

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

SPECIAL.

We announced a Portrait of Mirabeau on the contents-sheet, but there has been an unexpected delay at the engraver's, and the Portrait—a very fine one—will appear in our next number, with a special article from the editor's pen.

ATHEISM AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

SUNDAY, July 14, is the hundredth anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, and the occasion will be splendidly celebrated at Paris. In itself the capture of this prison-fortress by the people was not a wonderful achievement; it was ill defended, and its governor might, had he chosen, have exploded the powder magazine and blown it sky-high. But the event was the parting of the ways. It showed that the multitude had got the bit between its teeth, and needed a more potent master than the poor king at Versailles. And the event itself was a striking one. Men are led by imagination, and the Bastille was the symbol of centuries of oppression. Within its gloomy dungeons hundreds of innocent men had perished in solitary misery, without indictment or trial, consigned to death-in-life by the arbitrary order of irresponsible power. Men of the most eminent intellect and character had suffered within its precincts for the crime of teaching new truth or exposing old superstitions. Voltaire himself had twice tasted imprisonment there. What wonder, then, that the people fixed their gaze upon it on that ominous fourteenth of July, and attacked it as the very citadel of tyranny? The Bastille fell, and the sound re-echoed through Europe. It was the signal of a new era and a new hope. The Revolution had begun—that mighty movement which, in its meaning and consequences, dwarfs every other cataclysm in history.

But revolutions do not happen miraculously. Their advent is prepared. They are as much *caused* as the fall of a ripe apple from the tree, or the regular bursting of the buds in spring. The authors of the Revolution were in their graves. Its leaders, or its instruments, appeared upon the scene in '89. After life's fitful fever Voltaire was sleeping well. Rousseau's tortured heart was at rest. Diderot's colossal labors were ended; his epitaph was written, and the great Encyclopedia remained as his living monument. D'Holbach had just joined his friends in their eternal repose. A host of smaller men, also, but admirable soldiers of progress in their degree, had passed away. The gallant host had done its work. The ground was ploughed, the seed was sown, and the harvest was sure. Famished as they were, and well-nigh desperate at times, the men of the Revolution nursed the crop as a sacred legacy, shedding their blood like water to fructify the soil in which it grew.

Superficial readers are ignorant of the mental ferment which went on in France before the Revolution. Voltaire's policy of sapping the dogmas by which all tyranny was supported had been carried

out unflinchingly. Not only had Christianity been attacked in every conceivable way, with science, scholarship, argument, and wit; but the very foundations of all religion—the belief in soul and God—had not been spared. The Heresiarch of Ferney lived to see the war with superstition carried farther than he contemplated or desired; but it was impossible for him to say to the tide of Freethought "thus far shalt thou go and no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." The tide poured on over everything sacred. Altars, thrones, and coronets met with a common fate. True, they were afterwards fished out of the deluge; but their glory was for ever quenched, their power for ever gone.

Among the great Atheists who prepared the Revolution we single out two—Diderot and D'Holbach. The sagacious mind of Comte perceived that Diderot was the greatest *thinker* of the band. The fecundity of his mind was extraordinary, and even more so his scientific prescience. Anyone who looks through the twenty volumes of his collected works will be astonished at the way in which, by intuitive insight, he anticipated so many of the best ideas of Evolution. His labors on the Encyclopedia would have tired out the energies of twenty smaller men, but he persevered to the end, despite printers, priests and governments, and a countless host of other obstructions. Out of date as the work is now, it was the artillery of the movement of progress then. As Mr. Morley says, it "rallied all that was best in France round the standard of light and social hope."

Less original, but nearly as bold and industrious, D'Holbach placed his fortune and abilities at the service of Freethought. Mr. Morley calls the *System of Nature* "a thunderous engine of revolt." It was atheistic in religion and revolutionary in politics. It challenged every enemy of freedom in the name of reason and humanity. Here and there its somewhat diffuse rhetoric was lit up with the splendidly concise eloquence of Diderot, who touched the work with a master-hand. Nor did this powerful book represent a tithe of D'Holbach's labors for the "good old cause." His active pen produced a score of other works, under various names and disguises, all addressed to the same object—the destruction of superstition and the emancipation of the human mind. They were extensively circulated, and must have created a powerful impression on the reading public.

Leaving its authors and precursors, and coming to the Revolution itself, we find that its most distinguished figures were Atheists. Mirabeau, the first Titan of the struggle, was a godless statesman. In him the multitude found a master, who ruled it by his genius and eloquence, and his embodiment of its aspirations. The crowned king of France was pottering in his palace, but the real king reigned in the National Assembly. His career and achievements will form the subject of another article.

The Girondists were nearly all Atheists, from Condorcet and Madame Roland down to the obscurest

victim of the Terror who went gaily to their doom with the hymn of freedom upon their proud lips. Danton also, the second Titan of the Revolution, was an Atheist. He fell in trying to stop the bloodshed, which Robespierre, the Deist, continued until it drowned him. With Danton there went to the guillotine another Atheist, bright, witty Camille Desmoulins, whose exquisite pen had served the cause well, and whose warm poet's blood was destined to gush out under the fatal knife. Other names crowd upon us, too numerous to recite. To give them all would be to write a catalogue of the revolutionary leaders.

Atheism was the very spirit of the Revolution. This has been admitted by Christian writers, who have sought revenge by libelling the movement. Their slanders are manifold, but we select two which are found most impressive at orthodox meetings.

It is stated that the Revolutionists organised a worship of the Goddess of Reason, that they went in procession to Notre Dame, where a naked woman acted the part of the goddess, while Chénier's *Ode* was chanted by the Convention. Now there is a good deal of smoke in this story and very little flame. The naked female is a pious invention, and that being gone, the calumny is robbed of its sting. Demoiselle Candeille, an actress, was selected for her beauty; but she was not a "harlot," and she was not undressed. Whoever turns to such an accessible account as Carlyle's will see that the apologists of Christianity have utterly misrepresented the scene.

Secondly, it is asserted that the Revolution was a tornado of murder; cruelty was let loose, and the Atheists waded in blood. Never was greater nonsense paraded with a serious face. During the Terror itself the total number of victims, as proved by the official records, was less than three thousand; not a tenth part of the number who fell in the single massacre of St. Bartholomew!

But who caused the Terror? The Christian monarchies that declared war on Freethinkers and regicides. Theirs was the guilt, and they are responsible for the bloodshed. France trembled for a moment. She aimed at the traitors within her borders, and struck down many a gallant friend in error. But she recovered from the panic. Then her sons, half-starved, ragged, shoeless, ill-armed, marched to the frontier, hurled back her enemies, and swept the trained armies of Europe into flight. They *would* be free, and who should say them nay? They were not to be terrified or deluded by "the blood on the hands of the king or the lie at the lips of the priest." And if the struggle developed until the French armies, exchanging defence for conquest, thundered over Europe, from the Baltic to the Mediterranean, from the orange-groves of Spain to the frozen snows of Russia—the whole blame rests with the pious scoundrels who would not let France establish a Republic in peace.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE SECRET DOCTRINE.

THE sudden conversion of Mrs. Besant to Theosophy, which be it said is far different from Christianity or even personal Theism, is a severe blow. We do not so much mind the absurd crowing on the part of Christians about the credulity of sceptics, as the fact that her own influence for good will be seriously impaired. Mrs. Besant has claims on the sympathy of Freethinkers, which no action on her part can obliterate, and we feel sure she has been true to herself in taking her present course. Into the nature of the personal influence which has induced the change it would be impertinent and useless to inquire, but there can be no doubt that something is to be attributed to the two remarkable volumes before us.*

* *The Secret Doctrine: the Synthesis of Science, Religion, and*

Many reasons, well known to friends, have interested the present writer in Theosophy. Intimate daily companionship with a Kulin Brahmin, now a hermit Yogi "on the path," to use the Theosophic jargon, made me acquainted with the whole scheme of Hindu Theosophy, the essential part of *The Secret Doctrine*, long before it was put forward by any member of the Theosophical Society. On its first appearance I reviewed in this journal Mr. Sinnett's book, the *Occult World*, which first made English readers acquainted with the alleged Occult Brotherhood, and the time I have given to "occult" literature has, I regret to say, been very considerable. I do not often write of myself, but it seems right to say thus much, as the first thing a believer in *The Secret Doctrine* will be apt to do is to question the competence of the reviewer.

To review nearly 1,500 pages of a work which, if its claims are genuine, is the most wonderful revelation ever made to man, is indeed no light task. The work purports to give the Hidden Wisdom of the East as transmitted by "adepts," and to explain both the origin of worlds and of man. Is the claim genuine? Are the explanations correct? These are the only questions we need attend to, though there is much in the book of interest to those with leisure to study bye-paths of mythology and philosophy. The remark must be made that the essential teaching of the work is not secret or occult, but simply a compound of common Hindu Pantheism with Kabbalism, which can be learnt by any student. The Secret Doctrine pretends to be based on "The Book of Dzyan," a work declared to be of immense antiquity. "Extracts are given from the Chinese, Thibetan, and Sanskrit translations of the original Senzar, Commentaries, and Glosses on the Book of Dzyan—these being now translated for the first time into an European language." We by no means deny that there are many Eastern sacred books yet unknown to European scholars, or even such a language as the Senzar, with which they are unacquainted.

It may be that in Thibet there are immense libraries "too large to find room even in the British Museum." It may be that in Thibet there is an Occult Brotherhood able to communicate instantaneously with Madame Blavatsky without using the telegraph, or it may be she only alleges their existence in Thibet because that country has been but little explored—Freethinkers never set themselves to prove negatives. It may be that it was necessary for the Theosophic shrine at Adyar, Madras, to be made in secret, in order that the Mahatmas might magnetise the place, or it may be, as alleged by Madame Coulomb, that this was the reason assigned, because it was necessary for M. Coulomb to insert sliding panels, traps and strings in order to work the Theosophic wonders. We leave others to judge for themselves.

But we have the gravest doubts as to the antiquity of this "Book of Dzyan." Not only is Kwan-Yin, a comparatively late development of Chinese Buddhism, mentioned, but the tone of the philosophy is that of late Hinduism, not that of the Vedas, compounded with Kabbalism, not so much as expounded by the earliest Kabbalists, who good authorities consider date only from the middle ages,† but that of Monsieur A. L. Constant, "Eliphas Levi," who died in 1875.‡ This "Kabbalist" conjuror and charlatan is the true spiritual father of Madame Blavatsky, though she has also learnt much of Hindu philosophy during her sojourn in India. She says indeed her work is "a partial statement of what she herself has been taught by more advanced students." We suspect no

Philosophy, by H. P. Blavatsky. Vol 1., *Cosmogogenesis* Vol 11., *Anthropogenesis*, London Theosophical Publishing Co. Price two guineas.

† See *Encyclopædia Britannica*, art. Kabbala

‡ Madame Blavatsky calls him Abbé Constant, though he was never ordained a priest. Other little slips such as "Sterling" for Stirling, and Haegel for Hegel or Haeckel, indicate that these handsome volumes have not been supervised by perfect beings.

mysterious "adepts," but the late Swami Dyanand Sarasvati and the living T. Subba Row are responsible for a large portion of the teaching about the days and nights of Brahma and so forth. Indeed, all this matter might be gathered from any Brahmin or well informed "Yogi." Hindu systems of philosophy may be as well worth studying as European ones—that, by the way, is not saying much—but students would do well to go to the original sources rather than to a *rechauffé* of Hindu doctrines used as the jargon of a new faith. No doubt the profound Hindu philosophy may come as a revelation and a new view of life to some Europeans, but they will do well to remember the position in which it has left the Hindus—dreaming of Theosophy and practically at the mercy of less speculative Mohammedans and Christians.

The Book of Dzyan, like other revelations, reveals nothing unless you have the right interpretation. It resembles them also in being capable of being turned into whatever you please. We cite as a specimen the opening stanza: "The Eternal Parent (Space), wrapped in *her* ever invisible robes, had slumbered once again for seven eternities." The Eternal Parent is explained as "the incomprehensible Deity." "Deity is an arcane, living (or moving) Fire, and the eternal witnesses to this unseen Presence are Light, Heat, Moisture—this trinity including, and being the cause of, every phenomena in Nature." God, however, is not a person, but "BE-NESS rather than Being." As He, She, or It is "unthinkable and unspeakable," the first principle of the new theosophy, is in antagonism to all former theosophies which claimed insight into the divine nature. It is, in fact, rather Pantheism than Theosophy.

The explanations are occasionally given in the words of "the Masters," whose style is marvellously similar to Madame Blavatsky's own. § The first explanation of theosophy given to Mr. Sinnett by Mahatma Koot Hoomi through Madame Blavatsky, in his *Esoteric Buddhism*, he said emphatically, "is Esoteric Buddhism, and for European students approaching it for the first time, any other designation would be a misnomer." Since, however, an eminent Pali scholar has said that what the book contains is "neither esotericism nor Buddhism," Madame Blavatsky finds it is "an excellent work with an unfortunate title." She also falls foul of her disciple for having appeared to support Darwinism by speaking of the earth as "able to develop man from the ape." A large part of the work indeed is a long philippic against Darwinism and the men of science, "such as Hæckel, Carl Vogt, or Ludwig Büchner in Germany; or even Mr. Huxley and his co-thinkers in materialism in England." "Such men," she continues, "are simply the intellectual and moral murderers of future generations."

And what is the theory with which Madame Blavatsky seeks to replace Western science? A *melange* of Eastern Pantheism and Polytheism with no personal god, but Dhyani Chohans, "creative spirits" who correspond to the Hebrew Elohim, a "host of angelic beings appointed [by whom] to guide and watch over each respective region." Mahatmas or "adepts" with supernormal powers who can see round a corner and into the middle of next week. With the confidence of a few weeks' membership of the T.S., Mrs. Besant proclaims that "by a long and definite course of training certain men|| have attained this Mahatmaship." Madame Coulomb, for many years the intimate friend and fellow resident of Madame Blavatsky, tells how Mahatmas were made out of a doll, a white sheet, and a bamboo pole!

§ Experts employed by the Society for Psychical Research, a society largely composed of spiritists, gave their opinion that letters attributed to Mahatma Koot Hoomi were in the handwriting of Madame Blavatsky. Facsimiles are engraved in the "Proceedings" of the Society, and the reader can judge for himself.

|| N. B.—There are no Occult Sisters of Thibet.

Theosophy certainly has a theory of evolution, but it is based not on science but imagination, in which the superstition attached to the number seven has a large share. As a part of "cosmogogenesis," the student will learn such scientific *facts* as that the earth is the satellite of the moon, and the moon is "the friend of the sorceress and the foe of the unwary." ¶

Men, according to *The Secret Doctrine*, are descended from giants with four arms, one head and three eyes, the third eye being now represented by the pineal gland. This monstrous hoax seems to be accepted in good faith by Mrs. Besant. Any duly-instructed Brahmin would explain the matter differently. The third eye is conscience, as Madame Blavatsky may find in the next edition of her book, if she is not above profiting by the hint of a chela "on the fourth round." The giants are witnessed to by the belief of the ancients, (founded on osseous remains, now known to have been extinct animals) and the "huge statues of Easter Island"—how huge can be seen outside the British Museum—as though a colossal statue without legs proved the existence of colossal men without legs.

What will astonish most readers of *The Secret Doctrine* is the display of learning and appeal to authorities. Madame Blavatsky is widely read in mythology, and occasionally what she says or cites from others on that subject is worth attention. But she seems unacquainted with the works which throw most light on the subject, such as Tylor's *Primitive Culture*, Spencer's *Principles of Sociology*, Vignoli's *Myth and Science* and Lang's *Myth, Ritual and Religion*. We make no account of this parade of erudition. The Theosophical Society is rich and has a good library. Madame Blavatsky has been in the business at least some fifteen years, and half that time has edited theosophical magazines. It would be strange if she had not collected some curious material. Her *Pall Mall Gazette* reviewer (said to be Mrs. Besant) calls the work "a coherent whole." To us it seems a complete hodge-podge of Yogi philosophy, "Esoteric Buddhism," Ignatius Donnelly, Ragon and "Eliphas Levi." In the whole 1,474 pages we find much about Brahma, Jehovah, Noah, Osiris, Vishnu, and Purusha and Prakiti, but hardly a single line of direct service to mankind, and we can therefore safely predict that, despite its curious learning, it will, even although the rage of the day, eventually take its place on the dusty shelves beside the treatises of Fludd, Postel, Kunrath and the other quacks and theosophists of the past.

If we are severe we hope we are not unjust. We have felt Mrs. Besant's change of opinion as a blow to the Freethought cause, but we trust it has not indisposed us to look at what may be said from the standpoint of her new views. We agree that all things are begirt with mystery, but we fail to see how the mystery is cleared up by belief in gods or Dhyani Chohans. Nevertheless, the mysterious has an undoubted fascination, and charlatans will for long be able to live in clover by their pretences to remove the veil. We regard Theosophy as more dangerous than Christianity, as it is less definite. The belief in magical powers now existing is more noxious than the belief in miracles which only happened in the past. The attempt to gain supernormal powers while on earth is quite as delusive as the hope to enjoy them in heaven, and the inculcation of asceticism and celibacy by Theosophy is as pernicious as the same principles in Christianity. The experience of India is an historical warning against the dreams of transcendentalism and Theosophy. Real progress is only made by restricting our aims and efforts within the limits of the actual.

J. M. WHEELER.

¶ Perhaps this is why Madame Blavatsky called herself *Luna Melanconica*.

ACID DROPS.

The Christian Evidence Society must feel it is losing ground, for its advocates are particularly virulent this season. Every one of them seems to be furnished with a stereotyped set of libels on the leading Freethinkers. The thing is done systematically, and if Messrs. Engstrom and Waterman are ignorant of the machinery by which it is carried out they must be altogether too simple for this wicked world. From all the reports that reach us the universal watchword is "Never mind the subject; black-guard the Secularists." Fortunately the game is played with such utter brutality that the public who listen are becoming sickened. The spiciest libels grow stale at last in such a limited circle of defamation.

Many Freethinkers have asked us how they should act when they hear these libels from Christian Evidence platforms. Our answer is "Give the fellows a wide berth. But if the spirit moves you too powerfully, just go up to the libeller and say 'Do you mind putting that in writing and signing it?' Of course the answer will be 'no,' but the refusal will show the audience how much the fellow really believes in what he says."

The way in which the papers have dished up the beastly story of Sullivan's fight with Kilrain is a fine comment on the meekness and humanity which are claimed as the special characteristics of Christian civilisation. The old Greeks had their manly sports, but it never occurred to those wicked Pagans to set up two men to smash each other's faces for so much a side and glory to the bargain.

A Roman Catholic writer, who calls himself Bernard, and who has served his novitiate in a monastery in London, gives his experience in a book entitled *From World to Cloister*. Monastic life is by no means so attractive as when the monks lived on the fat of the land. Fasting and mortification is now the rule. The writer confesses that a life passed in restraint, taciturnity and separation from the outer world has a tendency to foster an interest in trifles. And further he says: "There is no doubt that a rule which excludes most subjects of human interest, if it be kept in real earnest, has a tendency to dwarf and etiolate the mental powers; to destroy any tone of culture, any breadth of view; to weaken sympathy for one's fellow-creatures, regarded as flesh and blood; and to develop a taste for petty gossip." Yet this life of entire devotion to religion is the highest ideal attained by Christianity.

The Bishop of Southwell has not long had that diocese, but has already intimated his intention of petitioning the Queen for a suffragan Bishop. He has not, however, intimated any intention of paying his assistant out of his own salary. That is another matter.

Another prophecy is fulfilled. The lion and the lamb have lain down together, though God knows which was which. Dr. Moorhouse, the Bishop of Manchester, gave a garden party, and an invitation was sent to Dr. Vaughan, the Catholic Bishop of Salford. It was accepted, and the two fathers in God fraternised. Memories of Luther and the Pope, and Queen Bess and Queen Mary, were dismissed into limbo. Probably the two bishops reflected that domestic squabbles among Christians must be postponed until the common enemy is disposed of. When infidelity is settled—*when!*—the lion and the lamb will still keep company, but one will be inside the other.

Dr. Moorhouse has been addressing his clergy on cremation and gambling. On the former subject he seems to keep an open mind; on the latter he talks a deal of nonsense. It is all very well to bid the clergy raise their voices against it, but if the big gamblers go unreprieved—as they certainly will—what is the use of rebuking the small ones? Preaching in any form is a wretched failure. The pulpit was influential when it had the law behind it. Now it is a ghastly pretence. It has as much effect on the community as water on a duck's back.

How much is modesty a matter of custom. Oriental ladies think it the height of immodesty to show their faces. If they stumble, they take care to keep their features

covered, and leave the rest of their charms to the mercy of accident. Here in England a lady bares her face, but is covered with confusion if she discloses an inch of stocking. It appears, however, that the Persian ladies are, on the whole, less lavish in displaying their charms than the English ladies who move in high society, and the Shah is shocked by the revelation of evening dresses.

By the way, the Church of old set itself vehemently against the nudity of fashionable females. But it could never make the ladies submit. The daughters of Eve were always trying to get back to her primitive costume. They listened to the sermons, and cut their dresses an inch lower. So much for the power of the pulpit.

A writer in the *Theological Monthly* fixes the precise day of the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt as April 15, 1438, B.C. Perhaps he will now prove that the Jews were in Egypt as some wicked sceptics have doubted if they were ever there at all.

The *Expositor* has an article by the Rev. C. Plummer on the "documentary" theory of the origin of the Gospels. This theory has been ridiculed by M. Godet, on the ground that it is absurd to postulate such patchwork as the theory requires: an author borrowing two words from one document, three from another, and four from a third, piecing them all together in his own narrative. Mr. Plummer takes two mediæval chroniclers, Benedict of Peterborough and Roger of Hoveden, and shows they did the very thing which M. Godet pronounces impossible. The article suggests what caution should be used in the question. The one patent fact is that the three first Gospels have narratives in common, which precludes the possibility of their being independent and original witnesses.

"Amid all the pressure of my public life and duties," writes Mr. Gladstone, "I have always thanked God for the rest and repose of the Sunday." Very likely. But if Mr. Gladstone had been pent up in a factory six days out of every seven, he would have thanked God, or anybody who afforded it, for the opportunity of seeing and studying the artistic and scientific treasures in public institutes on Sunday, or taking a trip into the country with the sky above his head and the grass beneath his feet. There is nothing more profoundly and miserably selfish than the attitude of the upper classes on the Sunday question. What they do not require is of course unnecessary to other people.

The *Church Times* doesn't like the idea of the Old Catholics establishing a mission in England, a scheme said to be approved by Dr. Dollinger. It says: "The movement implies that the Church of England is not the Catholic Church of the country, that it is not in continuity with the Church of pre-Reformation times, and does not afford the true means of grace," etc. We wonder if the humbug about the Church of England being the Church of pre-Reformation times goes down with any person outside the communion of that Church.

Archdeacon Thomas has been holding forth again at Oswestry on the wickedness of the anti-tithe agitation. He recited a number of divine "visitations" on the ring-leaders in this infernal attempt to rob the clergy of their share of mammon. People might call him superstitious, but what did he care? Facts were too stubborn to be talked away. But the Archdeacon's facts are all of the anonymous order. Somewhere—God knows where; at some time—God knows when; farmer what's-his-name fell under the Almighty's wrath. He wouldn't send the parson that sucking-pig and the Lord smote the sow! Moral—pay up! Very pretty, Mr. Archdeacon, but can you substantiate these little stories to the satisfaction of even a committee of churchwardens?

The Rev. T. Moore pleads for "Freedom for the Church without Disestablishment." What he wishes is the repeal of 25 Henry VIII., cap. 19, whereby convocations cannot sit without a licence from the Crown. "State support, but no State control," is always the motto of the parsons. Formerly the clergy used to tax themselves through convocation, and no doubt they would like to resume that function since the *Church Times* never ceases

to maintain that taxation of the clergy is both "fraudulent and illegal."

A biography of Henry Ward Beecher, by William C. Beecher and the Rev. S. Scoville, assisted by Mrs. H. W. Beecher, has been published in more than seven hundred pages. One would think from the work that the popular preacher was the most eminent man of his age. To our mind Ingersoll's tribute to Beecher excels all that that worthy ever wrote. When a generation arises that knew not Henry Ward Beecher, it will ask what the deuce did he do to merit such a biography. The only answer we can suggest is—he didn't preach hell.

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts is always known as the S.P.G. We have heard of a young man who was instructed by his parents to strictly set down his expenditure. In his account book were found considerable items initialed "S.P.G." His pious mother was delighted by his zeal for missionary work, but he explained it to a friend as meaning "Something: Probably Grub."

The Liberal Spanish press has received very coldly the proposition that the Pope should reside in that country, and even the Conservative papers mention it without enthusiasm.

Dr. Allbutt has lost his case. The Court of Appeal has decided in favor of the Medical Council. This body, it appears, has the right to deprive any doctor of his medical degree for "unprofessional conduct," and that means anything contrary to the prejudices of the profession. It is a monstrous usurpation, all the worse for its having a legal sanction. Dr. Allbutt is a victim of bigotry. He is robbed of his means of livelihood in what should be a honorable profession for the simple offence of giving useful information to poor people "at a low price." We hear there has been some talk of serving Dr. Allinson in the same way for giving medical advice in the *Weekly Times and Echo*.

While the Salvation Army was carrying on the collection business in its usual vigorous fashion at Charles Street, Openshaw, on Sunday evening, a woman in the crowd was heard to say, "Well it may be all right, but I don't know; however, here's a shilling." She didn't seem to regard J. C. as the favorite, but she backed him for a place.

Convocation has been sitting and trying to devise some scheme for a court of appeal in ecclesiastical cases, whereby lay influence will be nullified as far as possible. It is doubtful if Parliament will assent to their projects, especially as they are very much at loggerheads among themselves.

Theosophy and other humbug has largely availed itself of the phenomena of hypnotism to whet the eager gulosity of the credulous. Experiments made by Dr. Pinel, of Paris, shows that hypnotic patients will obey the directions conveyed by a phonograph as readily as the words of a living voice. He argues from this that the theory of animal magnetism—*i.e.*, of a magnetic current passing from the operator to the subject—is baseless, and that the real cause of the phenomena is a disordered mental state. Those who have noted in how small a proportion "sensitives" are found in such experiments, will be inclined to this view of the matter.

Mrs. Besant's letters in the *Star* seem to be attracting all sorts of cranks. Here is one who, in welcoming her to the ranks of theosophy, says: "I am gradually losing myself, my personal mental consciousness, to find a reincarnation in Atma Buddhi for perfect Altruism." Give it up? Or does the man mean that he is going out of his mind? We usually notice, by the way, that something like this is the mental condition of those who speak of being born again.

A gentleman, who was dressed as a clergyman and refused his name, was brought before Sir James Ingham at Bow Street. The magistrate was informed that as the Rev. John Howard, a Church of England clergyman at Ongar, was walking down Holywell Street, he asked the defendant, who was then smoking, for a light, and in

return received a violent blow in the eye. Mr. Howard therefore brought a charge of assault. As the defendant behaved strangely in court, the magistrate remanded him in order that the police might endeavor to find his friends.

Mr. Justice Butt had before him, on Thursday, the suit of *Overy v. Overy*, a wife's petition for a judicial separation by reason of the alleged cruelty of her husband, the Rev. Henry Overy, vicar of St. Veep, Cornwall. The marriage took place in 1879, and there were five children of the marriage. Petitioner said her husband dragged her round the room, flung her from the bed, and struck her violently on the back and face. He also threw a fork at her, and had shaken her violently. — In cross-examination she admitted having called him "a brute," "a liar," and "a would-be-murderer."—A decree of judicial separation and the custody of the children was granted the petitioner.

The Salvation Army had a great field day at the Alexandra Palace on Tuesday. The excitement of the 1,000 monkeys witnessing fireworks was as nothing to that of the Army when 100 bands played simultaneously. Oh, what must it have been to be there?

At Pittsburg, Pa. on the second Sunday after the Johnstown catastrophe, the Rev. James Madden, a Prohibitionist clergyman from Kansas, addressed a meeting held under the auspices of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union. Previously he had visited Johnstown. He described the manner of his leaving the place as follows:—"I was in Johnstown when the flood occurred, but managed through my own energy and perseverance to escape the flood. Those who had not done so let a warning six hours old go unheeded, waited, were drowned, and *went to hell*." It is to the credit of his audience that the majority of them left the church at once, showing that though they may be theoretical Christians they do not approve of its practical application. If Christianity be true Madden was right, and it takes just such brutes as he to prove that most people are not real believers. Their humanity is after all greater than their faith in "God" and "God's word."

The Biblical belief in witchcraft is by no means extinct in America. A girl at Tioga, Illinois, recently became insane, and her superstitious friends held an incantation over her, sticking many pins into her body and torturing her fearfully to drive away evil spirits.

They were celebrating Thanksgiving Day at Ellensburg, a little town of 6,000 souls in Washington Territory. It was a more picturesque and furious ceremonial than had been anticipated. Some houses caught fire, the whole town was laid in ashes, and two million dollars' worth of damage was done.

More of the Lord's tender mercies! Storms in Hong Kong have done a vast amount of injury in the colony. Many persons have been killed, and houses, roads, and telegraphs washed away. The total rainfall in thirty-six hours was over thirty inches; nearly three times the average for the whole month during the past twenty years.

An article—we believe by Miss Edwards—in *Temple Bar*, on Carlyle and Goethe, compares these two great men, much to the disparagement of the first named. The writer says: "Goethe was a fervent Christian in every respect but that of form, for the very essence of a Christian moral nature is surely charity." The writer might as well have said Goethe was a perfect Christian in every respect but that of believing Christianity to be true. That Goethe did not believe Christianity to be true we have his own words. In a letter to Lavater he says distinctly that he could not believe the stories of a man being born of a virgin and rising from the dead.

Major General Synge, occupying the chair at the Victoria Soldiers' Home, Eastney, gave a very pessimistic address. He did not believe the world was improving. That individual saints grew in grace he was fearfully convinced of, but inasmuch as the progress of the population of the world in heathenism and sin out-numbered all Christian efforts put together, reckoning even Christians of nominal profession, he failed to see that the Kingdom of Christ was being established on earth. What is this but

saying that Christianity is a failure, God the Father a failure, God the Son a failure, and God the Holy Ghost a failure likewise?

Many of the French papers cast doubt upon the sincerity of the piety of General Boulanger, and his regular attendance at the French chapel recalls the saying of Henry of Navarre that France was well worth a mass.

At an extraordinary consistory of Cardinals held in the Vatican on June 30, Pope Pecci delivered an allocution fully reported in the *Tablet* of July 6th. His Holiness raged violently against "these crimes that have afflicted us." A long series of outrages he declares has culminated in setting up a public trophy to "a spirit that reared himself up obstinately against the church." "They load with honors" he complains "a heretic judicially condemned, whose boldness attacked the church in his last breath."

Pecci has no remorse for the crime of the church of which he is the head. Instead of showing sympathy with its victim he adds insult to injury, and in language monstrously unjust calls him "a depraved intellect and a vulgar spirit" and "a follower of a disgraceful materialism." Let the Pope howl. He cannot undo the protest made under his very nose last Whit Sunday.

The rumors that the Pope consulted the consistory about leaving Rome are stronger than ever. We don't believe he is quite such a fool. We only wish he were. To give up the traditional divinely appointed seat would shock the Catholic world as much as the erection of the monument to Bruno.

The utterances of the authorised Catholic authorities upon the execution of Bruno show that the true Catholic spirit was well voiced by Louis Veuillot, when he wrote in the Catholic *Univers* of Huss and Luther that the only thing to be regretted was that "Huss met with his deserts so late, and that Luther was not burnt at all."

The Bishop of Salford, following in the footsteps of the Pope, has published a pastoral "to the faithful of the diocese," entitled "Acts of Reparation and Consecration to the Sacred Heart of Jesus in connection with the recent outrage in Rome and our Education Question." Of Bruno this truly Christian pastoral says: "It is said that he received his deserts by having been publicly burnt for his crimes in Rome in the year 1600." A decree at the back of the pamphlet offers a Plenary Indulgence to those who, at the Feast of the Sacred Heart, will "visit some church or public oratory, and devoutly pray there for a short while according to the intention of His Holiness." Evidently the Pope believes in magic. All prayer indeed is founded on the belief in spells and incantations. Freethinkers, who work in the open, must laugh at such nummery as this.

The Bishop of Salford of course winds up with an appeal for money for Catholic schools. The true act of reparation and consecration is shelling out.

Sweet are the uses of religion, says the sentimental parson, parodying Shakespeare. Swift, however, said that most men had just religion enough to make them hate each other. This truth was beautifully illustrated on Sunday at Liverpool, where Catholics and Orangemen came into collision, and eighty policemen were necessary to restore order. According to the *Post* "the street presented a very animated appearance, sticks and brickbats flying about in all directions." Detective-constable Williams, who had the misfortune to interfere with a religious shindy and spoil a pious fight, received a terrible injury on the right temple, and at one time "the street was like a battle ground." Yet these bitter contending factions would both agree in damning the harmless necessary infidel.

Then were the words of Scripture fulfilled, and they picked up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.

Mrs. Finn explains in the *Daily Telegraph* why the Shah's attendants will not wake him from sleep. It is believed in Persia, she says, that a man's soul goes out of

him in sleep, and if he is suddenly aroused it may not have time to get back, and the consequence is fatal. Were Mrs. Finn better acquainted with superstitions, she would know that this belief prevails over the largest portion of the world.

Among savages the soul goes out of the body also in sickness, and another soul takes possession. Tylor records a very funny story of a savage lying on the ground and bawling out to his own soul to come back to him.

Mr. Meredith Townsend writes in the *Contemporary Review* on "Cheap Missionaries." His plan is to secure native preachers. No doubt this will be cheap and easy, but what a havoc they will make of the blessed gospel. The holy doctrines of the Trinity and the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, as expounded by cheaply converted Shanars and Santals, will be a caution.

The number of Jesuits throughout the world is stated at 12,070. The order is more powerful now than at any time since its suppression by Pope Clement XIV.

There are two hundred and seventy-five women ordained to preach in America. These are the females. Nearly a hundred thousand women of the other sex are in the same business.

A real live countess contributes an anonymous article to the *New Review* on Sarah, Rebekah, and Rachel: three types of womanhood. She goes into holy raptures over this precious trinity. She admires them through and through. The pious old cat who shared Abraham's tent and best bed turned poor Hagar and her boy into the desert to starve. But what does that matter? She was the mother of Isaac, and a lovely woman. Two kings made love to her, one of them when she was niaety. Beautiful Sarah! She nagged her husband, and cheeked the Lord himself! Modest Sarah! As for Rebekah, she helped Jacob to cheat Esau and deceive his dying father. Rachel stole her father's gods, farmed out her husband like a town bull, and put her maid to bed with him. Such are the lovely and engaging types of womanhood held up for reverence in the *New Review*.

The Rev. Dr. Hannon, of San Francisco, declares that the recent disasters at Johnstown and Seattle "are terrible and startling messages from God," warning men to be prepared for death and the glories of heaven. If God is as careless of our welfare in heaven as on earth, the gain will not be great. Stronger dams and more efficient fire engines now are worth many years of pious preparation against fire and damns of another sort hereafter.—*Freethought*.

Chinese women are beginning to revolt against the malformation of their understandings, and have started a "Heavenly Foot Society." It appears that a missionary has been preaching to them on the subject, and their war-cry is likely to be "Christianity and Big Feet."

HOW TO HELP US.

- (1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in his window.
- (2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that may remain unsold.
- (3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our permanent placards, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
- (5) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (6) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.
- (7) Do one of the above, or all of them if you can.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, July 14, Regent's Park, London, at 3.30 (open-air), "The Devil."

July 21, London Secular Federation Excursion; 28, Camberwell.

Aug. 4 and 11, Camberwell; 18 and 25, London Hall of Science. Sept. 1, Manchester; 15 and 22, London Hall of Science; 29, Newcastle.

Oct. 6, South Shields; 12 and 20, London Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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

IT being contrary to post office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will in future receive the number when their subscription expires in a colored wrapper.

C. KROLL LAPORTE.—The substance of your letter having appeared in the *Star*, it will already be familiar to many of our readers. The new Theosophy seems rather founded on Hindu philosophy and French Kabbalism than on the German Theosophists you mention.

A. HUGHES.—We have heard of the thesis that Christ and St. Paul were one and the same person, and of a great number of other cranky notions upon matters on which our real information is very limited.

R. B. (Liverpool).—Justin Martyr's "Apology" is usually dated A.D. 139, and his Dialogue with Trypho, the Jew, about the middle of the second century.

W. COOKNEY, 1a Willow Street, Paul Street, Finsbury, E.C., announces that the Hall of Science Children's Excursion will take place on August 25, and acknowledges the following subscriptions:—W. J. Birch, Esq., £1; Mr. and Mrs. Burton, 5s.; E. Clare, 5s; Bullock, 2s. 6d.; E. Binks, 6d.; Ward, 6d.; S. Binks, 6d.; Young, 6d.; J. W. Ramsey, 6d.; Wenn, 1d.; Wise, 2d.; Shore 3d.; L. Schneider, 2s. 6d.; H. etc., 1s.; G. etc., 1s.; Bengunan, 1s.; Lateys, 2s. 6d.; Snider, 2s.; Pezaro, 1s.; F. W. Smith, 1s.; H. W., 1s.; Pollack, 6d.; J. W. L., 1s.; Frost, 1s.

J. BROWN.—Thanks. Mr. Rossiter is not very accurate. We have written the *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* in reply to his bombast.

H. ARTHUR.—We hope to publish the second volume of *Crimes of Christianity* this year.

J. E. ROOSE.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops." Always glad to hear from you.

G. B.—MS, under consideration.

C. TOMLINSON suggests that neat admission tickets should be printed and sold at the London Hall of Science. Freethinkers might purchase them and give them to orthodox friends.

A. HEMINGWAY.—Date booked. It is September 1, not August 31.

H. H. SPARLING.—Many thanks for the cuttings.

W. WHEELER states that the Westminster Branch will start from Old Pimlico Pier on July 21 at nine o'clock sharp. Tickets 2s. 6d. Address, 2 Bessborough Gardens.

J. GRANGE writes from Farsley, Leeds, that the local Freethinkers are trying to form an active Branch of the N. S. S., and have already arranged for some open-air lectures. We are delighted to hear it.

T. A. WILLIAMS.—It is a scandal that the Bristol Freethinkers are so disorganised and inactive. Can a hall be procured in which discussion is allowed? If so, Mr. Foote will try to pay you a visit. We are glad to hear that you are trying some open-air propaganda.

A. SEYMOUR.—Yes, "Letters to the Clergy" are forwarded to the persons they are addressed to. We thank you for your efforts to promote our circulation. Don't send to members of the House of Commons, unless in envelopes to their private addresses.

H. A. ROGERS.—The Archdeacon's nonsense about God's judgments on the anti-tithe agitators has been dealt with before in our columns. He seems the prize fool of the silly season.

GEO. MANCO.—The statement that Sarah Bernhardt told Gounod she was an Atheist was taken from the columns of the *Echo*, entitled "Men and Things," about a month ago.

W. UHLENBURGH.—Bigot Gace has been written about enough. Unless he indulges in a fresh outburst he had better be treated with silent contempt.

E. KENDRICK.—Very likely there was some mistake, our correspondent confusing you with someone else. From the matter and manner of your letters we feel quite sure that you would speak civilly, clearly, and to the point.

H. M. RIDGWAY.—Sorry to hear the Christians insulted and hustled you for distributing our tracts at the corner of Wellington Street and Upper Street, Islington, on Sunday evening, and that the policeman threatened to run you in for complaining. You have a right to give away tracts, so long as you do not cause an obstruction, and the police have no right to interfere.

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.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Manchester Guardian—La Raison—Twentieth Century—Women's Suffrage Journal—Echo—Bulletin des Sommaires—Secular Thought—Menschentum—Freethought—Liberty—Liberator—Freidenker—Boston Investigator—Western Figaro—Newcastle Chronicle—Truthseeker—Fritankaren—Railway Press—Tocsin.

SUGAR PLUMS.

"LETTERS TO THE CLERGY" will be resumed next week. We are full of other matter this week. Mirabeau and the French Revolution make a heavy claim on our space.

Mrs. Besant's Theosophy is the title of a pamphlet Mr. Foote is writing. The lady's defection from Atheism is far too important to be passed over in silence. Mr. Foote is criticising the explanation she has offered, his object being twofold—first, to examine Mrs. Besant's new position, and second, to do what is possible to prevent her from misleading Freethinkers. This is demanded by principle, and it can be done without acrimony. The pamphlet will be ready soon after the *Freethinker* is on sale.

MR. FOOTE lectures in Regent's Park, London, this afternoon (June 14) at 3.30. Mr. A. B. Moss presides. The station is near the Park entrance to the Zoological Gardens. A collection will be taken on behalf of the London Secular Federation. Freethinkers in the vicinity should avail themselves of the opportunity and bring their orthodox friends. Subject—"The Devil." However the weather is, it will be a warm afternoon.

LONDON Freethinkers, please remember the Excursion to Epping Forest on July 21. Mr. Foote, Mr. Wheeler, Mr. Moss, Mr. Standing and other well-known gentlemen will join the party. A big gathering is expected. Tickets for the central contingent, leaving the Hall of Science, can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter Street at 2s. 6d. Next week, if the Branches furnish us with the information, we will print a list of the contingents, with the times and places of starting.

WE understand that the North-West London Branch are busily employed in furnishing their brakes with portraits and other decorations. Some members contemplate taking a stock of Freethought literature to distribute on the road. All the contingents will be at Lea Bridge at 10.30 sharp. Arrangements have been made for indoor amusements at High Beech even should the weather be unpropitious.

THE quarterly tea meeting, dance, and social gathering at Camberwell has passed from being an experiment into an institution, and one that deserves to be copied. Last Sunday the proceedings were enlivened by the Milton Hall Dramatic Company giving short sketches. One, entitled "April Fools," kept the company in roars of laughter, and was certainly as well rendered as any farce on the stage. Our Camberwell friends on these occasions pay due regard to the inspired text, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it jolly," as their version has it. A party of Freethinkers from Nottingham dropped in to see how it was done.

MR. WM. DIGBY, well known for his constant attention to Indian matters, writes in the *Daily News*, praising Mr. Bradlaugh for his efforts on behalf of the famine-stricken at Ganjam. Mr. Digby says, "Tens of thousands of people who have never heard, and will never hear, his name owe their lives to his exertions." This is the Atheist our Christian legislators kicked out as unfit for their assembly.

IT is curious that Mr. Bradlaugh, who was so long kept out of his seat in Parliament, should now compile a work on *The Rules, Customs, and Procedure of the House of Commons*, and that the work should be generally praised.

"FOLLOW the example of the President of the United States and join in a Sunday excursion," is the language of all the billboard advertisements of the Sunday excursion steamers in America. It is a great card.

DR. R. B. WESTBROOK, the President of the American Secular Society, writes in *Secular Thought*, protesting against the application of the term "infidel" to Freethinkers, many of whom in the United States rather glory in it, as witness a pamphlet just to hand from Mr. Putnam, entitled *The Glory of Infidelity*. Curiously enough, Mr. C. Watts has a pamphlet with a similar title, *The Glory of Unbelief*.

AN interesting reminiscence of the veteran Freethought champion, Mrs. Ernestine L. Rose, is given by Ella E. Gibson in the *Boston Investigator* for June 12. Miss Gibson was present at the Bible Convention at Hartford in 1854, when some Christian roughs turned out the gas and left the hall in darkness and disorder. Miss Gibson says, "During this melee, which was but momentary, I stood upon the platform with my arms around Mrs. Rose, she saying to me, '*This is nothing, I'm not frightened!*' As the gas was lighted, I stepped back, and there stood the heroine, all alone, Bible in hand, in her fearless majesty! I shall never forget her terrible invective, in these words, as she held it up before the gallery students, and shook it in their faces, exclaiming, '*Yes, you are fit representatives of your book, you illustrate your religion by your mobocracy!*' She then proceeded with her discourse, which was a scathing one." This discourse, by the way, is published at the office of the *Boston Investigator*, and is worth reading.

THE veteran and learned Republican Karl Blind contributes an article on "Giordano Bruno and new Italy" to the *Nineteenth Century*. Herr Blind points out that the clerical party is unrepentant, and that the struggle with obscurantism has still to be carried on.

A GENTLEMAN wishes to know of a high-class school in South-east London where a boy can be sent without fear of his being crammed with religion. Are any of our readers aware of such an institution? And if so, will they communicate with us?

La Raison publishes a discourse pronounced at Rome by M. Napoléon Navez, President of the Antwerp Freethought Society, as Belgian delegate to the Bruno festival. He called attention to the forthcoming Congress at Paris of the International Federation of Freethinkers, of whose Council he is a prominent member.

THE *Daily News*, writing of the proposal to abolish tests in Scottish universities, remarks: "The religion of many pious souls is based upon the philosophy of Kant. But Kant himself was strongly suspected of being a theist only in name. It was certainly not Bishop Butler's intention to make anybody an Atheist. But we know that he made one of James Mill, and it is highly improbable that James Mill was his only convert. Dean Mansel was a metaphysician of much subtlety, and a logician of great ability, who considered himself to be, and who probably was, an orthodox believer. Yet Bishop Jeune, as well as John Mill, regarded the Dean's Bampton Lectures as destructive of faith in a personal God."

THE once Rev. Mr. Pentecost, now editor of the *Twentieth Century*, has some sensible words on the Johnstown disaster. He says, in answer to the Rev. Dr. J. Whiton, "If your personal God could have controlled the Johnstown flood and did not he is not good. No matter how foolish the people were in the manner in which they built their dam, there is no human being wicked enough to have allowed all those who did not build the dam, or even those who did, to perish if he could have helped it. If God could have prevented that slaughter and did not he is, in my opinion, (that is not "dogmatism") bad and cruel. If he could not have prevented it what is the use of his being

God at all? The fact is, it all happened according to natural law, and that is all we know about it."

In an article on "The Crumbling of Christianity," a Ceylon Buddhist newspaper, after quoting the remarks of an English bishop concerning the "alarming spread of infidelity, or the total disbelief in the Bible and Christian religion," says: "This shows us what a false appearance of strength the padres are making to us in Ceylon. They would make us believe that their religion is so true that all the European nations accept it implicitly, and now it appears that the opposite is the fact, and that the number of believing Christians is growing smaller every day. . . . *This is a pretty sight for us Buddhists indeed.* . . . Let us wait but patiently, and we may see the whole mass of quarrelling sects fall into the gulf dug by the pioneers of reason and Freethought."

R. O. SMITH, honorary treasurer of the London Secular Federation, 142 Old Street, E.C., acknowledges the following subscriptions:—G. R. £1; East London Branch (collection) 3s. 6d.; Ball's Pond Branch (collected at Mr. Foote's open-air lecture) 17s. Further subscriptions urgently needed.

A BRIGHT SUNDAY.

HEARING that the Liverpool Branch of the National Secular Society was still in difficulties, I offered to pay the city a special lecturing visit. The offer was accepted, and I delivered three lectures on Sunday in Camden Hall, to audiences which, considering the weather, were unexpectedly large. Mr. Wise, the local paid agent of the Christian Evidence Society, gave out (I am informed) that he was going to lecture out of doors in the afternoon and evening and spoil my audience. He meant well—for Jesus; but he overestimated his powers of attraction.

On my way down to Liverpool I got out of the train at Rugby, and stretched my legs on the platform. While doing so, I was accosted by a gentleman who said he had seen me before and read many of my writings, but had never spoken to me. He expressed great regret at the stoppage of *The Liberal*. "Why," I said, "that was ten years ago." "Yes," he replied, "I know, but it was the best magazine of its kind I ever knew. I met with a copy accidentally. Someone left it in the train. I got all the numbers, and I have them bound up. It changed my whole course of thought."

This fact is worth recording. It shows what good may be done by leaving Freethought literature about where people are sure to find it. A chance magazine, journal, pamphlet, or tract may change a Christian's whole course of thought.

On reaching Liverpool I found Mr. Sam Standring, of London, staying at my hotel. He was down on business, and would have spent the Sunday at New Brighton, only he was anxious to attend my lectures and get acquainted with the Liverpool friends. He took the chair for me in the afternoon and evening. Mr. Ward presided in the morning, my lecture being on "Religion and Morality." Mr. Wise mounted the platform and offered opposition in two ten minutes' speeches. Liverpool air has not improved him. I fancy there is too much *Orange* in it. I will not enter into the general discussion—that would be unfair; but I will mention a single point. By way of illustrating the connection of religion and morality, I instanced the fact of my being asked what was my religion by the booking clerk in Holloway Gaol, which shows it is taken for granted that criminals are religious. Mr. Wise said he was "sick" of hearing of my imprisonment. It was not Christians that sent me to gaol. I was incarcerated under an obsolete law, and the blow was meant for Mr. Bradlaugh. To this I replied that the indictment on which I was sentenced did not include Mr. Bradlaugh; that whichever was aimed at, the persecution was all the same; that the "obsolete" law had just been

endorsed by an overwhelming majority in the House of Commons; that the Christians made me "sick" of my imprisonment, and I was glad to hear I was making them "sick" of it; and that it was silly to blame me for alluding to my trouble, for Pontius Pilate crucified Jesus Christ and the Christians had been talking about it ever since.

Mr. Wise stuck to his text, however; the law was obsolete, and what I said about the two indictments proved all he maintained! But the audience didn't seem to think so. When I got down from the platform Mr. Wise told me, with a fine candid smile, that his evening lecture would be upon— Let the reader guess. He gives it up? Well, upon—O ye gods and little fishes!—"The Leeds Conference." The subject is as novel as the death of Queen Anne, but a few cheap personalities could be wrung from it, and personality is the breath of a Christian Evidence lecturer's nostrils. Poor Mr. Wise was mistaken in one thing. He may know Christian human nature, but he doesn't know Secular human nature. The Liverpool Freethinkers were not in the least interested in the Leeds Conference. They came to Camden Hall to hear me lecture on "God Help Us!"

Physically, owing to a brief holiday at Ramsgate, I was in good form, and the audience was very enthusiastic. Ten new members were enrolled, and the committee said it was a "regular revival." Mr. Bradlaugh is going to lecture next month. After that I trust the Branch will feel ready for a good, vigorous, winter campaign. There is plenty of material to work upon. Success is not difficult in such a populous city, and the secret of success is "go." Some of the young men I spoke to in the body of the hall, and afterwards at my hotel, should supply some of this valuable quality.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE BATTLE IN SWEDEN.

FREETHINKERS in every part of the world will learn with sympathy and regret of the sentence of our heroic Swedish comrade, Viktor E. Lennstrand to six months further imprisonment, three months at Stockholm and three months at Malmo, for the "crime" of expressing his opinion of Christianity at these places. He has, we presume, appealed, or at any rate judgment is not yet put into execution, as we hear he is still lecturing, and will continue to do so up to the very day of his incarceration. What further action English Freethinkers will take in the matter it is for them to declare, but certainly the prosecution in Sweden and that of Dr. Voelkel in Germany show the necessity for a close international organisation for common support to those in trouble, and common resistance to the enemy, who is scotched but far from killed. We trust the Paris congress, to which the Swedes will send a representative, will devote its earnest attention to this important matter.

A conference of the *Utilistiska Samfundet* will be held at Stockholm on August 3rd and 4th, and measures will doubtless be taken to uphold the Society against clerical persecution. The *Fritänkaren* is by no means suppressed, and will, we trust, be stoutly sustained not only by Swedish, but by all Scandinavian Freethinkers, during the time its chief editor is in prison. Public opinion abroad looks to England more than English people are sometimes apt to think, and we are, therefore, not sorry to see that the expressions of sympathy made at the Conference of the National Secular Society have been translated for the readers of *Fritänkaren*. Mr. Foote's recent article on "Providence and Floods" is also translated by our indefatigable friend Captain Otto Thomson, and high praise is given to Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*. Freethought has fairly broken ground in Sweden and

though it is evident there will be many a hard fight ere freedom of expression is completely gained, yet

"Freedom's battle once begun,
Though baffled oft is ever won."

Individuals may suffer, but opinions cannot be suppressed. The cause is in good hands. The men who are upholding it are emphatically of the right stuff. Persecution instead of stamping out the movement will only spread it, and Sweden will awake from its lethargy of pietism and place itself abreast of the leading continental nations in the matter of freedom of thought.

FORWARD YOUNG WIDOW RUTH.

IN the Bible, sandwiched between the Book of Judges and Samuel, is a short but not uninteresting romance in four chapters, which might very well be called "Ruth the Reckless, or the Bold Young Widow of Moab." It would be interesting to know how many persons who profess the Christian faith have read this story, and further, how this and the Book of Esther came to be incorporated in the Holy Bible. Perhaps, however, they were included on the principle that spicy stories are always acceptable, however remote their connection with the other portions of the book. The novelist, we know, delights in giving light and shade to his work by the introduction of quaint characters that have no necessary connection with the story; and the skilful dramatist seldom hesitates to delay the action of his play to allow the low comedy merchant a chance of giving off a certain number of well-worn wheezes for the delectation of the "gods." But we have to go to the pages of Holy Writ to find stories introduced, which have little or no relation to that which has gone before, or indeed to what follows, and which appear to have been "preserved" mainly on account of the "blueish" character of their contents.

Briefly told, the story of the gay young widow Ruth is this. A famine being in the land, a certain man of Bethlehem-Judah, named Elimelech, went to sojourn in the country of Moab with his wife and two sons. Elimelech soon dies, leaving his wife Naomi and two sons to struggle on alone. The sons marry, but in a short time they also are smitten down and die; and the mother and her two daughters-in-law remain. A short time after Naomi returns to Judah, accompanied by only one of her daughters-in-law—in short, Widow Ruth, of Moab.

Desiring to earn her own living this forward young widow goes into the fields to glean, meets a wealthy cousin named Boaz, and, having successfully repelled the advances of some young mashers, steals slyly to bed with her cousin, who blesses her for her unselfish kindness, and ultimately rewards her by making her his wife. A very pretty story indeed! Quite a model for Hollywell Street story-tellers—especially if Ruth herself supplied the "copy." And this pretty tale is a part of God's revelation to man. No wonder the elder Weller admonished Sam to "beware of widders!" What good lesson does this Bible story teach?

The confessions of Jean Jacques Rousseau reveal the weaknesses and failures of a great moral reformer in his struggles to live a noble and pure life; and the story of his failings carries with it many a useful lesson. "Ruth's Romance," on the other hand, has no moral. What its spiritual meaning may be passes my comprehension; but I dare say some fourth-rate divine can tell you what God's intention was in inspiring Ruth to record her youthful peccadilloes. The same divine might also inform you why God considered it wise to inspire Moses to write the disgusting story of Lot and his daughters, or why such indecencies as those recorded in the Book of Kings are still preserved for the edification of the young of both sexes in Christian Sunday-schools. But to the

ordinary secular and unsophisticated mind, each thing furnishes the strongest possible proof of the human origin of the Bible, and the base ideas of human life entertained by some of these early writers.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

MRS. BESANT'S MENTAL DEPARTURE.

MRS. BESANT'S curiously new departure from Atheism has caused considerable perplexity amongst the Freethinkers of this district (Farsley). The stoutness and decisiveness with which she has hitherto proclaimed the philosophic soundness of the principles of Atheism, render the problem of her somewhat sudden mental change more difficult of solution. She has not merely asserted the validity of Atheism, but, by accuracy of logical reasoning assisted by a wealth of scientific analogy, she established its claims.

Her former principle of discussion has been to reason from the simple to the complex, from the known to the unknown. Does she still adhere to this principle? Once the inevitable conclusion from the teachings of Evolution was Atheism. Is such the case now? If not, *why* not? Does she now see design where she formerly saw adaptation? Does she see intelligence where the Atheist can only see unspiteful, unsympathetic natural law? If yes, by what mode of reasoning did she discover it? Science, which knows only the natural, was once her guide. Is this still her source of knowledge? Mind, she believed, was simply a mode of motion absolutely dependent upon a material substratum. What does she find it now? Is it a real actual entity? If so, where or how can we verify it?

Moreover, do the barren dreams of the metaphysician still receive her satiric smiles? In brief, not long ago Mrs. Besant wrote a small work on *My Path to Atheism*, but now justice to her readers requires a plain statement on the subject of *My Path to Theosophy*, which would doubtless be received with respectful eagerness.

JOHN GRANGE.

CONVERSION OF A CATHOLIC PRIEST.

The Rev. Arnold Jerome P. Matthews, for the past two years Roman Catholic priest at St. Mary's, Bath, has addressed a letter to his congregation announcing his resignation, and the reasons thereof. He says:—"After long and anxious thought and study, I have arrived at the conviction that the Jewish and Christian Scriptures, though possessing many excellences, are full of legendary and mythological statements, and that they possess no claim to, and manifest no evidence of, Divine inspiration; that the Roman Catholic Church has no claim to be regarded as a divinely constituted authority; that the Papacy is a human institution, gravely compromised to error and superstition, and therefore injurious to the spiritual and temporal welfare of mankind; that Jesus Christ, though a holy man and an ardent reformer, was not the great God of the Universe, but the son of Joseph and Mary; that neither demoniacal spirits, nor a place or state of everlasting torment have any existence in fact, but originate in ancient mythologies."

With these convictions, which he says he had striven against for a long time, Mr. Matthews felt it his duty to resign. We trust he will soon find a sphere of usefulness. He is said to be an excellent preacher and an able controversialist, and it is supposed that he will seek a Unitarian congregation. We should like to see him enter on a mission for the conversion of his late fellow-Catholics. He knows their difficulties and the pernicious effect of priestcraft and religious terrors. If he does not shrink from this high task, he may do a greater and more far-reaching work than he can ever hope to do in a Unitarian pulpit.

A WARNING.

Allow me to warn the members of various Branches, of a lying spirit, who goes about making untrue statements concerning various members of the Balls Pond Branch and their unfortunate and unsuccessful attempt to help the Metropolitan Free Hospital. The statement of this individual is to the effect that we, at Balls Pond, got up a concert which turned out quite a success financially, and neglected to hand over the proceeds to the Hospital; and that our then secretary, Mr. Latimer, absconded with the money. The latest addition

is that he couples my name with two other members of our Branch as his authority for the statement. To that I personally give the lie direct. I have never stated such a thing to any man; neither is it true in any way, as I have always endeavored to show. Once I, and one of the others he gives as his authority, attended the Hospital Committee with the books, but they would not believe either our statement or the books, which show beyond dispute the real state of the case. If you will publish this it will always be handy to contradict this person when he puts in an appearance.

A. SWINNEY.

REVIEW.

Essays Towards a Critical Method. By John M. Robertson. London: T. Fisher Unwin, 26 Paternoster Square; 1889; pp. v. 287.—The aim of Mr. Robertson's book is expressed in its title. Criticism should not be the haphazard judgment of personal likes and dislikes, but the expression of methodical and well-reasoned conviction, founded not on any passing fad, but on the permanent laws of the human mind. He pleads, in short, for "Science in criticism." This, indeed, is the title of the first, the longest, and the most important study in the book. Mr. Robertson, of course, uses the historic method, and sets out by stating the chief historic phases through which literary criticism has passed. He dwells on the influence of the rationalists—Lessing in Germany, and Diderot, "the most German of the French, the Atheist successor of the Deists," who "dismisses all old formulas, and in flashes of insight reaches beyond logic to new." Mr. Robertson notes the failure of our own most reputed critics to exhibit the all-round freedom, the eager analysis and the artistic initiative of Diderot and Lessing. But he justly remarks:

"The new generation is abandoning the conventions of its predecessor; and already Mr. Greg, Mr. Arnold, Mr. Stephen, Mr. Harrison, and Mr. Morley, have in their turn taken "unpopular" courses, and found them, as of old not so unpopular as had been supposed. So strong and so general indeed has been the interest in the deeper questions of human faith and destiny, since the general forward reaction that partly began with Strauss, was re-inforced by Mill, and was solidified at once by Spencer, by Buckle, and by Darwin,—that pure *belles lettres*, or at least the simple criticism of *belles lettres* no longer receives relatively so much consideration as it did in the time of Hazlitt and Campbell."

Mr. Robertson has the training and faculties of the critic, and we find no fault with him in that he "magnifies his office." The necessity for training and method in criticism becomes painfully apparent when we find practical persons taking a Theosophic jumble for a new revelation. But the habit of continually sitting in judgment is apt to induce a dogmatic tone which we incline to resent—at any rate, when it comes into collision with our own judgments. Mr. Robertson's essays throughout are interspersed with so much of the science of criticism, so many shrewd hits at persons and books passed under review, that we are almost left in the position of the man who could not see the wood for the trees. The essays which follow his "Science in Criticism," although written earlier than that treatise, will unavoidably be taken as applications of Mr. Robertson's own principles. To those on "Mr. Howell's Novels" and "The Art of Tennyson," the objection may be taken that, although excellent in their way, after all they are only illustrations of that "belletrist" criticism which Mr. Robertson decries. That on Mandeville's "Fable of the Bees," is, to our mind, of a superior order. The criticism of the too-little-read Freethinker of last century shows philosophical insight, ethical judgment, and a fine spirit of discriminate unconventionality. Mr. Robertson, indeed, is so distinguished for boldness and breadth of thought that his work should commend itself to all Freethinkers interested in "Science in Criticism." We have no space to dwell on the merits of the work, its shrewdness of observation and felicities of statement, and for the defects we only hint that Mr. Robertson might do well to take into more consideration the general reader, and simplify his terms and shorten his sentences. The book is well got up and reflects credit on the publisher as well as on the author.

Old gentleman (asking a few questions)—"Now, boys, can you tell me what commandment Adam broke when he took the forbidden fruit?" Small scholar (like a flash)—"Please, sir, th' worn't no commandments then, sir!" Questioner sits corrected.

A POEM FROM GRUB GULCH.

Appended is the narrative of Noah and the ark,
 With the lion and the tiger all a-roaming in the dark,
 The polecat and the rattlesnake, hyena, and the lamb;
 But the sinful little babies did Jehovah drown and damn.
 The angels aided Noah,* yes they rounded up the boar,
 The polar and the grizzly bear, and countless thousands more.
 I can't enumerate them all, but they drove them, great and
 small,
 Up the gang-plank to the steerage where each creature had
 his stall.
 The gorilla was unruly and quite difficult to please—
 Looked and acted much like Kearney when he's "cussin"
 the Chinese—
 So they put him in the steerage, but the sportive little skunks
 Monopolised the cabin, where they had their choice of bunks.
 The angel with the hornets' nest stubbed his toe and fell—
 The inmates went exploring round, and Noah shouted "Hell,
 You haven't paid your passage; go aboard some other ark;"
 But every buzzing insect made a stinging, sharp remark;
 Insisted on their lawful rights, and wouldn't be ignored,
 And made themselves familiar with everyone on board.
 Mrs. Noah very badly fared, with her abundant muscle,
 For scant and thin was her attire and innocent of bustle.
 Beasts, birds, and reptiles, all embarked, then tight was shut
 the door,
 The angels pulled the stoppers out and down the waters pour.
 It rained about a foot an hour, a somewhat soaking shower,
 And thus did the Creator manifest his love and power.
 The mothers with their babies, as they sought for places
 drier,
 Climbed on the roof of village church and clustered round
 the spire.

* See sermon of Rev. Talmage.

But all their struggles were in vain, the water rose still
 higher,
 For God had doomed them all to drown; then everlasting
 fire.

The ark was drifted by the tides on top of Ararat,
 It's occupants then issued forth quite destitute of fat,
 For they had been almost a year on very scanty ration;
 What they lived on I cannot tell, unless 'twas ventilation.
 And Captain Noah, when safe ashore, so overjoyed was he,
 He planted vines and made red wines, and had a royal spree.
 Now here you have the story as I find it in the book,
 Where you may find it also, if you have a mind to look.
 And if you don't believe it you're forever damned in hades,
 With all those drowned mothers and their wicked little babies.
 Now if I had been Jehovah, the truth I'll dare to tell,
 I'd surely drowned the devil, and then closed the gates of
 hell.

I'd save the coal and sulphur, extinguish all the fire,
 Of each damned soul I'd make a saint, with seven-octave lyre.
 Don't think I'd be quite happy though, on the great white
 throne,

If now and then came up from hell an unbeliever's groan.
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PROFANE JOKES.

Mother—"Now, Emma, what is the tenth commandment?"
 Emma, aged five—"The same as it was last Sunday."

"My son," said an Auburn parent, Sunday, "what was the
 text?" "I dunno, papa," was the reply of the four-year-old,
 "but I guess it was 'He that tumbleth himself shall be ex-
 hausted.'"

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 day the market would soon be glutted. No "Salt Syndicate"
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