

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

BOOTH'S BOOK.

[CONTINUED.]

WHAT is General Booth's scheme for dealing with the "submerged tenth," or three millions of the poor, the unemployed, and the vicious? And in what spirit will he set to work if he gets the hundred thousand pounds down, with the prospect of the rest of a million pounds afterwards?

Booth is a bold man and his promises are magnificent. "If the scheme," he says, "which I set forth in these pages is not applicable to the Thief, the Harlot, the Drunkard, and the Sluggard, it may as well be dismissed without ceremony."

We suspect that the Sluggard will be the toughest subject of all. Booth has to solve the insoluble problem of how to put nervous energy into a body in which it is constitutionally lacking. Common sense says the thing cannot be done. You may galvanise the Sluggard for a while, but the effect will not last. Energy is not acquired, it is congenital. If Booth would take the trouble to read Mr. Havelock Ellis's book on Criminals, not to mention more recent works, he would see that the Sluggard and the Thief are first cousins. Both have a defective vitality, only the Thief, and the Criminal generally, is capable, like all predatory creatures, of spasmodic activity. The type is well known and should be dealt with scientifically. Inveterate criminals should be segregated. There is no necessity to treat them with cruelty. They should be surrounded with comfort, but they should be rigorously prevented from procreating their like. Science shows us that the only permanently successful way of dealing with these classes is to cut off the supply.

Certainly there are many persons in gaol who are not congenital criminals, and these should be dealt with in a spirit of wisdom and humanity. Were they treated like men, subjected to proper discipline, and rewarded for good behavior and industry, instead of being punished so liberally for bad behavior and idleness, most of them would be reclaimed. In ordinary prisons—so wretched, so inhuman, and so imbecile is the system—eighty per cent. of first offenders come back again; while in the one great American prison which is conducted on a better method the percentage is exactly reversed, only twenty per cent. returning to gaol, and eighty per cent. joining the ranks of decent society.

General Booth is not a scientist. He knows nothing of the lessons of Evolution. He is not aware that thousands of men and women are born in every generation who are behind the age. They are types of a vanished order of mankind, relics of antecedent stages of culture. Natural Selection is always eliminating them, and General Booth proposes to coddle them, to surround them with artificial circumstances, and give them a better chance. He does not see that most of them, however propped up by the more energetic and independent, will always bear the stamp of unfitness; nor does he see that he will enable them

to beget and rear a more numerous offspring of the same character. The law of heredity is a stern fact, and it will not budge a hair's-breadth for General Booth and all the sentimental religionists in the world.

Take the Harlots, for instance. We are far from denying that many girls, after being seduced by men, are pushed into a life of vice. Christian society has no mercy on female frailty; it drives a girl who has listened to the voice of a tempter, or the first suggestions of her sexual passions, into a career of infamy; and then, when it has helped to poison her life, it hypocritically sheds tears over her and sets up associations for her rescue. This is true enough—damnably true—but it is not the whole truth. Just as there are congenital criminals, there are congenital harlots. They are cases of survival or reversion. Discipline of every kind is hateful to them. They prefer to do what they like, how they like, and when they like. Animality and vanity are strong in them, but they have little steady energy and no self-control. In a polygamous state of society they would find a place in a harem; but in a monogamous and industrial state of society they are hopelessly out of harmony with the general environment. Here is an instructive little table from General Booth's book. He takes a hundred cases "as they come" from his Rescue Register.

CAUSES OF FALL:					
Drink	...	...	...	...	14
Seduction	...	...	...	...	33
Wilful Choice	...	...	...	...	24
Bad Company	...	...	...	...	27
Poverty	...	...	...	...	2
Total					100

Twenty-three of these girls had been in prison. Only two were pushed into vice by poverty. Seduction, wilful choice, and bad company, come to much the same thing in the end. In any case, one fourth of the whole hundred deliberately took to prostitution. Now if General Booth fancies that the money he spends on these is a good investment, while a greater number of good girls are trying to lead an honest life in difficult circumstances, with little or no assistance from "charity," we venture to say he is grievously mistaken; and we think he is basking in a Fool's Paradise, unless he is trading on pious credulity, when he looks forward (p. 133) to the girls of Piccadilly exchanging their quarters for "the strawberry beds of Essex or Kent."

Facts are facts. It is useless to blink them. The present writer did not make the world, or its inhabitants, and he disowns all responsibility for its miserable defects. But when you attempt to reform the world there is only one thing that will help you. Humanity is presupposed. Without it you would never make a beginning. But after that the one requisite is Science. Now all the Science displayed in General Booth's book might be written large on thick paper, and tied to the wings of a single pigeon, without impeding its flight.

General Booth himself, in one of his lucid intervals, recognises the hard facts we have just insisted on.

"No change in circumstances," he says (p. 85), "no revolution in social conditions, can possibly transform the nature of man." "Among the denizens of Darkest England there are many who have found their way thither by defects of character which would under the most favorable circumstances relegate them to the same position." Again he says (p. 204) :

"There men so incorrigibly lazy that no inducement you could offer will tempt them to work; so eaten up by vice that virtue is abhorrent to them, and so inveterately dishonest that theft is to them a master passion. When a human being has reached that stage, there is only one course that can be rationally pursued. Sorrowfully, but remorselessly, it must be recognised that he has become lunatic, morally demented, incapable of self-government, and that upon him, therefore, must be passed the sentence of permanent seclusion from a world in which he is not fit to be at large."

These very people, who are the worst part of the social problem, Booth will not trouble himself very greatly about. Here are a few extracts from the Rules for the "Colonists," as he calls the people who come into his scheme.

- (a) Expulsion for drunkenness, dishonesty, or falsehood will follow the third offence.
- (b) After a certain period of probation, and a considerable amount of patience, all who will not work to be expelled.
- (c) The third offence will incur expulsion, or being handed over to the authorities.

Expulsion is Booth's whip, and a very convenient one—for him! He will soon simplify his enterprise. All who come to him will be taken, but he will speedily return to society all the liars, drunkards, thieves, and idlers; so that when the scheme is in full swing, society will still have the old problem of dealing with the residuum, and in this respect Booth will not have helped in the least.

General Booth's scheme is thus, in the ultimate analysis, merely one for dealing with the unemployed. On this point his ideas are simply childish. He seems to imagine that *work* is a thing that can be found in unlimited quantities. He does not suspect the existence of economic laws. It never occurs to him that by artificially providing work for one unemployed person he may drive another person out of employment. Nor has he the least inkling of the law of population which lies behind everything.

In his Labor Shops, in London, he proposes to make match-boxes. Well, now, the community is already supplied with all the match-boxes it wants. The demand cannot be stimulated. And every girl that Booth takes in from the streets and sets to making match-boxes, which are to be put on the market, will turn some other girl out of employment at Bryant and May's or other match factories.

Similarly with the Salvation Bottles (p. 120) and the Social Soap (p. 136). Booth's soap, if it gets sold, will lessen the demand for other people's soap, and thus a lot of existing soap-makers will be thrown out of work. If he collects old bottles, and furbishes them up "equal to new," there will be so many less new bottles wanted, and a lot of existing glass-bottle makers will be thrown out of work. The wily old General of the Salvation Army, owing to a want of economic knowledge, falls into a most obvious fallacy. He is like the Irishman, who lengthened his shirt by cutting a piece off the top and sewing it on the bottom.

G. W. FOOTE.

(To be concluded.)

Recently, one of our preachers said, "The little good any of us can do must be done with our hearts thumping against the hearts of our fellow-men." And every young woman in church looked at every other young woman and smiled approvingly.

A circular has been sent to very many clergymen by a wine firm setting forth the merits of its wines and liqueurs, with prices by the case, etc. The end of the circular reads: "N.B.—To avoid suspicion, every case sent you will be marked 'canned peaches.'"

THE ARCHBISHOP'S JUDGMENT.

THE proverbial law's delay has been exemplified in the spiritual court of which churchmen boast as a rival and superior to the civil tribunals. We do not wonder at the protracted proceedings, nor at the nature of the decision last Friday. The Archbishop was in a strait between the Devil and the deep sea. He could hardly hope to please both High Church and Low Church. In trying to do so he will please neither. His task was a difficult one. To serve God and Mammon is nothing to it. *That* all clericals have a long apprenticeship in, and are usually adepts before they reach a bishopric. But to reconcile the Romanisers and the anti-Papists in the Church of England is a task that would tax the resources of God Almighty. What the Archbishop has done is to condemn the Bishop in his most glaring points of Romanising, such as making the sign of the cross in pronouncing absolution and benediction, though inferentially he may do so upon other occasions if he thinks fit. He is also condemned for not making the manual acts visible in the Communion service. He may, it appears, mix privately as much water as he chooses with the Savior's blood in the sacred chalice, only he must not do so in presence of the congregation.

On the other hand he is acquitted for singing the *Angus Dei*, for using the eastward position and for using lighted candles, not for purposes of light, but for purposes of ceremony. All these things, according to Archbishop Benson, are really without significance. This is meant as a salve to the Evangelicals. The Archbishop knows full well that the High Church clergy adopt these puerile usages because to them they do have significance. He lays it down that "No significance can be attached to any form, act, or usage, unless that significance is in accordance with the regular and established meaning of language and symbol." Yet he must know that the Church has been repeatedly torn to pieces in controversies about symbols which had no essential meaning at all. He must know too that the ceremonies of Rome are to be interpreted in the language of Rome. The eastward position, in celebrating the Communion, he rules is legal, but it has, he says, nothing to do with the sacrificial aspect of the ordinance—which is the very reason the Ritualist adopts it. That really the eastward position can be traced to Sun worship, as can also the bread and wine of the communion service, does not affect the matter. The Ritualist has gained his point when he can make his ceremonies speak his doctrinal language which is that of sacerdotalism; mystery and mummery for the people, and a separate and holy position for the priesthood. The effect of the Archbishop's decision will be to extend the spread of Ritualism. It will come as a boon and a blessing to ecclesiastical candle-makers. Ritualists will quietly smile at the Archbishop's appeals for forbearance, urging they will not do what he says they legally may do. Their policy is to push on, knowing the ordinary Englishmen, though he makes a fuss at first soon gets accustomed and apathetic.

We have little quarrel with the judgment. It is as weak, illogical, and inconclusive as we expected and desired. We confess that since it overrides the previous judgments of the Privy Council we hope to see it appealed from. The spectacle of the highest lay tribunal over-ruling the Archbishop's judgment would be gratifying. But that it favors the Ritualists alarms us not. The Church of Rome, it is no secret, has been hoping for an Anti-Ritualist decision to drive that party into the arms of the Mother Church, and this the decision may do something to avert.

From our point of view, the more Ritualist the Church becomes the better. *Lux Mundi* shows that in their zeal for the worship of the Church, the

Ritualists may help to give the quietus to the worship of the Bible. They seek to stay the advance of rationalism by abandoning a portion of the ground. This rationalism will take and use it against themselves. The more sharply the division between the sacerdotalism of the clergy and the Protestantism of the people is drawn, the sooner will come the disruption of the Establishment. The ascendancy of the Ritualists in the Church, is but one of many signs of the separation of the Church from the people. However puerile these questions of candles, clothes, and crosses may appear, in their ultimate issue between Rome and Reason there is a vital principle at stake, and we are confident that when the issue is made clear there is sufficient ingrained opposition to sacerdotalism in Englishmen to rend the Church asunder.

J. M. WHEELER.

SCOTCH THISTLES.

In my last bunch of Thistles I drew attention to the fact that in Edinburgh and Glasgow Sunday Concerts have been established. The example set by these towns has now been followed by others. In Aberdeen on a recent Sunday afternoon the band of a Highland regiment played selections before a large audience, and in Leith a wealthy merchant has, it is announced, rented a hall for Sunday evening concerts at which secular music and secular songs will form the chief features. The clergy and the "unco guid" people in Edinburgh have drawn the attention of the authorities to the fact that Cook's Circus (where Dunn and Davidson's band performs on Sunday nights) is only licensed for week-day performances, and they want the licence withdrawn on the ground that its conditions have been infringed. Meantime Dunn and Davidson are coining money by their venture.

Professor Menzies of St. Mary's College, St. Andrews, opened his winter session with an address upon Scientific Theology, in the course of which he observed that one of the questions which the theologian had to ask was, "How are the people to be made to feel that in religion there is something certain, something to be firmly relied on, which no doubt can shake, so that their faith may continue to have its basis in their own knowledge and reason, and not be at the mercy of the priest, the fanatic or the charlatan?" This is indeed a hard nut for the Christian theologian to crack, and I for one should like to see it done. The man who can show that Christianity rests now, or ever has rested, on our knowledge and reason will indeed be a prodigy.

Dr. Marcus Dods has again been airing his views upon the Bible. Here is a sample of the stuff with which this learned Professor feeds his flock. "The Bible is infallible in its substance, though not in its form; it is infallible as a whole, though not in each particular fact; it is infallible in the spirit, though not always in the letter. The discrepancies are in themselves very trifling, and of absolutely no consequence; but they become of alarming consequence when used as a lever to subvert the real infallibility of scripture." Is not this a bold statement in the face of *Luc Mundi* and other modern, not to speak of ancient criticisms upon the Bible? Divinity students must indeed repose a blind faith in their teachers if they swallow this spoon-food fit only for babes. We may, in their case, define faith as it was defined by the school-boy, who promptly gave as answer to the question What is faith? "Faith is that which enables you to believe what isn't true."

While speaking of professors, I may mention that the Professor of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh University chose "Hypnotism" as the subject of his opening lecture this winter. While admitting that the mesmerist possesses a marvellous power over his subject, he contended that no one in ordinary health could be hypnotised, except as the result of his own consent, and it was, therefore, impossible that a state which depended upon personal choice could carry an argument against will-power. "A conclusion," said he, "adverse to freedom of will is intolerable." Thus Professor Calderwood boldly proclaims that he will not tolerate any conclusion which does away with free-will.

And yet this is the Goliath of the Christian Evidence advocates in Modern Athens. Few of their meetings are

complete unless he is on the platform as chairman or lecturer. He is looked upon by his admirers and backers as a veritable infidel-slayer, and they applaud vociferously when he hits out. His mode of warfare may be gleaned from the fact that on one occasion, when asked by an opponent how he reconciled the order given to the Israelites anent the spoiling of the Egyptians with the command, Thou shalt not steal, he replied:—"The order amounted to this: 'Beg, borrow, or steal whatever you can, and even then you won't have got your wages.'" This answer threw the Christians into a phrensy of delight, and the Professor smiled benignly.

The Crusade for the disestablishment of the Scottish Church goes on apace, and both parties are waxing warm. Those favorable to disestablishment say that the Ministers of the established Church are drawing their stipends under false pretences. The money was left, they affirm, for the saying of the masses for the souls of the departed, for the hearing of confessions, and for the granting of absolution—none of which is done by those who now pocket the teinds. The *Established Churchman* turns the other cheek to the smiters by gently reminding them "that this is an age of religious indifference; that already in the towns there are tens of thousands of artisans who go to no church, because they will not pay for a seat-rent, and cannot bear the visits of the monthly collector; and that if the Church were disestablished, the ploughmen in the country would very quickly fall into the same humour (they are doing so already), and decline to go to a church for which they had to pay, if indeed there was a church to go to?" These are the words of Principal Cunningham, and I believe them to be the truth, and nothing but the truth.

R. M. R.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President, G. W. FOOTE.

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

SECULARISM teaches that conduct should be based on reason and knowledge. It knows nothing of divine guidance or interference; it excludes supernatural hopes and fears; it regards happiness as man's proper aim, and utility as his moral guide.

Secularism affirms that Progress is only possible through Liberty, which is at once a right and a duty; and therefore seeks to remove every barrier to the fullest equal freedom of thought, action and speech.

Secularism declares that theology is condemned by reason as superstitious and by experience as mischievous, and assails it as the historic enemy of progress.

Secularism accordingly seeks to dispel superstition; to spread education; to disestablish religion; to rationalise morality; to promote peace; to dignify labor; to extend material well-being; and to realise the self-government of the people.

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THE EVIL THE CHURCH DOES.

BY HUGH O. PENTECOST.

(From the "Twentieth Century.")

(Concluded.)

AN Infidel, though his life be stainless and wholly given to good works; though he swathe his wife in the sunshine of love and rock his children in the cradle of kindness; though he serve his friends and love his enemies; though he conform his life to every precept of the "Sermon on the Mount," cannot belong to the Church; but a Calvinist, though his heart be a nest of unclean birds and his whole life a serpent's trail; though he freeze his wife with indifference or defile her with a loveless embrace, and rule his children with a rod of iron; though he be false to his friends and vindictive to his enemies: though he violate every maxim of the "Sermon on the Mount," can.

A poor drunkard cannot belong to the Church, but a rich drunkard can. A poor libertine cannot belong to the Church, but a rich libertine can. A common prostitute cannot belong to the Church, but a young woman who in legal prostitution sells herself to an old man for gold can. A non-uniformed man who habitually attacks and beats his neighbors on the street cannot belong to the Church, but a policeman can. A common burglar cannot belong to the Church, but a tax collector or sheriff can. A common murderer cannot belong to the Church, but a hangman can. The hand that adjusted the noose or cut loose the drop on Friday can take the communion bread on Sunday. A sneak thief cannot belong to the Church, but a detective can. A confidence man cannot belong to the Church, but a promoter of bogus commercial enterprises can. A bucket shop keeper cannot belong to the Church, but a stockbroker can. A policy shop keeper cannot belong to the Church, but you can buy a chance in a sofa cushion at a church fair. An ordinary gambler cannot belong to the Church, but a vacant land speculator can. An ordinary thief cannot belong to the Church, but a money manipulator can. A poor person who lives without working cannot belong to the Church, but a rich person who lives without working can. Poor men and women who spend their time in dance houses along the Bowery cannot belong to the Church, but rich men and women who spend their time in dance houses at Newport and Tuxedo can. A poor woman who does not pay her rent is not sought after by the Church, but the landlord who turns her into the street is.

The most ignoble criminals in this country are the men who are debauching the people by election bribes, who are robbing them by corporate monopolies, who are starving them by keeping them off vacant land and limiting the supply of money, but these men are all members of the Church, or may be. And this because the Church openly or tacitly recognises and encourages a false idea of morality.

The Church wants God in the Constitution, but it does not clamor for justice in society. It wants the Bible in the public schools, but it does not insist on the Golden Rule in business. It says we must not break the Sabbath, but it does not say to the employer: "You must not break that woman's back over a sewing machine." It wants you to worship Jesus, but if you try to follow his precepts it will persecute you. It tells the poor to be economical and contented, instead of telling the rich to be just. It bids the rich to be charitable, instead of telling them to stop robbing the poor. It tells women to keep within their sphere instead of telling men to give them their liberty. It encourages the suppression and imprisonment of reformers instead of studying what they have to say. It points the eye of faith to another world, but encourages the hand of business to lay up treasures in this. It preaches the blessedness

of poverty while it revels in the luxury of wealth. It loves respectability more than righteousness, and hates social obscurity worse than sin. It worships God and behaves like the Devil. It wears the livery of heaven and cultivates the manners of hell. It is intrinsically and necessarily bad. It cannot be reformed. It must go!

A REVERENT AGNOSTIC.

THE Marquis of Queensberry is an emotional gentleman. We were close to him once when he spoke in St. James's Hall; every nerve in his body was painfully quivering, and his brief speech was what might be expected in such circumstances. Years afterwards, his lordship rose from his seat in the stalls of a London theatre, and shouted out a protest against Tennyson's *Promise of May*, in which an Agnostic plays the part of a scoundrel. There was no necessity for such a protest, for a play which is a sermon is sure of a quick mortality, nor in any case was the theatre the proper place to make it. After these, and some other facts, we are not much astonished at the following letter from the Marquis to the head of the Salvation Army:—

"Glenlee, New Galloway, N.B., Nov. 21.

"My dear General Booth,—I have read your book, *The Darkest England*, with the greatest interest, also with thrills of horror that things should be as bad as they are. I send you a cheque for £100, and shall feel compelled if your scheme is carried out to give you a yearly subscription. You say you want recruits. When I come to town I should very much like to see you to talk this matter over, for I see no cause in which a man could more put his heart and soul into than this one of endeavoring to alleviate this fearful misery of our fellow creatures. I see you quote Carlyle in your book, but is it possible for anyone like myself, who is even more bitterly opposed than he was against what to me is the Christian falsehood, to work with you? We have two things to do as things are at present—first, to endeavor to alleviate the present awful suffering that exists to the best of our abilities, and surely this ought to be a State affair; and, secondly, to get at the roots of the evils, and by changing public opinion gradually develop a different state of things for future generations, when this help will not be so necessary. I do not wish to get into a religious controversy with you on how this is to be brought about, but I tell you I am no Christian and am bitterly opposed to it. A tree I believe is to be judged by its fruits. Christianity has been with us many hundreds of years. What can we think of it when its results are as they are at present with the poor, whom Christ, I believe you say, informed us we should always have with us? I know nothing about other worlds, beyond that I see thousands upon thousands around me who I presume look after their own affairs. It appears to me our common and plainest duty to help and to try and change the lot of our suffering fellow creatures here on this earth. You can publish this if you please, but without suppressing any of it. If not, and any notice is given of subscriptions, as I see you are doing, I beg it may be notified that I send this mite as a reverent agnostic to our common cause of humanity.—Yours faithfully,

QUEENSBERRY."

Lord Queensberry calls himself "a reverent agnostic," and we suppose the *reverence* is responsible for his sending £100 to help a scheme which is to be carried out by the Salvation Army, and which is designed to promote that very Christianity to which his lordship is so "bitterly opposed." Perhaps the same *reverence* has hitherto prevented his lordship from subscribing towards the work of those who are engaged in destroying the "Christian falsehood." It would be really wonderful, if one knew less of human nature, to see wealthy men tightening their purses against unpopular causes with which they have an intellectual sympathy, and loosening them promptly for popular causes with which they have no intellectual sympathy at all. Mr. Samuel Laing, M.P., is another reverent Agnostic, who sends Booth £100. How much has he ever subscribed to spread Freethought? Agnosticism, with some people, takes the form of opposing Christianity theoretically, and supporting it practically.

ACID DROPS.

General Booth has to pay £27 damages to Mr. Baker, a lodging-house keeper, of St John's Wood. In the Salvation Army monthly periodical, *All the World*, it was suggested that Mr. Baker was keeping a disorderly house. Before the case came on for trial in the Court of Queen's Bench, the "General" paid £2 into court. That was the amount he thought he ought to pay for a gross libel on a fellow citizen, but the jury multiplied the figure by thirteen and a half. Perhaps this little lesson will teach the "General" that he is not "all the world."

Mr. Bradlaugh's statement in last week's *National Reformer* is enough to make a saint swear. No, no; not a saint; saints swear readily enough; we should have said a gentleman. It appears that when Mr. Bradlaugh lay desperately ill, almost dying, a Salvation Army contingent passed under his window and stopped to give him a "salvation salute," which is one of the most hellish rows this side of Central Africa; and if the police had not protected him, these callous, fanatical wretches would have repeated their wretched performance.

Why doesn't Booth put this forward as one of his credentials? There are thousands of Christians who would gladly help him to give "salvation salutes" under the windows of sick or dying Freethinkers.

At General Booth's Exeter Hall meeting to raise the wind, the formal proceedings opened with a hymn and a prayer. Then came another hymn before the Salvation Pope rose to address the ladies and gentleman in the half-guinea seats. Now that hymn was very appropriate.

All I have I am bringing to thee.

How the "General" must have grinned (inwardly) and wished it was true.

Religion is a mental disease. The civilised races are used to it, and natural selection has toughened them. But when the diseases of civilised races are carried to uncivilised races they work the deadliest havoc. The Messiah craze has got amongst the North American Indians and driven them three-parts mad. They are indulging in wild religious dances, and Chief Little Wound says they are going to dance until spring, when "if we find Christ does not appear, we shall stop dancing." Meanwhile the white settlers are in a state of alarm. A massacre is apprehended, and the United States troops are held in readiness to put down a rising of the Christ-deluded red men.

The American papers say that the Sioux Messiah bears the commonplace name of Johnson. The name, after all, is no more commonplace than that of Jesus. He seems to bear one of the genuine marks of a Messiah in bringing calamity on those who adopt him.

Among the rancid pufferies of himself which the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes admits weekly into the *Methodist Times* this one may be noted. The readers are told that one of the secrets of his "power of evoking enthusiasm" is his "splendid decisiveness of opinion and action." "Splendid decisiveness" is good. We admit the quality, though we shouldn't give it that name. The quality comes out in his story of the Atheist Shoemaker. There isn't a word of truth in it, but the "splendid decisiveness" never trembles. In other words, the author of that fraud is a fine, straightforward liar.

By the way, the *Methodist Times* gives the names of some pious men of science—not including Darwin, Haeckel, and Huxley—and asks "Who dares to say that the greatest scientists are unbelievers in God, and regard the Bible as cunningly-devised fables?" Ay, who? You put the dangerous names out of sight, and cry out, Who's afraid? But this trick will not save your fetish. Science and the Bible do not agree, and you know it. As for the Bible being a lot of cunningly-devised fables, we are ready to prove it—in debate! We don't make the assertion and run away, as you did, Mr. Price Hughes, when you lied about that converted Atheist; no, we are ready to maintain it, if you have any stomach for a real fight.

Price Hughes is down on Parnell for "lying." When we read that we laughed. It was not a smile, it was a convulsion. The whole neighborhood was alarmed, and the timid old lady eight doors off has had a policeman sleeping in the house ever since.

We should like to see the dictionary they keep in the *Methodist Times* office. Our curiosity is whetted by the following sentence:—"If he [the negro] is civilised without being Christianised, his strong, passionate nature will make his civilisation a curse rather than a blessing." Now we want to know, if the inquiry isn't flat blasphemy, what are the meanings of "civilised" and "civilisation" in the Price-Hughes vocabulary. If civilisation can be a curse rather than a blessing, in any shape, the ordinary dictionaries that we have access to are fraudulent and misleading.

Poor African! The Philistines are upon thee. First come the missionaries, and then the missionaries' friends, gentlemen from the same country, and worshippers of the same Christ. And these gentlemen bring rum, syphilis, and rifles; and thou, poor darkie, findest thyself, infernally sold, bought with a great price, as the missionary says, but, alas! never paid for. And the missionary's friend dispatches thee to kingdom-come, and the missionary preaches thy funeral sermon. Amen.

The Rev. Howard Heber Evans, vicar of Mapperly, contends that St. Paul was the author of the Acts of the Apostles. This is rather a dangerous position for an orthodox defender of the faith. Good critics like Baur and Zeller consider it evident that the Acts of the Apostles belong to the second century. Consequently, if they are correct, all the evidence which goes to show that this document had the same authorship as that of the epistles attributed to Paul would only show that these last could not have been written by Paul, who, according to Christian tradition, suffered under Nero about B.C. 64.

Mr. H. H. Evans, however, brings forward some notable verbal similarities between Luke, Acts, and Paul's epistles. These similarities, however, may be explained on quite another theory than that of the authorship of Paul, viz, that the same person redacted all three long after Paul's death.

The profits of the Passion Play amount to 300,000 marks. Two thousand go to Jesus Christ—not so much for being crucified, considering that one thousand three hundred go to Caiaphas and as much to his daughter Mary. It would seem that it pays to put the Savior on the boards. But the village is said to be dissatisfied. Taxes are being levied at the same time for the State and the parish, and in Munich the opinion is expressed that the Passion Plays will have an ugly sequel.

The Rev. T. W. Norwood declined to publish the banns of a couple of barge people because they had no residence except the boat on the canal. This difficulty, which should be none, was made the subject of a conference at Nantwich, with the single result of inducing the Bishop of Chester to say he must look into the law on the subject.

Early this year Mrs. Anna Maria Morris advertised for a Christian gentleman for a husband. A Christian gentleman who was already married, and who had been convicted for felony, abduction and fraud, married her, obtained £59 from her, and then treated her cruelly. When the case came before the judge at the Manchester Assizes he remarked that the result was "exactly what might have been expected to happen to a lady who advertised for a Christian gentleman for a husband."

The *Saturday Review* professed to rejoice that a tardy testimonial was presented to Walt Whitman, but adds, "it is a pity that the chief actor should have been an offensive quack like Mr. Robert Ingersoll." Probably the writer knows no more of Mr. Robert Ingersoll than that he is an anti-Christian orator. If he read Ingersoll's noble tribute to Whitman he would discover that the good grey poet is as little religious as his eulogist. But the *Saturday Review* man, knowing little or nothing of either Ingersoll or

Whitman, seeks to strain at the one while swallowing the other. Really it is very amusing!

About Bishop King's Romanising ritual and doctrines there can be little question. When Principal of Cuddesdon Theological Training College a goodly number of his pupils passed into the service of the Church of Rome. When consecrated Bishop of Lincoln, on April 15, 1885, the ceremonial proceedings excited great joy among the Romanisers. Though the Archbishop teaches that there is no significance to be attached to his Ritualism, the Bishop himself holds that Ritualism is proper simply on account of the doctrinal significance which is attached. There is little doubt he will conform on the few particulars required by the Archbishop's judgment. An appeal is far more likely to come from the other side.

The Rev. H. H. Henson, vicar of Barking, writes a vigorous letter to the *Times*, protesting against the patronage of Booth by the bishops. He says: "If 'General' Booth speaks truly, and the saving power of the Gospel depends on the agency of the Salvation Army, then the Church lacks the authenticating mark of Christianity; it is an imposture, and my lords would better set an example to their clergy of honesty and courage by forthwith resigning their bishoprics and applying to the 'General' for commissions in the Army."

A meeting of the unemployed was held on Clerkenwell Green on Tuesday to denounce General Booth's scheme. Testimonies were given that men waited in the bureau many days without getting any relief, and it was stated that a man would have to work twelve weeks before he got five shillings in money to buy tools.

The *Catholic Weekly Register* suggests that, as the Queen never uses Buckingham Palace, she should hand it over to Cardinal Manning as a slight restitution for the buildings of which the Catholics were despoiled under Henry VIII. "General" Booth will apply for it next for the S. A. Her Majesty has as yet given him nothing but her good wishes.

The leading Theosophist of Paris calls himself "Pappus." His real name is M. Encausse. He is the author of several volumes, in which he pretends to teach High Magic. As he has been disparaging the High Priestess we are not surprised to read in *Lucifer* that he has been expelled from the Theosophical Society. M. Encausse Pappus can afford to laugh, for he has, we learn, come in for a million of francs, given him by a deluded old French lady to propagate his crankery.

There is a superstition against looking over the shoulder. People are afraid of seeing something uncanny, a circumstance which Coleridge employed with great effect in the *Ancient Mariner*. But Mr. Spurgeon is not an ordinary man, and he says, "I have often felt that if I were to look over my shoulder and see Christ I should not be surprised." Good, Mr. Spurgeon, good! You are a very great man, and God Almighty walks *behind* you.

Pious Billy, whom an imbecile destiny has made the ruler of forty million Germans, has been favoring his army with some more of his views. He told them that no one could be a good soldier if he were not also a good Christian. Indeed! What about the Greeks who fell at Thermopylæ and conquered at Marathon? What about Hannibal, Marcellus, Scipio, and Julius Cæsar? Were these gentlemen Christians? And what chance would pious Billy stand against any one of them?

The *New York Herald* publishes an autobiographical account of Reginald Birchall, who was executed in Canada for murder. It is satisfactory to note that he repudiates the statement that he was an Atheist.

What trust in Providence amounts to was exemplified by a woman in Birmingham, who was called on by a local life insurance agent. "Well, sir," she said, "we've been trusting to Providence, but now there's so much illness about that does seem rather risky."

At the home office of the Salvation Army at Blackfriars Station a large advertisement on canvass, covering nearly

the front of the building, announced "Two days with God at Exeter Hall on Nov. 23 and 24." Apparently God did not seem to care about their company, for he did his best to blow the advertisement into shreds.

A correspondent of the *Daily News* describes the reception of some young girls at Vienna as Brides of the much-married Christ. It says: "Many a sob was heard as the twenty young nuns filed out of the chapel behind the Bishop. In the corridors and visitors' rooms of the convent all the painful partings took place between mothers who were not all willing to give up their children, and girls who did not, every one, seem to understand the necessity of spending a long life behind the convent walls." Christ permits none of the ladies of his harem to have any contact with the outside world. To become dead to worldly duties is the highest reach of Christian morality.

A telegram from Berlin says:—"Ex-Court Chaplain Hofman, of Dresden, who resigned his chaplaincy to the Court of the King of Saxony four years ago under sensational circumstances, entered the Lutheran Church, and married a rich young widow, has now absconded from Dresden Newstadt, leaving his wife and three babies behind. It is surmised that Hofman has done this at the instigation of members of the Catholic Church, and that he is now doing penance in some Italian convent preparatory to receiving the Pope's forgiveness." Similar specimens of Roman morality have occurred in England.

The Bishop of Wakefield says the Christian may accept Evolution without fear. Yes, and a man may walk into a powder magazine with a lighted stick without fear, but he'll get blown up all the same.

At Bistritz, in Transylvania, the newly-appointed minister is of Roumanian nationality. When he tried to enter the church he was debarred by the Saxon members of the flock. A free fight ensued between the rival factions, six persons were killed, and sixteen seriously injured. God bless religion!

"Owing largely to the persevering and faithful efforts of the lady collectors" the Bolton section of the British and Foreign Bible Society has collected £215 11s. 10d. during the past year to send Bibles to the African and other heathen. Would it not be better if the "lady collectors" would turn their attention to the wants of Bolton? Is it not simply humbug to be so anxious for the salvation of people thousands of miles away while destitution, ignorance and vice flourish at your own doors?

J. Maxwell writes an indignant letter to the *Mossley Reporter*. He went into the library of the Co-operative Society and found there the writings of Paine, Bradlaugh, Foote, and other reprobates. He also found some French novels translated into English; and he calls upon the co-operators to banish "infidelity and immorality" from their midst.

J. Maxwell dosen't say if he found a Bible in the library. If he did, he need not have been so severe on French novels, for the Jewish naturalists beat the French ones hollow.

The mixed marriage question is still causing a ferment in Hungary. The Liberals are taking the opportunity to press the claims of civil marriage. Count Apponyi, though belonging to an ultra-Catholic family, has advocated this sensible reform in a speech which was much applauded. He declared that the present disorderly state of things only tended to loosen the marriage tie.

There is a certain poetical justice in the boycotting of a Catholic priest. The engineer is hoist with his own petard. Excommunication, indeed, is a game that two can play at, as Father Cantwell, of Tipperary, finds to his cost. He is boycotted by the local League, his parishioners are warned not to give him his Christmas dues, and everyone found speaking to him is to be boycotted. Father Cantwell's novel experience may set him thinking on the fate of many a poor, inoffensive heretic cast off from human society by the tender mercies of his Church.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, November 30, Secular Hall, Humberston Gate, Leicester: at 3.30, "Heaven and Hell"; at 6.30, "A World Without God."

December 7, Portsmouth; 14, Manchester; 21 and 28, 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.

W. O. WILCOX.—Strictly the two first chapters should be the first two chapters. J. S. Mill's *Principles of Political Economy*, followed by Alfred Marshall's treatise.

T. PHILLIPS.—We regret to hear the bad accident to Mr. E. Fletcher, the President of the Spennymoor Branch. Pray call and pay him our respects and express our wishes for his speedy recovery.

G. NAEWIGER (Hull) thanks the Berlin friend who sent a parcel of literature for distribution.

YOUNG NORWICH.—Something ought to be done in your city. Could not some of the "young bloods" form a Branch? Only seven members are needed to make a beginning. Mr. Foote will be happy to pay you a visit.

J. TULLIN.—We think the quotation is correct. Will look it up and let you know.

R. E. HOLDING.—Such well-written letters in the local press are of great service to the cause.

J. R.—You must allow for difference of tastes. You do not like Mr. Pentecost's articles. Another correspondent wrote by the same post to say how much he relished them. Read what you do like, and skip the rest.

W. NICHOLLS.—Mr. Foote will write to you privately in a few days.

"DAYLIGHT" sends 2s. 6d. for the Children's Party at the Hall of Science.

M. W. KELLY.—We do the best we can. Thanks for your letter in the *Holloway Press*. It will influence fair-minded readers.

R. WALLER.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

DUBITANS.—Thanks for the extract, though we had already seen it. Sir J. W. Dawson's book was severely handled in the *Athenæum*, which accused him of ignorance or worse. Perhaps we may notice it when we have time. Generally speaking, Sir J. W. Dawson is not a writer to waste much time upon. Some of his articles in *Tracts for the Times* are almost contemptible.

N. S. S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Two Friends (Grimsby), 1s. 3d.; Mrs. Harrison, 1s. 8d.; Battersea Branch, 9s.; W. J. Lloyd, 5s.; Grimsby Branch (collected at Mr. Foote's lectures), £1 2s. 6d.—R. Forder, sec.

W. B. says that before ordering the N. S. S. Almanack he asked his shopmates if they would like one, and in consequence he had to order five copies. This correspondent's questions are thus answered. (1) Yes, Palestine is too cold in December for flocks to be out all night. (3) There were several Herods, a dynasty of them. Two are mentioned in the New Testament, and perhaps three.

M. DE P.—Read Greg's *Creed of Christendom*, *Supernatural Religion*, and Giles's *Christian Records*.

C. KELT.—It is always best to send Guide Notices on separate slips. The matter should be arranged as in our printed list. Some secretaries send letters also, asking "Will you kindly insert," etc. This is quite superfluous.

A. MATTHEWS, newsagent, 25 East Street, Walworth, supplies this journal and other Secular publications.

S. S.—Mr. Foote does take care of his health, and is usually quite well, but it is impossible to avoid being sometimes overworked. He comes of a pretty long-lived family.

J. S. ROGERS.—There is a great deal of truth in what you say.

FORDER TESTIMONIAL FUND.—We have received the following:—J. Dean, 2s. 6d.; W. J. Ford, 5s.; A. Lewis, 2s. 6d.; N. P. Mills, 5s.; S. S., 5s.; Daylight, 5s.; M. W. Kelly, 3s.; G. J. Holyoake, 10s. 6d.; J. W., 2s.; Mrs. Waterlow and family, 5s.

R. CHRISTIE.—(1) We cannot hunt through our file four years ago for the item. Life isn't long enough. (2) If the world

is all wrong for the want of true Christianity, after nearly two thousand years' trial, it shows that the system is either bad or impracticable.

A. WRIGHT wants to know the address of a newsagent near London Bridge where he can obtain the *Freethinker*. Can any reader oblige him? Mr. Bradlaugh has given up the shop in Fleet Street. His paper and other writings are now sold by Mr. Forder at the above address.

G. F. PELHAM.—It is a mad production; but, as Bishop South said, prophecy is a subject that generally finds a man cracked or leaves him so. Thanks for the other enclosures.

J. BANHAM.—We cannot insert such a notice. If you want to work for Freethought you should begin in a more modest way.

N. P. MILLS.—Yes, it will be difficult to find a suitable successor to Mr. Forder.

W. SIMMONS.—Cuttings are always welcome.

Y. Y.—Your letter received. It is a little wild, but you seem to feel deeply.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren—Liberty—Freethought—Open Court—Menschenthum—Lucifer—Neues Freireligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Mossley Reporter—Freidenker—Truth-seeker—Mossley Reporter—Daily News—Liberator—Echo—Western Figaro—Der Arme Teufel—Independent Pulpit—Progressive Thinker—Two Worlds—Flaming Sword—Cosmopolitan—Evening Standard—Cambria Daily Leader—Eastern Argus—Blackpool Times—Northern Daily Telegraph—Leicester Chronicle.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish our attention. CORRESPONDENCE should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise he reply stands over till the following week.

FORDER TESTIMONIAL FUND.

AFTER serving for fifteen years as Secretary to the National Secular Society, Mr. Robert Forder is resigning the post. His best days have been spent in the party's service, and his health is now precarious. In these circumstances, it has been deemed an act of justice to present him with a testimonial in recognition of his invaluable work as a lecturer and organiser, and to assist him in the Freethought publishing business, to which he will devote the remainder of his life. The Testimonial has the hearty support of Mr. Bradlaugh, who held the Presidency during the period of Mr. Forder's service.

G. Holloway, 1s. 6d.; J. Barnaby, 8d.; G. Stanton, 5s.; S. Hartmann, per C. Bradlaugh, 5s.; Wm. Turner, 4s.; A. G. Scopes, 2s. Per T. Huband, H.M.S. Temeraire: T. Huband, 1s.; R. Simmons, 1s.; W. Lane, 1s.; W. Dale, 1s.; H. B. W., 2s.; G. A. Meadows, 7s. 8d.

Collecting lists sent on application.

W. H. Reynolds (*Treasurer*), New Cross, S.E.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote was in tolerably good form on Sunday, but Liverpool wasn't. During nearly the whole of the day you might have fired cannon down Lime Street without hurting anybody. The wind blew furiously and the rain was almost incessant. Going to the hall in the morning Mr. Foote had his umbrella grievously assaulted and damaged by a cyclone at the corner of London Road. For the rest of the day he tramped through the wet with a turned-up collar, and three lectures of course meant six journeys. Naturally the audiences were thinned by such weather. The morning and afternoon meetings were poor, but some three or four hundred people assembled in the evening, among them being several plucky ladies. Several questions were asked after two of the lectures, and in the morning some opposition was offered by Mr. George Wise, of the Christian Evidence Society.

Some imaginative Christians fancy that Freethought lecturers make "a splendid thing of it"; but when the lecturer, after travelling 400 miles and delivering three discourses, counts up his profit in shillings, and reflects that most of them must be spent in repairing his gingham, he is apt to take a less sanguine view of the situation.

Fortunately Mr. Foote's visit to Liverpool was fruitful in one respect. He found the Hall Scheme still in the stage of talk, but by prodding the committee and talking to, if not at, the Freethinkers in the meetings, he managed to get it advanced a stage further. Before the close of the proceedings

the first half crown had been paid on eighty shares. This is a good beginning, and if the Company is formed at once and promoted with activity, we have no doubt the Liverpool Secularists will soon have a hall of their own.

Mr. Foote lectured to a crowded room at the St. Pancras Reform Club on Thursday, Nov. 20. His subject was "The Blasphemy Laws; and Why they should be Abolished." After the lecture a resolution was carried, without a single dissentient, condemning the Blasphemy Laws as an outrage on the principle of religious equality, and trusting that the members for the St. Pancras division would support any Bill brought into Parliament for the abolition of such relics of barbarism.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake, who is happily recovering from the shock of his recent accident, in sending half a guinea to the Forder Testimonial Fund, writes—"It is a small acknowledgment of the very considerable service rendered by Mr. Forder. I hope he has before him years of honor and greater prosperity than he has yet known."

Mr. Bradlaugh lectures in aid of the Forder Testimonial Fund at the London Hall of Science on Wednesday, Dec. 10. Mr. Foote takes the chair. For particulars see advertisement.

A good collection (£7 12s.) was taken up for the Benevolent Fund after Mr. Bradlaugh's lecture on Sunday evening.

Mr. J. M. Robertson had an improved audience at Peckham, and his able lecture was listened to with close attention. Mr. Foote winds up this course of Free Lectures on Thursday evening, Nov. 27.

The Finsbury Branch has arranged for a course of Free Lectures at the Hall in Banner Street, St. Luke's, on the Sunday mornings in December. The lecturers are Messrs. Forder, Robertson, Standing and Rowney.

The West London Branch intend to continue their Tuesday evening Free Lectures at Hammersmith Club during December. The attendances have been fairly good. On Nov. 18, Mr. C. J. Hunt debated with Mr. W. O. Drake (Spiritualist), and acquitted himself very creditably. A debate is also arranged between Mr. Hunt and the Rev. S. Brennan, on Dec. 9. The subject "Does the Bible teach a Personal Devil?"

The *Brighton Times* reports a vigorous lecture by Mr. C. E. Ford on "The Priest and the Politician." He traced the disastrous influence of priestcraft from the early days of Christianity.

Rudyard Kipling has a powerful story of East London life in the Christmas Number of the *Detroit Free Press*. It is very realistic, and very pathetic in spite of its sordidness and brutality. The quotation from Browning's *Pippa Passes* at the head of the story must be ironical:

—God's in his heaven,
All's right with the world,

Dr. T. R. Allinson has just published a very useful little work (price 6d.) on *Diet and Digestion*. Those who will take the trouble to read it, and profit by its advice, will save many doctor's bills and enjoy a share of the priceless boon of health.

A large meeting of Leicester boot and shoe operatives passed a vote in favor of the Sunday opening of free libraries.

Dr. J. L. York, the Californian Freethought lecturer, had a debate with Father Carden, a Catholic priest, at San Diego. The result was that Father Carden was dismissed from his post for giving the infidel an opportunity of showing up the unsavory character of the Church. But this did not end the matter, for the ex-priest has since asked to lecture on the platform of the San Diego Freethought Union, and his offer has been accepted.

The *Ironclad Age* of Indianapolis for Nov. 10, opens with Mr. Wheeler's "Notes on Witchcraft in England," extracted from our columns.

The Congress of the American Secular Union at Portsmouth, Ohio, seems to have been rather a mixed gathering. President Westbrook, in addition to the Freethought leaders, in-

vised a Jewish Rabbi and various other free-religious persons opposed to the union of Church and State. To guard their feelings he called one of the speakers sharply to order for denouncing prayer. The former officers were re-elected, R. B. Westbrook as President, Miss Ira Craddock as Secretary, Mr. Mende as Treasurer, and the name of Mr. John R. Charlesworth was added as Travelling Secretary. The directors are Dr. E. B. Foote, T. B. Wakeman, J. O. Bentley and T. M. Parot.

Mr. Symes has been giving in his *Liberator* some interesting articles on native Australian superstitions under the title of "The Gospel of the Blackfellows." It appears the blackfellows practised circumcision and had many similar superstitions to those of the Jews.

Joseph Symes keeps pegging away. He has emerged successfully from one law suit but has another before him. A state of contention seems to be the normal one with Mr. Symes. We wish him well out of all his difficulties.

Fritänkaren gives a portrait and autobiographical sketch of Mr. Knut Wicksell, one of the delegates from Sweden to the International Conference at Paris. The fight for free speech in Sweden is by no means finished, cases against Messrs. Berghell and Hellborg being still pending.

The result of the elections in Italy must be another blow to the poor old Pope since Crispi is assured of another five years rule. The worst of it for Signor Pecci is that if the Ministry had not been so strong it is the Radicals and not the Clericals who would have gained.

Captain Pfoundes, of the Buddhist Propagation Society, has sent us the *Bijou of Asia* of Kioto Japan—the *Buddhist Ray* of Santa Cruz, California, and the *Buddhist* of Colombo, Ceylon. All three papers are printed in English and bear witness to the extension of the movement for the propagation of Buddhism among Christian nations.

Mr. J. D. Shaw has decided to keep the *Independent Pulpit* a monthly, and is pushing forward the Freethought Association of Texas.

We see from the *Cosmopolitan* that Mr. J. A. Balfour, of the Bombay Secular Society, 13 Khetwady, Bombay, has issued a catalogue of Freethought works for readers in India.

The *Cosmopolitan* pushes ahead despite the Post Office authorities, whose prohibition can never apply to a new issue. It reprints some paragraphs from our columns and a chapter from the *Crimes of Christianity*.

A *Virgin Mother*, the next instalment of Mr. Foote's "Bible Heroes" will not be ready till the middle of December. Mr. Foote is obliged to lessen his literary output for a week or two.

HOW TO HELP US.

- (1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.
- (2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, 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.

OBITUARY.—Died on Sunday the 9th November, Mrs. Bryceson, of Charlton Place, Islington, from paralysis. The deceased lady had for many years been at our meetings, and passed calmly away without fear or trouble. She was a good woman and a loving mother. Mr. Haslam conducted the funeral, reading the service in a most impressive manner.

There is nothing nobler in man than courage; and the only way to be courageous is to be clean-handed and hearted, to be able to respect ourselves and face our record.

TWO SECRET SOCIETIES.

MR. WHEELER having drawn attention to the Jesuits, surely the most powerful and pernicious religious secret society now extant, it may not be out of place to call attention to two extinct secret societies, which perhaps more fully displayed the true inwardness of religion than even the company of Jesus. The first is the Mahommedan Secret Society of Assassins. Our word assassin indeed comes from the Ismailien Secret Society of Hassan ibn Sabah. Hassan and his sect, according to R. D. Osborn's *Islam Under the Khalifs of Baghdad* were Theosophists. To Freethinkers he is also noticeable as the school companion at Nasshapor of Omar Khayyam, the Persian astronomer, poet, Epicurean and pessimist. In 1090 Hassan seized the fortress of Alamut, in the mountains south of the Caspian Sea, where he became known as the old man or sheik of the mountains. His followers were pledged to extirpate the enemies of heaven. Of Hassan Lieut. Osborn says (p. 345) :

"Pitiless and inscrutable as destiny, he watched the troubled world of Oriental politics, himself invisible, and whenever he perceived a formidable foe, caused a dagger to be driven into his heart. The roll of his victims would be too long to enumerate here. Warriors, statesmen, merchants—he spared none. But to the last he enforced among his followers the most rigid adherence to the letter of the Koran; and one of his last acts was the execution of his son because he had presumed to drink wine. His own time, it is said, he spent chiefly in prayer, and in the composition of treatises setting forth and defending his religious beliefs."

Nothing but religious fanaticism indeed would have sustained such a pernicious society, which grew and flourished after Hassan's death in 1124, and was not suppressed till 1256, when twelve thousand of them were massacred by Houlagou, the brother of Mangou Khan during the Mongol invasion.

Of the other secret society, a Christian one, even less is known than of the Assassins. They flourished in Spain, where they were suppressed in 1803, and were known as the *Despenadores*, or Pain-relievers. As this word had at that time become obsolete, it is evident the society dated from a considerable antiquity. The *Despenadores* were a religious order of monks, who, in addition to the usual vows, took also a solemn oath that they would lose no opportunity of attending the bedside of the dying, and after assuring themselves of their salvation by administering the last sacrament of Extreme Unction, should take care they did not return to their old life of pain, temptation and sin, by accelerating death and relieving the death agony by means of strangulation and suffocation. This was done under the pretext of being alone for prayer, confession and spiritual consolation. How long the order had existed and how far its operations extended is uncertain. Being suppressed by the Inquisition, in order to avoid a scandal to religion, no details were made public, but it is said that the holy brotherhood of the Pain-killers, though not numerous, was extended through every province of Spain. Evidently they believed their soul-saving mission was divine, and on religious principles they had a deal to say for the beneficence of their operations.

LUCIANUS.

MIRACLES.

AN UNSPOKEN ADDRESS.

[CONCLUDED.]

Of what utility is it to believe in these miraculous events, to fill ourselves with pride over such nonsense as a dead man rising from the grave and sailing away to some unknown region of space to prepare a place of everlasting bliss. What is the use of fostering hopes which will never be realised, of transporting our best and highest thoughts into the region of unreality away from this world where they are so much needed. The man or the nation who neglects, or misunderstands the laws of the universe will ere long reap a terrible punishment. The mechanism of the cosmos will keep grinding on, notwithstanding the mistaken views and heartrending sorrows of the human race.

Do miracles appeal to the moral philosopher for support? No, for the philosophical spirit and the belief in miracles are antagonistic one to the other. The wiser a man gets the further he leaves behind him the childish conception of chance and self-willed powers. Before the abnormal and unnatural the wisdom of the wise man availeth nothing, his morality possesses no utility or value. Why should he lead men in the stern road of virtue when for all he may know, those who enjoy the delights of vice, will miss its punishment, when the

terrible diseases men have brought upon themselves by their love of pleasurable sensations may be all wiped away by the touch of a Christ? No wonder in a vicious and credulous age, Christianity with such teachings as these, with such loopholes of escape from the evil which doth hedge us about, spread like wildfire over the decaying Roman empire. Belief is strong, belief that somewhere in this world of woes, there lies hid some panacea for all its ills, some universal all-purifying pill, is strong in the human breast. On the crest of this great wave of credulity Christianity has sat enthroned for some eighteen hundred years, but the wave will break at last ending in froth and foam, leaving Christianity high and dry, a relic of some former geological period.

The belief in miracles is opposed to science, it is antagonistic to scientific methods. If you admit the existence of the miraculous, the spasmodic interruption of the order of nature you abolish all certainty in the physical and sociological worlds, and dash to the ground the experience and labor of man from the day when he first opened his eyes to the existence of the universe.

The belief in miracles, especially those of the Bible, is unsupported by historical evidence. The product of the miracle-manufacturing power has been great, but the raw material has been drawn from the human imagination. The belief in miracles is the great enemy of progress and science, of truth and justice, and no stable development of the higher faculties of the human race can take place until miracles have been totally discarded, and the system of nature, to which we owe all that we are, and all that we may be, is recognised as alone the source of all goodness, power and beauty here and now.

GEORGE ARMATAGE.

A SHAM PRAYER.

"FATHER forgive them, they know not what they do";
Thus prayed the Father's co-eternal Son
When, on the cross, the nails had pierced him through,
And made his blood, for man's redemption run.

His blood just shed made this his maiden pray'r,
As substitute for those who did rebel;
A pray'r that must have cleft the darkened air,
And thrilled the cosmic pulse, from heav'n to hell.

For as, at first, throughout the lifeless air,
The Father's fiat shed heav'n's quick'ning light,
So Christ the Savior's first post-bleeding pray'r
Had surely put all moral gloom to flight.

Can any one believe that God the Son,
Whose blood and life were ebbing on the tree,
Had then his Intercessor's work begun
By proving that a fruitless one was he?

But vain was Christ's appeal, for we do know
That those who did "they knew not what," that day,
Were not absolved; they drained their cup of woe;
Though Christ forgave, his Father made them pay.

What then avail the bleeding and the death?
The Son was snubbed; his *protégés* condemned;
His intercession was but wasted breath,
Since God's malignant temper was not stemmed.

The Father and the Son were thus at odds,
Instead of being thoroughly at one,
Which clearly shows that they were diff'rent gods,
This ruthless Father, and his ruthless son.

The risen Christ appears to have forgot
His quondam clients, or still failed to reach
His Father's heart, for God forsook the lot,
Or, rather, stuck too close, just like a leech.

Let no one then expect to move by prayer,
A God whom Christ his son had failed to move.
Since Christ's appeal for Jews so ill did fare,
His pray'rs for us may not more fruitful prove.

As Christ's first intercession-case was lost,
His mediation must have been a sham;
His clients having had to pay the cost,
'Twas worth no more, nor less, than just a damn.

For Christ the advocate was God the judge;
He prayed unto himself to bless his foes;
He cursed instead; to bless he would not budge;
So praise the Lord, from whom all blessings flow!

G. L. MACKENZIE.

REVIEWS.

Saint Monica. A Wife's Love Story. By MRS. BENNETT-EDWARDS. Bristol: Arrowsmith.—The authoress is a practised writer, and her new novel will interest many readers. She is advanced in thought, and able to work out a problem of passion with considerable skill.

Self Help in Massage. By E. T. CRAIG, 10, Andover Road.—The author, who is now 86 years of age, claims to have added a dozen years to his life by vitalising the blood through mineral baths and massage. Mr. Craig is no quack, and gives directions for self-help to those who think his system of value.

A Protest Against Agnosticism. By P. F. FITZGERALD. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co.—The writer, we understand, is a lady, and for a lady she uses a very strange vocabulary. Her style is like that of the severest German metaphysician, and her pages show an eruption of quotations, some with references and more without. Here and there we find a sound sentence, but as a whole the book hardly permits itself to be read.

Aryan Sun-Myths the Origin of All Religions. London: Trübner and Co.—The anonymous author appears to have read widely, and the ordinary reader will find this little book contains a good deal of useful information. The author's fault is that he rides his hobby to death, and makes one origin of religions, out of many, do duty for all. We are glad to see, however, that he has the courage to put Christianity in the common category of religions.

The Rev. T. Ashcroft's attack on the Walsall Spiritualists. By the REV. PETER DEAN. E. W. Wallis, 10 Petworth Street, Cheetham, Manchester, 1d.—This is a reply by a Unitarian minister to a Methodist minister, who makes a speciality of lecturing on "Spiritualism, a Farce and a Fraud." Mr. Dean is no Spiritualist, but he shows that Spiritualism is closely interwoven with both the Old and New Testaments, and points out that "John Wesley himself was a Spiritualist if ever there was one."

The Ethical Problem. By DR. PAUL CARUS, Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co.—Dr. Carus is not a very stimulating writer, but we prefer his prose to his occasional outbursts of versification in rather German English. These three lectures prove that he hardly understands Utilitarianism as taught by John Stuart Mill. To confine the "useful" to the "materially useful" is an arbitrary impertinence. Mill knew as well as Dr. Carus that "happiness" cannot be chased and captured, and such criticism of a great thinker is really trivial. Still, in some respects Dr. Carus's lectures are worth attention, and they would be still more so if he would ponder Ingersoll's profound saying that "Reformation is a hospital in which the new Philosophy exhausts its strength in nursing the old Religion."

Freethinking and Free Inquiry. By "AGNOSCO." London: Stewart and Co.—The author of the Junius Letters had a good reason for adopting a pseudonym, but it bewilders a sober person to find gentlemen putting pseudonyms on the title-pages of inoffensive volumes. If "Agnosco" is influenced by a taste for mystery, this may account for his ghostly metaphysics; if his motive is timidity, this may explain his preference of Agnosticism to Atheism. We do not wish to convey the idea that this volume has no merits; on the whole it is lucid and interesting, and occasionally it is valuable. Those who cannot read Mr. Herbert Spencer will here find an echo of his teachings. But the slavish following of the greatest master is idolatry. "Agnosco" talks of "some power acting through phenomena," but if he will take the trouble to define "power" he will see that he is talking tautology, or anthropomorphism, or nonsense. Nor does his criticism of Secularism show that he has even read the principles of the N. S. S. with any attention. We believe "Agnosco" is a young man, and young men are often ambitious; but a concoction of Herbert Spencer is not an original, or even a necessary article, and we hope "Agnosco" will devote his attention to special questions instead of ranging over the whole universe, and give his readers the results of his own thought.

The name of David's mother.—Mrs. Jesse.

Better advice than Solomon ever gave:—

"Early to bed and early to rise;
Never get drunk, and advertise."

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.

Ball's Pond Secular Hall, 36 Newington Green Road, N., 7 Mr. J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "How Science tells what a Star is made of" (with experiments).

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Free Concert by members and friends; 10, dancing. Monday, at 7.30, dancing class (3d. per lesson); 8.30, social gathering. Thursday, at 8, singing and dramatic classes. Friday, at 8, discussion.

Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.—"The Monarch" Coffee House, 166 Bethnal Green Road, 7.30, Mr. C. Cohen, "Origin of Species." Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 7, dramatic recital; 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "Explanation of the Theory of Hypnotism and Mesmerism." Friday, at 7.45, Science Classes (Hygiene and Chemistry).

Edmonton—Angel Assembly Rooms, Silver Street, 7, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "Responsibility: from a Secular Standpoint."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., Mr. C. Bradlaugh, 11.15, "The Work of the Session"; 7, "Religions."

Hammersmith—Hammersmith Club, Grove House, 1 The Grove, Tuesday at 8, Mr. F. Haslam, "Who was Jesus and what did he Teach?"

Leyton—W. Jenkenson's, Cooper's Lane, 7, Mr. W. Jenkinson, "Why do I Blaspheme?" A meeting of members after lecture.

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7.30, Musical Evening, Orchestral Band, Ballads, etc. Tuesday, at 8, singing and dramatic class (practice).

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow, Mr. F. Haslam, 11, "The Radical Programme"; 7, "Is Christianity True?"

Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street, 7, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "Origin of Christianity."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Maxey Road), 7.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Man and Evolution."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates, 11.15, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "Inspired Arithmetic."

Tottenham—Corner of West Green Road, 3.15, discussion, Messrs. Keen and others.

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill, 11.30, Mr. Sam Standing, "Sermons from Shakespeare, VII.—'The Grey-eyed Morn.'"

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge Street, Mr. J. M. Robertson, 11, "The Meaning of Materialism"; 3, "The Law of Population: its Meaning and its Menace"; 7, "The Christ Hallucination."

Crook—Club Room, Commercial Hotel, Commercial Street, 6.30, a paper by Mr. Robinson.

Glasgow—Albion Hall, College Street, 12 noon, debating class, Mr. J. Forrester, "The Chemistry of the Common Gases" (with experiments); 6.30, Mr. Shaw, "The Chronology of the Bible."

Hull—Friendly Societies' Hall, Albion Street, No. 2 Room, 6.30, Mr. W. Hudson, "Intervention."

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street.—11, Tontine Society; 3, discussion class, "Hastings Refuted"; 7, Mr. Gowland, "Does Christianity Meet the Highest Needs of Man?"

Manchester N. S. S.—Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, 3, mutual improvement class, Mr. Willock, "Secularists and Socialism"; 6.30, Mr. W. K. Hall, "The Old and the New Trades Unionism." Wednesday, at 8, dancing.

Newcastle-on-Tyne—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 3, adjourned meeting to consider taking fresh premises.

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, 7, Rev. Prof. J. E. Symes, M.A., "Buddha and Buddhism."

Plymouth—100 Union Street, 7, Mr. Proctor, "The Labor Movement from a Secular Standpoint."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 3, debating class, "Secular Sunday-schools"; 7, entertainment, consisting of songs, recitations, etc.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, 7, special pianoforte and other recitals, vocal music, etc.

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street, 7, usual business meeting.

Spennymoor—Victoria Hall, Dundas Street, 6, Mr. R. Hankey, "The English Reformation."

Sunderland—Albert Rooms, Coronation Street, 7, Mr. A. Lovell, a reading.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Nov. 30, Woolwich. Dec. 28, Camberwell.

STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Liverpool.—Dec. 14 Sheffield; 21, Liverpool.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—Dec. 7, Reading; 21, Woolwich.

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