

THE FREETHINKER

EDITED BY G. W. FOOOTE.

Sub-Editor—J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



HOW TO CURE DEVILS.

And when he was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs.—MATT. VIII., 28.

RELIGION AND ROGUERY.

OUR last week's article on "Pigottism" was much appreciated, and we have been pressed to write a similar article on "Walterism," showing how Christian forgeries have been accepted without the slightest hesitation or enquiry. For the present, however, we must make the most of poor Pigott, and exhaust his usefulness as an unconscious pointer of the lessons of Freethought. We have no desire to dance over his grave, or to dissect him in the embrace of "just, subtle and mighty Death." But, on the other hand, we despise the silly proverb about speaking only good of the dead, for truth is very much better than a forced politeness. We shall therefore deal with Pigott as a religionist in this article, and afterwards respect his *Hic Jacet*.

When Pigott's body was examined by the authorities at Madrid, a scapular was found under his shirt, bearing the sacred letters, I. H. S., which the Church renders—we think fictitiously—from three Latin words as "Jesus the Savior of mankind." From this fact the *Pall Mall Gazette*, which has a certain softness for everything connected with religion, concludes that "there was a lingering touch of humanity about the poor creature, and that scapular that he wore round his neck was significant of much." Now it is not our intention to dissent from the first half of this passage. We repudiate the Christian doctrine of original sin

and innate depravity. We believe neither in perfect heroes nor in perfect villains. The best men have their failings, and the worst their redeeming qualities. Pigott, like other criminals, had "a lingering touch of humanity," though it does not seem to have taken the form of care for his offspring. Doubtless, also, that scapular "was significant of much." But "much" is a vague word. We wish our contemporary had been more precise. But, having no means of compelling it to be so, we proceed to give our view of the significance of Pigott's scapular.

What is a scapular? It consist of two squares of woollen cloth, attached by two strings, one square falling over the back and the other over the chest. It is a miniature of the garment worn by various Catholic orders. The Dominicans wear a white one, and the Carmelites a brown, which seems to have been Pigott's color. This scapular was personally given (we don't vouch for it) by the Virgin Mary, in the thirteenth century, to St. Simon Stock, an English friar, who honored Cambridge with his sanctity. God's mother made lavish promises of benefit to those who should wear it. They were to be delivered safely from Purgatory; nay, she herself would rescue them from that dreary residence, on the first Saturday after death, provided they had recited daily the Office of our Lady, and abstained from meat on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Pope John XXII. endorsed these promises in the Sabbatine Bull. Messrs. Addis and Arnold, in their great *Catholic Dictionary*,

throw doubts upon the Bull's authenticity; but Father Clarke championed it in the *Tablet*, and many who agree with him assert that whoever dies wearing this scapular cannot be eternally lost.

Not humanity, therefore, but self-interest induced Pigott to wear this holy chest-protector. It was a soul-insurance policy. He trusted to his own shiftiness to elude the punishment of his offences in this world, and to the scapular to save him from *too* warm a punishment in the next. The article was thus "significant" of Pigott's trust in the immoral trumpery of Rome. The creeds are, indeed, all founded on selfishness; but Christianity has the evil distinction of being the only faith which promises heaven without the necessity of any merit in the sinner.

Pigott was a true Catholic, like Carey, the infamous wretch who planned the Phoenix Park murders and betrayed his accomplices. Carey attended Mass punctually, and went to Confession the very morning before the assassination. Pigott also attended Mass with his family in Glenageary Chapel, and wrote from London to Archbishop Walsh under what he thought the seal of the confessional. "This display," says the *New York Herald*, "must, of course, have been the veriest hypocrisy." Nothing of the sort. Pigott was sincere enough in his religion, and the scapular proves it. The *Herald* does not understand Catholicism. Shelley, who studied it in Italy, where it flourished in unchecked luxuriance, wrote as follows in the Preface to *The Cenci*—

"Religion in Italy is not, as in Protestant countries, a cloak to be worn on particular days; or a passport which those who do not wish to be raided at carry with them to exhibit; or a gloomy passion for penetrating the impenetrable mysteries of our being, which terrifies its possessor at the darkness of the abyss to the brink of which it has conducted him. Religion co-exists, as it were, in the mind of an Italian Catholic with a faith in that of which all men have the most certain knowledge. It is interwoven with the whole fabric of life. It is adoration, faith, submission, penitence, blind admiration; not a rule for moral conduct. It has no necessary connection with any one virtue. The most atrocious villain may be rigidly devout, and, without any shock to established faith, confess himself to be so. Religion pervades intensely the whole frame of society, and is, according to the temper of the mind which it inhabits, a passion, a persuasion, an excuse, a refuge; never a check."

Primarily, as Tylor shows, religion and morality had no connection with each other. It is only in a late stage of culture that the connection is established. But, in becoming moralised, religion is dissolving. It abdicates sovereignty, and drops the imperative, or speaks it for its partner. A religion of ritual, indulgence, priestcraft, and imperious authority, like Catholicism, is only moral under compulsion. Its hopes and fears are quite independent of ethics. The best man may be damned for disrespecting its ordinances; the worst man may be saved by respecting them. For the blackest sin it has absolution; only heresy is never forgiven in this world or in the next. Pigott was no hypocrite in following such a faith. A forger himself, he never suspected forgery in Holy Mother Church. He was awed by her vastness and satisfied with her promises. His composure in facing death, compared with his agony in the witness-box, is indeed significant. The scapular could not protect him from Sir Charles Russell's ingenious torture, but it would protect him from hell and damnation; and he pulled the trigger of his pistol in complete reliance on the sanctified scraps of woollen under his shirt.

G. W. FOOTE.

HUXLEY ON "STRETCHING."

"QUITE apart from deliberate and unconscious fraud (which is a rarer thing than is often supposed), people whose mythopoeic faculty is once stirred are capable of saying the thing that is not, and of acting as they should not, to an extent which is hardly imaginable by persons who are not so easily affected by the contagion of blind faith. There is no falsity so gross that honest men and, still more, virtuous women, anxious to promote a good cause, will not lend themselves to it without any clear consciousness of the moral bearings of what they are doing."—*Nineteenth Century*, March.

A PIECE of verse in the *Oxford Magazine*, entitled "Cleansing Fires," attributes a recent fire at Mansfield Church to Ritualistic machinations, and ends—

"I think they might have burned at least
The chapel for not facing East."

A RAMPANT PARSON.

DR. WACE, the Principal of King's College, replies to Professor Huxley in the current *Nineteenth Century*. The reverend gentleman is very ill-tempered. He tries to be sarcastic, but only succeeds in being downright rude; in singular contrast to the great Agnostic, whose keenest darts were decorated with exquisite good-humor. Dr. Wace sticks to his "infidel" brand, and says Huxley deserves it; adding, with an air of impartiality, that *he* doesn't mind being called "infidel" by a Mohammedan. Perhaps not; but hard words do not injure reputations when they travel a few thousand miles, and it requires little courage to face such a distant odium. Dr. Wace fights shy of the Gadarean swine, the story of which is "one of the most difficult and mysterious narratives in the New Testament." He invites Professor Huxley's attention to the Lord's Prayer and the Sermon on the Mount, evidently in complete ignorance of his opponent's argument; for the Professor pointed out that Jesus told the devils to leave the possessed men and enter the pigs, and argued that if Jesus did not utter this order there is no greater evidence to show that he said anything else ascribed to him. But before he finishes Dr. Wace's caution deserts him, and he admits that he "fully believes" the pig story. He does so on the ground that Professor Huxley, as a scientific man, is not prepared to deny the *possibility* of the story's truth, while it is supported by "the evidence of trustworthy persons." What wonderful logic! Dr. Wace does not see that Professor Huxley will not deny the *possibility* of the miracle only because he will not deny the possibility of *anything*. The point at issue is not possibility but *probability*. The improbability of devils being in men and going out of them into pigs is so overwhelming that the most tremendous evidence would be required to make it plausible. And what is Dr. Wace's tremendous evidence? Why the "evidence of trustworthy persons," not one of whom alleges that he saw the miracle himself! Such is Dr. Wace's defence of what Professor Huxley attacks. No wonder, having such a bad case, and feeling it, that he splutters discourtesy at his deft opponent. Should Professor Huxley answer him, Dr. Wace will be a pitiful spectacle. Even the devils who got into the pigs might shed a tear over his plight.

DR. PARKER'S CREED.

JOSEPH PARKER'S cry for the total abolition of all tests of orthodoxy, it appears, proceeds from an inward want. According to a correspondent of the London *New York Herald*, the trust deed of the City Temple lays heavy on his soul. By that deed the trustees are "to permit to officiate such person or persons of the denomination of Protestant Dissenters who shall be of Calvinistic persuasion, and hold the religious tenets contained in the Assembly's Catechism and Confession of Faith, drawn up by the Westminster Assembly of Divines, 1647." Dr. Parker is thus bound to believe literally that "the world was created and made in six days," and that the souls of the wicked shall be cast into hell, where they remain in most grievous torment of body and soul without intermission for ever and ever.—(L. Catech., q. 29).

Among other things, he must hold that—

There is no salvation for those who are not Christians, be they never so diligent to frame their lives according to the light of nature and the law of that religion they profess; and to assert and maintain that they may is very pernicious and detestable.—(Conf. iii.)

By degree of God for the manifestation of his glory men and angels are fore-ordained to everlasting death, their number, if such is so certain and definite, that it cannot be either increased or diminished.—(Conf. iii.)

The wicked for their former sins God doth blind and harden; from them he withholdeth His grace, whereby they might be enlightened in their understandings. . . . and exposes them to such objects as their corruption makes occasion of sin.—(Conf. v.)

He must further hold that civil magistrates have authority to see that the truth of God be kept pure—that all heresies be suppressed; he has also the power to call Synods.—(Conf. xxiii.)

To church officers (i.e., ministers) the keys of the kingdom of heaven are committed . . . to retain or remit sins.

Of course Joseph does not believe or preach this rot, yet he accepted his situation knowing this was what he was bound to as his marching orders. We doubt not that a number of Liberal Nonconformists are in exactly the same position if only the trust deeds of their chapels could be examined.

Deacon's wife (in church, nudging her husband): "John, rouse yourself; the minister has got to the 'one word more and I am done.'" Deacon (in an impatient whisper): "What do you want to disturb me for when the sermon isn't half over?"

ACID DROPS.

SPURGEON has come back from Mentone in "fine form." He is as jocular as ever, though his wit is still on the level of his congregation. They laughed—yes, actually laughed, in the house of God—when their refreshed oracle told them that directly unbelief enters a man he begins to ask, Who was Cain's wife? But the question is a very pertinent one, and, lying as it does at the front door of the Bible, is calculated to excite attention. If Cain's wife was a stranger, Adam and Eve were not the parents of the whole human race. If Cain's wife was his sister, God arranged matters so that the very cradle of the race should be stained with incest. Either alternative is awkward for the Bibliolators. No wonder Spurgeon parries the horns of this dilemma with a joke. He knows his congregation and he knows his book.

THE "Scotch Spurgeon" has been duly inducted into the original Irving church in Regent Square, London, after sparring with the Devil for a few Sundays at the real Spurgeon's tabernacle. Mr. McNeill is what they call a rousing preacher. He doesn't stand on trifles. He calls Unitarianism one of the meanest, basest things that crawl on this planet. Yet the very preachers who indulge in such exaggerated license of speech support the Blasphemy Laws to "protect" their own "feelings."

SPURGEONS are getting plentiful. There is a "Stonehaven Spurgeon," the Rev. John Robertson, whose eccentricities are somewhat famous in the Lowlands. Last Sunday he held forth on prayer, and denounced the people of little faith who say we should pray for the soul but not for the body. Mr. Robertson says the Lord will heal *all* our infirmities, and cure a cripple as well as a sinner. Nay, he advises prayer when people are unable to pay their rent. A capital idea—especially for landlords, who should request the prayers of rickety tenants a fortnight before rent-day.

WHAT a consistent journal is the *Pall Mall Gazette*! When Mr. Bradlaugh was trying to carry his Oaths Bill in its amended form, this journal stood up for it in that very shape, but now the measure is carried it talks about "the futility of Mr. Bradlaugh's compromise." Some journalists have need of good memories.

HERE is a delicious touch from a *Pall Mall Gazette* review of Dr. Geikie's new *Life of Christ*. Dr. Geikie, it seems, shows "a felicitous avoidance of controversy by a simple narrative treatment of disputed points." What a flattering method of saying that Dr. Geikie avoids every difficulty by begging the question!

LIVES of Christ, by the way, are all the rage at present. The inspired narrative of the Holy Ghost is not good enough for this age, so scores of clergymen spin out something from their inner consciousness. But the cream of the joke is, they all have to go to the poor old Holy Ghost for their raw material. Evidently the Gospels would have been far bigger had the Paraclete dictated them in an age of printing-presses and type-writers.

THE Bishop of Bedford calls upon the prodigal people of London to imitate the thrift of an old Whitechapel lady who lives on a weekly allowance of one hundredweight of coal, a four-pound loaf, two ounces of tea, half a pound of sugar, and one shilling. Well, we don't mind trying when we have leisure and strength for the experiment. Meanwhile we should like to see the Bishop try it for a few weeks himself. If he finds it agreeable he might dispense with ninety-nine per cent. of his big salary. This would be a great saving to the nation, and no injustice to the Bishop, for one per cent. of his present income is considerably above his public value.

DR. BOYD CARPENTER, the Bishop of Ripon, preached in London last Sunday on the man with one talent. Considering the mental outfit of the majority of clergymen, the Bishop might preach to his brethren a very apposite sermon on the man with no talent at all.

A CURRENT profane joke. The first Walter was a printer's devil; the present Walter is the Devil's printer.

HE was an artless thing. And he put this advertisement in the *Church Times*—"To the childless. Will lady or gentleman adopt young man, with view to help him to take holy orders." Poor aspiring orphan! What a pity a certain elderly Baroness is already engaged!

How the servants of the Lord are persecuted! Janet Allen, a district visitor, who has for many years taken part in the clerical work of the parish of St. Phillips's, Battersea, having been superintendent of the church schools, has been sentenced to six weeks' imprisonment with hard labour for stealing an umbrella while on a church visit.

AT the examination of the Rev. Penfold Cope, the bankrupt Baptist minister, who was always on the look out for the widow's mite, one of his letters to a deacon from whom he obtained money was read in court. He said "God leads the blind in

various ways, and we trust him to bring home the prodigal who has wandered in a far country." It is supposed that the bankrupt referred to himself as "the prodigal."

A NICE specimen of the canting Christian is Henry Edward Lane whose wife has just obtained a divorce with custody of her child. Lane passed as an exemplary Methodist at Alvery, Salop. He, however, cruelly treated and deserted his wife, and then went to Rhayader, in Radnorshire, where he also obtained reputation as a pious young man. Representing himself to be single, he induced one of the congregation to elope with him and pretended to marry her. Lane then wrote a canting letter to her father, saying, "it shall always be my endeavor to make her happy in what I hope to be a Christian home." Mr. Justice Butt remarked he thought it likely Lane would come to penal servitude. Certainly he deserves it.

SAMUEL POOLE, a married man who says that he has been "serving God" for several years, has been brought before the South Stockton magistrates charged with an attempted assault on a girl of 15 years. He was committed for trial at York Assizes and bail was refused.

JAMES SHARPLES, formerly parish clerk and sexton at St. Saviour's Church, Bamberidge, has to pay £300 damages for seducing, at the age of 14, a pupil teacher at St. Saviour's School.

THE Rev. James Mellor Evans, curate of St. Stephen's Church, Poplar, has been committed for trial at the Central Criminal Court for abducting Jane Lane, a girl of 15. The girl was severely cross-examined, but Mr. Busby said he was bound to commit the prisoner on the evidence, and the Rev. Mr. Elliot refused to become surety again.

THE Rev. Hugh O. Pentecost, who used to be a revivalist, but is now an independent preacher, lately, in a sermon in New York on parasites, said: "Lastly, there are the religious or the spiritual parasites. They are the people who don't want to work out their own salvation. They want it all prepared and ready made beforehand. They are the ones who want their minister to think about their religion for them, and who argue that it is of no use to pay a parson if the parson can't attend to their salvation. They crawl into a church, or a creed, or a doctrine, like the parasitical hermit crab, and under its shelter simply wait for salvation. This is salvation by suction. In this class are the feeble human parasites who think that by simply clinging to Jesus, and without an effort of their own, they will be saved.

'Jesus died and paid it all,

All the debt I owe.'

That is their hymn. It is the hymn of the parasite. Nothing is so singular as to hear a company of women singing:

'Safe in the arms of Jesus,
'Safe on his gentle breast.'

It is the hymn of the parasite."

THE *Daily News* in reviewing "The Land of Darkness," in which Mrs. Oliphant describes a hell of a Swedenborgian kind very different from that of the orthodox, says "Good of a kind is very indispensable as a motive power to the machinery of life. Without it the works must stop dead. The very social order of this hell implies a conception of law which is, in itself, a conception of good. Without this no conceivable hell could hold together. The roof would fall in. But it is better to take this powerful study as it is offered to us, and to recognise it as a distinct reform of the code of damnation. The broiling days of one penal system like the hanging days of another are past." The talk of Jesus about unquenchable fire is now given up as poetry, that is fiction.

MRS. AUFRAY, better known as "Edith O'Gorman, the escaped nun," has been the occasion of another squabble. Her lecture at the Central Hall, Birmingham, was attended by a number of Catholics, led by a young clean-shaven gentleman in a clerical coat, who shouted out vigorous and impolite denials of all her assertions. The lecture resolved itself into a two hours' duel between the escaped nun and the priest, in which, according to the report in the *Daily Post*, the lady had by no means the worst of it.

ANY visitor to the British Museum, who will take a look at the Historical Series of Wood Engravings in the second north gallery, will find at the beginning of the series an engraving of "The Creation of Eve," by Michael Wohlgenuth, which will take the cake for profanity against any of our own "Comic Bible Sketches." It depicts Adam sleeping naked on a bank, while God Almighty, in a long cloak and with a full-sized halo on, is pulling a nude female figure out of his side, and has got her fully halfway out, with which he is apparently contented, for a smile pervades his somewhat wooden countenance.

THE *Methodist Temperance Magazine* is responsible for the statements following:—"A prison chaplain says that in the gaol chapel every morning there were at least 60 Sunday-school teachers; that, out of 649 prisoners, 593 had been Sunday scholars on an average for six and seven years each; and that out of 724 prisoners 81 had been Sunday-school teachers. In

the Leeds Gaol, out of 2,000 prisoners, 1,400 had been Sunday scholars. From some other gaols the reports show a still larger percentage. Most of the prisoners trace their fall back to drink. It is supposed that 45,000 Sunday-school scholars become drunkards every year."

WE are delighted to be able to quote the foregoing figures from a pious contemporary. They blow to the four winds the idle old nonsense about Christian education being so necessary for the moral purity of the young. The real fact is that the silly stuff poured into children by Christian teachers makes them fools, and, as Coleridge said, a criminal is only a fool with a circum-bendibus.

AMERICA is the land of useful inventors. The latest "wrinkle" from the great Republic is a patent for episcopal balloon sleeves. These are made of fine white rubber. They are blown out before the service—with wind, of course, something like the preacher; after service the wind is let out, and they are packed in a small compass. No wonder the Bishops begin to patronise Science.

MR. GOVER, a most illiberal Liberal on the London School Board, holds that Mr. Moss should not be allowed to oppose religion because his employers teach it. He forgets, however, that the Conscience Clause releases parents from the obligation of letting their children have it. On the other hand, he forgets that his argument, if logically carried out, leads to strange conclusions. Free Trade is the orthodox doctrine in England, but it is heresy in America, and the Kansas Legislature is considering the advisability of preventing by law the teaching of Free Trade in the university of St. Lawrence. If Mr. Gover thinks this is quite right, well and good; but, if not, he is perfectly illogical in persecuting Mr. Moss.

SIR W. DAWSON, an ex-president of the British Association, is a very old-fashioned gentleman. He writes books to show that the Bible and real Science—that is, Dawson science—agree wonderfully. His latest production, *Modern Science in Bible Lands*, ridicules evolution and the antiquity of man with all the gravity of Don Quixote tilting at the windmill. Sir William actually gives a geological map of the Garden of Eden! He also gives a funny explanation of the Flood. But his best feat is explaining the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah by a "bitumen or petroleum eruption." Sir William forgets that, according to Genesis, the Lord rained down brimstone and fire out of heaven; although, by the way, one would naturally expect such stuff to come out of hell.

AN attempt is being made by the High Church party to procure funds to pursue the Church Association for maintenance in furnishing funds for the prosecution of the Bishop of Lincoln. Mr. Bradlaugh's success in the action he brought against the late Mr. Newdigate is cited as an encouragement. But are not these parties making themselves liable to the very same charge?

A BIG placard on the London hoardings has been announcing a conference on "Coming Prophetic Events," among which are "The greatest war in Europe in 1889 or 1890, caused by France, led by Boulanger, who bears the number of the Beast, defeating Germany and changing 23 kingdoms into 10." This is a trifle to what follows." On the 21st of April, 1894, 144,000 will ascend in the air to heaven without dying, and Christ will descend on 11th April, 1901."

IN the fuller newspaper advertisement there is a slight discrepancy. We are told "The fifth day of March will be observed by these meetings as the anticipative anniversary of Christ's Second Advent 'in the air' on March 5, 1896, to raise the deceased saints and translate 144,000 watchful living Christians to Heaven without dying." Of course this emanates from our old friend the Rev. M. Baxter (whose name bears the number of the beast), the editor of the *Christian Herald* and the author of *Louis Napoleon the Destined Monarch of the World*. The figures are the same as in his *Great Crisis* published two or three years ago, except that the "great wars" were to have commenced in 1888. Baxter lives on the religious terror of credulous Christians, and we understand makes a very good thing out of it.

THE Bristol Auxiliary of the Colonial and Continental Church Society has been much ruffled at finding that at one of the chapels on the Continent "Hymns Ancient and Modern" is used. Thus while trying to reclaim the Catholics from the errors of their ways they are at the same time spreading the seeds of Romanism.

THIS Colonial and Continental Church Society is a very low and slow organisation, and they send out a portentously dull body of chaplains to the Continent. A bishop and his dean, we are told in the *Church Times*, were on tour together and came to a village where there was a chaplaincy. It turned out that they were the only worshippers present on Sunday morning, and the bishop suggested that the chaplain might omit the sermon under the circumstances. But that worthy man did not often get a bishop as his auditor, and he did not take the suggestion. And the two hearers were treated to forty minutes' abuse of the Pope.

IN view of the Government possibly adopting some of the recommendations of the majority of the Royal Commission on Education, all Freethinkers should be on the look out to do what they can for the cause of Secular Education. The clergy are already saying "Let us rid ourselves of the incubus of the so-called Settlement of 1870." If so it may possibly be worse for them in the long run. What we have to do is to support the Board Schools and endeavor to make them free, this is feeless by recovering as far as practicable endowments originally intended for the poor and diverted from their proper object.

ACCORDING to the *Barnsbury Independent* a "mysterious occurrence" took place at Low Valley. Mrs. Martin, it appears, who lives in Providence Street, is an energetic lady with a numerous offspring; and she frequently quarrels with her husband over the nursing of these olive plants. During a recent debate on this perennial topic, Mrs. Martin adjourned to a neighbor's house, leaving Mr. Martin with the "blooming lot." Her excitement was so great that she wildly expressed a wish that "the Lord would strike her stiff and cold where she stood." No sooner said than done. Mrs. Martin became as stiff as a corpse, and had to be laid on a sofa. A surgeon who was called in said her case was hopeless, but she was carried home and put to bed, where she still remains, although her condition is improving.

SUCH is the story, and we daresay it is as true as a number of "old soldiers" that have done duty in past ages. We venture to hope that one of our readers in the district will inquire into the case, and inform us of the real facts, if there are any.

John Bull is a pious paper. It is edited "For God, the Sovereign, and the People"—the Christian upside-down way of looking at things. Above this motto is a cut of a Bible surmounted by a crown. What exquisite loyalty! The Bible below, and the crown on top; God Almighty quietly playing second to Queen Victoria.

John Bull has been thinking in its bovine fashion over the *Times* forgeries, and comes to the conclusion that Mr. Parnell has suffered no injury whatever "that is not of his own infliction." We congratulate our pious contemporary on its lack of decency. Were every Christian journal conducted in the *John Bull* style, Christianity would be swept into the sewers in a twelvemonth.

WE don't follow Professor Seeley in his so-called Unionism, but we believe he said one true thing in his Monday's address to the lady Liberal Unionists of Cambridge. "Anarchy," he said, "is commonly high-flown and unctuous in its speech; the style of anarchy is solemn and pathetic; anarchy loves to refer to the New Testament." The last clause we beg to endorse. Every crazy schemer, who has a patent pill for society, goes to the New Testament for inspiration, and is able to bless it and approve it with a text.

RENAN laughs at the English goody-goodies who call Paris "immoral." He says there is nothing in Paris half so immoral as an ordinary leader in the *London Times*.

THE religious societies are great gainers by the death of the late John Rylands, of Manchester. The Religious Tract Society takes £10,000, the Baptist College, Regent's Park, £10,000, Lancashire and Cheshire Chapel and School Building Society £10,000. The London City Missions, London Missionary Society, Baptist Missionary Society, and many similar institutions, get £5,000 each. It is not at all likely that the late Mr. Rylands had read Canon Isaac Taylor on *The Great Missionary Failure*.

MR. CAINE thinks the missionaries would get on better in India if they were more self-denying. But why doesn't he also preach self-denial to the sky-pilots at home, and practise it himself by way of example?

ONE of the most plausible arguments for the Christian religion having fishermen at its foundation is the prohibition of meat during the forty days of Lent. This looks like a stroke of business which might have proceeded from that canny Jew, Peter; but after all it is more probable that the fishy business commenced at the great port of Alexandria than around the insignificant lake of Tiberias.

THE Rev. Dr. Barry (R.C.), writing in the *Tablet*, calls Mr. Romanes' work on *Mental Evolution in Man* "a leaf from the Gospel of Dirt," and "an inhuman book in support of a degrading dogma—the dogma of man essential bestiality." This was the sort of thing to which Darwin was subjected at first, and now all the more sensible sky-pilots are straining their elastic consciences in the endeavor to reconcile Darwinism and divinity.

THE Rev. R. W. Dale, of Birmingham, is a popular and is supposed to be a Liberal, preacher. Yet he is vehement in his assertion that the central fact of Christianity is that Christ died for our sins. Until he explains how and why the death of one can remove the sins of others we shall consider we have his word for it that the central fact of Christianity is an absurdity and an injustice.

MR. FOOTE'S LECTURES.

Sunday, March 10, Lecture Hall, Nelson St., Newcastle: at 11, "Bible Blunders;" at 3, "The Day of Judgment;" at 7, "Good God."
Monday, March 11, Cleveland Hall, Newport Road, Middlesboro, at 8, "An Hour in Heaven."

March 17, Claremont Hall; 24, Camberwell; 31, South Shields.
April 7, Birmingham; 14, Hall of Science; 21, Hall of Science; 28, Camberwell.
May 5, Manchester; 11, Milton Hall; 19, Milton Hall; 26, Camberwell.
June, 8, N.S.S. Conference; 23, Hall of Science, London; 30, Hall of Science, London.

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, Ohina, 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.

B. DAVIES.—Of course the *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers* will be published in a volume when completed, but the cost will be higher than the price of the parts. We cannot state the exact figure at present.

R. B.—Sorry to hear such news. We fear there are many domestic tragedies of the same kind. People are trained in bigotry, and a change of opinion is resented as an act of will. We know of several cases where Freethinkers have had a hell on earth made for them by Christian wives.

A. P. (Birkenhead).—Always glad to receive cuttings. We are acquainted with the Egyptian story of the Two Brothers. It is something like the Joseph story, and certainly earlier. Thanks for your good wishes.

A. SEYMOUR thinks the circulation of the *Freethinker* would be greatly increased if other readers would do as he does—leave it, after perusal, in the train, tram-car, or waiting-room. Those who can afford it might take two or three copies and distribute them in this way. Mr. Seymour often sends a copy to persons dealt with in our paragraphs.

A. COATES.—Your advice is well meant. That is the best we can say of it. God Almighty, if he exist, can hardly be so stupid as to punish us for not believing as you do. Anyhow, we cannot change our belief by an act of will; so we must run the risk of going wrong. Your religion need not boast of its "consolations" when it threatens every honest independent thinker with everlasting brimstone and no treacle.

J. HEMINGWAY asks us to reprint Mr. Ball's verses "The Bible tells me so" as a tract, and offers to take 500 copies. What do other readers say?

J. HULL, Kington Langley, Chippenham, would be glad to receive any Freethought literature for distribution. He gives the *Freethinker* credit for his Atheism. J. H. should join the National Secular Society. The Secretary, R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C., will be glad to hear from him.

No. 12.—Sorry to hear you were unable, through the bad Sunday service of trains, to run down and hear Mr. Foote's lectures at Plymouth. Your friend who journeyed from Totnes deserved "a treat," and we are happy to learn that he feels anything but disappointed. We say as before, "keep pegging away." You will do good by circulating Freethought publications, and entering into conversation with open-minded men and women.

T. B.—The *Liberator* referred to is a Melbourne paper edited by Joseph Symes.

RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Menschenthum—Liberator—Western Figaro—Jester—Star—Liverpool Echo—Bulletin des Sommaires—Radical Clarion—Birmingham Daily Post—Bournemouth Guardian.

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.

A FEW 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.

MR. BRADLAUGH'S new Bill for abolishing religious prosecutions is a decided improvement on Mr. Courtney Kenny's measure. It omits Mr. Kenny's gratuitous preamble about the inte-

rests of true religion, and goes straight to its purpose, which is expressed in the following words:—"After the passing of this Act no criminal proceedings shall be instituted against any person for schism, heresy, blasphemous libel, blasphemy at common law, or atheism."

PETITIONS should be sent in to members of the House of Commons *at once*, as the Bill comes on for discussion on March 20. Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C., will supply forms and sheets to applicants. Directly a sheet is filled in it should be sent to some other member than Mr. Bradlaugh. The member for the district in which the signatures are obtained is preferable. It would be well, however, to inform Mr. Bradlaugh of what petitions are forwarded, and to what members, so that he may make inquiries if they are not presented.

FREETHINKERS should also write, and induce their Radical friends to write, to their representatives in Parliament, urging them to vote for the Bill. Such communications will show there is a vital interest in the question, and will have a good effect on the minds of members who receive them. Resolutions carried at public meetings are also of the highest value. We call upon Freethinkers to strain every nerve to make the Bill a success; then, even if it fails the first time, it will stand in a good position, and command a prospect of success in the immediate future.

THE Association for the Repeal of the Blasphemy Laws, of which the Rev. W. Sharman is secretary, has met and resolved to empty its exchequer in procuring petitions for the Bill. The Guild of St. Matthew is also working vigorously. Unitarian ministers and liberal-minded Church of England clergy men—few as the latter are—are expected to make a good show of signatures. Fifteen or twenty thousand is hinted.

MR. FOOTE had a good audience at Milton Hall on Sunday evening, and the petitions against the Blasphemy Laws were numerously signed.

AT Mr. Bradlaugh's special invitation, as President of the National Secular Society, Mr. Foote has undertaken, with the sanction of the Executive, to do some organising work in Lancashire and Durham. He will devote a week or so to the Tyne-side district between March 29 and April 5, and a week or so in South Lancashire between May 2 and 9. His object will be to organise existing Branches and form new ones. Those who wish to avail themselves of Mr. Foote's services on these occasions should communicate at once with Mr. Forder, Secretary of the N. S. S., 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C. The Executive bears the whole cost of this work.

WE hope every Branch of the N. S. S. will make an effort to be represented at this year's Conference. Grave decisions will have to be made as to organisation. The Conference might well be held in London, which is central, easy of access, and tempting to delegates who would combine business and pleasure. We feel sure that a larger Conference would assemble in London than elsewhere, and it is time that London had a turn.

BRANCHES which have not sent in their criticisms on the Organisation Committee's report should do so without a moment's further delay, as the Committee cannot postpone its final report beyond April.

SPECIAL.—Having to move an important amendment at an adjourned meeting of London Radical Associations, *re* the public right of meeting in Trafalgar Square, on Thursday, March 14, Mr. Foote is obliged to alter the dates of his lectures on behalf of the London Secular Federation in the minor Hall of Science. He will only be able to give two discourses instead of three. These will be on Wednesdays instead of Thursdays. The dates are March 20 and 27. Subjects—Animism and Theism. Admission free. Time, 8.30.

Le Danton, we are glad to hear, is meeting with success. The number before us contains a stirring article on the suppression of the "budget des cultes," the sums voted for the support of religion. In noticing Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*, it calls it "a gigantic task, undertaken by our *confrère*, the sub-editor of the London *Freethinker*. To put on record the thousands of men who have been devoted to Science and Freethought, and have contributed to their development—such is the object of this work, which, we hope, will be translated into every language. It will be an indispensable book to all who are engaged in propagating and promoting the ideas of progress and liberty."

De Dageraad in briefly noticing Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary*, says that "The Freethinkers of the Netherlands will not be forgotten in this work." Most assuredly the Freethinking countrymen of Spinoza will not be omitted. Behind their mud dykes the Dutch formed a cradle for liberty at a time when intolerance was rampant on the Continent. The printers and publishers of Amsterdam, Leyden, and other cities issued works proscribed in every other country, and a succession of Freethinkers have kept up the traditions of Freethought from the

time of Spinoza to that of *De Dageraad*. When the history of Freethought in Europe comes to be written, the little country of Holland will have no mean place.

MR. SYMES gives us the following good word in the *Melbourne Liberator*:—"The Christmas number of Mr. Foote's *Freethinker* is worthy of its predecessors, and deserves a good circulation. The Christian bigots have not gained much by imprisoning the editor. They tried to crush him and his paper too; but the stuff both were made of was much too tough for their teeth and jaws; and the *Freethinker* flourishes at the expense of the Bible. Every Number of it either makes new converts or confirms the old ones. Without papers the Freethought movement would be impossible. We feel proud of our worthy contemporaries in England, America and elsewhere, which are carrying on the battle of liberty."

THE project of raising a monument to Giordano Bruno has roused at once the ire of antagonists and the researches of the friends of Freethought. A Catholic writer has even ventured to question the fact whether he was ever martyred at all, and, as our readers know, Mr. Foote recently replied to calumnies and misstatements which found their way into the *Scottish Review*. But others have looked into the question, and it has been found that the fact of his martyrdom, beyond being testified to by Caspar Schoppius, a converted Protestant, who was in the service of Pope Clement VIII. and in Rome at the time, is notified in an official publication called the *Avviso di Roma* of Feb. 19, 1600, which records that this "heretico obstinatissimo" was burnt, and said that he died a martyr, and willingly ["et diceva che moriva martire 'et volentieri"]. It has also been discovered that Bruno's birthday, which has been variously dated from 1548 to 1550, was on the 21st of March, 1548. So Freethinkers have a new anniversary to insert in their calendar.

"UNSECTARIAN BIGOTRY" is the title of an editorial in the *Church Reformer*. Brave and outspoken, as usual, Mr. Headlam stands up for Mr. Moss's right to advocate his principles, and denounces the bigotry of the London School Board in overriding it. He points out that Mr. Moss's character, as an officer of the Board, is irreproachable, and says "this persecution is grounded simply upon the character of his lectures and pamphlets." "Mr. Moss," adds the article, "is fighting for the same liberty of utterance which has been fought for and won by the Dissenters, Roman Catholics and Jews." Mr. Headlam laughs at Mr. Gover's absurd talk about discharging such heretics as Mr. Moss, and says "there are plenty of Freethinkers among Board-School teachers."

ACCORDING to tables published in the *Liverpool Daily Post* and drawn attention to by the Rev. Dr. Verner M. White, the attendance at church and chapel in Liverpool has largely decreased since 1851, and this despite the enormous increase of population. In 1851 the proportion to population was 20.6 per cent.; in 1882 14.5 per cent. With an increase of 176,000 in the population, and of 57,000 sittings in the church and chapel accommodation, the attendances, morning, afternoon, and evening in 1882 were 14,000 less than in 1851. Those altogether absent from any place of worship in 1851, who could have been present, were 53 per cent., and in 1882 they were 75 per cent.

IN fifteen cities and towns in England and Wales, while the increase of population has been 73.4 per cent., the increase of church and chapel attendance has been only 39.5 per cent. Dr. White winds up his discourse by saying that it is the deep conviction of multitudes of Christians, who still believe in the Bible, that nothing but the coming of the Lord in his power, and the special outpouring of his spirit, can save the Church. This is very encouraging. While they are waiting the coming of the Lord in his kingdom, Freethinkers will be working for the Republic of Man.

WHETHER or not Dr. Hannay was right in saying that the doctrine of eternal torment is practically dead in the churches, it certainly is so among the mass of the people. Anyone who doubts this should go to the Gaiety and hear "Faust up to date." How the people laugh when Mephistopheles, asked for a toast, points downwards and says, "I'll toast you all presently;" and then, when Martha says, "I could listen to you for ever," and his redness replies, "You'll have an opportunity of doing so," a broad grin spreads all over the house. Goethe made fun of the orthodox notions, and turned the devil into a cynical man of the world, but Messrs. Sims and Pettitt turn him into ridicule. Meantime, the clergy are doing their best to bring Jehovah, Jesus, and Co. "up to date," but the result is only a sorry burlesque.

A THEORY in regard to St. John's nightmare put forward by Prof. Vischer, and which has been endorsed by Prof. Harnack and other eminent critics, is that the book of Revelation is a Jewish production, to which Christians wrote an introduction and interspersed Christian interpolations. The Rev. F. H. Chase, with perfect fatuity, attempts, in the *Expositor*, to show that this theory breaks down, because it can be applied to the writings of St. Paul. He probably is not aware that the learned

Dutch critics Drs. Pearson and Naber, hold that the epistles attributed to Paul are composite productions. Mr. Chase is unwittingly aiding the theory he attempts to overthrow.

MESSRS. TRUBNER AND CO. have published a work on Christianity and Islam, by Ernest de Bunsen, the author of *The Angel Messiah of the Buddhists*.

THE *Westminster Review* for March has a curious theosophic kind of an article, entitled "Ecce Homo," the purpose of which seems to be to establish a new kind of Christianity without the idea of a Divine Creator or Providence, which is repudiated as a delusion. The writer says: "It is demonstrable that the idea of a Creator is inconsistent. The idea is absurd as well as inconsistent. It is repugnant to the enlightened moral faculty. It is refuted by the discovery that what is called design is a product of unconscious force. It implicitly contradicts the axiom *Ex nihilo nihil fit*, for the idea of a volition followed by the emergence of something out of nothing is inconsistent." The writer, who we suspect is a lady, goes on to say "The Holy Ghost within us, pointing to the predominance of evil in being, denies creation."

NEXT Sunday at 12 a.m. Mr. Leno, the author of *The Last Idler* and other poems, lectures at the Borough of Hackney Club, 26 Haggerston Road, giving original readings illustrating "Country Life." Those who visit the club will doubtless enjoy a treat.

THE ATTEMPTED SUPPRESSION OF FREETHOUGHT LITERATURE IN ENGLAND.—II.

ON June 22, 1652, the House of Commons referred to a committee of ministers to find out the authors, printers, and publishers of a book entitled *The Three Grand Impostors*. What the Presbyterian committee did in the matter is not known; neither is the book. Can it have been a translation of the celebrated Freethought treatise on the *Three Impostors: Moses, Christ, and Mohammed*, to write the history of which book would be to sketch the history of Freethought from the thirteenth till the eighteenth century? More probably it is identical with a work to which my attention has been drawn by my erudite Dutch friend, "Conrad von Elborch,"* entitled *De tribus Nebulonibus*, a satire on Masaniello, Cromwell, and Mazarin, printed in Holland in 1655.

On Dec. 12, 1654, the House of Commons found that a work entitled *The Apostolical and True Opinion concerning the Holy Trinity Revived and Asserted*, 1653, contained "impious and blasphemous opinions against the Deity of the Holy Ghost," and all the printed copies were ordered to be burnt by the common hangman. This book was by John Biddle, whose *Twofold Catechism* and other works were subjected to the same fate.

Hobbes was a favorite with Charles II., and to this doubtless owes his immunity from persecution. An attempt was made to prosecute his *Leviathan*, an order being made 17 Oct., 1668, to receive information touching such books as tend to Atheism, blasphemy, and profaneness, and in particular the book published in the name of one White, and the book of Mr. Hobbes called the *Leviathan*. They seemed to have been content with an attempt at suppression.†

In 1677 that noble patriot, Andrew Marvell, published at Amsterdam his *Account of the Growth of Popery and Arbitrary Government in England*. It was ordered to be confiscated, and a reward was offered in the *Gazette* for the discovery of the author.

In 1671 a book was published with a long title, beginning *That neither Temporalities, nor Tythes is due to the Bishops, Priests, or Clergy*. The author was unknown, but the printer, Mr. Francis Smith, was pounced upon and taken to Lambeth House to appear before the Bishop.

William Penn published his *Sandy Foundation Shaken*, in which he displaced all dogmas by the light of the spirit, in 1668, for which he was imprisoned in the Tower for about seven months.

Charles Blount, in 1678, issued his *Anima Mundi*. It gave offence by its scepticism, and Compton, bishop of London, desired its suppression. It was burnt "by some

* See *Over Drie Bedriegers* (Mozes Jezus en Mahomed), p. 58 1888.

† Pepys writes, 31 Sept., 1668, "To my bookseller for Hobbes' *Leviathan*, which is now mightily called for; and what was heretofore sold for eight shillings I now give twenty-four shilling for it second-hand, and is sold for thirty shillings, it being a book the bishops will not let be printed again."

zealous person," but afterwards re-issued by Blount. In 1680 he published *The two first books of Philostratus concerning the life of Apollonius Tyaneus*, with heretical notes upon each chapter. Dr. Adam Clarke is probably right in saying the design of the work was "to invalidate the testimony of the evangelists concerning our blessed Lord." A few copies were dispersed before the work was suppressed, and it was translated into French in 1779. Blount, who suffered much from the censorship, was the main cause in getting that obnoxious institution abolished. This he did by getting the censor to endorse an anonymous pamphlet entitled, *King William and Queen Mary Conquerors*. Parliament ordered the work to be burnt and the licenser removed. In 1681 was prohibited *The Presbyterians' Paternoster, Creed, and Ten Commandments*. This broad-sheet was very similar to other parodies which have appeared in almost all languages. The Paternoster begins, "Our Father which art in Hell; magnified be thy name; thy arbitrary kingdom come, thy tyrannical will be done in England now as it was in forty-one, etc. The Creed begins, "I believe in John Calvin, the Father of our religion," etc.

On Jan. 3, 1693, a vote was passed in the House of Commons declaring W. Freeke's *Brief but Clear Confutation of the Trinity* an infamous libel, and ordering it to be publicly burnt. Freeke also had to pay a fine of £500 for attacking the holy three in one. In 1697 the clergy and Dissenters, in an address to William III., entreated him to stop Unitarian and blasphemous publications, and in the following year the Blasphemy Act was passed. As it in express terms applies only to those who had made profession of the Christian religion, it has never once been put in force, though its existence has been made to support various prosecutions at common law. Even in the case of the Rev. Thos. Woolston, the Attorney-General, preferred to rely upon the common law.

The next heretical work which received the attention of the powers that be, was Dr. Coward's *Second Thoughts on Human Soul*, which was burnt by the public hangman March 17, 1704. Convocation attempted proceedings against Toland, but in trying also to silence Hoadly it was silenced itself, and its persistent croak against liberty was not heard for over a century. The power of bigotry was not silenced with it.

Anthony Collins's *Discourse of Freethinking*, though dated London, 1713, was printed at the Hague, and the outcry at the infidel work was so great that the author deemed it prudent to take refuge for a time in Holland. Deism spreading through the writings of Toland, Shaftesbury and Collins, a bill was brought before the House of Lords in 1721 for the further suppression of blasphemy. It was thrown out, but in 1723 Mandeville's *Fable of the Bees* was presented by the Grand Jury of Middlesex. An English edition of Servetus was in the same year seized and burnt by Bishop Gibson, who got hold of the manuscript of the second part of Matthew Tindal's work and also suppressed that.

J. M. WHEELER.

(To be concluded.)

REVIEW.

Positivism and the Religious Revolution. By Malcolm Quin. Positivist Depôt: 80 Alexandra Place, Newcastle-on-Tyne (3d.).—Mr. Quin writes with singular ability and eloquence. His sketch of the general decadence of Christianity is powerful and vivid, but few of our readers, we imagine, are likely to accept the Comtist faith which he offers to "a suffering world." Many of them, also, will dissent from Mr. Quin's view of the historic beneficence of Christianity. Positivists may regard it with a certain affection as the caretaker of the premises they expect to inherit; but the Freethinkers who are under no such sense of indebtedness are apt to regard it as the un-der sleeping enemy of all real progress. For our part, however, we recognise that Mr. Quin has admirably expressed the modern danger from those who "seek to save society by the compulsions of the State," and the prevailing trust "not to the transforming reason which educates character, but to the peremptory mandate which dominates will."

PROFANE JOKES.

Of course Solomon was the wisest man. A fellow with 700 wives has a chance to get instruction.

Minister (after a long and dreary sermon): "Language, brethren, fails me." A Voice: "Thank heaven!"

A Birmingham woman, last Sunday, tied her boy to the bed-post, spanked her little girl, kicked the cat under the bed, called her husband "a tallow-eyed old snoozer," and then fixed up and went to help the choir sing that good old hymn, "Near-r, my God, to thee."

THE CANNIBAL MAID AND THE LOVE-SICK MISSIONARY.

(From the "Chicago Mail.")

A CANNIBAL maiden loved too well
A missionary good,
And he loved her, but dare not tell
His love—for thus it stood:
A cannibal she and a clergyman he,
And their creeds were wide apart;
And how could he take, for sentiment's sake,
A cannibal to his heart?
Oh, 'twas a problem vexing, very,
For the cannibal maid and the missionary—
Indeed it was.

But the cannibal maiden's love grew bold,
For she was a simple thing;
And thus her love to her love she told:
"Oh, marry me! Be my king!
For I love you, my sweet, well enough—oh, to eat!
'Tis a terrible thing, I know;
But I must be your bride, or encompass you fried—
Oh, I must, for I love you so!"
Oh, 'twas a problem vexing, very,
To the maid, but more to the missionary—
Indeed it was.

He looked in the depths of her dark-brown eyes,
With their wealth of love and trust,
And he cried, in the flush of a glad surprise:
"Ah, well, if I must, I must!"
They were wed on that day; for 'tis ever the way
That passion must conquer creed;
And a happier pair it's remarkably rare
To discover—it is indeed!
And so 'twas settled nicely, very,
For the cannibal maid and the missionary—
Indeed it was.

HUNGARIAN SUPERSTITIONS.

The *Philadelphia Record* gives the following particulars of superstitious pranks played by the Hungarian settlement in Pottstown, Pennsylvania:—

A little girl belonging to a Hungarian family by the name of Petofy was wrapped in a motley garb of shawls, coats, and shirts, and buried up to her neck in the cold ground. Around the incarcerated child fifty sons and daughters of Hungary's dirtiest and sauciest danced in bare feet a hilarious can-can to rattling tin-cans and unearthly yells. The little girl was afflicted with a severe skin-disease, and the wiseacres of the settlement had bethought themselves of a certain prescription for the affliction as found in their country's folk-lore, and finally decided upon the above "babona," as they term it, or, superstition, as a curative. The cold ground, according to the superstition, removes the disease from the body, and the demoniacal rab-a-dub on kettle-drums drives away all boxies and spirits which they supposed to be invariably connected with diseases. The sufferings of the children, who were dancing the can-can on the frozen ground in their bare feet, was intended to be an ordeal that would always keep them from harm.

At the conclusion of the noisy performance, the dancers prostrated themselves upon the ground, swallowed all the dirt that they could hold, and then set up a continuous five minute howl. The last performance was intended as an expression of thanks to mother earth for her curative powers, and the fiendish cries were designed to cause the disease to make a peremptory removal to other quarters. Matters became additionally interesting when it was discovered upon the removal of the child that the disease rapidly left the little one. So great has been the sensation over the case that hereafter all skin-diseased babies of Pottstown will be wrapped up in swaddling clothes and this novel form of healing will be tried.

The Hungarian settlement is also permeated with a mass of rubbishy religious superstitions. Three weeks ago a curious religious revival passed over it. Two weeks later the especially sinful members of the community looked as if water was an element unknown to them. In the interim the whole tribe endeavored to get as dirty as possible, the dirt representing sin. When all had sufficiently covered themselves with miniature potato patches, the period of repentance was reached.

Several nights ago 250 of them felt that the time for salvation had come, and filed off to take a midnight bath in a creek at the southern end of the town. With sin thus removed the party entered into a realm of sweet beatitude, and amid a series of demoniac yells felt themselves forever absolved from sin. The creek has now been adopted by the Hungarians as an absolution bowl, and is termed in Miltonic language, "Silo's brook, that flowed fast by the oracle of God," by the pedants of the tribe.

The latest freak, however, in the community, is a unique marriage ceremony. There being no Hungarian priest in the settlement, the knot-tying act is performed by the parents of the couple—or, if there happen to be no parents present, by four of the most ancient maiden ladies. The bride and the bridegroom are fastened together by a rope tied in a series of knots. If either one complains of the knots hurting it is a signification that the two would forever disagree, and the marriage is considered a failure. If there is no complaint, then the two are made man and wife.

Wife (returned from church): "You should have heard Mr. Goodman's sermon this morning, my dear. I don't know when anything has made such a profound impression upon me." Husband: "Did you walk home?" Wife: "No, I took a street-car; and do you know, John, the conductor never asked me for my fare. 'Wasn't I lucky?"

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