the issues of war entirely to God? Why not settle international disputes with praying matches?

THE drama is one of the diabolical influences mentioned in the Pope's Encyclical. This is very natural. There has always been enmity, based on trade jealousy, between the pulpit and the stage. Up to the present the pulpit has had the ascendancy, but now the stage is transcending its rival. The London papers gave the Pope's anathema less than a tenth of the space they gave to Mr. Irving's "Macbeth."

ANOTHER diabolical influence, says the Pope, is materialistic and Atheistic teaching. We are glad to hear it is alarming the papacy. That means progress.

WHILE the Pope is damning the drama some of our London clergy are trying to use it for their own ends. We do not refer to Mr. Headlam's Church and Stage Guild, or ecclesiastical flirtation with ballet girls, but to a play called "The Conversion of England" which is being enacted in various parts of London. The play dramatises the arrival of Augustine and the conversion of Ethelbert. The chief parts are taken by clergymen, who fancy this little device will have a great effect on our modern Babylon.

LONDON has nearly six hundred places of amusement, and Mr. Irving reckons the theatre-goers in the metropolis at eight hundred thousand. That is a larger number than the church-goers.

"YOURS in the Lord, C. H. Spurgeon," sent a New Year's greeting to his flock from Mentone. "I heartily wish myself among you," he says, "whatever the cold and fog may be." Nevertheless he stays beside the blue Mediterranean, and gives the cold and fog a wide berth. Some of us, who don't make two or three thousand a year by preaching the gospel of poverty and renunciation, would like to be half as fortunate.

It is not often that a Christian minister resigns his pulpit because he fears he is too orthodox. Yet that was the chief reason which induced the Rev. E. Gough, of Barrowford, to place his resignation in the hands of his congregation. "I wish you to know," he said, "that twelve years' laborious and prayerful study of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures has convinced me that the Bible, from the beginning to the end of it, is verbally inspired." Mr. Gough's congregation, however, were not terrified at this discovery. They unanimously besought him to reconsider his resignation, and after a very little pressing it was withdrawn. Barrowford, therefore, boasts a minister and a congregation of unimpeachable orthodoxy. There are no doubts in that quarter about Adam's rib, Eve's apple, Joshua's astronomy, Noah's flood, Balaam's ass, or Jonah's whale. The flood of infidelity which Mr. Gladstone says is sweeping over the country may half-drown other places, but Barrowford remains as dry as a bone.

No one who reflects that the most catching music-hall songs are full of double meaning will be surprised to hear that several of our *lions comiques* are extremely pious. The great Vance, who died the other evening of heart disease, attended early morning service at Westminster Abbey on the day of his last exit from the stage. Mr. Charles Coborn, we hear, is actually a churchwarden, and has a mania for opposing "infidelity."

JULIA SPICKERNELL has been charged at the Dalston Police-court with the wilful murder of her child, Mabel Constance, aged nine months, by drowning her in a pail of water. The poor woman appears to have been beside herself. According to the *Daily News* report, she has been subject to *religious mania*.

AN inquest was held on Saturday, Dec. 29, at the Mermaid Tavern, Hackney, on the body of Jane Norris, aged 43, the widow of a commercial traveller, who, driven by anxiety and privation, sought refuge from trouble in a suicide's grave. A very touching letter to one of her sons was found in her pocket. "God bless you" occurred twice in a dozen lines. We offer this as another illustration for Talmage's next sermon on infidelity and suicide.

THE Rev. E. C. Corfe, preaching at Stroud on behalf of the Home Missions of the Church of England, told some wondrous tales of doings among "the infidels of the East-end of London." He is reported as saying that in some parishes "Church work had emptied infidel clubs, and acquired them as mission halls." We should like some information of what these clubs were, and when they were so acquired. He then went on to say that "In another parish, containing the scum of the population, an infidel lecturer wilfully misquoted the Scriptures at a meeting, and on a clergyman correcting him the lecturer had to run for his life." This, we suppose, was a triumph of Home Mission work. As Mr. Corfe gives no particulars of who this "infidel lecturer" was who "wilfully misquoted the Scriptures," we doubt the truth as much as the charity of his story. Sky-pilots so often dispense with these when speaking of infidels, and endeavoring, as Mr. Corfe was, to obtain subscriptions for their Christian work.

CHRISTMAS Eve was celebrated with much peace and good-will at Boherboy, in county Limerick. Two mobs (Catholic and Protestant we presume) attacked each other with stones, and the police were obliged to clear the streets.

WE commend to Judge North's attention a recent proclamation by the chief magistrate of the Chinese city of Lu-ngan Fu. Some English missionaries had made a few converts, who had smashed up their idols. Could there be a more flagrant outrage on the "religious feelings" of their countrymen? According to Judge North, nay, according to Lord Coleridge, such conduct calls for the infliction of penalties in the interests of the public peace. Yet, although the peace was broken by the countrymen of these iconoclastic converts, who stirred up a riot against them, the Chinese magistrate calls them "senseless scoundrels." Referring to the missionaries, he says—"They have come to propagate religion; they do so in accordance with treaty right. Those are at liberty to hear who will. Anyone who interferes with them must at once be arrested and punished with the utmost rigor." Evidently they manage these things much better in China. How that worthy magistrate would stare on learning that the Christian missionaries, whose religious freedom he protects in a foreign country, follow a very different method in their own land, where they "punish with the utmost rigor" those who oppose *their* religion, although the opposers are their own countrymen.

THE *Christian Commonwealth*, in speaking of the new temple consecrated by American Buddhists at New York, speaks of Buddhism as an "abominable paganism in its native lair." Christians talk of other religions in this insulting fashion, and yet expect other people to speak in the most respectful way of *their* religion in order not to hurt their feelings.

THE Czar of Russia is very superstitious. He carries about a bit of the true cross—the *true* cross, mark—on his imperial person; and on one occasion, having accidentally left the relic at home, he stopped the train for several hours till it was brought to him. This superstitious gentleman governs eighty million people by the grace of God and their own stupidity.

THE Rev. A. L. F. Baker, writing in the *Rock*, shows that Christmas and its customs are undoubtedly of pagan origin, and that the Christians adopted the pagan festivals. He quotes Tertullian's rebuke of the inconsistency of the Christians of his day as contrasted with the fidelity of the pagans:—"By us," says he, "who are strangers to Sabbaths (Jewish Sabbaths) and new moons, once acceptable to God, the Saturnalia, the Feast of January, the Brumalia and Matronalia, are now frequented; oh, how much more faithful are the heathen to their religion, who take special care to adopt no solemnity from the Christians" (Tertullian, *De Idolatria*, c. 14).

BACON justly said that almost any passion will conquer the fear of death, on which the clergy are always trading. Over at Dublin a coroner's inquest has been held on the body of a young fellow named Burke. He had been to a football match, and, travelling back by train, he jumped out before it stopped in order to avoid paying the fare. He fell under the carriage and was frightfully injured. On help arriving, he murmured, "My arms and legs are on the line. This was all for the sake of twopence."

WE have always held that revival movements do not swell the ranks of Christianity. They merely draw Christians from one place to another. In proof of this we may cite the recent case at Rochester, where Dean Hole has been drawing large congregations at the cathedral on Sunday evenings, chiefly by means of attractive music. The consequence is that other places of worship are robbed of their attendants, and, which is worse of their offertories. So many complaints have been made that Dean Hole has agreed to make a collection at his Sunday evening service, and to divide it among the clergy whose funds have suffered.

THE Rev. F. B. Nunnely has obtained a divorce. His wife played the harmonium at the evening services as usual and at the conclusion eloped with the churchwarden.

THE Salvation Army persists in blocking a thoroughfare in Plymouth with their meetings. The street is so narrow that two vehicles cannot pass each other. The neighborhood is a low one and great uproar prevailed. The defendants refused to promise not to obstruct the thoroughfare and were each fined 1s. and 4s. costs. As they left the court they "fired a volley," that is, they shouted "Amen" at the top of their voices.

AN English sailor, singing as he sat at his work of cleaning the side of his ship at Sierra Leone, was suddenly seized by the feet, which were in the water, and disappeared. Nothing was seen or heard of him until a few days later one of his limbs was ejected from the maw of a newly caught shark. He had evidently been seized by one of these monsters of the deep and dragged down and torn in pieces by a contending swarm. How beautiful and beneficent are the works of God. Bless him, O ye sharks and tigers and vipers, for the prey he graciously sends to feed you day by day.

THERE was an awkward batten in "Mustard and Cress" in the *Referee* of December 23. Mr. Sims had written "I am Father Christmas," but it came out in print "I am Father Christ."

IN the recent terrible disaster of the burning of a steamer on the Mississippi, the pilot deserted his post and sprang overboard to save his life. A deck hand named Jim Givens saw that the only means of saving the passengers from a fearful death was to bring the steamer to the bank. He sprang through the flames, seized the wheel, brought the steamer to the shore, and lashed the wheel so as to keep her there. Then he dashed through the flames, jumped into the river, and was pulled ashore in so horribly burnt a condition that he died after a few hours of indescribable agony. According to orthodox Christianity, if Jim Givens doesn't happen to believe rightly in Jesus Christ, he has gone, not to a few hours of indescribable agony, but to an eternity of it. If the pilot who abandoned his fellows is a believer, or subsequently becomes one, he will look down from paradise upon the everlasting agony of the brave man who sought the salvation of others at the expense of his own. Cowards and murderers have time and opportunity for repentance and faith. They can secure heaven when the self-sacrificing hero loses it by seeking the welfare of others instead of his own.

THE Vicar of Woodplumpton has disappeared after being seen in company with a woman who apparently reproached and assaulted him. He left a letter in which he says, "I am a ruined man." He asks for some kindly remembrance to set against his faults.

THE Rev. Canon Baynes, formerly Vicar of Folkestone and Hon. Canon of Worcester, has been sentenced at the Oxford County Sessions to four months' imprisonment for obtaining money by means of fraudulent cheques. Perhaps out of tenderness to the culprit's cloth, the Recorder asked the jury to acquit the prisoner, but they very properly found him guilty.

FATHER O'REILLY got into a mess with the Merthyr Board of Guardians. His reverence was shocked at the idea of an orphan girl who had been brought up in the Aberdare Industrial School being in the employment of a Protestant doctor. Accordingly he sent her a postal order for 3s., and advised her to forego a month's wages and leave at once. But the law is on the side of the guardians, and Father O'Reilly had to sing small after being read a severe lesson.

A CLERGYMAN has discharged his housekeeper for the sole reason that she reads the *Christian* and refuses to give up that journal. The *Rock* points out that there is nothing in that paper antagonistic to Churchmen, and that the intolerance of clergymen does great harm to the cause they are supposed to support.

THE Jezreelites are gradually dissolving. The few who still possess anything have sold off and left Chatham, while the poor dupes of the late "Mr. and Mrs. Jezreel" are distracted by rival candidates for the leadership. Meanwhile their huge building for the reception of the 144,000 elect stands roofless, a prey to the elements, and the mass of scaffolding shakes in the wind and rots in the rain. By-and-bye the Jezreelites will disappear, and the historian will have another big craze to record among the religious phenomena of this enlightened nineteenth century.

AFTER a considerable rumpus on the part of the Jewish community in Manchester and Liverpool, the managers of the Macclesfield Industrial School released the Jewish boy Cantrovitch from attendance on Christmas services and from work on the Jewish holy days. In the ordinary prisons there is provision made, not only for Catholics, Protestants, and Jews, but for devotees of other faiths. No provision, however, is made for Freethinkers, who might wish to commemorate the birthday of Voltaire or Paine. Still the grievance is an infinitesimal one, for Freethinkers very rarely enter those establishments. Theoretically—being utterly depraved—they ought to fill the prisons, but they don't. It is another of those cases in which Christian logic will not square with the facts.

ACCORDING to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Cardinal Manning, who is now eighty-three, "has entirely recovered from his recent indisposition, and is now setting to on an elaborate article for the *New York Forum*, in which he intends, on the strength of a book recently published by a competent authority, to smash, pulverise, and destroy the Common School system of America." We respect courage, and Cardinal Manning must have plenty of it—or of something next door to it—to attempt such a feat. But he won't make much of a show unless he does better than he did in the article which Ingersoll has mercilessly refuted in *Rome or Reason*?

AUSTRIA is a Christian country, and here is a specimen of its sensitive humanity. A prisoner at Ratibor, under sentence of death, is trying to cheat the gallows by starving himself; while the prison authorities, in order to circumvent him, and so have the pleasure of hanging him, screw his jaws open twice a day and feed him through an india-rubber tube with milk gruel.

THERE are many good arguments in favor of the abolition of capital punishment, but what honest and thoughtful man can entertain any respect for the mawkish sentimentalism of Christian pietists on this subject? Mr. William Welby, ex-sheriff of Canterbury, writes to the *Daily News* demanding a respite for the condemned lads at Maidstone. "Are we Christians?" he asks, and then he adds, "In my shrievalty a poor love-sick boy was executed for shooting his sweetheart." How awfully sad! Mr. Welby speaks with tears in his voice. Fancy hanging a poor young fellow for shooting a girl! Had he shot himself, his crime would have been unpardonable; but as he only shot somebody else, he is a proper object of Christian sympathy. What a pity Mr. Welby was not allowed to adopt the unfortunate youth into his own family!

MR. WELBY, of course, writes as a man. The boy was love-sick, and couldn't help shooting a female. The logic is perfect—from the male point of view; but the women are likely to look at the matter in a different light. They would probably dissent from the doctrine that their sex are proper targets for love-sick boys. We should say their opinion would rather be that if a love-sick boy must handle a loaded pistol, he had better find another love-sick boy to shoot at, so that two fools might go out of the world together.

Now let us look at Mr. Welby's proposal. He doesn't go to the length of suggesting that two young men, without a rudiment of conscience, and capable of practising murder as a pastime, should be turned loose upon society! Oh dear no! Mr. Welby might get a bullet through his own brain one of these days, and that would be extremely awkward. What Mr. Welby suggests is that they "should be set to work for life." In other words, they should be respited from the gallows, and subjected to penal servitude for the remainder of their lives. This, of course, may be a mercy to Mr. Welby's feelings, for he is shocked at the notion of anybody being hung, but it is a very questionable mercy to the prisoners. Death, short and sharp, is a great deal better than twenty, thirty, or forty years of death in life.

THE fact is, our whole system of legal punishment, from petty theft to murder, requires overhauling. Our present methods are as brutal as they are foolish. We must get rid of the Christian idea of punishment, as well as the Christian sentimentalism which coddles criminals at the expense of honest men. We must look upon the restraint of criminals as necessary for the protection of society; and then, having got the criminals helpless in our clutch, we should make an assortment. Some, probably the largest number, might be released with safety, improved in health, mind, and character, by scientific—not Christian—treatment. The rest should be permanently detained, and treated as moral lunatics. Every consideration should be shown them, and they should be allowed the healthiest enjoyment of life, subject to the one condition which their detention involves, namely the impossibility of their procreating little duplicates of their vicious selves.

OVER in France, where a shameless and, as we think, an incapable adventurer, is plotting the overthrow of the Republic, we see the Catholic priests abetting Boulanger. And now this charlatan is going to contest the vacancy in Paris, who is it the friends of free government are calling upon to oppose him? Why the atheistic Victor Schœlcher, whose character is that of a saint as well as a hero, and whose name is inseparably connected with the humanisation of the law and social life of France.

THE *Rock* holds that the belief in Incarnations so common in false religions is a proof that God at a very early period must have revealed the future occurrences of such an event. Is it not rather a proof that belief in incarnations of deity is a common product of human nature, and that Christianity merely follows the "false religions" in adopting the common product of superstition? The *Rock* says that "the Evil One has always loved to counterfeit the truth." But in the case of the Incarnation of Jesus, God has apparently imitated the falsehood which was already in circulation under the auspices of the Devil. Why does God follow out the ideas of the Devil? Or why does he allow himself to be forestalled by his rival?

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURES.

Sunday, January 6, Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, at 7.30, "How God Was Born."

January 13, Liverpool; 20, London Hall of Science; 27, Camberwell.

February 3, London Hall of Science; 10, London Hall of Science; 17, Manchester; 21, Hackney Workmen's Club.

March 3, Milton Hall; 10, Newcastle; 17, Claremont Hall; 24, Camberwell.

April 14, Hall of Science; 21, Hall of Science; 28, Camberwell.

May 11, Milton Hall; 19, Milton Hall; 26, Camberwell.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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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. Australia, China, and Africa:—One Year, 8s. 8d.; Half Year, 4s. 4d.; Three Months 2s. 2d. India:—One Year, 10s. 10d.; Half Year, 5s. 5d.; Three Months, 2s. 8½d.

JOHN SPEERS (Newcastle).—Mr. Hubert Bland is the editor of *To-Day*. The review you referred to appeared after the School Board election, and could not therefore have affected it in the slightest degree.

J. L. HUGHES.—You do not appear to grasp the issue involved. Acting in a certain way to make inquiring Christians come over to Free-thought is one thing; acting in a certain way to conciliate or hoodwink bigots is quite another. You say you are "sure the greater portion of Freethinkers like the racy style in which the paper is written." Well, that is at least something. You will never find a journal which pleases you in every detail from the title to the imprint.

C. HEATON.—We cannot answer your question. The funeral was strictly private.

EX-RITUALIST.—Always glad to receive your valued contributions. It is pleasant to hear that you find our Christmas Number for 1888 "the most readable and jolliest" you have yet seen. Thanks for your new year's good wishes, which we heartily reciprocate.

J. BROWN.—You were too late for a paragraph in last week's *Freethinker*, as we had to print on the Monday, owing to the Christmas holidays.

G. WARD.—Cutting received with thanks. We hope to realise your wishes for our prosperity in the new year.

JOSEPH BROWN.—The date is booked.

ANONYMOUS correspondents are warned that their communications go into the waste basket.

FREETHOUGHT.—The passage you refer to is as follows: "I cannot persuade myself that a beneficent and omnipotent God would have designedly created the Ichneumonidae with the express intention of their feeding within the living bodies of Caterpillars."—*Darwin's Life and Letters*, vol. ii., p. 312.

CAPTAIN OTTO THOMSON (Sweden).—Received with thanks. We trust Messrs. Lennstrand and Lindquist are none the worse in health for their sufferings on behalf of Freethought.

G. RAWSON.—Your newsagent is deceiving you or he is deceived himself. Our Christmas Number has been on sale for weeks. There should be no difficulty in obtaining it. Your newsagent should insist on being supplied by his wholesale agent.

J. BURRELL writes, with respect to a Freethought funeral recorded in another column, that "the gravedigger was fixed with astonishment, and said he did not quite understand it, but the words were beautiful."

A LABORER.—Thanks for the cuttings. Glad to hear you found the paragraphs useful.

D. M. GILBERT.—Thanks for the item and your good wishes for the new year.

R. S. SEAGO sends £1 1s from G. Jardine, South Africa, a subscription to the School Board Election Fund.

F. MILLAR.—Jokes received with thanks.

G. NAEWIGER, 5 Hull Place, Osborn Street, Hull, thanks the Glasgow, Birmingham, and Perth friends who sent him batches of Freethought literature for distribution. He would also like to meet some Hull Freethinkers at his house on Sunday, Jan. 6, at 3 p.m., for the purpose of starting a branch of the N. S. S. in that priest-ridden town.

E. L. G.—Received with many thanks.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Shields Gazette—Freidenker—Echo—Diggers' News—Independent Pulpit—Western Figaro—Open Court—Fair Play—Boston Investigator—Liberty—Lucifer—Glasgow Evening Citizen—Stroud News—Truthseeker—Bulletin des Sommaires—Freethought—Liberator—Menschentum.

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

TO OUR READERS.

WE hoped to be able to enlarge the *Freethinker* to twelve pages with the new year. But a difficulty has arisen. Owing to the way in which the paper would have to be folded, twelve-pages is an awkward size, and the machine on which this journal is now printed will not quite take the extended sheet. There is, however, a chance of a larger machine being available shortly, and we would rather wait than change the *shape* of the paper.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE Ball's Pond Branch has been for some time rather quiescent, but it is now arranging a fresh course of Sunday evening lectures. Mr. Foote opens the ball to-day (Jan. 6), his subject being, "How God was Born." There should be a rally of Freethinkers in the district, and if each can bring an orthodox friend so much the better.

MR. S. M. PEACOCK, who is an ardent and energetic Freethinker, will we hope maintain his seat on the South Shields School Board. His supporters have begun operations, and we trust they will spare no effort to secure his success at the approaching election. The bigots appear to be active in their hostility to his candidature. One of them, under the curious pen-name of "Truth," writes to the *Daily Gazette*, reminding its readers that Mr. Peacock has called the Bible "an immoral book," and "insulted the intelligent as well as the religious public." We day say "Truth" is a local sky-pilot with a professional interest in Bible teaching.

SIGNOR MANCINI, the recently deceased Italian statesman, was, we believe, an earnest Freethinker. His anti-clerical proclivities were notorious. He was also a great legal reformer. In 1865, when Minister of Public Instruction, he carried the abolition of capital punishment. This act was repealed in 1874, but was again carried in 1876, when Signor Mancini became Minister of Justice. Cardinal Manning, in his *North American Review* article to which Ingersoll replies in *Rome or Reason?* bitterly complains of Signor Mancini's harassing laws against the Catholic Church; but "harassing," in the Cardinal's vocabulary, only means interfering with the Church's privileges.

DAVID HUME'S death was one of the calmest and most philosophical on record. Evidence of this is given in Mr. Foote's *Infidel Death-Beds*, and a fresh proof appears in Hume's letters to his publisher, Strahan, which have just been given to the world under the editorship of Dr. Hill. Hume died on August 25, 1776, and he wrote to Strahan as follows on August 12:—"This, dear sir, is the last correction I shall ever trouble you with; for Dr. Black has promised me that all shall be over with me in a very little time. . . . And, indeed, I consider it as good news. . . . Adieu, then, my good and old friend." Commenting on this, the *Daily News* says that "no man ever, surely, went to death with a less troubled heart."

MR. J. D. SHAW, editor of the *Independent Pulpit*, of Texas, has been taunted by one of his old comrades in the ministry of the Methodist Church that "Infidels will not stand by you." But Mr. Shaw is able to tell him that he will have to revise his opinion. The task of upholding a Freethought journal in a new district is no light one; and in congratulating Mr. Shaw on his gallant fight and the high standard of excellence which he has maintained, we hope he will receive the support of all the "infidels" in the Southern States.

MR. JOSEPH SYMES'S struggle with the authorities at Melbourne for the right of free speech in the open air has attracted the attention of the English press. The *Pall Mall Gazette*, at least, gave a very fair account of his case on Monday evening, under the head of a "Trafalgar Square Question in Victoria."

WE see that Mr. L. K. Washburn, of Revere, Massachusetts, one of the most indefatigable lecturers on the Freethought platform in America, has issued in pamphlet form a new lecture entitled *Was Jesus Insane?* This very subject was treated by Mr. Foote half a dozen years ago, and was also published as a pamphlet. We shall be glad to see and notice Mr. Washburn's lecture if it is forwarded to us.

MR. BRADLAUGH, M.P., is at present in Paris, and attended the sitting of the Chamber on Saturday. He was "chaperoned" by his friends M. Clémenceau and M. Yves Guyot, and fraternised a great deal with the members of the Extreme Left. The massive head and frame of the member for Northampton made a bit of a sensation in the Palais Bourbon, where men of his size and stature are rarely to be seen, although among the country deputies there are a few stalwart specimens of humanity.—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

MR. E. B. TYLOR has accepted the first two year's incumbency of the Gifford lectureship at Aberdeen. Should his discourses be published, as we may expect, the world will gain a book in ten thousand. Dr. Tylor is one of the best and soundest thinkers of the age.

By the way, the *Echo* spells Dr. Tylor's name three times running as *Tyler*. The same journal reduces Dr. Hutcheson Stirling to *Dr. Hutcheson*, and actually refers to Mr. Black, the publisher, as one of the editors of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. No doubt the *Freethinker* is a most vulgar, illiterate journal, but it doesn't make mistakes like that.

WATTS AND CO. publish in pamphlet form what is called *A Friendly Correspondence with Mr. Gladstone about Creeds* by Mr.

Samuel Laing. The friendly correspondence is very one-sided, for Mr. Gladstone's two letters, being "private and confidential," cannot be printed. Mr. Laing draws up for Mr. Gladstone a "body of negative propositions, which have been so far adopted on the negative side as to be what the Apostles and other accepted creeds are on the positive." Every one of these propositions, however, is contained, with many more, in Colonel Ingersoll's *Reply to Gladstone*. Mr. Laing has no mandate to draw up the negative *Credo* which Mr. Gladstone desires, and we should decline to be bound by his statement. With regard to Revelation, for instance, he simply appeals to physical science, almost entirely neglecting comparative religion and anthropology, which, in the hands of men like Rénan and Tylor, explain, and thus settle for ever, the genesis and development of myths, legends, and superstitions, including that great superstition of the human soul, which Mr. Laing has apparently not yet fully dismissed. As for Mr. Laing's theory of "polarity," we merely say it is not a recognised article of the "negative faith," and in talking about "the reality of Free Will" he is really representing no one but himself.

AMONG the positive articles of Agnosticism, Mr. Laing reckons "the denial of Atheism, and of a purely mechanical Materialism." Very well, then. Passing over the nonsense of calling a denial positive, we find that Agnosticism is a form of Theism. If that is what Mr. Laing means—and surely it is what the denial of Atheism means—he should plainly say so. Talking about "behind the veil" is natural in a Theistic poet like Tennyson, but in Mr. Laing it is little less than humbug. We may also tell Mr. Laing that if he wants to find the positive attitude of Atheists, it is expressed in the programme of the National Secular Society.

MR. LAING'S reference to Heaven and Hell is that of a dilettante disbeliever. He undoubtedly believes that both are fictions, but he does not like to say so. If one speaks to him of Heaven and Hell he says: "It may be so; I do not know." Just as though such tremendous doctrines can be dealt with in this easy-going fashion! This is not the spirit which will ever touch the multitude of common folk, who have hearts in their bosoms as well as brains in their heads. They cannot discuss Heaven and Hell as they might discuss to-morrow's weather or next week's prospects or other such events "behind the veil." Nor would Mr. Laing talk about Heaven and Hell so serenely if he were not a confirmed *disbeliever*. His suspense of mind is merely metaphysical; practically he does not suspend his judgment at all.

DOES Mr. Laing believe in the divine right of kings, or does he consider it an open question? Of course not. He would laugh at it. But why? He cannot disprove it. For all he *knows* to the contrary, kings rule by the grace of God, or the Unknowable, or whatever it is "behind the veil." But Mr. Laing would say, "Oh, I can explain how that superstition arose, how it was fostered by circumstances, and how in other circumstances it decays. There is nothing mysterious about it." Precisely so. And the same may be said of Heaven and Hell. Every fallacy of Animism is as explicable as the divine right of kings, and when a fallacy is explained there is an end to it.

ON the whole we cannot welcome this pamphlet. It does not sustain Mr. Laing's reputation. It seems to us hasty and ill-concocted. No one ignorant of the fact would suspect that the author penned such a volume as *Modern Science and Modern Thought*. Perhaps Mr. Laing's failure is due to his great deference to Mr. Gladstone as his political chief. But the Republic of Truth knows no monarchs—it only knows citizens.

THE annual balance-sheet of the Liverpool Secular Sick and Tontine Society is a flourishing document. The society's business is conducted so economically that, out of 30s. per member paid in, 22s. 3d. was returned at the close of the year, after meeting sick claims and paying doctors' fees. There ought to be a rush of members into such a prosperous organisation.

A SPECIAL meeting of the Liverpool Branch will be held this evening (Jan. 6) for the purpose of strengthening its organisation. Local Freethinkers are earnestly invited to attend.

THE funeral of M. Hude, the late deputy of the Seine, took place yesterday afternoon at Issy, near Paris. The deceased having been a Freethinker, there was no church service. A battalion of infantry marched before the hearse, which was followed by the members of the Corporation of Issy, several Freemason lodges, the local bands, M. de Mahy, and several deputies and functionaries. M. Pichou, deputy for Paris, made a speech over the grave, the concluding words of which were received with cries of "Long live the Republic!"—*Daily News*, Jan. 1.

THERE is plenty of work for the Lord's Day Observance Society. Carter, Paterson, and Co., the carriers, in the course of delivering 36,000 parcels on Sunday, Dec. 23, only met with 24 people who refused to receive a parcel on account of its being the Lord's Day.

MR. W. COOKNEY, 1A Willow Street, Paul Street, Finsbury, E.C., acknowledges the following subscriptions for the Hall of

Science Annual Children's Party, which will be held on Wednesday, Jan. 30:—Collected at Hall of Science, £2 3s. 2½d.; J. Robertson, 5s.; — Halley, 6d.; Mrs Houghton, 1s. 6d.; Mr. and Mrs. Burton, 5s.; Horace Seal (Brighton), £3; — Botting, 2s. W. J. Birch, Esq., 10s. Per Mrs Cookney—A. C., 2s.; E. Edwards, 6d.; — Rice, 6d.; Friend, 1s.; — Ronney, 2s.; — Parris, 1s.; Sleigh and Family, 4s.; Friend, 6d.; Mrs. Hunt, 6d.; Mr. Doran, 2s.

AMERICAN Freethinkers have determined to raise the question whether the will of Stephen Girard is being duly carried out. He left a munificent endowment for an orphanage college at Philadelphia on the conditions that only secular instruction should be given and that all ministers should be excluded, but the pious have contrived to evade and nullify these conditions. A subscription for testing the question has been opened, and several hundred dollars have been subscribed.

It is often reported that Colonel Ingersoll has quitted the Freethought platform. We are pleased, however, to notice that he is announced to lecture in Toronto and that the people of California hope to induce him to pay them a visit.

AN eight-days' debate has taken place at Silverton, Oregon, between Mr. B. F. Underwood and the Rev. Clark Braden, the maligner of Colonel Ingersoll. From a brief report in *Freethought* it appears that Mr. Underwood's supporters are well satisfied with the result. Braden, instead of burying the Secular Union, as he advertised he would do, found it at the end of the battle so lively a corpse that he was glad to get away from it.

CHRIST'S MIRACLES.

VIII.—MARITIME MIRACLES (*concluded*).

JESUS appears to be anxious to take the responsibility for the storms that lash the ocean into fury and wild destructiveness. On this miniature ocean of the Sea of Galilee he stilled a storm, thus showing that he controls the winds and waves when he chooses, and that they can only swallow doomed ships and dash shipwrecked mariners on the merciless rocks by his permission or by his command.

According to Matt. viii., 24, when Jesus and his disciples had entered into a ship "there arose a great tempest in the sea, inasmuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but he was asleep." Mark iv., 37, says that "the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full." As the ships of this lake were apparently only open fishing boats, it is strange that the "ship" floated so well when "covered with the waves," and still stranger that Jesus should be "asleep on a pillow" under such watery conditions and amidst the tossing of the waves and all the noise and confusion of the "great tempest." Apparently the story-teller only sends him to sleep for dramatic purposes. The tempest thus comes upon him unawares, and the distress of the disciples in the fishing boat, "covered with the waves" and "filled with water," is shown in their coming to Jesus and rousing him from the theatrical slumber in which the supreme rider of whirlwinds and director of storms is wrapt. Jesus then arises and "rebukes" the wind and the sea, which straightway subside, so that the great tempest is at once converted into "a great calm." Seeing that Jesus, like Britannia, rules the waves, and that wind and weather are his obsequious slaves, why does he not give the world a perpetual miracle in the abolition of storms? Instead of an obscure and unverified tradition of the miraculous ceasing of a sudden gust of wind on a mountain lake liable to such abrupt changes, why does he not stop storms on the wide ocean as a lasting sign of his power? If he announced beforehand the entire abolition of earthquakes, volcanoes, floods, droughts, storms, and so forth, and then carried out his promise, would not such a perpetual proof of his power convince and convert the world, and so achieve the great object of his mission, which up to the present has proved a failure so far as the bulk of mankind are concerned?

One night when the apostles were in a ship "in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves," Jesus took it into his head to walk out to them (Matt. xiv., 24-27). How did he keep his balance on the foaming waves? How did he get foothold to make his way against contrary winds? What a curious kind of walking, or "making believe" to walk, it must have been. What made Jesus carry out so strange a freak as this? Is it not more like the offspring of a schoolboy's imagination than the action of a supernaturally wise being? Why did Jesus, too, choose to show his power at night and only to a few of his disciples after he had "sent the multitudes away?" Why did he not let the multitudes see his divine performance by broad day-

light so that the doubters might be convinced and the believers might have their faith increased? If he had openly walked on the sea before the towns of Capernaum and Bethsaida, or better still if he had walked on the sea at Athens or some other great civilised sea-town, and had had the miracle duly witnessed and verified, and carefully recorded in public documents and the works of great philosophers and historians, how valuable such proof of his powers would have been. If he had taken all his apostles out to sea with him the miracle would have been still more striking. He promised to carry them up into the clouds on his speedy return; and walking on waves should be an easier miracle than floating in air.

Peter evidently felt that one, at least, of the apostles might work this miracle, for on finding that the maritime apparition was Jesus, he was struck with the ambition to imitate the surprising feat of his Lord and Master. At Peter's request Jesus told him to come to him, whereupon Peter, when he "was come down out of the ship," "walked on the water, to go to Jesus" (Matt. xiv., 29). The curling breakers supported his steps just as solid masonry would have done. Peter and Jesus bobbed up and down like two buoys on the rolling deep, keeping upright, of course, in a fashion which Blondin could hardly imitate, even with a canoe and his balancing pole to help him. But Peter "saw the wind" was boisterous. Becoming alarmed, he began to sink in proportion as he lost faith. As the sinking of a lactometer measures the density of milk, so the sinking of Peter measured his diminishing faith. If this animated fideometer had been properly graduated with a scale, a scientific observer might have gauged the precise extent to which poor Peter's faith oozed from his finger tips with each fresh gust of wind or each onrush of a great splashing, foaming billow. Peter's faith oozed away so fast, and the waves beneath his feet became so much less solid than heretofore, that Peter had to cry out to Jesus to save him. Jesus, whose floating powers still remained perfect, then caught hold of Peter and carried him to the ship. And so endeth the childish story of walking on the water.

W. P. BALL.

THE AGNOSTIC'S CREED.

BY MR. SAMUEL LAING.

Article I.—That the subjects which positive creeds profess to define are, for the most part, unknowable—that is, beyond the scope of human reason or conception.

II.—That Darwinism—or, in other words, evolution by known or knowable natural laws—affords the true explanation of all that (apart from Revelation) we do or can know respecting this inscrutable First Cause, its attributes and relations to man, and such mysteries as birth, life, and immortality.

III.—I have said "apart from Revelation," for a revelation, attested by prophecies and miracles, is a conceivable proposition, and might teach us things which, without it, we could never know. But it is a question of evidence, and whereas every fair-minded man must admit that it ought to be extremely strong and almost irresistible, we find it to be extremely weak and wholly insufficient.

IV.—It is insufficient, because it rests solely on the assumed inspiration of the Bible—a theory which breaks down when tested by the ordinary rules of criticism, and examined impartially by the light of modern knowledge, unbiassed by any violent prepossession in its favor from tradition and authority.

V.—The theory of Revelation breaks down, because an inspired revelation cannot contain falsehoods, and many of the statements in the Bible are demonstrably untrue, generally as regards the facts of the universe, and specially as regards the origin of man.

VI.—Thus far the Articles of the Negative Creed have been purely negative, and I believe that all who are called Agnostics would agree with them. There are, however, certain positive articles which are generally, though perhaps not universally, held. For instance, the denial of Atheism, and of a purely mechanical Materialism.

VII.—Morals and Religions are products of Evolution.

VIII.—Polarity is the great underlying law of all knowable phenomena, whether of the inorganic or organic universe, or of the spiritual world of conscience, morals, free will, and determinism.

OBITUARY.—It is my painful duty to record the sudden decease of Vivian Smith, son of one of our oldest and greatly respected members. He was a very gifted youth and gave great promise for future work, and we would like to place on record our sincere condolence with the bereaved parents. The funeral took place at Hanwell Cemetery, and as it was the wish of the deceased that there should be no religious ceremony, Mr. A. B. Moss conducted the Secular Service and read the beautiful words of the oration for the dead with most impressive eloquence. The scene is not likely to be forgotten by those present.—J. Burrell, Hon. Sec. (Westminster).

CORRESPONDENCE.

MARK'S GRAMMAR.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER"

SIR,—In his interesting article in last week's *Freethinker* ("Casting out Devils," p. 413), Mr. Ball writes: "As Mark says, with a beautiful confusion of number that should delight the shade of Lindley Murray: 'And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.'" I do not see the confusion here. The devils were many in number, and the one styled "Legion" apparently acted as spokesman for the crowd. Therefore he rightly besought Christ that they might not be expatriated. Take a similar case. The boys in a school depute one of their number to ask the master for a holiday: "He (the representative boy) besought him (the master) much that he would give them (all the boys) a holiday." Would a sentence of this kind cause old Lindley Murray to squirm in his grave?—Yours truly,
G. STANDING.

[I find no trace whatever in the gospel narrative of Mr. Standing's idea of a representative devil who uses the single number to indicate him-self, and the plural number to indicate his constituents. The confusion of number rules throughout the whole narrative. Just as there is a mystic Trinity in Unity in the Godhead, so there is an equally incomprehensible multiplicity in unity in this Devil who is thousands of devils. Jesus says to this singular-plural kind of a being "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit," and asks "him" what his name is, whereupon "he" answers, saying, "My name is Legion: for we are many." Why does "he" not say, "Our name is Legion? The demoniac is described as possessed of "an unclean spirit," which is afterwards described as "the unclean spirits." Presently we hear that "all the devils besought him, saying, send us not into the swine." Why should we suppose that Jesus addressed himself only to a spokesman devil, and that this particular demon confined to himself the distinguishing surname of Legion, which obviously would apply to the whole body of his companions rather than to himself alone?—W. P. BALL.]

REVIEWS.

Amerikanischer Turner-Kalendar, 1889.—Young Germany in America goes in largely for athletic societies, and the athletes have in this publication an excellent calendar. It is published at the *Freidenker* Publishing Co., Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and has a considerable leaven of freethought in its pages. The German Gymnastic Union, we are pleased to notice, strongly oppose the Sunday Laws and all connection between Church and State.

The Safe Side, by Richard M. Mitchell, 6141 Stewart Avenue, Chicago.—This work is by a Theist who thinks he has found the safe side in rejecting Christianity but clinging to the belief in a personal perfect deity who acts by immutable law. Apart from this hypothesis there are many good points in the book. Mr. Mitchell argues that in just the degree that a Christian is a believer in Christ he is an unbeliever in God, and that in just the degree that Christ is a savior God is a failure. The best part of the work is the criticism of the teachings of Christ, of which Mr. Mitchell has no high opinion. He gives reasons for thinking that portions of the gospel story were adapted from Josephus.

JESUS REDIVIVUS.

Have ye heard of Father Larkin,
And the games he does embark in?
Cures the Irish blind and cripples,
—Bless him—and at night he tipples
With the folks he healed intirely.

From the clouds the Virgin Mary,
Patroness of Tipperary,
Does inspire the wonder-worker,
Who's as poplar as a porker,
In the whisky land of Erin.

'Mong the country folk of Surrey
He'd no chance; so in a hurry
He rejoined his Irish minions,
Who revere the priest's opinions,
Always back the biggest humbug.

Now to crown his holy mission,
And remove the Irish scission,
He might coax the God of heaven,
To shell out say,—millions seven—
All arrears of rint to settle.

CHAS. KROLL LAPORTE.

PROFANE JOKES.

A new reporter was sent to investigate a rumor that a well-known clergyman had become insane. The next morning the following paragraph appeared in the paper: "There was a report yesterday that something was the matter with the Rev. Mr. Saunder's head. It is as sound as it has always been. There is nothing in it." The reporter's career ended there and then.

One time Edna was riding with her grandma through a dense forest. It was very shady, and Edna began to cry. "Oh, don't cry," said her grandma, "God will take care of you just the same in the dark wood as in the sunny field." "I 'spect he will, grandma," said the child, "but I thought the bears might come out of the woods and eat up the horse! God might forget about the horse, you know!"

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