

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

ADAM'S BREECHES.

BLUSH not, fair reader; nothing is coming to offend your modesty. No doubt you have seen pictures of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, dressed in the primitive costume of simple innocence, or, as Hans Breitmann says, "mit noddings on." And perhaps you felt the remarks of some thick-skinned friend at your side as rather embarrassing. But our intention is to take the Grand Old Gardener and his wife at a later stage, when they got clothes, and laid the foundation of all the tailors' and milliners' businesses in creation.

For some time, nobody knows how long, whether six hours or sixty years, Adam and Eve never discovered their nakedness. It never occurred to them that more than one skin was necessary. And as the climate was exquisite, and the very roses grew without thorns, they had no need of overcoats or sticking-plaster. But one day they ate an apple, or for all we know a dozen, and they and the world underwent a change. "My dear Adam," said Eve, "you are quite shocking; why don't you dress yourself?" And Adam replied, "My dear Eve, where is your dressing-gown?"

Necessity is the mother of invention, and when a woman wants a dress she will get it somehow. There was no linen or woollen, so they had recourse to fig leaves, which were large and substantial. Needles and thread turned up miraculously, and Eve took to them by instinct. She sat down on a grassy mound, and worked away, stitch, stitch, stitch, while Adam looked on with the ox-eyed stupidity of his sex in presence of a lady engaged in this interesting occupation. In half an hour, more or less, she produced two splendid pairs of—well, yes, BREECHES. The Authorised Version calls them aprons, but we may believe it was a double-barreled arrangement. This at any rate was the opinion of the translators of the famous Breeches Bible, first published in folio in 1599, in which the seventh verse of the third chapter of Genesis reads—"And they sewed fig-tree leaves together, and made themselves breeches," from which translation it has been ingeniously argued "that the women had as good a title to the breeches as the men."

There is no dispute as to the color of Adam's breeches. They were *green*. Hence that universal wit, and recondite scholar, the author of *Hudibras*, represents the knight's attendant, the worthy Ralpho, as

For mystic learning wondrous able,
In magic Talisman and Cabal,
Whose primitive tradition reaches
As far as Adam's first green breeches.

Such was the substance and color of Adam's first unmentionables. They were soft and cool, and infinitely preferable to the coarse articles purveyed in English bathing-machines. But they were hardly calculated to stand the wear and tear of the life of labor to which Adam was doomed after the Fall, and before Jehovah evicted his tenant he took pity on the

poor fellow's limited wardrobe. "Poor devils," he said to himself, "that fig-leaf arrangement won't last them long. It's sure to burst the first time Adam hoes potatoes. I'll start them with something stronger. Perhaps the lass will find out how to rig herself. There's the first pond for a looking-glass, and I guess it won't be long before she gets Adam to hold a skein of wool. But meanwhile I must do something for her dolt of a husband. Yes, he shall have a new pair of breeks."

And Jehovah made them. Not of shoddy, or good woollen, but stout leather. Adam changed his *green* breeches for *brown* ones, and when he got then on he said "My God, ain't they hot!" Eve declared she would never wear a thing like that. "I don't waddle," she exclaimed, "and I won't look bandy." So a committee of seven archangels was appointed to find a fresh pattern.

Leaving Eve's outfit alone, and confining our attention to Adam's, we may ask a few questions about his second pair of breeches. Let no one object that such questions are frivolous. Did not England ring once with tidings of O'Brien's breeches? And shall it be thought undignified to take an interest in Adam's? Nor let any one object that such inquiries are blasphemous. They are obviously prompted by a spirit of reverence. What else, indeed, could excite our curiosity about an old pair of breeches that were worn out many centuries before the Flood?

What were the dimensions of Adam's breeches? The Bible does not tell us his altitude, but as he lived nine hundred and thirty years, and perhaps had a fourth of that time to grow in, it is not surprising that the Jews regarded him as excessively tall. His original height was incalculable; when he stood upright his head reached to the seventh heaven. But his appearance alarming the angels, the Lord flattened him down to a thousand cubits. Fifteen hundred feet, therefore, was his height before he shrank away subsequently to his expulsion from Paradise. Consequently his breeches must have been about eight hundred feet long, and the circumference proportionate. Suits might have been carved out of them for a whole regiment of Dutchmen.

What animal did Jehovah kill and flay for such an extensive skin? Even the mammoth would be ridiculously insufficient. We presume, therefore, that a wholesale slaughter of beasts took place, and that Adam's breeches were made of a multitude of skins. These were of course of divers colors or shades, and the garment must have borne some resemblance (to compare small things with great) to the well-mended trousers of a poor fisherman, blessed with a careful, industrious wife, who makes one pair last him her lifetime by insinuating fresh patches as the old ones wear away.

Happily the world was not then peopled, or Adam's life would have been unbearable. There were no little boys, about two hundred feet high, to pass exasperating remarks, such as "Who's your tailor?" "Does the missis know you're out?" "Hullo, old Patchwork!"

How long was Jehovah employed? Did he give the breeches out in sections to the angels, and do the connections himself? According to the Bible he made them alone, but we may well assume an omission in the narrative, and give him assistance in executing such a liberal order.

How did he kill the animals that furnished the skins? Did they die instantaneously at his order, or did he slaughter them with a knife and a poleaxe? How did he dress the skins? Were tan-pits constructed? Were the usual chemicals employed, or did Jehovah's science only extend to the use of bark?

The ingenious reader will be able to ask a number of questions for himself. Our own must be brought to a close. We have only to add that the world is impoverished by the loss of Adam's breeches. Those who have read Dr. Farrar's *Life of St. Paul* will recollect how he sheds rhetoric and tears on the Apostle's old cloak. But what was that battered garment in comparison with the subject of this article? Not only were Adam's leather breeches the first piece of tailor's-work in the world, but they were worn by the father of all of us, and made by God himself. Such an article would be better worth seeing than the coats of Kings and Emperors. But, alas, it is lost! Yet the voice of Hope whispers it may be found. Who knows? "There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy." Adam's breeches, too dilapidated for use or decency, may have been carefully rolled up and preserved by Seth. Perhaps they were taken into the Ark by Noah. And when the regions of Mesopotamia are thoroughly explored, they will perhaps be found in some deep cave or dry well, carefully wrapped in waterproof, and accurately ticketed. Oh what joy when they fall into the hands of the Christian Evidence Society! Then will Engstrom dance with glee, even as David danced before the Ark of God; then will the infidel slink away disgraced and crestfallen; and then will the Christians cry out to the Huxleys of the world, "Oh ye of little faith, who denied the existence of Adam, come and see his breeches!"

G. W. FOOTE.

RELIGIOUS CELIBACY.

COUNT TOLSTOI'S striking article on Christianity and Marriage in the *Universal Review* for July, opens up one of the most interesting and important questions connected with the history and doctrines of Christianity. Although the New Testament cannot be said to enforce universal or even priestly celibacy, there can be no doubt it extols the unmarried above the married state. Its great exemplar, nay its God, was a bachelor. Jesus said, he that was able to receive the doctrine of making oneself an eunuch for the kingdom of heaven's sake "let him receive it" (Matt. xix., 12), and declared that the children of this world marry, and are given in marriage; but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage (Luke xx., 34-35). Paul declared "It is good for a man not to touch a woman," and while permitting marriage "to avoid fornication" would that all men were even as he himself, unmarried; and pointed out that "The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband" (1 Cor. vii.) The Apocalypse speaks of the redeemed as "not defiled with women" (Rev. xiv., 4).

All the Fathers of the Church, her popes, councils and priests have in all ages sounded the barren virtues of virginity. It was supposed to have some mysterious value in the eye of God, not easily understood save on the supposition that he was like an old

Jewish patriarch, very particular about the character of his harem. By perpetual vows they secured the profession, not the possession of this particular virtue. Enthusiastic youths and maidens, taught that the path of perfection is inseparable from a life of celibacy, have had their piety turned into a source of woe and vice. The "brides of Christ," the spiritual harem of the bachelor god, are kept in bastilles of superstition for his service, secure not from temptation but from exposure. The male virgins are set to hear the confessions of confiding females under pretext of spiritual superintendence. Christianity denounces the immorality of Paganism but it had nothing to equal this.

Celibacy and chastity are two different things; some might be tempted to say two incompatible things. The history of sacerdotal celibacy is the history of priestly immorality. Readers of the *Crimes of Christianity* will be acquainted with some of the evidence on this point, or the Christian reader may be directed to the more orthodox pages of Mr. H. C. Lea or Isaac Taylor. All the great fathers of the Church unite in the praise of religious celibacy. St. Augustine, in answering the objection that if all the world followed the principle he recommended, the earth would soon become a desert, says in a tone of triumph, *Oh felix mundus exitium!* If all human beings were blotted from the earth by celibacy it would be a happy world—for the other animals. Apes would take the lead in the line of evolution. This is what religious celibacy has done. Like the Inquisition it has eliminated the pick of the race. No doubt it may be contended that it has been of service to mankind in hindering the propagation of priests. Even if this is disputed it may be conceded that it helped in the Dark Ages to preserve Europe from the dominance of an hereditary priestly caste. In Norman England it was the custom of all the clergy to keep concubines and wives, and even an Archbishop of Canterbury, Reginald, was the son of a bishop. Lea says "They arranged to have their benefices transmitted to their sons, while their daughters were married to the sons of the other priests, thus establishing an hereditary sacerdotal caste in which marriage appears to have been a matter of course."

The Church spared no effort to crush priestly marriages. Celibacy meant both completer subordination than could be expected from those with family ties, and also the inheritance by the Church of property and funds which might otherwise pass into lay hands. The lay view of clerical celibacy has always been unfavorable. When the system was established in Denmark the peasantry broke into insurrection and demanded that the clergy should be compelled to marry, as otherwise no man's wife or daughters would be safe. At a later time it was common in Switzerland for the inhabitants of a parish, on the arrival of new pastor, to oblige him to choose a concubine, though the precaution was not always sufficient to secure the virtue of the female parishioners. A synod at Palencia, in 1322, is evidence of a similar custom in Spain.

But to show the evils inseparable from religious celibacy there is no need to rake up the chronicles of history. All with human hearts and passions, and that love of children which is one of the great foundations of social life, see that the state is unnatural. Vows are taken by those ignorant or unheedful of the dangers which beset their path. The issue of perverted instincts is always misery and vice.

Protestants may say that arguments against religious celibacy do not affect them. So much the better. But Protestants after all are only a fraction of that large army of superstition which we have to encounter. At a time too when numbers of a most important party in the Church of England are seeking to establish Celibate Brotherhoods and Sisterhoods,

and when Theosophists are extolling the mysterious virtues of virginity, it may not be out of place to direct some attention to the observed effects of religious celibacy.

J. M. WHEELER.

MORE ABOUT THE NEWMANS.

EVIDENTLY the passage in Newman's *Grammar of Assent*, referred to in our last week's leader, concerning three Protestants, one of whom became a Catholic, the second a Unitarian, and the third an Atheist—was inspired by the Cardinal's own experience. He himself became a Catholic, and his brother Francis William an advanced Unitarian. There was a third brother, who died a few years ago at Tenby, after living there for some time as a recluse. He was a declared Atheist. We have heard that he was a very remarkable man, highly accomplished, and of great powers of mind. It is a pity that some one who knew him does not give a fuller account of the third Newman. How curious that three brothers should have covered the whole field of religious thought; the eldest a Roman Catholic, the youngest an Atheist, and the middle one a Deist.

Some of the papers have referred to the Achilli incident. Achilli was a beastly profligate, but coming to England as a convert from Catholicism, he was fulsomely patronised by leading Protestants. Newman attacked the reptile with his consummate skill, and Achilli appealed to a British jury. The charges were all made good, at least to the satisfaction of honest men, but a Protestant jury gave a verdict against the hated apostate from the English Church. Newman was sentenced to a fine of one hundred pounds, and imprisonment as a first-class misdemeanant until the money was paid. Even the judge—it was the present Lord Coleridge's father—read Newman a lecture on Christian charity. Achilli got a verdict, but his own admissions and Newman's exposure damned him completely. Soon afterwards he disappeared, and it transpired that the Protestants who patronised him, and found the money for his libel action against Newman, were thoroughly aware of his being an unprincipled scoundrel.

So much for the Protestants. But let not the Catholics crow too loudly. Newman was urged to attack Achilli by Cardinal Wiseman, who promised to supply overwhelming evidence to sustain his accusations. But when the trial came on Wiseman broke faith and left Newman in the lurch, preferring, as the *Speaker* says, that "Newman should be ruined in character and fortune rather than that the doings of Achilli, while a Roman priest, should be exposed." This is the Church all over. Everything and everybody is sacrificed to its interests. It reminds us of the declaration of the first Christian Emperor, Constantine, that if he caught a bishop in the act of adultery he would throw his mantle over the holy sinner rather than cause a scandal to the Church.

IT WAS A DREAM.

After studying the Holy Bible one night, I fell asleep, and dreamt that I was God Almighty, the manufacturer of the universe. All worldly thoughts not having left me, I had the brilliant idea of making my *ci-devant* fellow mortals happy, and roared down from the skies, so as to be heard by all nations: "Let me know your wants and they shall be satisfied!" Hundreds of millions of mouths were opened, and a babble and cackle commenced that would have puzzled anyone but a god. My elongated divine ears were thus assailed: "We want peace. We want war. We want to live for ever. We want to die at once. We want one language. We want none at all. Make all people Christians. No, no, make all Turks. No,—Jews. No,—heathens. Let's all be equal. No, let's all be nobles. No,—kings,

Make Spurgeon our leader. No,—Bradlaugh. No,—the Pope. No,—Foote. Give us riches. No, don't. Give us all enough. Abolish art. No,—science. No,—let them flourish. Shut the pubs. No, no; turn on the tap all round—beer and the Bible! No,—women and the Koran! Make us all white. No,—black. No,—transparent. Away with niggers! Down with the whites! Let's have eternal summer. No, eternal spring! Let's get no more children! Let's have one each. No more religions. Yes, any quantity. No,—one only. Let's be taller. No,—shorter. Let's know everything. No, we don't want to know anything. Give us instinct (a safe guide, bravo!). We want fun. *Panem et Circenses.*" I was getting positively alarmed, when all of a sudden I heard the ominous words: "Get down old cock! You've perched up there long enough! Let me be boss." I roared out in a voice of thunder: "To the devil with you, insane wretches! You have driven Jehovah mad, but you won't me. *As you were is my motto.*" Here I awoke, and felt considerably relieved that I had no hand in making such a cursed pack of idiots. That would have been a disgrace.

CHAS. KROLL LAPORTE.

SOUR GRAPES AND SWEET GALL.

A well-known, gouty Baptist recently said that pain is a blessing, etc.

The fox in the fable disguised his disgust,
On fruitlessly grabbing at grapes;
Quoth he, "They are sour," then although all adust,
A jaunty contentment he apes.

The fox feigned to slight what he failed to secure—
Determined to hide his defeat;
Called crude what he saw to be ripe and mature,
And sour what he knew to be sweet.

A brain-hating Baptist, whom God goads with gout,
On proving all pray'r to be vain,
Now seeks to escape from the sceptical flout,
By groaning out, "Gout is a gain!"

This gouty, but godly and pawky old priest—
A saint from his hat to his socks—
In feigning to like what all life must like least,
Inversely out-vulpines the fox.

Disgusted to find that his faith fails to move
His Savior to save him from gout,
Says he, "Pain a pleasure and profit doth prove,
And thus I put scoffers to rout!"

This podagric preacher pretends to delight
In troubles he cannot avoid;
A sort of a negative, sanctified spite
'Gainst God, at whose ways he's annoyed.

The artful old fox tried to reach, but in vain,
The ripe bunch of berries so sweet;
The priest vainly prayed to get rid of the pain
That addled his head through his feet.

The fox told a lie to condemn what was good,
The priest lied to praise what is bad;
They lied in a pride-prompted, mortified mood,
To hide what they hadn't, and had.

O Baptist! beware!! for your soul is at stake
Whene'er from the truth you may trip!
False footsteps, though gouty, lead straight to the lake,
Where devils give liars a dip!

O foxes, and parsons, and tricky folk all!
Remember, 'tis silly to lie;
So try to be truthful, though gout make you squall,
And grapes may be hanging too high.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

A four-year-old boy who has been in the habit of repeating a formulated prayer every evening, surprised his parents the other night by saying: "Oh! God, I wish you would make the trees walk!" When remonstrated with for his singular request he replied:—"You say God can do anything, and I shan't pray for anything else until they do!"

INGERSOLL ON THE PRESBYTERIAN CREED.

Col. Robert G. Ingersoll was interviewed at Rochester, N. Y., the other day, and in answer to the question, "What do you think of the revision of the Westminster creed?" he said: "I think that the intelligence and morality of the age demand its revision. The Westminster creed is infamous. It makes God an infinite monster and man the most miserable of beings. That creed has made millions insane. It has furrowed countless cheeks with tears, and under its influence the sentiments and sympathies of the heart have withered. It was produced by those who were suffering with two diseases—petrification of the heart and putrefaction of the brain.

"The civilised Presbyterians do not believe it, the intelligent clergymen will not preach it, and all good men who understand it hold it in abhorrence. It gives me great joy to know that the churches are getting better; that they are growing more and more humane; that they do not really hate all forms of joy. Infidels are reforming Christians, teaching them to be generous, intellectually hospitable and happy. After all, happiness is the only good, and the time to be happy is now, and the place to be happy is here."

"Christians owe a debt of gratitude to Haeckel, Huxley, Voltaire, Diderot, Hume, Paine, Humboldt, Darwin, and many others. These great men have helped to destroy the awful fears, ghosts, and devils of the orthodox religion. Yes, the creeds must be revised or the churches will have to be closed."

THE HUMBUGARIOS.

The Humbugarios are a queer people. They worship a certain God but do exactly the reverse of what he tells them to do; when their friends die they say they have gone to a place of eternal happiness, but they weep and wear black clothing as if they had gone to a place of eternal misery; they say they love freedom better than life, but they unwillingly pay billions of dollars every year to support a great army of persons who do nothing but make and enforce arbitrary rules preventing freedom; they say that love in a cottage is the highest form of happiness, but they all try to live in a mansion; they say poor people are the happiest people in the world but they all try to get rich; they say love is the only tie that should bind people in marriage, but they also say people are not married unless bound by law; they say we should forgive sinners, but they imprison and hang sinners; they say honesty is the best policy, but they have to watch each other like hawks to keep from being swindled; they say idleness is a disgrace and industry an honor, but the only people they respect are idle and the only people they thoroughly despise are industrious. Where do you suppose the Humbugarios live?—*Twentieth Century*.

SORT YOURSELVES.

There lived some years ago in western Pennsylvania an old circuit preacher, Father West by name, whose genial humor and general kindness of heart had greatly endeared him to all the people of his district. He was a particular favorite with the young folks matrimonially inclined, and his opportunities to "tie the knot" were numerous. On one occasion he found upon his arrival at a certain town several couples awaiting his blessing. The old man was tired, and wished to make short work of the job. "Stand up" he began, "and jine hands." Which being done, he rattled through a marriage service that, like himself, was original. "There," he said, when it was finished, "ye can go; ye're man and wife, ev'ry one o' ye."

Two of the couples hesitated, and finally made it apparent that in the sudden "jining" they had become confused, and had taken the hands of the wrong persons. The old preacher's eyes twinkled as he took in the situation; but he instantly straightened up, and with a wave of his hand dispersed them. "I married ye all," he said, in a deep voice. "Sort yourselves."—*Harper's Magazine*.

DIDN'T APPLY TO HER.

"Now, my good woman," said our celestial representative, "I hope my sermon has borne good fruit by making many a lasting impression upon your mind. You heard what I had to say about the everlasting fire?" Here his voice became hushed, even solemn, in tone as he continued: "That place where there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." "Well," said the toothless old party, "all I can say is, let them gnash 'em as has 'em." Our sin shifter has since reported this old woman's care as hopeless.—*Boomerang*.

ACID DROPS.

We rejoice to see the Cardiff strike ^{scanned} without the intervention of Cardinal Manning. What on earth does he know about the business? It was amazing to see how John Burns and other labor leaders played into his hands during the Dockers' strike. The Cardinal also tried his hand on the gas-stokers' business, and with what result? Of course he will do anything to advertise himself and gain a fictitious reputation for his Church.

Only second in silliness was the attempt of some busy-bodies to get Lord Dunraven as arbitrator. Fancy the workmen and their employers so incapable of settling their own affairs as to beg an aristocrat to leave his yacht and do it for them! Happily they did not sink so low. Neither the Earl nor the Cardinal had a finger in the pie.

When will the world cease to believe in "Saviors"? There have been thousands of them, yet we still need salvation. The latest is an African gentleman, the Sheik-el-Mahdi (not *the* Mahdi) who lives at Djerboub, in Tripoli. His followers, who are numerous and devoted, look upon him as the Savior who is to regenerate the world. Well, the world will take a lot of regenerating. London, the capital of the most Christian country in the world, will give the African gentleman a terrible tough job. We should like to know when he is going to begin in these parts.

Mr. Cotter Morison, in his *Service of Man*, pointed out the superiority of science over religion in ministering to human suffering. Religion might send a few devoted priests and nuns among the victims of cholera, to console them in their agony; but science would counteract its ravages, or perhaps keep it off altogether. Mr. Morison's reflection is just enforced by a lady's letter from Johannesburg. Miss Rose Blennerhassett, whose position in the Nurses' Home gives her an opportunity of judging, is severe on the Catholic nun-nurses. Nothing, she says, could be worse than their incompetence, lethargy and untidiness. She pities the poor maimed diggers, whether Kaffir or English, who come under their skillless hands. No doubt the nun-nurses are good creatures, in their way, but religious devotion is a poor substitute for fair human sympathy, a sense of duty, and scientific instruction.

God seems moving about in his mysterious way, as usual. Serious floods, with loss of life, are reported from Upper Styria, Austria, and also from Beloochistan, where six miles of railway have been destroyed. The cholera is mowing down the Mohammedan pilgrims fast at Mecca and Jeddah. The phylloxera is spreading so rapidly in the vineyards of France and Germany that these countries are terrified at the visitation. Lightning struck an aged man at Mansfield, Notts, and the verdict was "Visitation of God." A man and a boy were also killed by lightning at Heanor, near Ilkeston, and during a thunderstorm at Crefeld a house containing fifty persons fell and over twenty lives were sacrificed.

Sam Jones is a noted revivalist of America. He can boast of sending many victims to the lunatic asylum, and has just helped to dispatch a young lady to Jesus. Miss Mattie Wilson, who attended one of his revival meetings, was so unhinged by the religious excitement that she committed suicide. Religion is worse than rum when administered at its full strength to delicate people.

Religious publishers in America are much the same as those here, or perhaps a shade worse. Messrs. Funk and Wagnalls, the largest religious firm, unblushingly reprint the articles from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* as though they had been paid for instead of stolen, and when taxed therewith point out that other American publishers do the same.

William Warry writes a most impudent letter in the *North Middlesex Chronicle*, pretending that one of the N. S. S. lecturers has been "expelled" from Finsbury Park for "impurity." Nothing of the kind has occurred. Mr. Keen was somewhat short-tempered and indiscreet in answering opponents, but that is the worst we have heard alleged against him. Fortunately the *Chronicle* inserts a crushing reply to Mr. Warry from the pen of Mr. A. J. Field, the new secretary of the Finsbury Park Branch, who

is carrying on the work with so much energy, tact and success. The *Chronicle* itself honorably appeals for fair-play for the Secularists. "Looking at the matter from a Christian standpoint," it confesses to the "greatest possible misgiving as to very much that goes on, even when inspired by the best conceivable motives, in connection with open-air services."

"A Tradesman of Woolwich," who has not the courage to give his name and address, complains in the local *Herald* of the "abominable lewdness" of the Secular speakers in Beresford Square. This led the editor to go and hear for himself. He admits that he heard a good deal of "blasphemy," but "nothing obscene." Whatever may have been said by persons in the crowd (some of whom were doubtless believers), the editor declares "There was, at any rate while we were there, no encouragement of obscenity on the part of those in the van." So much for the "Woolwich tradesman's" libel. Evidently he drew on his imagination, and not on his memory, for the filth of the Secularists.

The editor of the *Herald* complains that the Secularists are allowed to "collect money" in Beresford Square, and the matter has been brought before the local Board of Health. But what about the Salvationists? They meet earlier in the day at the same place, they make collections and sell the *War Cry*. If the Secularists are stopped, the Salvationists will have to be stopped too, or the Secularists will know the reason why.

Two Christians, formerly members of the Salvation Army, have annoyed the Woolwich Secularists ever since the first Sunday in June. On Sunday week they overshot the mark and got "run in." They were charged at the Woolwich Police Court with disorderly conduct—or, as the *Kentish Mercury* reports, for "yelling at the speaker at an Atheists' meeting"—and bound over to keep the peace for three months. Behind these yelling ruffians there is a local clergyman, whose acquaintance the Secularists are extremely anxious to make. But perhaps, as his lambs have fared so badly, he will continue to lie *perdu*. We use the word *lie* in its fullest significance.

Two women and a man have been expelled from a church in Richmond, Kentucky, for "going astray after false gods." They professed their belief that Christ has come to earth again in the person of Schweinfurth, the German American Messiah.

Wanamaker, the Postmaster-General of the United States, is a universal provider at Philadelphia, and also an occasional preacher at the Presbyterian church. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* reports one of this wealthy man's sermons on the blessing of poverty, and "the evident intent of God that the majority of mankind should be poor." At the same time we learn that before prosecuting Tolstoi's *Kreutzer Sonata*, Mr. Wanamaker applied to the publisher to let him have a large supply of the work at reduced rates.

"Little children, love one another."—"Damn it! I'm not a child, and she's not a child," exclaimed Mr. Somebody, farmer and churchwarden, on finding a middle-aged lady in his seat at Easton-in-Gordana parish church, near Bristol. And as she wouldn't budge, all the seats being free, he hauled her out like a sheep from a ditch. The lady's arm was severely bruised, and she brought an action in the Bristol County Court for £50 damages. But it turned out that the churchwarden had a prescriptive right to his seat, and the lady had to be satisfied with a paltry five-pound note. Indeed, if the churchwarden had not paid that sum into court, the judge would have ruled there was no case to go to the jury. Evidently, therefore, Mr. Somebody has a legal right, which he seems likely to enforce, to play the devil with any gentleman or lady who squats on his seat in the House of God.

Considering how the man after God's own heart was allowed to carry on, it is rather hard that the Rev. N. E. Howe, the vicar of Swindon, should be worried by his bishop for kissing and cuddling a pretty Sunday-school teacher.

The Rev. Andrew Colville, Methodist minister, of Grace Chapel, East Twenty-second Street, New York, has a thick

head or a tough constitution. He attempted to commit suicide with a revolver, but after putting two bullets in his top loft, and finding himself still on this side of Jordan, he quietly walked a whole mile to Bellevue Hospital, where the doctors are in hopes of his recovery.

Dr. Eliot Coues, of Washington, has been "expelled" from the Aryan Theosophical Society. He retaliates by making serious charges against its members. These were published by the *New York Sun* in the report of an interview, and the Society is bringing an action for 50,000 dols. This the blessed result of the new universal brotherhood.

By the way, Madame Blavatsky "cannot as a Theosophist" go to law with her "libellers." The American Theosophists don't appear to share her scruples.

Apropos of the French youth, Montant, who is curing diseases by the laying on of hands (and feet), the *Standard* remarks—"It seems the height of folly to believe in miracles and miracle-workers." Very true, but just carry this principle out to its logical issue, and what becomes of Christianity? The Gospels are stuffed with miracles, and Jesus, Peter, Paul, and the rest of them, were all miracle-workers; and precisely as the *Standard* thinks it the "height of folly" to believe in thaumaturgists like Montant, other people think it the "height of folly" to believe in thaumaturgists like Jesus.

The Pope threatens to ruin Rome, but we guess it will take a good deal of ruining. He is said to be so exasperated by the "fierce persecution" of the Church—that is, making it mind its own business—that he will "soon issue a manifesto to the Roman Catholic world, and announce his intention of abandoning Rome together with his court." In the opinion of the faithful this will be a terrible blow to the Italian capital. No more pilgrims will flock there to kiss the Pope's big toe, and the shopkeepers and hotel-keepers will all be bankrupt. But there is one thing omitted in this little calculation. When the pious parasites clear out of Rome the city will probably become more honest and industrious.

According to a correspondent of the *Manchester Courier*, "it is impossible for any Christian now to live in Rome, which is fast becoming the headquarters of Atheism and Freethought. The shop windows are full of shocking caricatures of the Deity, and the license allowed to blasphemy has never been surpassed." How sad! Who would not put on sackcloth and ashes?

The *Eastern Post* reports a sermon by the Rev. Reuen Thomas, who treats his hearers to such stale stuff as that "we could have no thought of God if there was no God." Instead of exhibiting his thought of God Mr. Reuen Thomas is satisfied with declaring "If we all had purity of heart we should have no doubt of the divine presence but men enclose themselves in unwindowed mud huts of sensualism." This is a fine way of saying "If you don't see as I do it's because you are a brute."

The sanctity of an oath sometimes means the immunity of crime. In the bad old days before the Evidence Amendment Act, Freethinkers were often robbed because their evidence could not be taken against their robbers. In Massachusetts an attempt to assault a four-year-old child was made a short while ago. The criminal went free, because the only witness to the dastardly act was the assaulted child herself, whose testimony was not taken as valid, for the reason that she had no conception of the sacredness of an oath.

Judge McSherry, of Frederick, Md., has filed an opinion declaring that "baseball playing on Sunday by men who are under contract for the season at stated salaries, no one being admitted to witness the games except those who pay, can be construed as nothing else than work, and therefore comes within the purview of the prohibitory statute." Preaching is done on Sunday "by men who are under contract for the season at stated salaries, no one being admitted to witness the games except those who pay." Will Judge McSherry now kindly construe this as "nothing else than work," and decide that it "therefore comes within the purview of the prohibitory statute"?—*Truthseeker*.

The Lord was invited to be present at the tea given by the rector of Cogenhoe, near Northampton, to the Young Women's Bible Class. But the Devil seems to have got into the buns or the minced beef, for in the evening, with two or three exceptions, all became ill and showed symptoms of being seriously poisoned.

The *Adelaide Advertiser* is sent to us from Australia, with a report of a sensational divorce case, in which the wife of Llewellyn John Ford, of North Adelaide, eloped with a married officer in the Salvation Army. After deserting her husband she wrote a pious letter to him, asking him to send on her money and clothes, and telling him to "Be good, and true to God."

The Salvation Army was in full force on Sunday afternoon at a corner in the Seven Sisters Road, Holloway. On drawing near we heard a thin voice proceeding from the midst of the meeting, but when we joined the crowd we were unable to see the speaker. Working our way through the first two or three rows, we managed to catch a view of his physiognomy. He was a pasty-faced boy about fourteen, or at the outside fifteen. His eyes rolled about like a monkey's, never looking at anything in particular. And this is what we heard him say:—"Prepare to meet yer Gawd! Dear friends, prepare to meet yer Gawd! Think Gawd, I'm prepared. Dear friends, prepare to meet yer Gawd this afternoon. Dear friends, make yerselves ready. Think Gawd I'm ready. Dear friends, we must all stand before Gawd." That was as much as we could stand. It was a hot afternoon, but we made tracks at six miles an hour.

Two ministerial changes were reported last week. On the one hand the Rev. Ernest Maitland, Roman Catholic chaplain of St. Marylebone Infirmary, Notting Hill, renounced Roman Catholicism, and it is stated, will accept a curacy in the Church of England. On the other, the Rev. S. B. Thorp, curate of St. Matthew's, Sheffield, and formerly of Christ Church, Clapham, has been received into the Romish Church. Which is the conversion and which the perversion? and will not probably both the men of God enhance their worldly prospects by the change?

The death of Cardinal Newman forces a comparison, or rather a contrast, with the living English Cardinal. The one a recluse, devoted to the intellectual life, and free from all suspicion of sordid self-seeking, the other a persistent self-advertiser, adroitly seizing every opportunity to push himself to the front. Compare Cardinal Newman's respect and unaffected regret at the apostacy of Dr. Dollinger with the frantic attempts of Cardinal Manning to keep the Atheist Bradlaugh out of Parliament. The first may be compared to St. Francis, the second to St. Dominic. Yet both Catholics and heretics have rightly felt that it is the latter who most fitly embodies and expresses the type of Roman Catholicism.

Mrs. Dis Debar, an American spiritist mejum, who has been residing at Rome, says she was requested by one of the leading Roman dignitaries, Monsignor Campbell, to dematerialise the statue of Bruno on the feast of Corpus Christi. Possibly Mgr. Campbell is a subtle jokist.

Some one has taken the trouble to send us the August number of the *Monthly Evangel* emanating from Greengate Congregational Church, Plaistow. We have looked through it, and found it hardly worthy of the idiot department of Colney Hatch. The brains of a domestic rabbit are surely sufficient to edit such a publication. We notice, however, that the reverend conductor has an eye for the main chance. He guarantees to devote £120 to benevolent purposes, and asks for twice the sum to enable him to do it. He also describes the *Evangel* as "a splendid advertising medium," which is doubtful; but then "the charges are reasonable," which is very likely.

A number of Japanese journalists have been sentenced to four years' imprisonment, with hard labor, for writing disrespectfully of the Emperor Jimmu, who, according to some authorities, flourished about 2,200 years ago, and according to others never flourished at all. The *Manchester Examiner* commiserates these unfortunate scribes, and pokes

fun at the Japanese Constitution. But surely the English Constitution is open to the same criticism. How long is it since the editor of the *Freethinker* was imprisoned? And what was his offence? He wrote disrespectfully of an old Jew ghost named Jahveh, who according to some authorities flourished about 2,500 years ago, and according to other authorities never flourished at all. He also wrote disrespectfully of a Jewish mystery-man, who multiplied loaves, turned water into wine, and cured the blind with clay ointment, 1,800 years ago, though some say he never existed either.

Dr. Parker sniffs cash in the wind as keenly as Jay Gould. Not satisfied with his present sources of income, he is going to imitate Mr. Stead, and run a syndicate letter in as many journals in the universe as will take it, and pay for it. By way of a start he gets a good editorial advertisement in the *Christian World*, from which it appears his object is simply to promote the kingdom of God. Ahem! Parker is no fool.

A Philadelphia paper refers to "that advanced thinker, Mr. Stead." Most people on this side the Atlantic regard him as no thinker at all. He has a keen eye for the main chance, and a fine aptitude for advertising himself; but for the rest he is a bundle of sentiments and prejudices. His religion is a perfect chaos.

Talmage is figuring in a law suit. It appears that some of his enthusiastic admirers hit upon the idea of having a terra-cotta bust of the great man, which they thought would sell by the thousand, and help to raise money for the new Tabernacle. Talmage approved the clay model, and an order was given for fifty replicas. But when they were delivered the Tabernacle trustees refused to pay. They alleged that the likeness was bad, the features were not majestic enough, and the mouth was too large. Surely the last item is incredible.

Emma Bates, of Pitt Street Elington, was paralysed in body and apparently in mind. She went to the Salvation Army room, and in coming out fell, and had to be taken home by two men. A Mrs. Caroline put her to bed, but crossing the yard soon afterwards she looked through the window and saw poor Emma Bates lying with the back of her head on the fire. Mrs. Caroline got through the window, shot the bolt, and raised an alarm; but no one would render any assistance, not even the members of the Army. At the inquest the coroner said "these people" should be thoroughly ashamed of themselves. Perhaps Booth will get some one to write a poem about them in the next *War Cry*.

"Not more than others I deserve, but God hath given me more," is the song of Mrs. Reilly, of Carrigallen, county Longford, who has given birth to a triplet of boys, whom she has gratefully named Peter, Luke and John. The Queen has sent her three pounds. What Providence, who sent the children, will send her to feed them with, remains to be seen.

It is a sad business to get wetted with the wrong sort of holy water. So thought the Rev. S. K. Simcox, of Ewelme, who found a child had been messed about by a Primitive Methodist minister, and so terrified the mother by his remarks on the child's spiritual danger, that she let him mess the child over again in the Church fashion. Wouldn't it be well, now the child has had two baptisms, to try the holy water of every sect, in the hope of finding the right one among the lot?

The town of Kieff, in Russia, boasts of a splendid relic. It is no less than the shoes of St. Joseph. When the husband of Mary brought her and the baby back from Egypt, he found his shoes were in a sad condition, and being aware of the excellent leather-work done in Russia, he sent them to Kieff to be repaired. Somehow they remained there. Either Joseph forgot to send for them, or the honest Kieffer forgot to return them. It is now reported—at least the *Daily News* says so—that the Archbishop of Sophia proposes to re-sole the shoes and then "expose them to the veneration of the faithful." We suggest that he should re-top them too, and bring them up to date.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, August 24, New Alhambra, Station Street, Landport, Portsmouth; at 11, "Man's Origin and Destiny"; at 3, "Shelley, the Poet of Atheism"; at 7, "Heresy at Oxford."

August 31, Birmingham.

September 7, Milton Hall; 14, Milton Hall; 21, Manchester; 28, Hull.

October 5, 12, 19, 26, 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. 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.

H. GEE.—See "Acid Drops." Glad to see you are making an impression on the bigots at Woolwich. The game is in your hands if you all keep cool. Be as civil and polite as possible, and leave all the ill manners to the opposite side. If you are interfered with by the authorities, apply at once to Mr. Foote.

H. NICHOLSON.—Your notices for N. S. S. Almanack received.

J. S. ROGERS.—Do not send your Guide notices to Mr. Forder, but to the editor as above.

T. CRISFIELD.—Thanks for your trouble, but we gave an "Acid Drop" to the Bishop's utterance some weeks ago.

H. P. BOWDEN.—Thanks. How is it we hear from you so seldom now?

W. GILMOUR.—We hope to hear soon of a branch in Govan. Glad you found our letter useful.

F. EDWARDS.—You will probably be surprised to learn that *Reynolds'* will not advertise Freethought publications. Stamps will do.

E. T. H.—The verse is not at all bad substantially, but the execution is very uneven.

A. J. FIELD.—See "Acid Drops." Glad to hear your good report of Finsbury Park. Mr. Foote has decided not to tax his voice out of doors this year. He will try to give some of the outdoor stations a turn next summer. Couldn't you manage to get a room for indoor lectures in the winter?

W. SMITHSON.—Better let it drop now.

S. M. PEACOCK.—We hope it has been amicably settled.

E. SMEDLEY.—The Josephus passage is dealt with in the chapter on "Pious Forgeries" in *Crimes of Christianity*. No one denies that the passage is "quoted" by Eusebius. But he lived nearly three hundred years after Josephus. The historic case against the passage is, that it is never referred to by any Christian writer before Eusebius, although it would answer their purpose. Internally, the case against the passage is equally strong. It is altogether out of connection with the context, and the language is not such as a Jew, which Josephus was, could have written about Jesus. There is not a scholar in Christendom, of any standing, who regards the passage as genuine. Those who favor it, like Milman, can only say that Josephus wrote something about Jesus, and somebody has altered it into its present form!

S. STANDRING.—Your report on Finsbury Park confirms Mr. Field's. Glad to hear you had such large and orderly audiences, and found a brisk demand for our publications. We hope you will get more assistants in the work of your Federation.

H. O. THOMAS.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

A. HILLERBY.—We have given it a paragraph.

T. BIRTLEY.—Pleased to see your letter inserted. The editor has obviously no evidence. He seems to think his bare word sufficient proof against any number of dissentients.

J. ROBINSON, 35 Gladstone Terrace, Sunnyside, Tow Law, Durham, R. S. O., desires the Freethinkers of the district who are willing to join in forming a Branch of the N. S. S. to meet at his house on Sunday, September 7. Unfortunately he does not mention the hour.

J. LUNNON.—The passage you refer to in Matthew xix. does not refer to marriage *per se*, but to divorce. Why stop at verses 5 and 6, where Jesus is quoting from the Old Testament? You should read right on to the end of verse 12.

SENEC.—Your post-card to hand. We hope you are having a pleasant holiday. Does the new flag make any difference in the Heligoland air?

J. SMITH.—Remittance received, but not the photograph.

R. W. HEARDEN.—Shall be acknowledged with other subscriptions to the Central Fund next week.

T. CRISFIELD.—We cannot answer the conundrum. The lady must apply to a priest.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Neues Freireligiöses Sonntags Blatt—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Bulletin des Sommaires—Menschentum—Progressive Thinker—Lucifer—Freidenker—Freethought—Fritankaren—Cosmopolitan—Boston Investigator—Echo—Loyal American—Secular Thought—Open Court—Star—Fair Play—Twentieth Century—Freethinker's Magazine—People's Press—Chat—Tocsin—Liberty—Eastern Post—Ashore and Afloat—Woolwich Herald—Sheffield Independent—Jewish World—Churchman's Magazine—Christian Miscellany—North Wilts Herald—Adelaide Advertiser—Morpeth Herald—Der Lichtfreund.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish our attention directed.

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.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote's new lecture on "A World Without a God" drew a good audience on Sunday evening. Mr. Charles Watts presided, and made a brief farewell speech. He had perfectly recovered his voice, and was in excellent form. On Saturday he sails for New York.

Mr. Watts desires us to tell the Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow and other friends who have invited him to lecture that he was quite unable to pay them a visit. His stay in England was a brief one, and all his time was fully occupied. Next time he comes to England he will try and stay longer, and make a lecturing tour. Mr. Watts is very pleased to find how he is still remembered by his old friends on this side of the Atlantic, and on a future occasion he will be very happy to see as many of them as possible again.

Colonel Ingersoll, as Mr. Watts informs us, does not intend to resume lecturing. His law practice is large and increasing, and he has less and less inclination to leave his happy home. He intends, however, to go on contributing Freethought articles to high-class journals and reviews, by which means he addresses a very large audience, and thinks he does even more good than by platform work. Still, it is a pity in one sense; for Ingersoll is a consummate orator, a master of smiles and tears, and his great gift is very largely lost to the world if he refrains from public speaking.

Colonel Ingersoll commissioned Mr. Watts to pay his best respects to the Freethinkers in England. Mr. Foote, on their behalf, amid the warm applause of the Hall of Science audience, desired Mr. Watts to convey back, not their compliments, but their admiration and deep affection.

No less than 4,800 visitors inspected Grosvenor House on Sunday afternoon. The Sunday League received no less than 10,000 applications for tickets.

The Dockers' demonstration in Hyde Park was large and orderly. Evidently the working men don't believe in the "sanctity of the Sabbath," or they think "the better the day the better the deed."

The Sunday League this year increased the number of its Sunday bands in London from three to six. The music has been appreciated by audiences which have amounted to about 150,000 persons each Sunday. There are still some parks unprovided for and there is already a deficit. Subscriptions towards its reduction will be gratefully received by the Treasurer, 8 Theobalds Road, Holborn, W.C.

An Episcopalian priest of the diocese of Ohio, Mac Queary by name, has categorically denied, at least two articles of the Creed, viz.: That J. C. was born of a virgin and that he rose from the dead. He has been inhibited by his bishop, but was previously invited to state his views at the American Church Congress.

Joanne-Magdelaine, a French Freethinker, puts out a brochure on Church and State in France, in which he contends that the forty-four millions of francs annually voted for the subsidy of religion in France, is really augmented by the gift of buildings, land, etc. to the enormous total of five hundred and fifty millions of francs. Anyway France pays pretty

dearly for the privilege of being called a Catholic nation, which it is fast ceasing to be in reality. Yet the clericals complain because they are not allowed to use their influence in elections.

The *Truthseeker* noticing some recent letters in our columns suggesting the formation of a Freethought Museum, hopes that some future decade may discover among American Freethinkers enthusiasm and means adequate to the erection of a like institution. It suggests that various types of religious fossils should also be preserved, and that the great Talmage himself may be found pickled in a Chamber of Horrors.

Five applications have been received for the secretaryship of the National Secular Society. Any further application should reach the present secretary, Mr. R. Forder, before Wednesday, August 27.

About a thousand people listened to a debate in Victoria Park on Sunday between Mr. Thurlow and Mr. Elfein on "Is Slavery Supported by the Bible?" Happily the greatest order prevailed. The Secularists are delighted with the result.

Mr. C. J. Hunt visits Halstead to-day (Aug. 24), on behalf of the N. S. S. Executive. He lectures in the Co-operative Assembly Room, Trinity Street, at 2.45, on "Christianity and Secularism." After the lecture, and any debate, a Branch will be formed.

In *Open Court* Mr. Moncre D. Conway writes on "The Mythical and Mystical Shrine of Agnes." He holds that St. Agnes was the prototype of Lady Godiva. What will the people of Coventry say?

Mr. Wallace Nelson appears to be travelling a good bit about Australia. The *Liberator* reports a successful lecture at Charters Towers.

We regret to read, in the Melbourne *Liberator* that an accident has happened at the Melbourne Hall of Science. A Mr. Abbott was killed by a revolver, which it was supposed had the charges withdrawn. There was, of course, an inquest, and the jury found that it was a pure accident; but no doubt the Christians will make the most of the melancholy and regrettable accident. Mr. Symes has had many difficulties to encounter, but he has a spirit that will overcome them all. It appears that a riotous Anarchist section, lately expelled from the Society, made a raid upon the hall, which had to be defended night and day, and the accident occurred during this trouble.

Even the Primitive Methodists are showing signs of discontent with the old dogma of eternal torment, and there is a correspondence on the subject in the *Christian World*.

The *British Weekly* discovers that on a liberal estimate not one fifth of the inhabitants of London who might, could, and should attend some church or chapel do so. The rest take the primrose path to the everlasting bonfire.

The Welsh Anti-Tithe League have succeeded in hindering distraint for tithe in many Welsh parishes for such a length of time that one half year's tithe has become irrecoverable.

An interesting work just published by the French Cremation Society is entitled *La Crémation en France, 1797-1889*, par G. Salomon. It appears that the project of cremation was put forward in the days of the Revolution, but was put out of sight when Napoleon made the concordat with Rome. The work gives several views of the Crematorium at Père la Chaise.

The Rev. Harris Cohen the Jewish pastor of Merthyr has sent a letter of protest to the *South Wales Daily News*, against the operations of Christian conversionists among the Jews. Mr. Cohen says they do no good and only raise doubts and sow dissension among families. Of the converts he says: "It is a known fact that these are the scum of the Jewish nation, and it is an equally established fact that from being bad Jews they are turned into worse Christians." Mr. Cohen shudders to think that so much money should be so ill-spent.

Professor Huxley is a busy man and doesn't care to waste his time in writing letters to people who only want his autograph. In one of his letters sold by auction the other day was the following:—"I look upon autograph-hunters as a progeny of Cain, and treat their letters accordingly; heaven forgive you if you are only an unusually ingenious specimen of the same race."

Mr. Forder will send a sample packet of twenty of our Tracts post-free for twopence.

David Hume's *Liberty and Necessity*, an argument against Free Will and in favor of Moral Causation, is just reprinted and issued from our office. It forms a valuable adjunct to Anthony Collins's work on the same subject. Every Freethinker should read and re-read it. The price is fourpence.

THE ELEPHANT-UNDER-THE-EARTH.

(From a Chicago Paper.)

THE child asks the father what supports the earth. To avoid an explanation which is beyond the child's comprehension, the father tells him that it rests upon a great elephant's back. The child, who is intelligent enough to think that the earth needs a support, at once wonders what supports the elephant, and if told that it stands upon a terrapin's back he again asks what supports the terrapin, and his mind thus follows the trail *ad infinitum*, never finding any final support that does not itself need to be supported as much as the very earth with which he began his questions. So, even he, child as he is, comes to the conclusion that his father's explanation is all fudge.

The foregoing is a very plain case of false philosophy; so plain, indeed, that everyone at once rejects it as insufficient and inadequate. We have introduced it here because its very simplicity and plainness will enable us, by comparison, to see the fallacy of many scientific theories and philosophical explanations, some of which are now, and have been in all ages, accepted by learned and wise men without murmur, although they are of precisely the same character as the theory of the elephant-under-the-earth, and are just as absurd and ridiculous. Our books, ancient and modern, are full of such foolish inventions of men of science and philosophers; they are taught in our schools, colleges, and universities; they are preached from our pulpits, and they pervade the popular mind, cropping out in the columns of our magazines and our weekly and daily papers, and in the conversation of the learned and the unlearned, as matters that are fixed and settled and not to be questioned for a moment—and woe be to him who does question some of them.

Before we proceed in the application of our illustration to other theories, so as to make their absurdity appear as plain as that of the illustration itself, let us look more closely at the elephant supporting the earth, and see what that supposition involves. In other words, let us see what an elephant-under-the-earth really is, so that we may ever after know him at first sight, no matter how disguised or by whom introduced.

In the theory of the elephant-under-the-earth, we find the following elements which are essential, characteristic, specific:

1. It is supposed that the earth cannot support itself.
2. The elephant-under-the-earth is also a supposition, a pure invention, made to supply a supposed need.
3. The sole business of the elephant-under-the-earth is to do that one thing—to support the earth—and there it must stand forever, merely supporting the earth, with no other office or function. In other words, one thing is supposed to have been created, or to have happened into being, merely to wait upon another—to do the work of another, work which that other can just as well be supposed to do for itself.
4. If the earth is inadequate to do its own work, the elephant-under-the-earth is equally inadequate, and so needs a terrapin under it; and the terrapin, for the same reason, needs something under it, and so *ad infinitum*.
5. Then, to meet all the requirements of the case, we must do violence to our own reason, and suppose the elephant-under-the-earth to be not only big enough and strong enough, but in every respect fully adequate and adjustable to the work. Of course, when a need is to be met by a supposition, it is easy enough to suppose a supposition that is fully adequate and adjustable to all the requirements of the case, no matter how unintelligible it may be. There

is no use in mincing matters. Suppositions are cheap—they cost nothing.

6. The elephant-under-the-earth is totally unnecessary; for it is just as easy (and it is more economical of elements or principles) to suppose that the earth can support itself, as it is to suppose that the elephant can support itself.

The foregoing being characteristics of the elephant-under-the-earth (I mean of the species), then in looking for the elephants-under-the-earth (individuals of the species) we must not look for immense four-footed beasts with leathery hides, short, tufted tails, ivory tusks, and great muscular trunks; for none of these enter into the constitution of the species. On the other hand, all things that contain the foregoing specific characteristics, no matter whether they be things visible or invisible, tangible or intangible, shaped or shapeless; no matter for how many centuries or millenniums they may have been cherished as the very energy of world, the very soul of man, or the very God of the universe; and no matter how completely they have been fused and welded as something real, rational, and ever-abiding into our mental machinery, and into our language, and into the very forms and habits of our thinking, are, nevertheless, all equally fictitious, equally unphilosophical, and equally absurd and ridiculous. Sooner or later science will disown them and philosophy must ultimately reject them all. Take for instance the following examples:

Bodies are known to vary in temperature, being now hot, now warm, now cold. To account for this varying temperature, it was at one time supposed that there exists in nature an imponderable element distinct from matter, to which the name caloric was given; and that if a body takes into itself some of this caloric it becomes warmer than it was; and on parting with caloric it becomes colder than it was. Caloric has, long since, shared the fate of the elephant-under-the-earth. It has given way to the modern theory that water warms itself by the rapid vibratory motions of its molecular constituents. And if we test the caloric theory by the six characteristics already enumerated, we shall see that it is merely an elephant-under-the-earth, and was justly abandoned, even if there had been no such reasons as we now have for believing that matter warms and heats itself.

Again, it is supposed that mere matter is dead; yet we see living things all around us. How is that? The prodigal inventor of ultimate elements comes forward with his vital principle, and supposes that it, under certain circumstances, gets into matter and makes it alive. The theory of a vital principle is pretty well abandoned in recent times, though there are still a few able and learned men who cling with tenacity to that ridiculous and unnecessary hypothesis. If the reader will take the trouble to analyse it, he will find that it contains all the specific characteristics of the elephant-under-the-earth, and as such should be surrendered.

To the same class belongs the theory of an electric fluid, considered as an element distinct from matter. The theory will not cover all the facts, and is now regarded either as obsolete or not proved; and although the term, electric fluid, is still used in standard treatises on electricity and magnetism, and the passage of electricity along a conductor is spoken of as a flow of something, yet such an expression is not intended to convey the idea that there is an actual flow of an element which is distinct from the matter that constitutes the conductor, but is simply used as an illustration, a comparison which will enable us to conceive the movements, methods and formulated laws of electricity and magnetism, for which, as yet, there is no satisfactory theory that will serve us any better, or as well. The same may be said of human or animal magnetism, when spoken of as an element distinct from matter. It is an unphilosophical hypothesis.

Again, it is said that matter can neither feel nor think. Yet we know that animals and human beings do think and feel. Philosophers were here in a quandary again; but only for a little while; for nothing is easier than to imagine an immaterial element whose special business is to think and feel; and there is nothing easier than to suppose that it, somehow, gets into the bodies of men and animals, and does their thinking and feeling for them. But this theory of an immaterial element, a thinking principle, a mind, considered as something different from the element called matter, is evidently an elephant-under-the-earth, having all its specific characteristics, as follows:

1. It is supposed that matter cannot think or feel.
2. The immaterial element, the mind, as something distinct from matter, is a pure invention, made to supply a supposed need.

3. The sole business of that immaterial element is to do that thing, to think and feel for matter—to wait upon another element called matter—to do its work, work which matter can just as well be supposed to do for itself. If it be said that no one ever perceived matter in the act of thinking or feeling, that it is necessarily non-sentient and unthinking, and that it is impossible for us to understand how it can think or feel, it can be said, with equal truth, that no one ever perceived an immaterial element in the act of thinking or feeling; that there is nothing in the nature of such an element that necessarily makes it a thinking and feeling element, and that it is impossible for us to understand how it can think or feel. If, therefore, I ask you how your immaterial principle really does think and feel, you can only answer, I make it do so. How? By my supposition. But cannot a supposition do as much for matter?

4. If we are obliged to suppose that one element, matter can neither think nor feel, we are equally obliged to suppose that the other element can do neither, and, therefore, needs some other element to think and feel for it; and so on, *ad infinitum*.

5. But suppositions are cheap; and as one seems badly needed here, it is made fully competent and duly adjusted to its work, although in doing so the inventor is compelled to do violence to his own reason by supposing that what is invalid in one case is perfectly valid in another similar case—that while the earth cannot support itself the elephant can.

6. The immaterial principle is totally unnecessary, for it is just as easy (and it is more economical of elements or principles) to suppose that matter can think and feel as it is to suppose that any other element can.

In this discussion it is not necessary that we should make any attempt to find out what matter really is; nor is it necessary that we should know what it is. What we are now aiming at is simply to show that, in interpreting that phenomenon of nature, it is unnecessary and unphilosophical to multiply principles or ultimates; and that even two (matter and mind) are as bad as a dozen, because one will answer all the purposes required. In the case of matter and mind it is immaterial which one is supposed to take precedence over the other in their joint action. Turn them up side down or right side up, and, in either case, one is elephant to the other, and is therefore unnecessary.

PAYTON SPENCE.

(To be concluded.)

PROGRESS IN THE NORTH.

The Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch is still progressing, and increasing its membership by leaps and bounds. What speaks well for its future is the increased interest taken in it by the members; all seem desirous of helping on the cause, and instead of all the work falling on the shoulders of a few, as is too often the case in societies, there are plenty of willing supporters to be found. Our energetic member, Mr. Penny, who conducted a shorthand class with such signal success last winter in connection with the Branch, is desirous of further extending the usefulness of the society, by starting a science and art class during the forthcoming winter, and providing we can get the necessary powers from the Science and Art Department at South Kensington, it has a fair chance of success, Mr. Penny having generously promised to provide the necessary materials and to conduct it himself. There is a growing desire also among the members to spread the gospel of Freethought by a more plentiful supply of lectures in the future, and Mr. Dickenson, who since his connection with the Branch has been one of our hardest workers, has hit upon a scheme, by which we can ensure for every lecturer a fair remuneration, and also ensure the Branch against loss. He has gained the sanction of the Branch to obtain from Freethinkers both inside and outside the society a guarantee for three tickets for any lecture that is held under the auspices of the Branch, such tickets to be transferable, and no sooner had he received the authority at our last meeting, than he obtained a guarantee from all the members present, and up to now he has not met with a single refusal. Several of the members also intend undergoing a course of study during the winter to enable them to carry on an open-air propaganda during the summer of 1891.—CHAS. H. KERR, cor. sec.

A million and a half sterling has been raised to build the Church of the Sacred Heart in Montmartre, Paris. Yet the *Star* says there are scores of churches empty in Paris, and thousands of poor Catholics who want bread.

That canny Scot, the Rev. J. McNeill, appears to have come to a decision about the "call" to a church at Westminster. He is climbing the ladder of fortune, and though he "seeks the Lord" at every rung he will never fail to hear him say, "Friend, go up higher."

REVIEW.

Social Songs. By MUNULLOG, Manchester. R. J. Derfel, Publisher, One Shilling.—Some years ago "Munullog," who is perhaps to be identified with his publisher, issued *Hymns and Songs for the Church of Man*, several pieces from which are incorporated with the *Secular Hymn Book*, published at Leicester. "Munullog" is a Freethinker and political and social reformer, and though his verses are of very unequal merit and often lacking in polish, they always express brave thoughts and manly aspirations. The most important piece in the present volume is entitled "The Forum." It gives a number of different and often very heretical views, the doubter and Secularist having decidedly the best of it in reply to the gospel of the priest. From some verses written in memory of Mr. Ridgway, the well-known Freethinker of Manchester, we give the following verse as a sample of Munullog's quality—

Faith he had, but not in Churches,
Faith in truth and love for man,
Human sorrow moved his passions,
Duty held him to his plan.
Doing good was his religion,
Knowledge was his life and joy;
Something to improve his brethren,
Ever did his mind employ.

No fastidious critic would give these *Social Songs* the coveted title of poetry, but no honest man could deny that they embody the thoughts, aspirations and sympathies of the masses.

OBITUARY.

Died on the 15th inst., at his residence, Haughton Street, Liverpool, aged 48 years, Mr. E. Sims, a staunch Freethinker, well known to many lecturers and others visiting Liverpool. By his death, after a protracted illness, great grief has been brought upon a very happy family, and humanity has lost a most straightforward citizen.—C. D.

Died at Hull, Aug. 13, William Leak at the ripe age of 84. He had held Freethought views from youth, and up to the last expressed no fear of death, but hoped no religious service would be read over him. A constant reader of the *Freethinker* since its first issue, he passed away calmly and sensibly to the last, and was buried at Hedon Road Cemetery.—W. Stewart.

PALESTINIAN HOLY PLACES.

Persons who have faith in supernatural occurrences because the places are still shown where they took place have little conception of the way in which legends grow. Any strange object such as a salt pillar is sure to have a story attached, and any story currently believed in is sure to have local corroboration. Sir Walter Scott in his *Kenilworth* has a notable scene at the Black Bear Inn at Cumnor, kept by Giles Gostling. After the publication of the novel, some undergraduates of Oxford painted a sign of the Bear and Ragged Staff, and got a landlord at Cumnor to substitute it for a totally different sign, and since then the house is generally pointed as the identical one where the scene mentioned by Scott occurred. A still more pertinent illustration may be taken from Palestine itself. In his *Idol at Horeb*, Dr. Beke relates how he believed he had found the site of Rebekah's well. The inhabitants had no idea whatever that there was any ground for this belief. But they took up the suggestion. The tradition was set on foot and Captain Burton found it had spread to Damascus within nine years. No doubt a similar origin may be ascribed to the other sites imposed by craft on credulity.—LUCIANUS.

PROFANE JOKES.

Minister (to class): "Yes; all you little children are made of dust. Now, boys, what am I made of?" Class: "Mud!"

"John," said a Sunday-school teacher, "when your father and mother forsake you, who will take you up?" "The police" responded the youth.

A mother, hugging a four-year-old, said, "Charlie, what makes you so sweet?" "I think, mother, God must have put a little sugar in the dust."

"Poor woman! have you no husband to help you to earn a living?" "I have a husband so-called, but he is deeply engaged in something else." "Of what nature?" "Trusting in Providence."

"George," asked the teacher of a Sunday-school class, "whom, above all others, shall you wish to see when you get to heaven?" With a face brightening up with anticipation the little fellow shouted, "Gerliah."

SUNDAY MEETINGS.

[Notices of Lectures, etc., must reach us by first post on Tuesday, and be marked "Lecture Notice," if not sent on post-card.]

LONDON.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 8, Free Concert by members and friends. Monday, at 8, social evening. Friday, at 8, discussion.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Apostles of Freethought."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7.30, Mr. T. Parris, "Some Quack Remedies for Life's Ills."

Hammersmith—Hammersmith Club (in the hall), 1 The Grove, Broadway, Thursday, at 8, Mr. E. Calvert, "The Soul."

West Ham—121 Broadway, Plaistow, 7.30, Mr. J. B. Coppock, "Animals, Plants, and Minerals: their Relations."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates, 11.15, Mr. P. H. Snelling, "The Morality of the Messiah."

Bethnal Green—Opposite St. John's Church, 11.15, a Freethought lecture.

Camberwell—Station Road, 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Mahomet and his Koran."

Clerkenwell Green, 11.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "This Age of Reason."

Edmonton—Corner of Angel Road, 6.30, Mr. Lucretius Keen, "Has Man a Free Will?"

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand), 3.30, Mr. G. Standring, "A Freethinker's View of the Bible."

Hammersmith Bridge (Surrey side), 7, Mr. H. Snell, "Why Fear Death and After?"

Hyde Park, near Marble Arch, 11.15, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "Moral Reasons for Rejecting Christianity." Wednesday, at 8, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Dead Dogmas."

Kingsland Green, 11.30, Mr. Samuel Soddy, "Evidences for Evolution."

Midland Arches, St. Pancras Road, N.W., 11.30, Mr. J. Fagan, "Recantation."

Mill End Waste, 11.30, Mr. H. Snell, "Why Fear Death and After?"

Plaistow Green (near the station), 11.30, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Is the Bible a Good Book?"

Regent's Park near Gloucester Gate, 3.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Who are the 'Infidels'?"

Victoria Park, near the fountain, 3.15, Mr. Dipper, "Inspired Arithmetic"; 6, Mr. Cohen, "Religion."

Westminster—Old Pimlico Pier, 11.30, Mr. E. Calvert, "History of the New Testament Canon."

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. G. Standring, "A Tilt at the Christian Evidence Society."

Woolwich—Beresford Square (opposite Arsenal gates) at 7, Mr. F. Haslam, "Mahomet and his Koran."

COUNTRY.

Heckmondwike—At Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms, 2.30, Mr. Hewson, a reading.

Hull—Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, No. 2 Room, 6.30, Mr. S. Thompson, "Intellectual Development of Europe."

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street—11, Tontine Society; 11.30, meeting of members and friends respecting hall; 7, Mr. Freeman will lecture.

Manchester N. S. S., Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saints—6.30, Mr. Stanley Jones, "God and Design." Free.

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, meeting of members.

Plymouth—100 Union Street, 7, an interesting paper will be read.

Portsmouth—New Alhambra, Station Street, Landport, Mr. G. W. Foote, 11, "Man's Origin and Destiny"; 3, "Shelley, the Poet of Atheism"; 7, "Heresy at Oxford: a Review of *Lux Mundi*."

Rochdale—Secular Hall, Milkstone Road, 6.30, Mr. A. B. Wakefield, "A Chat about Devils and Demons, Ghosts and Goblins."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street.—Mr. Robert Law, F.G.S., 3, "A Geologist's Visit to the Isle of Man"; 7, "Wonders of Geology."

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 7, meeting to arrange for picnic to Holywell Dene on the 31st.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Huddersfield—Market Place, Mr. H. Smith, 3, "Evolution or Devolution: which Prevails?"; 7, "Does Hell Exist, and who are most likely to go there?"

Manchester—Corner of Denmark Road and Oxford Road, 3, Mr. Stanley Jones, "A Criticism of the Biblical Creation."

Rochdale—Town Hall Square, 2.30, Mr. A. B. Wakefield, "A History of Freethought."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—August 24 (morning), Clerkenwell, (afternoon), Regent's Park, (evening), Camberwell; 27, Hyde Park; 31 (morning) Pimlico, (evening), Woolwich. Sept. 7 (morning), Pimlico, (afternoon), Finsbury Park, (evening), Hammersmith; 10, Hyde Park; 14 (morning), Bethnal Green, (afternoon), Victoria Park; 21 (morning), Midland Arches, (afternoon), Finsbury Park, (evening), Hammersmith; 28 (morning), Clerkenwell, (evening), Woolwich.

E. STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Walton, Liverpool.—August 24, Manchester. Sept. 7, Liverpool.

T. THURLOW, 7 Dickson's Villas, Rutland Road, East Ham.—Aug. 24 (morning), Plaistow Green. Sept. 14 (morning), Camberwell 21 (morning) outdoor, and evening in the hall, Plaistow.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—Aug. 24, Brighton; 31 (afternoon), Finsbury Park. Sept. 7, Chat-ham; 21 (evening), Woolwich; 28 (afternoon), Finsbury Park. Oct. 5, Woolwich.

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