

THE FREETHINKER

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

P I G O T T I S M.

"Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old times, which was before us."—ECCLES. IASTES I., 10.

EVERYBODY is talking about the flight of Pigott. The flight into Egypt never caused half such a sensation. Pigott has gone off into the infinite. He was shadowed, but he has performed the feat of running away from his own shadow. Where he will turn up next, or if he will turn up anywhere, God only knows. But wherever he re-appears—in the South Pacific as a missionary, in America as a revivalist, or in India as an avatar—it will be the same old Pigott, lying, shuffling, forging and blackmailing, with an air of virtue and benevolence.

Meanwhile there is weeping and wailing in Downing Street and Printing House Square. Old Morality and his old friend Walter probably feel like Adam and Eve in *Paradise Lost* after eating the forbidden apple—much inclined to round on each other. All the mighty edifice of calumny on Mr. Parnell and his closest colleagues rested on the foundation of Pigott, and Pigott is exploded. He has entirely vanished. Not a hair of him is visible. He is gone like last winter's snow or last summer's roses. He is in the big list of things Wanted. But advertisements will not bring him back, and, considering who is in power, it is very problematical if the officers of justice will be any more successful.

We have no wish to be disrespectful to the Commission, and it is far from our intention to pronounce judgment on a case which is *sub judice*, though who can help sundry exclamations when the chief witness on one side bolts, leaving no trace but a few more lies and counter lies? Our object, indeed, is not political but religious. We desire to make the noble Pigott point a moral and adorn a tale. He and his achievements in connection with the *Times* splendidly illustrate the process by which Christianity was built up. Pigottism was at work for centuries, forging documents, manufacturing evidence, and telling the grossest lies with an air of truth. What is still worse, Pigottism was so lucky as to get into the seat of despotic power, and to crush out all criticism of its frauds; so that, at length, everyone believed what no one heard questioned. It was Pigottism in excelsis. The liar gave evidence in the witness box, stifled or murdered the counsel for the opposite side, then mounted the bench to give judgment in his own favor, and finally pronounced a decree of death against all who refused to own him the pink of veracity.

Just look for a moment at these Parnell letters. They were printed in facsimile in the *Times*, published in *Parnellism and Crime*, circulated among millions of people, and accepted as genuine by half the population of England. And on what ground? Solely on the ground that Parnellism was heterodox and the *Times* was a respectable journal. That was enough. The laws of evidence were treated with contempt. Investigation was thought unnecessary. Thousands of people fatuously said, "Ob, the letters are in print." And all this in an age of Board Schools, printing presses, daily papers, and unlimited discussion; nay, in despite of the solemn declaration of Mr. Parnell and his colleagues, backed up by a demand for investigation, that the letters were absolute concoctions.

Now if such things can happen in an age like this, how easily could they happen in ages like those in which Christianity produced its Scriptures. Credulity was boundless, fraud was audacious, and lying for the profit of the Church was regarded as a virtue. There was no printing press, no free inquiry, no keen investigation, no vivid conception of the laws of evidence; and the few brilliant critics, like Celsus and Porphyry, who kept alive in their breasts the

nobler spirit of Grecian scepticism, were answered by the destruction of their writings, a process which was carried out with the cunning scent of a sleuth-hound and the remorseless cruelty of a tiger.

The Church produced, quite as mysteriously as the *Times*, certain documents which it said were written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, Paul, and James. Others were written by Pagans like Pilate, and one at least by Jesus Christ himself. No Commission sat to examine and investigate, no Sir Charles Russell cross-examined the witnesses. The Pigotts, the Houstons, and the Macdonalds kept quietly in the background, and were never dragged forth into the light of day. The Mr. Walters took the full responsibility, which was very trifling; and as Englishmen relied on the respectability of the *Times*, so the illiterate and fanatical Christians relied on the respectability of Mother Church.

Some of those documents, so mysteriously produced, were as mysteriously dropped when they had served their turn. Hence the so-called Apocryphal New Testament, a collection of writings as ancient, and once as accepted, as those found in the Canon. Hence also the relics, either in name or in fragments, of a host of gospels, epistles, and revelations, which primitive Pigottism manufactured for the behoof of Christianity. Every single scrap no doubt subserved a useful end. But whatever was no longer required was discarded like the scaffolding of a house. The real, permanent work, all the while, was going on inside; and when the Church faced the world with its completed edifice it thought itself provided with something that would stand all winds and weathers. It was found, however, in the course of time, that Pigottism was still necessary. Hence the Apostolic Constitutions, the Decretals, the Apostles' and the Athanasian creeds, and all the profitable relics of saints and martyrs.

About two hundred years ago an informal Commission began to sit on these Christians documents. The precious letter of Jesus Christ to Abgarus soon flew off with the Veronica handkerchief, and many other products of Christian Pigottism shared the same fate. The witnesses were examined and cross-examined, and the longer the process lasted the sorrier was the spectacle they presented. Paul's epistles have been shockingly handled. The Commission has positively declared that all but four of them are forgeries, and is still investigating the claim of the remnant under reprieve. Nor is the judgment on the Gospels less decisive. The Court has decided that they were not written by Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Who wrote them, when they were written, or where, is left to the Day of Judgment.

Unfortunately the press has given little attention to the proceedings in this Court of Commission. Its reports are published in expensive volumes for scholars and gentlemen of means and leisure. Some of the results, indeed, are given in a few journals written for the people; but these journals are boycotted as vulgar, unless they go too far, when they are prosecuted for blasphemy. Yet the truth is gradually leaking out. People shake their heads ominously, especially when there is anything in them; and parsons are looked upon with a growing suspicion. They look bland, they assume the most virtuous airs, and sometimes they affect a preternatural goodness. But in all this they are excelled by the noble Pigott, whose bald head, venerable beard, and benevolent appearance, qualified him to sit for a portrait of God the Father. Gentlemen, it won't do. You will have to bolt or confess. The documents you have palmed off on the world are the products of unadulterated Pigottism. You know it, we know it, and by and bye everyone will know it.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE ATTEMPTED SUPPRESSION OF
FREETHOUGHT LITERATURE IN ENGLAND.

"As good almost kill a man as kill a good book," says Milton in his noble Defence of the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing, for, as he says, "many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life." The history of Freethought is a history of persecution, and in the long catalogue of the crimes of Christianity I place not least its persistent attempts to stamp out the literature of its opponents from the time when the converted Christians of Ephesus burnt their books (Acts xix., 19) to our own day.

The Catholic Church has written down its opposition to human thought in its *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, wherein the names of most of the world's best thinkers and writers from Abælardus to Zwinglius are inscribed. I propose, however, to show that the Protestants of England are tarred with the same brush.

Beginning only after the Reformation and not noticing the many attempts to suppress Catholic and Arminian literature, there remains a long list of works attempted to be suppressed by the Protestant Church.

The tragedies of Christopher Marlowe appear to have escaped the censor, though we know that an accusation of blasphemy was brought against our first great dramatist, who, according to the Rev. Thos. Beard, Oliver Cromwell's tutor, "not only in word blasphemed the Trinity, but also wrote books against it." Marlowe probably only escaped punishment by his death in 1593. His translation of Ovid was, however, burnt by an order of the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London, dated 1 June, 1599.

The *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, by Reignald Scot (1584), was the first treatise published in England throwing doubt upon the reality of possession by demons. King James, who while in Scotland wrote a treatise on Demonologie (1597), in which he said that Satan offered his posteriors to be saluted by his worshippers in imitation of God's revelation to Moses in the cave of the rock, ordered Scot's work to be suppressed. Many copies were burnt, but there is one in the British Museum, and the work has recently been reprinted, edited by Dr. E. B. Nicholson.

That "most dread Sovereign" and most dreadful pedant, the modern Solomon, also had the treatise *De Dea*, of Conrad Vorstius, burnt at St. Paul's Cross and at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge in 1611. Vorstius was suspected of Anti-Trinitarianism, and King James wrote to the Dutch Bates "that as to the burning of Vorstius for his blasphemies and Atheism, he left them to their own Christian wisdom; but surely never heretic better deserved the flames." Early in the following year King James had Bartholomew Legate burnt at Smithfield, and Edmund Wightman burnt at Lichfield for Anti-Trinitarian heresy. These were the last martyrs who were actually burnt to death in England.

In 1614 the *History of the World*, by Sir Walter Raleigh, was prohibited "for too free censuring of princes." A few years after the Rev. William Whately was forced to recant the statement in a wedding sermon "that either adultery or long desertion dissolves marriage."

Another minister, Alexander Leighton, father of the Archbishop, for writing a book called *Sion's Plea against the Prelacy* (1628) was in 1630 brought before the Star Chamber. He was fined £10,000, degraded from the ministry, publicly whipped in Palace Yard, made to stand two hours in the pillory, one ear was cut off, a nostril slit and one of his cheeks branded with the letters S. S. (Sedition Sower.) After this he was sent to the Fleet Prison. At the end of the week "being not yet cured" he was brought out again, underwent a second whipping and a repetition of the former Christian treatment of cutting off the other ear, etc., and was then consigned to prison for life, where he actually spent eleven years. How his son Robert, who was in many ways an estimable man, could ever take office in the Church which had so treated his father is one of those mysteries more easily understood by the pious than by Freethinkers. The treatment of Prynne and Bastwick for their offences against prelaty is too well known to be detailed here.

I hasten to the time of the Civil War, when first the sentiments of toleration became openly promulgated in England. The *Commons Journal* on August 9, 1644, reported the order that all copies of a book by one Williams

concerning the tolerating of all sorts of religion should be publicly burnt. Hart says "Owing to the vagueness with which this book is mentioned in the *Commons Journal*, I have not been able to identify it all." I have no doubt that this was the *Bloudy Tenent* [tenet] of *Persecution for Cause of Conscience*, by Roger Williams, the founder of Rhode Island and apostle of civil and religious liberty in America, though the fact, as far as I can ascertain, has never been called attention to before.

The case of Paul Best, the Unitarian, whose works were ordered to be destroyed, still remains an obscure one, despite the monograph of the Rev. R. Aspland, and the researches of the Rev. R. Wallace for his *Anti-Trinitarian Biography*. On June 10, 1645, the Assembly of Divines attended the House of Commons and represented the blasphemies of Paul Best, who, it was said, called the Trinity "a three-headed monster." Best was committed to the Gate-house, and on Jan. 28, 1646, it was resolved that an ordinance be brought in for punishing with death Paul Best for his "abominable, prodigious, horrid blasphemies." It is pretty clear that this sentence was not carried out. Best probably recanted. The only other entry Whitelock makes on the case is an order (July 24, 1647) to burn, not the man, but one of his pamphlets, and to punish the printer.

Closely following on the case of Best was the more generally known trials of John Biddle, called the father of English Unitarianism. The Assembly of Divines sitting at Westminster made their endeavors to Parliament that Biddle might suffer death in May, 1648. Parliament, however, only kept him in prison till 1651.

The next work deserving of notice fixed upon by the Presbyterians for suppression was "The Alcoran of Mahomet, translated out of Arabique into French by the Sieur Du Dyer" (1649). It was considered dangerous that Christians should have any knowledge of the religion of "the impostor," as the Arabian prophet was then called by all orthodox Christians. In the following year Col. John Fry, a member of the Long Parliament and one of the judges of Charles I., was called to account for his little books, *The Clergy in their Colors*, and *The Accuser Shamed*. Fry was an Anti-Trinitarian. His books were ordered to be burnt by the common hangman 22 Feb., 1651. In the same year the Socinian *Raovinian Catechism* was ordered to be burned on the 2nd of April.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be continued.)

W H E N Y O U S E E .

If you should chance to see
A parson, clever as clever can be,
Who tickles his flock with jest and riddle,
And worships God with flute and fiddle,
The latest clerical fad is he.

And should you chance to see
The man whose fine philanthropy
Assumes that every man's a brother,
That he's a saint and you're another,
The devil a saint at all is he.

But further; should you see
A priest grow plump on penury,
Gad zooks! don't take it for a miracle,
Or deem his diet is atmospheric—
An anti-poverty priest is he.

Or if you chance to see
The man that vows that you and he
Have equal title to all the earth
By nature's warrant, the right of birth,
Why, so have the wolf and the chimpanzee.

In short, where'er you see
The real, original patentee
Of a new crusade, look out for gammon.
His creed is Self, his god is Mammon,
And all his preaching is tweedle-dee.

QUOTED IN *The Truthseeker*.

CHARLES BLAND was arrested at the Salvation Army Barracks, Salisbury Road, Highgate Hill, on a charge of stealing a saw and a trowel from Mr. Alfred Geard, builder. On the way to the station he sang, "I love Jesus; I am saved; I know I shall not get punished for this." He was mistaken, however, like a good many other prophets; for, notwithstanding his Salvation Army jersey, Mr. Bros, the magistrate, gave him a dose of imprisonment with hard labor.

ACID DROPS.

SIR J. WHITAKER ELLIS was Lord Mayor of London when we had the honor to appear at the Mansion House. He was very pious then, and he seems to improve in that respect with age. Speaking at Kingston recently, he delivered his soul, or what passes for his soul, as follows:—"This man Morley is sacrificing his honor, his character, and his country, in order that he may be dragged into power." Such a "pious opinion" is worthy of the speaker. Mr. John Morley is sacrificing nothing, except the agreeable quietude of a literary man. The principles he now advocates as a statesman he advocated as a journalist and an essayist before Sir J. Whitaker Ellis emerged from his natural obscurity by a piece of accidental good fortune.

BISHOP BILLING has been holding forth at Eastbourne. He says he has 1,500,000 people to look after in North and East London, but we doubt if they require as much looking after as the bishop himself. He delivered a violent diatribe against Radical Clubs, which he evidently regards as dangerous rivals to the churches, and declared himself in favor of establishing good, respectable workmen's clubs, adorned with billiard and card tables, but under the blessed patronage of the clergy and the upper ten. Well, if the parsons have any money to spare, let them try the little game. We venture to prophesy that they will lose all they invest. Workmen's clubs which are not self-supporting and independent are always sickly things. They are without power or influence, and, after costing a great deal in medicine, they are always buried amid sighs of relief.

THE Rev. Dr. Keatinge, who got into trouble some time ago, and recorded his experiences as an "innocent" criminal in the columns of the *Evening News*, is now orating "with great acceptance" at Wood Green. The orator began his course with a "rouser" on Hell. Some people say he has good reasons for hoping there is no such place. Anyhow, he says that Hell is an invention of priestcraft to terrify ignorance and superstition. There is a good deal of truth in this theory, but it is to be wished that parsons could find it out before they meet with "a little misfortune, you know."

It is reported that the Bible is now somewhat a rare book in Paris. One who attempted to purchase one returned after a fruitless search and said he had been told by one of the booksellers "it was a bad book, only fit for priests and pastors;" by another, "it had gone out of print;" and by still another, "there was no demand for it, and it was not in stock."

THE Rev. T. Marcy, of Newton, Mass., has committed suicide by shooting himself through the head. Another fact for Talmage.

THE two poor silly girls who drowned themselves at Cannock had spent the evening at the Salvation Army Barracks. One more fact for Talmage.

CONSIDERING how the Christians boast of their hospitals, it is astonishing what a mass of bigotry is cloaked by their pretentious charity. Piety, piety, piety, is the song in all our London palaces of pain. Not only is the chaplain a licensed and salaried teaser of souls, but the very nurses are coddled with the most debilitating sectarianism. A theological test is found everywhere. Only a few days ago the *Star* published a letter from the matron of King's College Hospital, who replied to an applicant for a nurse's post.—"Dear madam, I am sorry I cannot entertain your application as our rules admit members of the Church of England only." Instead of having good, homely, and wholesome nurses, the patients have to put up with proselytising sisters; and while the doctors, in too many cases are practising upon their bodies, the sisters are practising upon their "souls."

THE New York *Sun* calculates that by 1900 the number of Catholics in the United States will be twenty millions. They are being recognised as a grave and growing danger to the Republic.

A DISPATCH from Jacksonville, Florida, says: "Mrs. William Hall, who lives in a cosy little cottage on Orange Street, Oakland, is very devout. Last night, while at her devotions, kneeling in front of a bright pine-fat fire, her nightclothes caught fire. She was shockingly burned before the flames were extinguished, not a square inch of her body being unscathed. Her husband was severely burned while trying to extinguish the flames." Immediately after reading the above we saw in the *Boston Investigator* an account of a sudden death in a church. If such accidents occurred in Freethought halls when should we hear the last.

THE *English Churchman* is always discovering some mare's nest. The latest is that the Order of the White Rose intends to turn Queen Victoria off the throne and substitute a Popish prince.

MR. J. HIRST HOLLOWELL, Chairman of the Nottingham School Board, points out that the vicar of Holms-next-the-Sea has altogether gone beyond his powers, not only in wishing the school-

mistress to teach the Catechism in a Board School, but for using the Catechism there at all.

THE *St. Louis Post Dispatch* announces that some pious telegraphists have formed a Bible class and correspond by wire. It tells how reverent fingers sent the words over the magic wires. "If thou wilt thou canst make me clean;" then from another sleeping town came the murmur as if in answer to the prayer of each soul so mysteriously in communication with other souls by this God-giving mystery. "I will; be thou clean." Some one along the line was not aware of these services, and the worshippers were startled by the next despatch, which announced: "And he straightway charged him—Cabbage, 1½c. per pound; potatoes, Irish, 15c. a 20c., and forthwith sent him away with the market closing dull on wheat."

TALMAGE, it is stated, nets £6,600 a year from the Brooklyn Tabernacle. This with what he receives for his sermons and lectures in other places makes up a larger income than that of the President of the United States. Jesus said, "You cannot serve God and Mammon," but Talmage could have given him a tip in a contrary direction.

THE curate of St. Stephen's Church, Poplar, who gave the name of James Evans and tried to pass off as a traveller, has been brought before the magistrate at Worship Street Police Court on a charge of abducting and seducing Jane Lane, a servant girl of 15 years of age. He took her to the Opera Comique, and then to a coffee shop, where they stayed together all night. Through this she lost her place. To her he gave the name of Henry Haynes, and promised her some cards and a book called *The Rock of Ages*. He gave her a ring, supposed to be gold, but which turned out to be brass—no doubt a good deal like his promised *Rock of Ages*. He has been remanded, the Rev. Mr. Elliott and a Mr. Hake being sureties for his reappearance.

ACCORDING to the London edition of the *New York Herald*, "Pilot said 'What is truth?'" Is this an instance of how far the Americans mean to reform our spelling or of how conversant they are with the Holy Bible?

THE *Church Review*, very High and very dry Church of England organ, protests against the Bishop of Penrith marrying after consecration. It declares "Such a thing was never heard of until a few years ago, and now all the bachelor and widower Bishops, 'waxing wanton against Christ,' seem in a hurry to take unto themselves consorts." It would seem that if an ecclesiastical dignitary wishes to "wax wanton against Christ" he must do so before being consecrated a bishop. If the present plan of marriage was "never heard of until a few years ago," concubinage was by no means unknown. Archbishop Blackburne, at the beginning of last century, was equally famous for his devotions to Bacchus and Venus.

THE vicar of Bolton, who seems a liberal kind of man, invited the clergy of the deanery to a conference on the thesis introduced by Mr. G. Harwood, M.A., "That the opening of Free Libraries on Sunday afternoons is not incompatible with the Lord's Day." The Rev. J. Stott expressed his displeasure at being invited to listen to remarks from an outsider like Mr. Harwood, and other clerical bigots being of a similar opinion, Mr. Harwood declined to proceed, and the conference was abandoned, the vicar remarking, "I am ashamed of you." This produced a new tumult, in the midst of which he pronounced the Benediction, the audience hastily scrambling to their feet. They afterwards gathered in knots discussing the proceedings in anything but a spirit in accordance with the injunction "Let brotherly love continue."

"GENERAL" BOOTH, in an interview with a reporter of the *Newcastle Leader*, reckoned the income of the Salvation Army at "about three-quarters of a million." This is a little fact for those to ponder who consider that the days of credulity are over, and that Freethinkers need only compose pæans of triumph over the death of superstition.

THE Salvation Army has been extolled by Canon Taylor and Mr. Caine for its successes in India, yet "General" Booth acknowledges that "We are dissatisfied and somewhat disappointed that more has not been accomplished."

THE *Church Times* derides some clergyman who said, in answer to the assertion that the Bishop of Lincoln desires to return to primitive practice, "Well, very likely, but we desire to cling to the formation. That is the only pure moment of the Church that we can be sure of." We believe this clergyman was quite in the right. "Primitive Christianity," so called, is a mass of uncertainty. The practices of the primitive Christians were probably more like a cross between the Salvationists and the Mormons than like either the Church of England or the Church of Rome.

SAYS the *Church Times*, "A Nonconformist was scoffing at the impending trial, 'What a miserable state of things to be subject to a Bench of Bishops,' quoth he. 'But is there no authority over you?' asked the parson. 'Only a Board,' said the Dissenter."

'H'm! a Board. Well, what's a board but a bench without any legs to stand upon?' (Noncon. nonplussed)."

THE *Church Times* finds fault with the Archbishop of York's method of disposing of his patronage. It appears that he pitchforks young men only just ordained into good livings because they happen to be relations of his own friends.

THE Rev. W. M. Wollaston, chaplain of St. Paul's, Cannes, has been denouncing the gaming tables of Monte Carlo. He declares the place is a sink of iniquity and a home of the Devil. Meanwhile we read that the Prince of Wales has been losing with very bad grace at the roulette table.

THE Rev. Philip Hains writes a long letter to the *Wigan Observer*, which does very little credit to his honor as a man or a clergyman. He pretends that Mr. Bradlaugh is utterly ignorant of Hebrew, which is ludicrously false; and he pretends to know that language himself, which is very much open to question. But the really important point is this—How are the people of this country to be saved or damned except in English? What is the use of squabbling over the meaning of a contested Hebrew word before an audience who only know their mother tongue? Have we not the Revised Version, on which scholarship is supposed to have done its very best? Does Mr. Hains fancy himself a better scholar than the whole of the Revision Committee? And, if not, is he seriously prepared to maintain in public debate that Science and the Revised Version agree?

MR. HAINS declares that "No learned commentators of the Bible believe that the sun or moon stood still at the command of Joshua." But the statement is disingenuous. Commentators have learnt discretion in the presence of Science, but formerly they accepted the Bible narrative as literal. That, indeed, is the only honest course. It will not do to say that Joshua's command was a piece of oratory, for the inspired historian distinctly asserts that "the sun stood still, and the moon stayed. . . . So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down a whole day." If the writer did not mean what the words plainly express, why did he not add—N.B. This is a joke? Mr. Hains, in our opinion, is simply thimble-rigging. But that is his profession.

THE next statement of this truthful parson is that Jesus did not cast out devils. But this is the paltriest quibble. The Authorised Version gives "devils," but if you read "demons" or "evil spirits," what difference does it make? Mr. Hains keeps this part of the argument in the dark, and actually insinuates that Jesus, not having cast out "devils," never cast *anything* out of possessed men and women. This is really worthy of Mr. Pigott.

FINALLY, Mr. Hains contends that Jehovah did not *create* but *make* the heaven and earth. Another quibble! Geology shows us that the earth was not made in six days, or even six periods. If "in the beginning" applies to the raw material, the "six days" applies to the process of creation, and that is a childish absurdity. Mr. Hains, with a great pretence of learning and logic, appears to know little and argues like a child.

THE Rev. W. Hay Aitken has been lecturing to business men in Newcastle Cathedral. He tried to make out that but for the hope of immortality life was a worthless thing. Nature has a practical way of refuting this nonsense. Those who do not care for this life and the things thereof are in the long run snuffed out. The mischief with Christians is that they care after the things of the world overmuch, while pretending that their hearts are placed on other things.

ONCE in a way the *Church Times* says a very good thing. For instance, it says in regard to Dr. Parker's talk about Christian unity: "There is a great deal of skin-deep Christianity about in the world now. Its supporters merely believe in a vague philanthropy, and by applying the epithet Christian to it, claim to have converted Christianity into its true form, and to have made it acceptable to reasoning men."

WE see that the Rev. T. Ashcroft, of Leigh, near Manchester, has been lecturing at Lancaster on "Spiritualism a Farce and a Fraud." Mr. Ashcroft is probably unaware how largely his own religion is built up of the very same elements as modern spiritism. Take all the angels and devils out of the Bible and its stories would be very much condensed.

MIS CAROLINE STEPHEN, a sister of Sir James Stephen and Mr. Leslie Stephen, has been holding forth in Darlington. An advertisement in the *North Star* announced that "a lady from Malvern" would be glad to have a word with "Agnostics, Atheists, Deists, Sceptics and others" in the Hopetown Hall. One of our readers, being young and sanguine, went to see the show. He saw a lady of about fifty, who spoke for a quarter of an hour on Prayer. Not a word was said about the ideas of those who were specially invited, and the lady's chief argument for prayer was based on the fact that she knew a mother who prayed for her sick child's recovery and the child didn't die. O ye gods and little fishes! This is the stuff to stifle Atheism! Yes—with aught.

THE Bishop of Ripon has been preaching on Genesis before the Friendly Societies at Knaresborough. He complained much of "the literalist" who took everything exactly as it was written. Of course he knows that the story in Genesis is not literally true, only he took care not to say how much is literal and how much poetic. Is it, for instance, true that in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, and if the six days are not literal, is the Lord any whit more so? He says "Moses simply told the story in his own way." Then as Moses was a fallible man he probably made some errors. If, as we used to be told, he was guided by God, surely God could have seen that there were no mistakes through taking that as literal which was only meant to be figurative. Further on the Bishop admitted that "he was not prepared to say whether Moses literally wrote it or that he heard it from the lips of someone else." Altogether his lordship seems a nice specimen of the hazy and wriggling Christian.

SWINDLING by spiritualism has just been tried with great success in Paris by a band of British pickpockets, the members of which gave themselves out as mediums, says the *Daily Telegraph* correspondent. A few nights since great jubilation was caused among a select set of Paris spiritualists in the Rue St. Lazare. One of their number begged to introduce William Torry, a fair-haired Saxon young man, and two friends. Supernatural operations were at once begun. Suddenly the table quivered, there was a tap of a foot on the floor, vague mystical forms seemed to float in the air, and Torry was understood to say that he was the spirit of the great Malebranche. More wonderful still, he amazed the assembled Gauls by writing an elegant message from Malebranche on a slate in capital French, although he was a Saxon unable to wield that language with accuracy or ease. The French spiritualists were delighted. Torry and his friends were lauded to the firmament and asked to repeat their wonderful experiments and to commune with other deceased French philosophers and poets on the next evening, which they did. Again the shadowy figures moved about in mystical vapor, and the spirit of Victor Hugo was heard speaking amid semi-darkness. Then some of the spiritualists felt tugs at their watch-chains, and hands fumbling about in their pockets, and the spirits had disappeared, together with the British mediums, several watches, purses, and chains belonging to the company, in addition to various objects of art which had been on the mantelpiece or the tables.

FANNY LOCKER, described as a weird-looking old woman, has been sent to gaol at Birmingham for fortune-telling. Why, then, are the clergy at large? They take money for sprinkling water on babies' faces, pretending to do them some good in a future life. Catholic priests also take money for praying souls out of purgatory. All of them are in the same business as old Fanny Locker, but they are licensed tricksters and she is a poacher, who must be dealt with severely under the clerical game laws.

THIS unfortunate fortune-teller, it appears, had unhinged the mind of a married woman with dreadful stories of her husband's amorous intrigues. Bad, of course; very bad. But how many clergymen have unhinged the minds of poor women with dreadful stories of hell and damnation? Why are they allowed to fill lunatic asylums with impunity?

THE writer of "Local Notes" in the *Nottingham Evening News* falls foul of the Rev. George Bishop for whitewashing that Defender of the Faith, King Henry VIII. Never, he says, has Mr. Bishop, "descended to so low a depth as a moralist." But this is surely *too* severe. Life is hardly worth living if a parson cannot express a little professional gratitude to the founder of his Church.

THERE does not seem any likelihood of the talked-of debate between the Rev. George Bishop and Mr. Foote ever coming off. Mr. Bishop's friends stipulated conditions which showed either that they wanted no debate or that they lacked an elementary sense of justice. They expected Mr. Foote to come to Nottingham, leaving his home and his work, while Mr. Bishop left neither; and they also expected Mr. Foote to pay his own hotel expenses, instead of making them a charge on the proceeds. Being anxious to have a debate, the Nottingham Branch offered to defray the hotel expenses, but Mr. Foote would not let them do so. He insisted on "Justice or nothing." It should be added that the net profit was, as Mr. Foote agreed, to go to the infirmary.

WORDSWORTH, the poet, in his old age, when he was indeed a "Lost Leader," refused to dine with a man who voted for John Bright! According to the *Athenæum*, the verger of Durham Cathedral was quite as prejudiced against the People's Tribune. Dean Waddington told this functionary that a friend of his was coming to see the building. The verger promised that the visitor should see everything of interest, and, finding him so well disposed, the Dean said: "He is a very important man, very; you really must show him attention—in fact, it is Mr. John Bright." "Oh," said the verger, "I'll take good care that he doesn't steal anything away fra' the church."

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURES.

Sunday, March 3, Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town, N.W. At 7.30.

March 10, Newcastle; 11, Middlesboro'; 17, Claremont Hall; 24, Camberwell.

April 7, Birmingham; 14, Hall of Science; 21, Hall of Science 28, Camberwell.

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

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell Green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. B. Forder, 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. 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.

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.

NILE.—Glad to hear that you are now a staunch Freethinker, and that you attribute the change in your views to the influence of this journal. Your situation, as you describe it, is embarrassing and painful. It seems to us that you are quite justified in not letting the bigots blight your life's prospect. One of our Lancashire friends had the same difficulty, and a certificate from a Unitarian minister was his passport to the training college.

Mr. SELLS, 17 Cameron Street, Beckton, E., will be glad to receive any Freethought literature for distribution, and to hear from any inhabitants of Canterbury, Maidstone, Gravesend, and Bromley who are willing to co-operate.

W. COOKNEY, 1a Willow Street, Paul Street, Finsbury, E.C., says there is still a deficit of £3 on the Hall of Science Children's Party, and he will be glad to receive any further donations.

A. GUEST.—Hastings is very much like other Yankee evangelists. If the Almighty made them, he has a deal to answer for. Hastings knows nothing of Ingersoll. The calumny he insinuates is borrowed from Clarke Braden, who appears to live by slandering the great orator. Ingersoll thinks life isn't long enough to answer these vermin. He knows his reputation will take care of itself; and, after all, suppose a Freethinker *does* something wrong, does that prove that Jonah was swallowed by a whale? Such is Ingersoll's attitude, like Landseer's "Dignity and Impudence," only his dignity wears a good-humored smile.

ATHENISTA.—Thanks. We will look it up. Outtings always welcome. INCOG.—Some seed is sure to fall on stony ground. We must be thankful, as Christians go, if we find here and there a bit of decent soil.

TOBY.—The cheapest translations of Aristotle's works are published in Bohn's Library.

LIVERPOOL CAMDENIST.—We take it that "eat it" means "eat it," but we allow you to differ.

G. BATE.—We hardly care to deal with the matter without knowing all the facts. Nor do we care to decide for other people. We should take off our hat in a church, and keep silent at table while grace was being said. But we should not join the ceremony in the slightest degree. In social intercourse one must be true to one's convictions without being cantankerous or obtrusive.

H. O. CROSBY wishes to know where he can obtain Freethought publications in Bolton. Can any reader oblige him with the information? Our correspondent says: "The first time I saw the *Freethinker* was in travelling from Brighton to Manchester. Someone left it in my compartment. This was four years ago, and I have been a regular subscriber ever since."

T. W. WRATISLAW (Rugby) thanks the friends who have sent him parcels of literature for gratuitous distribution from Lancaster, Glasgow, and Barnsbury.

A. KING.—See "Sugar Plums." We wish your Branch a prosperous future.

F. M.—We are pleased you bear us in mind. American cuttings are always welcome.

CHRISTIAN SOCIALIST.—Surely our answer was plain enough, but, if you must have a further statement, we may add that the evidence we require is such evidence as would suffice in a court of law. If the Attorney-General tried to prove the Resurrection, calling his witnesses, the four evangelists, and Sir Charles Russell cross-examined them in his best style, we fear the Christians would be in as bad a box as the Unionists. You say you *are* a Communist. Well, that is at least honest.

YOUNG FREETHINKER.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

W. ROGERS.—Thanks for the cutting. The contradiction you refer to is more apparent than real. Certainly the Roman Empire was breaking up when Christianity was spreading, yet the new religion made things worse by enervating the masculine spirit necessary to repel the barbarians and develop internal progress. Compare the reign of Julian with the reigns of his successors, and you will see the force of our words.

RECEIVED—Fair Pay—Independent Pulpit—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Ironclad Age—Freethought—Truthseeker—Le Danton—Lucifer—Glasgow Evening News—Bolton Evening News—Secular Thought—Lancashire Guardian—Freethought—Bucks Standard—Boston Investigator.

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.

PERSONAL.

ONE or two friends have responded to our appeal and advanced us small sums of money, for which we return them our best thanks. We shall be very glad to hear from others, as we wish to extend our publishing business during the next twelve months, and are in need of capital to carry out our projects. Some important Freethought works will be put through the press if our finances permit. We pay five per cent. interest, and advances are recallable on six months' notice sent in registered letter.

SUGAR PLUMS.

OWING to a breakdown we appear without an illustration this week. Readers who say that they cannot circulate the *Freethinker* among their friends, because of the sketches, will now have an opportunity of circulating the editor's seasonable article on Piggottism.

THE change of hall did not prejudice the attendance at Mr. Foote's lectures at Plymouth on Sunday. The audiences, indeed, were larger than usual; thanks, in some degree, to the spirit with which the Branch did the advertising. There was no discussion. Two or three Christians who were going to eat the lecturer did not put in an appearance. Nor was there a line of report in the local papers. Several ministers were favored in the *Mercury*, but no notice was taken of the lectures delivered to hundreds of people in St. George's Hall.

THE Plymouth Secularists are going to make a big effort. They mean to get premises of their own if possible. A company is to be formed with £1,000 capital in one pound shares, and we wish it all success. Let the two Plymouth Branches amalgamate and work hard for twelve months, and the thing will be done.

AFTER a long absence, Mr. Foote revisits Milton Hall this evening (March 3). We trust there will be a rally of the local Freethinkers, who should make an effort to bring some of their orthodox friends. The lecturer, as usual, will not be *too* warm, but just warm enough.

MR. COURTNEY KENNY is retiring from Parliament. His little Bill for abolishing the Blasphemy Laws has never got further than being printed. Fortunately Mr. Bradlaugh has now taken the matter up, and we may expect to see it vigorously carried forward. Mr. Bradlaugh has given notice, and, with his usual good fortune, has secured an early date in the ballot. He will bring on his Bill on March 20. Whether it stands a fair chance of success is more than we can say. But there is no need to worry; the Bill is in the best hands, and every Freethinker may rest satisfied that whatever success is possible will certainly be achieved. Should the Bill fail in the first debate, it will be brought in again and again.

MR. BRADLAUGH'S Bill is not a facsimile of Mr. Kenny's. It is not in print as we are writing, but we understand it is a very simple document. We hope to give the full text in our next issue.

NOW is the time for petitioning. Mr. Forder will supply forms and petition sheets to all applicants. Signatures should be procured immediately, and the petitions sent in before March 20. Freethinkers should, in addition, write to their representatives in the House of Commons, and respectfully urge upon them the wisdom of abolishing this wretched relic of ancient bigotry.

MR. FOOTE will deliver a course of three lectures in the Minor Hall of Science, London, on Thursdays, March 14, 21 and 28. These discourses are intended primarily for our young and open-air lecturers, but all Secularists who desire to profit by them will be welcome. Mr. Foote's subjects will be—Animism, Theism, and Distinctive Christian Doctrines. His style will be conversational, his methods strictly educational. The auditors should take notes, and look sharply after the references to great writers on these subjects.

DURING April, Mr. Wheeler will follow with three discourses on Christianity and Preceding Religious Systems. Both courses are under the auspices of the London Secular Federation.

THE Federation has also arranged for a couple of social parties. The first, a concert and ball, will take place at the Camberwell Secular Hall, New Church Road, on Thursday, March 21. Tickets can be obtained of the Secretary of any London Branch; of Mr. G. Standing, the Federation Secretary, 7 Finsbury Street, E.C.; or of Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, E.C. Price for concert only 6d., for concert and ball 1s.

THE second affair is a bigger one. The London Secular Federation intends to have an annual dinner henceforth, and the first will take place on Monday, April 15, at the Bridge

House Hotel, London Bridge. Mr. Foote will preside, and a goodly company is expected from all parts of the metropolis. Ladies are earnestly desired to grace the festive board with their presence. There will be just a little speechifying, in the form of toasts, to give the scene a serious background; but the rest of the evening will be devoted to social enjoyment. The tickets are 2s. 6d. each, and the hotel is famous for a good menu.

Secular Thought, of Toronto, reprints Mr. Wheeler's paper on "Christianity and Woman" from the *Freethinker*. In the absence of Mr. Watts, who is lecturing in Kansas, Colorado, and Utah, "Alastor" attends to the editorial duties on our Canadian contemporary.

A VERY fair portrait of the late Miss Alice Bradlaugh appears in the *Liberator* for Jan. 19, with a brief obituary notice.

MR. L. K. WASHBURN, of Revere, Massachusetts, having published his lecture, entitled "Catholic Menace to Our Government," has followed it by another on "Protestant Menace to Our Government," dealing with the present attempt to pass Sunday Laws and insert God into the Constitution of the United States.

DR. AUGUST SPECHT, the editor of *Menschenhum* (Humanity), of Gotha, has put forward a new popular history of the evolution of the world.

It is our friends of the *Boston Investigator* who are republishing the Letters of H. G. Atkinson and Harriet Martineau on "The Laws of Man's Nature and Development." The first American edition has been sold out for some years.

ANOTHER reprint advertised is the *Review of the Evidences of Christianity*, by Abner Kneeland, the founder of the *Boston Investigator*, who was sentenced in 1836 to two years' imprisonment for blasphemy.

MR. CAINE, M.P., who has been visiting India, writes of the Christian Missions, that "in the main the results are miserable, inadequate, and surely discouraging." Mr. Caine is a good Christian and very desirous of seeing his religion extend in India, but he says, "It is clear to every impartial inquirer who goes through India with his eyes open, that ninety-nine out of every hundred Indians who are revolting from idolatry are much more likely to follow the teachings of Bradlaugh, Comte, or at the very best, Chunder Sen, than that of Christian missionaries." No doubt this is so, but why is this thus if Christianity is divine?

THE State of California is not only to the front in America in taxing church property, it is, with the exception of Nevada, the only State in the Union which is not cursed with Sabbatarian laws.

M. DODEL-PORT, the professor of Botany, whose Botanical Atlas is known all over the world as the best of the kind, has been lecturing at Zurich, on the subject of "Moses versus Darwin." Professor Dodel-Port, is Vice-President of the German Freethinkers' Union.

It is evident that hard fighting will have to be done in Sweden ere the fangs of bigotry are rendered harmless. It appears that on one of the counts against Mr. Lennstrand his jury acquitted him. Not satisfied with the imprisonment Mr. Lennstrand has undergone, the Public Prosecutor has appealed to the Supreme Court against this acquittal on the ground that there was a Jew among the jury, and the Supreme Court has in its impartial wisdom declared that on that account the jury was invalid and the case must be tried anew. This charge was that of being concerned with Mr. Lindkvist in translating one of the *Freethinker* tracts, that by J. Symes, entitled "Who is to be Damned if Christianity be True?" Mr. Lindkvist, it will be remembered, received one month's imprisonment and the Swedish bigots are not yet satisfied. We are pleased to notice as a set off that Norway has recently rescinded the laws by which the State was wont to bind consciences to the Established Church, a measure which has produced loud indignation on the part of the national clergy.

EVER since Mr. Foote debated with the Rev. H. Chapman, at Camberwell, Mr. Rossiter has been anxious to enter into a similar discussion. Mr. Foote declined to arrange the matter personally, but the Camberwell Branch is of opinion that a discussion may be useful, and Mr. Foote has placed himself in its hands. The result is that a public debate is arranged for. It will take place in the Camberwell Secular Hall on Wednesday, April 17; the subject for discussion being "Is Christianity the Foe of Liberty and Progress?" Mr. Foote will open in the affirmative. Mr. Rossiter, who will reply in the negative, is a contributor to the *Spectator* and the *Nineteenth Century*.

THE West Ham Branch, after five years' wandering in the desert, has entered the land of promise. It has taken premises suitable for a club at a rental of £40 a year. The members are all poor men—as yet, and they will be very glad of any assistance

in furnishing their place. They feel that, with a good start, they are sure of success. Can any well-to-do Freethinkers in the neighborhood give them a lift? We hope so. The Secretary's address is Mr. Alfred King, 3 New Road, Balaam Street, Plaistow, E.

THERE are eleven seats on the York School Board, and out of these only one Churchman has been returned by the Archepiscopal city.

THE People's Concert Society, a band of musical enthusiasts, have been filling Lambeth Baths for the last three Sundays with large audiences.

THE BRUNO statue was not unveiled after all on February 17, the anniversary of his martyrdom. The ceremony is postponed till April. Even then the Reactionists will do their utmost to cause a further delay, as they cannot bear the idea of a public memorial of Bruno standing, as it were, under the very walls of the Vatican. We trust, however, that their pious hopes will be disappointed.

WE have received the following subscriptions to the Swedish Prisoners' Fund:—James Weston, 5s.; A. G., 2s. 6d.; A. B. Moss, 1s.

MR. A. B. MOSS, whose case is dealt with in another column, informs us that Mrs. Besant, Mr. Conybeare, and the Rev. Copeland Bowie, spoke up for him splendidly. We are delighted to hear it. So far as Mrs. Besant is concerned, we have the most implicit confidence that Mr. Moss's case will be fought through every stage.

MR. COURTNEY'S new *Life of John Stuart Mill* contains a striking and pleasing letter from Mr. Gladstone. Here are its most notable passages:—"We well knew Mr. Mill's intellectual eminence before he entered Parliament. What his conduct there principally disclosed, at least to me, was his singular moral elevation. I remember now that at the time, more than twenty years back, I used familiarly to call him the Saint of Rationalism—a phrase roughly and partially expressing what I now mean. Of all the motives, stings, and stimulants that reach men through their egoism in Parliament, no part could move or even touch him. . . . He did us all good."

MOST people now, I daresay, interpret Sacred Writ in a way to suit themselves. Professor Adams, of the Theological Faculty, Edinburgh University, does so anyhow, and nothing can exceed the ingenuity and nonchalance, so to speak, with which he can get over a Scriptural passage which is not to be reconciled with the laws of human nature. A few days ago, when his class was reading the Song of Deborah, he stopped them at the words, "to every man a damsel or two." "You will observe," he said, with a twinkle in his eye, "that there is an evident mistake here. It would be a peculiar consolation to the women folk to find their men coming home with two girls apiece. In fact 'damsel' here means 'heap of spoil.'" And the class smiled sadly!—*Glasgow Evening News*.

REVIEWS.

The Curse of Conventionalism. A Remonstrance by a Priest of the Church of England. Watts and Co., 17 Johnson's Court, Fleet St.—This priest, whoever he may be, notes "That our flocks have grown thinner. That our hold upon them is less and ever lessening. That the old faith is being boldly challenged." The causes he assigns are "that the world has progressed, while we have not. That being out of date, we are also out of touch. That neither what we practise, nor even what we preach bears any true resemblance to what Christ taught." The priest evidently writes fairly as well as freely, and has an eye to facts, but it is curious he should think the world will be improved by going back to Christ's teaching and example.

An Appeal to the Electors of England for Federal Home Rule, by a Scottish Home Ruler. Edinburgh, 15 Teviot Place.—Although the title does not entirely indicate the contents, it will be sufficient to attract those interested in Scottish Home Rule.

A STORY is told of a somewhat eccentric parson in southern Virginia who was intending to preach from the text, "And the spirit of the Holy Ghost descended like a dove." It occurred to him that it would illustrate the text forcibly to have a dove let down with a string from the ventilator above the pulpit just as he uttered the words. So an old negro servant was brought to the church on Saturday and sent up into the garret to rehearse letting down the dove. It worked to perfection, and on Sabbath morning the old darkey was again sent to the garret before the opening hymn. The preacher reached the words, "And the spirit of the Holy Ghost descended like a dove," but the dove didn't descend. The text was repeated, and still no dove appeared. A third time the parson repeated the words, and then glanced up to the ventilator to see what was wrong. Slowly the ventilator opened, and in the space appeared a woolly head. "Say, massa!" said the darkey, "I'se 'fraid de Holy Gose can't show up to-day. Ole cat's bin up yar an' chawed his whole damned head off."

MR. MOSS'S CASE AGAIN.
(From the "Star.")

A BATTLE, which is to be transferred to the Board arena, commenced on Wednesday in the Bye-laws Committee. A visitor, who has been for nine years in the service of the London School Board, and who happens to be a Freethinker, was last May ordered to desist from lecturing on the Freethought platform at the instance of Mr. Kelly, Tory M.P. for Camberwell. Mr. Moss, the gentleman in question, has an unblemished record, and his superintendent gives him the highest praise as a visitor. It is not pretended that he has ever used his position to further his views on religious matters, but he has had the audacity to spend his leisure time in writing pamphlets and lecturing instead of in loafing. The Bye-laws Committee of the late reactionary Board, which permitted its visitors to preach, to lecture on temperance, to beat the drum in a Salvation Army band, etc., forbade Mr. Moss to lecture, and he appealed to the new committee to remove the interdict. A bitter debate took place on Tuesday, Mr. Gover defending the action of the late committee in a tone of acrid theological bigotry seldom heard now-a-days. Mrs. Besant claimed for Mr. Moss the liberty allowed to Jewish, Roman Catholic, Protestant, Nonconformist, and Church of England visitors, and asked that all might be forbidden to teach their religious beliefs, or all allowed equal freedom. Colonel Prendergast defended in courteous fashion the position held roughly and harshly by Mr. Gover, while the Revs. Messrs. Headlam, Jephson, and Curtice earnestly supported equal justice to all. The Rev. Copeland Bowie, though not a member of the committee, came down to bear witness as a minister in Mr. Moss's district to the excellent work done by him, and to his high character. Mr. Moss was called in and cross-examined, and although Mr. Diggle tried hard to confuse and entrap him, his honesty and courage made an evident impression on the committee. Finally Mr. Gover moved the previous question, and he carried it by eleven votes to seven. Mr. Conybeare, M.P., challenged a division by name, with the following result: For the previous question, the Revs. Messrs. Coxhead, Diggle, Holmes, Jay, Mitchell, Rose; Messrs. Gover, Laing, Sharp, General Sim, and Colonel Prendergast. Against: Revs. Messrs. Headlam, Jephson; Messrs. Bayley, Conybeare, Raphael, Rutson, Mrs. Besant. The question will be brought before the Board on a motion to direct the Bye-laws Committee to rescind their resolution, and the right of the Established Church to thus interfere with liberty will be hotly challenged. It was noticed with much regret that Father Buckley, who had, on a previous occasion, spoken bravely for religious liberty, had not the courage to support his speech by his vote. Yet his co-religionists are likely to be the next to suffer, if the Anglican clerical majority is to be allowed to trample on the religious convictions of those who do not belong to its own sect.

Mr. Henry Gover, not liking the *Star* reference to himself, wrote to that paper as follows:—"My attention has been called to a paragraph in the *Star* of last evening purporting to be an account of what took place at a meeting of the Bye-laws Committee of the London School Board. As no one was present during the discussion except the officers and members of the Board, no doubt it is an account furnished by a member. I shall be glad if you will allow me, nevertheless, to repudiate the statement that I 'defended the action of the late committee in a tone of acrid theological bigotry seldom heard now-a-days.' That statement is entirely untrue. I did not go into theology at all. On the contrary, I said it was a mere business matter, and as a commercial man would not allow a person in his employment to lecture and circulate books to the effect that his master's wares were falsehood and imposture, so neither could the School Board, so long as they retain Bible instruction in their schools, allow a person whose duty it was to bring children to the schools to receive that instruction, to publicly lecture and circulate books to the effect that the Bible was falsehood and imposture. I think your readers will agree with me that that was at least logical. Mrs. Besant, however, had on the same paper of business a motion for inquiring the religious belief of every such officer, which I am happy to say I successfully opposed."

Mr. Conybeare, M.P., gallantly took up the cudgels on Mr. Moss's behalf, and replied in the *Star*:—"Mr. Henry Gover's corrected account of the part he played in the debate respecting Mr. Moss on Wednesday last is unfortunately inaccurate. As one of the Bye-laws Committee I was present throughout, and although I am in no way responsible for the report which appeared in your columns, I feel bound to state the actual facts. It is true that Mr. Gover did use the argument he has set forth in his letter. It is also true that, after the withdrawal of Mr. Moss, he made an attack upon that gentleman, which elicited the strongest disapproval, and which, at the time, I characterised to one of my colleagues as the meanest and most unfair attempt to prejudice Mr. Moss that had been made by anyone. One of the questions asked of Mr. Moss on his appointment as visitor some nine years ago, was as to whether he had had any experience in the teaching or management of children. His written reply was that he had taught in a Sunday-school. Upon this he was questioned on Wednesday last by some members of the Board, with the object of showing that he had purposely misled the Board which appointed him, by representing himself to be a Sunday-school teacher at a time when he held Secularist views. In this they entirely failed. Yet, after Mr. Moss's withdrawal Mr. Gover thought fit to renew the attack, and asked us to decide that Mr. Moss was not fit to remain in our service on the specific ground that he 'had obtained his appointment by fraud.' It is a pity Mr. Gover omitted all reference to this in his letter to you. But Mr. Gover talks so often and so much that no doubt it is difficult for him to know exactly what he does, or what he does not say."

A VERY young witness at the New Court, in answer to the question, "Do you read the Bible?" naively answered "No." "Ah, well," was the response from the bench, "you will likely tell the truth better than some who do."—*Glasgow News*, Feb. 24.

THE ARMY OF SALVATION.

"Puck" of Jan. 26 issued a striking caricature of General Booth with the following lines:

Of all the nuisances that raise
My scorn and indignation,
I chiefly hate the one that brays,
My tympanum with clamor flays,
And bellows vulgar hymns of praise,
The Army of Salvation.

It's din and humbug make me prone
To proffer execration;
I hail with dismal sigh and groan
It's hideous horn and vile trombone,
And drumming fit to split a stone,
The Army of Salvation.

With Booth to dwell in realms on high
To me is no temptation;
The neatest "mansion in the sky"
I would not take rent free, if I
Knew that it were infested by
The Army of Salvation.

The while it pipes, and squeaks, and toots,
To public perturbation,
With crazy whistles, fifes, and flutes,
It marches on with dirty boots,
Blaspheming flags and tawdry suits,
The Army of Salvation.

Ye Councillors of London town
Have some commiseration;
Relieve us of this "sorrow's crown"—
On Puck's petition do not frown—
Silence the *War Cry*, and put down
The Army of Salvation!

SOME PIOUS PUNS;
OR A FEW "TINKLING SYMBOLS."

Base weather—20 years rained he in *Some area*.
Beasts of pray—Lewd parsons.
Whines from the wood—Pulpit utterances.
Allsopps—The Lord's Supper.
Euchre-istic—On all-fours; shuffling.
Water works—Baptism.
A grand reign-beau—Solomon.
Reigning cats and dogs—Religious catechisms and dogmas.
Twinity, or extremes meeting—MANNINGERSOLL.
Co-Evel—Adam and Mephistopheles.
A sound man but a hollow old stick—Tubal(ar) Cane.
Ramrod's brother—Nimrod.
Whisk-craft?—Handicraft or priestcraft?
Prisoners of war—Sun and moon arrested by Joshua.
INCOG(NIAC).

PROFANE JOKES.

Missionary: "Are you a Christian? Do you ever attend church, sir?" "Well, sometimes." "And what church do you attend?" "That depends upon the girl I am following."

A simple street arab had been captured and brought into Sunday-school. He was of frank and open spirit, and had all the courage of his ignorance. "What do you know about God?" asked the teacher. "Bout God? Nawthen." "But you know the Savior died to save sinners, don't you?" "Naw. Never knowed he was sick."

JOB'S SUFFERINGS.—The sermon had been about the patience of Job, and when it was over a stranger who had listened quite attentively approached the clergyman and said: "Say, who was that chap that had them boils?" "His name was Job." "Where does he live?" "He has been dead for centuries." "Great Caesar!" "Don't you admire his patience?" "No, I can't admire any man who will put up with a whole herd of boils when by sending to me he could get a box of my Egyptian Boil Remover, only 25 cents, warranted to cure—" "Let us engage in prayer."

Willie is a little Scotch boy who lives in Glasgow. He is five years old, and has not yet learned to like "pease bross," which is given to children to cool the blood. "Go on, Willie, you must eat it," said his papa one day at breakfast. "But I don't like it, dada," replied the boy. "That doesn't matter; you must eat it. It will do you good and make you fat like Daniel, who lived on it when he was a boy." "Did he? Was that the man who was in the den of lions?" "Yes, that was the man." "Well, then," replied the lad scornfully, "I don't wonder the lions didn't eat him."

A good story is told of one of her Majesty's inspectors in mid-England. Examining a school, Mr. K. inquired, "What is a pilgrim?" After a pause a sturdy little imp boldly answered, "A pilgrim is a man, pleaser." "A man?" returned the inspector severely, "that won't do. Tell some more about a pilgrim." Another pause, broken by the examiner this time: "I'm a man, you know," he said rashly, "am I a pilgrim?" Here followed no pause, but the prompt rejoinder: "Oh! no, sir, a pilgrim's a good man, sir."

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AN ENGRAVING FIT FOR FRAMING OF
THE BRUNO STATUE

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By GAUDENZO FERRARI.

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