

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

Vol. XI.—No. 3.]

SUNDAY, JANUARY 18, 1891.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.

THE DEVIL'S CITADEL.

On the last day but one in January the Rev. Mark Guy Pearse will sail from England for Australia. According to the *Methodist Times*, a paper of undoubted veracity, edited by the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, Mr. Pearse's object is threefold. He goes to the Antipodes "to promote his health, enlarge his experience, and advocate the claims of the West London Mission to the prayerful and practical sympathy of our kinsmen beyond the sea." Mr. Pearse's "forte is not raising money," but he hopes a merciful Providence will bless his efforts in this direction. In any case "there is no doubt"—for Mr. Hughes says it—that "God will bless his preaching and lecturing to thousands of souls." Very likely! But there is one thing Mr. Pearse will not venture upon, although if his efforts were blessed with success, the result would be a brilliant feather in his cap. He will not stop at Melbourne to hold a discussion with Mr. Joseph Symes. Methodists of his kidney are more adept in converting dead infidels than in confuting living ones.

Mr. Pearse's mission to Australia and New Zealand is, to say the least of it, singular. Hitherto England has sent missionaries abroad to convert the heathen, but now the Methodists are sending missionaries abroad to beg money for the conversion of the heathen at home. This is a noteworthy admission. As a matter of fact, England has more religion to the square yard than any other part of the globe. Churches and chapels abound, Bibles are circulated by the million, more than half the children go to Sunday School, and Scripture is forced down their throats in nine out of every ten Day Schools. Nevertheless it appears that England is still a heathen country, and people who live ten thousand miles away must subscribe to save her from Hell and the Devil. Well, if this is the real state of the case—and if it is not, Mr. Pearse is a very impudent beggar—we know how to estimate the chances of converting the heathen millions of Asia and Africa. Nay more, we can understand at a glance the wretched humbug of all our Missionary Societies, who send detachments of the Black Army at great expense to fight Old Nick in foreign parts, while he lies snugly entrenched in our very midst.

"Darkest England," Mr. Hughes says, "is really not in Whitechapel, but in Belgravia." In the East of London the people starve, but "there is something ten thousand times more terrible even than starvation, and that is sin." And the headquarters of sin is Vanity Fair. There is the Devil's citadel. And Mr. Hughes means to fight him there, while Mr. Pearse goes in search of provisions and ammunition.

"All the misery of the British Empire has its headquarters in West London," Mr. Hughes tells us; and the errors from which the misery springs "can be corrected only in West London." Old Nick lodges there somewhere. Probably Mr. Hughes could tell us the very street, aye, and the very num-

ber. We can imagine the fine old brimstone gentleman, all of the olden time, singing to himself—

Here sit I like some wondrous Archimage,
Plotting dark spells and devilish enginery.

But it is good to know that the great Mr. Hughes is on his track. With God's blessing, he will shell the Devil out of his stronghold, if only the Australians will shell out to Mr. Pearse. Hasten, then, O Mark Guy! Swift be thy vessel's keel through the yeasty waves! Mayest thou be able, on leaving "our kinsmen beyond the seas," to say after Cæsar, *veni, vidi, vinci*—I came, I saw, I conquered. Return, O Mark Guy, laden with cash; and the heart of Hugh Price Hughes shall dance with joy, and Hell shall tremble, and the Devil cry, "Please, gentlemen, don't shoot, I'll surrender."

Meanwhile it may be asked how it is that the Devil chooses the West of London as the centre of his world-wide business. "West London," says Mr. Hughes, "is the seat of empire, of culture, of commerce, and of society," and he goes on to call it "that Augean stable of selfishness." This is perhaps a sufficient explanation to Methodist readers, but it will probably strike the outside world as sadly inadequate. What is there particularly devilish, or selfish, in culture and commerce? Of course a man of culture *may* be a villain, and a commercial man *may* be a scoundrel; but rascality is incident to every department of life. There remain empire and society. Are we to suppose, then, that the West London Mission aims at converting statesmen and peers? General Booth seems to have made an impression on the susceptible Marquis of Queensberry. Does Mr. Hughes hope to succeed with Lord Aylesbury, Lord Euston, and other members of the aristocracy; or does he hope to bag Lord Salisbury or Lord Rosebery for a St. James's Hall afternoon, to hold forth as converted statesmen on the sin of "empire"? Such questions may be absurd to a Methodist nourished on the sweet and reasonable wonders of the Bible, but we hardly understand Mr. Hughes's drift, and our queries may easily be wide of the mark.

On one point, however, Mr. Hughes is explicit. The Augean stable of selfishness, to which Mr. Hughes has instinctively gravitated, and in which he aspires to play Hercules—though he doesn't look cut out for the part—is to be "cleansed by the supernatural power of Jesus Christ." Perhaps Mr. Hughes has a special supply of that article on tap. If he has not, he may as well follow Mr. Pearse to the Southern Cross, for the other Cross seems utterly played out. The supernatural power of Jesus Christ has been flowing through the conduits of gentlemen like Mr. Hughes for eighteen hundred years, and the Augean stable, they tell us, is as filthy as ever. The cry is, still more brooms and sluicing! There is no defect in the method—oh dear no! It only wants to be more vigorously applied. Especially it wants a heavier investment of cash. For this reason Mr. Hughes begs the Australians and New Zealanders "in the name of God (with a big G) and of humanity

(with a little h) to strengthen the hands of Mr. Pearse"—in other words, to fill his solicitous palms with the golden dross of mammon, to be spent by Hughes and Co. in chivvying Old Nick out of West London.

Well, the game may pay. Mr. Pearse may bag the money. But will the Devil budge? We guess not. He has survived whole generations of Hugheses and Pearses, and still holds his own as the Prince of this world. Judging from the wailings of the clergy, he doesn't give Jehovah a chance. Is it likely, then, that a smirking purveyor of little pious lies will defeat and annihilate the Father of Lies? Impossible! Jehovah will have to do the job himself, if it is to be done at all. Up to the present he has never made a serious beginning. Nor is it probable that he will ever be allowed to do much in this direction. The clergy, who take money for fighting the Devil, do not want him overthrown; for, as the Scotch elder remarked, "a kirk wi'out a de'il is na' worth a damn."

Seriously, however—we can be serious—we ask any candid, impartial reader if there is not something sublimely impudent in cadging in Australia for money to carry on a Christian Mission in West London? These Alexanders of clerical mendicity will soon be crying because they have no more worlds to exploit. This little planet is too limited for their magnificent genius. They must be yearning for Science to discover means of communication with other inhabited worlds, where they may beg for more money, and again more money, and still more money, in order to save the one world which God Almighty died to redeem. As Celia says to Rosalind, "O, wonderful, wonderful, and most wonderful wonderful! and yet again wonderful! and after that, out of all whooping!"

G. W. FOOTE.

OH, JERUSALEM.

THE gush about Jerusalem the Golden has gone on increasing in pious circles since Baroness Coutts started the Palestine Exploration Fund, and Farrar, Talmage and Didon found it good business to revisit the Holy Land, like Rénan, when concocting new romances on the Life of Jesus. I've not been to Jerusalem, but, having read a good deal concerning it, have come to the conclusion that those who do not go there as part of the business of make-belief always find the gilt taken off the Christian gingerbread.

In the first place, Jerusalem is a very ordinary little Oriental town. Edward Dicey, in the chapter of his pleasant book, *The Morning Land*, written at Jerusalem (vol. i., p. 201), says, "if you possess an unfortunate faculty for seeing things as they are, and calling them by their proper names, you can hardly conceal from yourself that the town of Jerusalem does not rank high in the list of the world's wonders." There is not in all Jerusalem any edifice, monument, or even mass of ruins dating even to the time of Hadrian, to say nothing of the days of Pilate and Solomon. Yet every incident in the old book of Jewish yarns is duly located. They will show you the place where Peter cut off the ear of Malchus, and where Jesus spat in the blind man's eyes. Mr. Dicey says:

"Jerusalem as you see it now is nothing more nor less than a permanent fair of rival peep shows; the curiosities exhibited being associated, with or without reason, with all the names and memories that Christian men hold most sacred. Every spot, from the Garden of Gethsemane downwards, is a show-place, kept under lock and key, to be visited with a guide, to be explained by a *valet de place*, to be paid for after inspection in one form or another of bakscheesh. Every tradition-honored spot has its custodian, who vaunts its authenticity as a pedlar guarantees his wares. Everybody has chaplets, beads, crosses, rosaries, to dispose of, all which are warranted to have been laid upon the stones of the Holy Sepulchre.

The trade of Jerusalem is in relics; its sacred antiquities are all exhibited for bakscheesh; its population lives upon the superstitions of fanatics and the needs of pilgrims."

Authorities are in conflict in regard to the site even of the Temple—Ferguson, the architect, locating it in one spot and Sir Charles Warren in another. There is hardly a single point of Jerusalem topography which is not the subject of controversy. Some call one pool of water the Virgin's Fountain, others the Pool of Bethesda. The only point the rival showmen seem agreed on is that Jesus Christ was crucified in the centre of the town.

The late A. W. Kinglake, in his ever delightful *Eothen*, tells how the Christian pilgrims methodically kiss the sanctified spots, so that they seem to be not "working out," but transacting, the business of salvation. Of the Holy Sepulchre he says:

"When you have seen enough of it, you feel perhaps weary of the busy crowd, and inclined for a gallop; you ask your dragoman whether there will be time before sunset to send for horses and take a ride to Mount Calvary. Mount Calvary, Signor?—eccolo! it is *upstairs on the first floor*. In effect you ascend, if I remember rightly just thirteen steps and then you are shown the now golden sockets in which the crosses of Our Lord and the two thieves were fixed."

Mark Twain says, in all seriousness, in his *New Pilgrim's Progress*: "When one stands where the Savior was crucified, he finds it all he can do to keep it strictly before his mind that Christ was not crucified in a Catholic church."

Kinglake continues:

"The Church of the Holy Sepulchre comprises very compecciously almost all the spots associated with the closing career of our Lord. Just there, on your right, he stood and wept;—by the pillow on your left he was scourged; on the spot just before you he was crowned with the crown of thorns;—up there he was crucified, and down here he was buried. A locality is assigned to every minute event connected with the recorded history of our Savior; even the spot where the cock crew when Peter denied his master is ascertained, and surrounded by the walls of an Armenian convent."

They show even the very marble slab on which Christ's body is said to have laid, while being scented and oiled, and even the hole from which the earth was taken when Adam was made. The truth probably is that the sites in Jerusalem were like the pieces of the true cross, supplied to meet a demand. It was St. Helena, the mother of Constantine, who, when converted by her son, went to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage to find the holy places. She was a most fortunate archæologist. Whatever she wanted she found. She wanted a piece of the true cross and she found it, although Jerusalem had been twice destroyed since the alleged date of the crucifixion. The site of the Holy Sepulchre has been so periodically the scene of actual conflict between the rival sects of Christians, Latins, Greeks, and Copts, that a Turkish guard is permanently stationed there to maintain order. Even the writer of the little book on *Modern Jerusalem*, published by the Religious Tract Society, is constrained to say:

"When we consider the soul-destroying errors which have been connected with pilgrimages to the Holy Sepulchre, when we think of the rivers of blood which have been shed on its account, and when we contemplate the shocking and disgraceful mummeries of which it has been, and is to this day, the scene; we truly wish that, like the body of Moses, the site of our Lord's death and resurrection had been altogether hid from the knowledge of men."

Mr. Dicey confesses that the Mohammedan Mosque of Omar is the most satisfactory sight in Jerusalem. It is here where ten thousand fugitives, who had taken refuge, were mercilessly massacred when the Christians took Jerusalem from the Moslems, and the marble pavement flowed ankle deep in blood. Alluding to the difference between the solemnity of the Mohammedan Mosque and the traffic and contention at the Christian Church, Mr. Dicey says: "I do

not wonder if the Mussulman cannot be induced to believe that the faith confessed in the Mosque of Omar is not higher than the one degraded and debased by tinsel and pageantry in the shrine of the Holy Sepulchre and the Church of the Nativity."

Now the railway from Jaffa to Jerusalem is being formed, a new boom in the Holy City is expected. With a view to future business the Roman Catholic Church has acquired property of extent sufficient to build a new city. Jerusalem will doubtless be visited more than ever, but the enchantment which has been lent by distance will be gone, and the golden city will, in the long run, only make familiar the frauds of Christianity.

J. M. WHEELER.

"THE CURATES' UNION."

By mere accident I recently made the acquaintance of an estimable young clergyman, who meekly answers to the name of the Rev. Caleb Trotter. A casual conversation in a railway-carriage led to an acquaintance which is fast ripening into an intimate friendship. Occasionally I visit him at his modest lodgings beneath the very shadow of St. Tittlebat's church, and the door of an atheist's home is always opened to him with a hearty welcome whenever his subdued rat-tat is heard. So complete is the confidence existing between us that Mr. Trotter has given me some valuable and interesting information which, so far as I am aware, has not yet become known to the public. In due course the facts which I am about to relate will be published to the world; and, in the meantime, I have Mr. Trotter's permission to give an outline of them to the readers of the *Freethinker*.

It may be premised that my clerical friend is one of the lean kine of the Established Church. His degree is derived, not from either of the two aristocratic universities, but from a London College, which confers the poverty-stricken "A. K. C." upon its graduates. He belongs to the proletariat of orthodoxy. His stipend is smaller than the wage of an average artizan, and I know that he frequently relieves, from his scantily-lined purse, the worst cases of distress amongst the poor of his parish. His wide-awake hat has done duty for several years; his black coat glistens in the morning sun; and his boots—none of the best—are sadly in need of repair. His pompous vicar, the Rev. Cyril Brabazon, M.A. (Oxon.), exacts thirty shillings' worth of work for every pound of his curate's salary; and the latter slaves in the slums what time his clerical superior plays tennis with Lady Crumpet and her friends on her trim lawn at Richmond. But "sich is life," and Mr. Trotter has never been heard to grumble in public at his hard lot.

Having indicated my friend's status and condition, it will be readily understood that he is anxious to improve, not only his own position, but that of thousands of his hard-worked and poorly-paid brethren in the Church. The opportunity appears to be now at hand. The labor movements of the past year or two have opened the eyes of the poorer clergy to the fact that they can never hope for higher wages and a fairer division of toil unless they learn the art of combination. Every penniless curate is as a twig in the hands of his well-paid and, in many cases, lazy employer; but, by uniting their forces, they may place themselves in a position to obtain fair treatment from the rectors and vicars for whom they have ever been the hewers of wood and drawers of water. Now for some time there has been in course of formation a "Curates' Union," proceeding upon the lines adopted so successfully by trade organisations of skilled and unskilled labor. Measures have been taken secretly, but assiduously, to form the curates of England into a society which, when the time is ripe, will declare its existence and formulate its

demands upon behalf of its members. If a satisfactory arrangement can be arrived at, the work of the Established Church will proceed upon its customary course without interruption; but if the clerical employers will not concede the claims that are to be advanced, then the whole—or at least the great majority—of the curates will strike on the first of April next.

It must be admitted that the claims of the curates—so far as Mr. Trotter has disclosed them to me—are just and reasonable. They are as follows:—

1. That the minimum stipend of curates belonging to the Union be raised to £150 per annum.
2. That one curate be employed for every 1,000 souls (or part of 1,000 souls) in each parish. [The effect of this arrangement would be to provide work for many curates at present out of employment, and to diminish the number of potential "blacklegs" who would flock into the churches in the event of any conflict taking place between the employers and the Union.]
3. The eight hours day, exclusive of reasonable time for meals. [On this point Mr. Trotter tells me that a firm stand will be made. At present he frequently commences the day at 7 a.m. with "Early Celebration," which is by no means a festive function on a dark and frosty morning. "You never catch the vicar taking that service," said Mr. Trotter, with a tinge of bitterness in his voice. "Why, yesterday there were only two old women and the sexton at the early celebration, and it was so cold that the wine actually froze in the cup. Then I was out from 9 till 2, visiting the sick and poor; from 3 till 5 I was engaged at the Mothers' Meeting, chattering small talk and superintending the 'faking' of old clothes for my destitute parishioners; from 5.30 till 7.30 I was writing the vicar's sermon for next Sunday; evensong occupied me from 8 till 9; and, after that, choir-practice went on till 11 o'clock. There was a sixteen-hours day—not at all an exceptional thing with me."]

These are the only three points upon which an agreement has as yet been reached by the members of the "Curates' Union." The list will, when complete, probably include some scheme for the regulation of "fat" (which is clerical slang) in the matter of Sunday preaching. At present the curate is generally required to take the morning service, and preaches dismally to a "thin house," while the vicar discourses to (more or less) crowded benches in the evening—often gaining praise and congratulations for a sermon which his curate has written for him. This and other questions are under consideration, but no decision has up to the present time been taken upon them.

It is sincerely to be hoped that a general strike of curates may be averted by timely concessions from the superior clergy. Of course such a strike would not in itself be ruinous to the community; indeed, it is difficult to see how the nation would be one penny the worse. But it would denote, upon the part of the employers, a disposition to resist the just claims of a body of men who are undoubtedly over-worked and under-paid. If, then, the first of April witness a general turn-out of the revolted curates, I am sure that every Freethinker will wish all success both to them and to their newly-formed Union.

GEORGE STANDRING.

THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY DEVILS.

"What I has to put up wid," said the Rev. Whangdoodle Baxter, "wi' three hundred and fifty debbils in my church." "How do you make dat out, Brudder Baxter?" "Why, don't yer kno' yer Bible? I thought yer knew it from de Garden ob Eden to de New Jerusalem. Haben't you read how de Lord Jesus Christ cas' seben debbils out o' Mary Magdalum?" "Yes, Brudder Baxter." "Wal, did you ebber read dat he cas' em out o' any udder woman?" "No." "Wal den, all de udder women got em yet, and fifty came to my church last Sunday."

ACID DROPS.

Cardinal Manning has written a characteristic letter to the *Twentieth Century*, a new review started by the Catholics of the south of France. This precious epistle contains the usual amount of vague clap-trap about "labor," for whose interests the Church has never done a single stroke of real work; and winds up with the following oracular declaration:—"Politicians and political economists of the modern school have had their day. The twentieth century will be the day of the people and of a well-ordered, prospering Christian commonwealth."

Prophecy is easy, Mr. Cardinal, but you are not inspired, and no one is bound to believe your prediction. Perhaps you will kindly explain the second half of your last sentence. In what way would your Christian commonwealth be *prosperous*? No doubt it would be well *ordered*. Priests would be at the top, and would order everything remarkably well—for themselves. But Europe is not sunk so low as that yet. Your lying, cruel, and impudent Church has had its day, and will never have another.

"Catholics nearly monopolise the liquor traffic; Catholics loom up before the criminal laws of the land, under the charge of drunkenness and other violations of law resulting from drunkenness in undue majorities; poor-houses and asylums are thronged with Catholics." This is not the accusation of an infidel. It is made by Archbishop Ireland in the (*American*) *Catholic World*.

Jehovah has spent a jolly Christmas, let us hope, for the poor old deity is having a bad time of it at present. The Christians are going in for a week of prayer, and Jehovah's ears are assailed with volleys of dull, stupid, dreary petitions. It is enough to put him into a passion, if it does not send him to sleep. Perhaps the latter theory is the more probable, for he never answers these blessed supplications.

We are puzzled to know what are the qualifications of Sir George Stokes for lecturing on Natural Theology, yet we see an announcement that he is delivering the Gifford lectures on this subject at the University of Edinburgh. We shall be happy to receive from any courteous reader whatever report of Sir George Stokes's deliverances may appear in the Edinburgh press.

Mr. Bradlaugh justly takes the *Methodist Times* to task for saying that "Secularism, so far as it was antagonistic to Christianity, is now on its last legs, and will soon be dead and buried" (By the way, why not *cremated*?) But among the activities of the orthodox party in still opposing Secularism, Mr. Bradlaugh omits to mention Mr. Price Hughes's pious fraud, *The Converted Shoemaker*. If Mr. Hughes really believed Secularism to be near its funeral, he would hardly vamp up such a clumsy piece of fiction, unless he has an unconquerable passion for falsehood, which is not altogether improbable.

Mr. T. W. Russell, in a recent letter to the *Times*, remarked that "Mr. Price Hughes is engaged every day in preaching a Gospel the truth of which he well knows could not be established according to the rules of evidence in any court of law." Mr. Hughes indignantly protested against this statement, and offered to produce five hundred witnesses any day of the week. Curiously, this was the very number of witnesses that Paul boasted of. He declared that Christ appeared after his resurrection to "five hundred of the brethren at once." Of course this was an impudent "stretch," for according to the Acts the number of Christians all told after the Ascension was only a hundred and twenty. Nevertheless it showed some recognition of the laws of evidence. But Mr. Hughes's witnesses are to be living Englishmen, whose personal acquaintance with the facts of the Gospel history must be extremely limited.

Mr. Hughes sees this difficulty, so he declares his contempt for "the fuss they make about ancient documents," and says he will prove the Gospel to be true by what happened in Soho last year! Surely this is excellent fooling, and if the gospel business goes wrong Mr. Hughes will be able to apply with some chance of success for the place of funny man on a newspaper.

Mr. Hughes's comic notion of proving the truth of the gospel by five hundred working men in Soho, as though truth was what John Smith and Tom Brown troweth, is by no means uncommon among Christians. They are brought up to have this notion of evidence. They feel that Christ was God, that he was born of a virgin, rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, just as the Catholic feels that Mary makes intercession for sin and the priest absolves. What these persons have to learn are the elementary principles of evidence, or plain common sense.

Several wealthy persons have thrown themselves and their purses into the new Brotherhood of St. Paul, a religious order authorised by the Bishop of London so long as he has the appointment of their Warden.

The Catholic magazine, *Merry England*, devotes an article to "Catholicism in Darkest England," and points out that, since aiding Booth's scheme will be virtually making proselytes for Salvationism, what Catholics want is a Salvation Army of their own. The editor further notices that they have already the elements of one. Professor Huxley drew a parallel between the S. A. and the order of Franciscans, and the editor of *Merry England*, and with him the *Weekly Register*, urge that in the Franciscan Tertiaries, or third order, not vowed to poverty and celibacy, there are the materials for a new Salvation Army. These Tertiaries are said to be already over 13,000 strong in England.

Truth devotes an article to General Booth's accounts. Mr. Labouchere is a dapper at finance. He says that the greater portion of the property set down as "assets" is mortgaged to more than two-thirds of the total, and declares the Boothian balance-sheet to be obscure and misleading.

In the *Times* of Tuesday Prof. Huxley has a further letter on the Salvation Army, in answer to Commissioner Booth-Clibborn. Prof. Huxley points out in corroboration of the Jesuitical character of the Army, the suppression of an adverse work by an officer in Canada entitled *The New Papacy*; that Booth's conduct in the Eagle case was censured by two judges; that Bramwell Booth admitted before Justice Lopes that he had made untrue statements because of a promise to Mr. Stead; and convicts Mr. Booth-Clibborn himself of misrepresentation.

Judging from a copy of the *Knaresborough Post*, we conclude that Mr. Stead's nonsense about the decay of Secularism is going the round of the provincial press. The closing of Mr. Bradlaugh's shop in Fleet-street is chuckled over as though the *National Reformer* were dead, and the jubilant Christians pretend to know nothing of the *Freethinker*.

Stead is "going it hot." He is looking forward to a Church of the Future, and tells the editor of *Great Thoughts* that it will include Atheists. Mr. Stead's notion is that good Atheists are Christians without knowing it, and will all go to heaven, being saved by invincible ignorance. In other words, Mr. Stead says to the Atheist, "You're a very good fellow, but a bit of a fool." Curiously enough, that is pretty much what the Atheist says of Mr. Stead.

Mr. Stead takes no notice of Mr. Holyoake's correction of his misrepresentations. He is also silent about Mr. Foote's letter to the *Star*. His foible is infallibility. Say anything that suits your turn, never admit a mistake, and always write as though you received daily news from God Almighty—such is Mr. Stead's policy, and as there are so many fools it pays.

Mr. Stead dismisses the criticisms of Booth's book by men like Professor Huxley as "the crackling of thorns under the pot." On the other hand, he makes much of the Marquis of Queensberry's visit to the "Social Wing," over which he was conducted by Mrs. Bramwell Booth. Now we do not wish to say anything disrespectful of the Marquis of Queensberry, but surely the idea of setting him off as more than an equivalent to Professor Huxley is a piece of fatuity of which few men but Mr. Stead could be capable.

"It is a thousand pities," Mr. Stead says, "that Mr. Bradlaugh, Mr. Labouchere, and Professor Huxley could not have the advantage of a good straight talk with the General." True. Mr. Bradlaugh, in particular, would almost give one of his teeth for a *straight* talk with Booth; only it would

have to be in public, and every word taken down. But such a straight talk as this is the very thing the Grand Old Showman evades.

If there is any truth in the *City Leader's* statement, Mr. Stead is puffing General Booth for "value received." It is said that Booth advanced the £5,000 for the purchase of Mr. Newnes' share in the *Review of Reviews*. Now Booth is not known to have any private fortune, so the £5,000, if it was so advanced, must have come out of the Salvation Army exchequer.

The Leeds clergy have been improving the occasion of the horrible burning to death of those fourteen children. The vicar of Leeds declares that man may be blamed, but nobody must complain against God, who rules everything for good. Similar humbug was preached in other gospel-shops. Even a Wesleyan minister, the Rev. W. J. Lewis, unctuously talked about the dead children being now angels in heaven. Of course he knows nothing of the kind; for all he knows they may be in hell. But the shameful creed of hell-fire shrinks abashed from the presence of mothers mourning for their dead children. It is also encouraging to see the clergy begging people to trust in God as though no tragedy had happened. This shows the revolt of the public mind against the doctrine of a Good God who is everlastingly praised and everlastingly does nothing to help his worshippers.

More Atheist suicides! Richard Perch, a professional cricketer, of Catford, shot himself with an old gun. He left a letter for his betrothed, in which he asks her forgiveness, and tells her to trust in God. At Havre, a pious monomaniac drenched his clothes with paraffin, went to St. Michel's church, set himself on fire, and was burnt out of all recognition.

Another suicide at St. Paul's Cathedral. An ex-soldier shot himself there on Saturday, but as it was not inside the part devoted to divine service the authorities will probably avoid the trouble of another reconsecration.

Miss Alice Hutchinson, of Broomhill, near Sheffield, is probably another victim of religion. Suffering from that complaint which, in its vehement form, frequently leads to self-destruction, she left her home in her nightdress, a cloak, and a pair of slippers, and has not been found.

Walter Austin, the Finsbury philanthropist, has had a fall from the brokers at last. *Truth* has played the devil with poor Austin's business, and despite his piteous appeals the other party has inspired no one to send in the needful.

Sacrilege! For the fourth time thieves have broken into All Saints' Church, Maidenhead. Unfortunately the rascals carried off the contents of the poor-box, which was very shabby; but perhaps they thought the name of that box a delusion.

When the banking firm of S. A. Kean and Co., at Chicago, took Mrs. E. M. Culver in as a partner, the articles of agreement contained the provision that "the business of the firm is to be conducted on strictly Christian principles and according to the teachings of the Bible." Kean and Co. have just failed for a large amount.—*Freethought*.

What a divine thing is Christian charity! A juryman, in one of the recent cases of death by starvation, said: "I know of several cases now where the people are being starved, but they won't give to you unless you go to their church."

The Catholics of Pennsylvania induced a weak-minded wealthy lady named Miss Kate Drexel to enter a nunnery and renounce her immense fortune, estimated at £1,600,000. This sum will be devoted to founding a new Catholic sisterhood in the United States, devoted to the conversion of Indians and negroes.

In Australia God has been trying on some variations of the old plagues he had such sport with in Egypt. Armies of caterpillars and locusts have been devastating all in their line of march, and for miles the grass and herbage, vines and wheat crops have all but disappeared.

At Aston, Birmingham, a poor jet ornament maker, out of

work was arrested for the atrocious offence of selling water-cress in the street on Sunday. When the police visited his home to find if the address he gave was a true one, they found his children crying for bread. Verily 'tis a Christian land.

The *Protestant Observer* says that in its origin the Clan Na Gael was a religious organisation devoted to the worship of the Virgin Mary. It appears to have become devoted to Saint Jael.

Six advowsons were offered for public sale last week, one in Worcestershire, offering excellent hunting, fishing, and good society. Another in Leicestershire is to be had, with possession, for £3,500. Its income, it is true, is only £125, plus "a fine house and lovely grounds." But among its incidental recommendations are "rail, society, neither poverty nor dissent, a gravelly soil," and lastly, only a hundred and fifty souls to look after, all told. A nice little investment for a clergyman not anxious for over-much labor.

The Rev. J. W. Roberts, vicar of Felinfoel, charged with beating and kicking a servant girl, got off with a fine of £5 and costs. His cloth was apparently considered a mitigation instead of an aggravation of his brutality.

Mr. Ernest W. Border writing in the *Fortnightly Review* on Official Christianity and Cruelty to Animals, notices that duty to animals forms no part of the current Christian creed. Paul asks, Doth God care for oxen? Any Hindu or Buddhist would revolt at the common treatment of animals in our streets by Christians, who boast that they alone in creation are endowed with immortal souls.

A common but untrue statement was trotted out by the Rev. E. F. Dyke of All Saints, Maidstone. "Before Christianity came into the world," said he, "there was not such a thing as a hospital in the world." Mr. Dyke perhaps does not know that rock inscriptions in India prove that Asoka, a Buddhist king who lived in the third century B.C., set up hospitals for both men and animals; that the Egyptians had medical colleges a thousand years before Christ; and that the Greek temples of Æsculapius were virtually hospitals. He is probably unaware, too, that asylums for the insane were instituted by Mohammedans long before Christianity thought of such things.

Sir John Lubbock gives a profit and loss account of some of our national expenditure. The cost of knowledge for education, museums, libraries, etc. he reckons at about £7,000,000. The cost of ignorance for dealing with the poor, criminals, etc., £12,000,000. The moral is increase the former and diminish the latter.

Fanaticism against pictures is not confined to our Vigilance Society. At Omaha one C. J. Warbington was so incensed against a picture by Bougereau valued at eighteen thousand dollars, that he took up a chair and dashed it at the picture making two large rents in the canvas. He claims to have acted from religious motives.

Religion is exhibiting itself in its natural state in some parts of America. In Kansas a negro named Rueben Carter is heading a religious craze patterned after the Indian one. He claims to be a Messiah of his race, and says the white race will be destroyed next spring. He urges his kind to leave the whites or they will perish with them. In the spring, he says, he will lead his followers to Oklohama, which is the promised land, and he will then exhibit miraculous power. Cities will rise in a night for his followers. He describes these cities, and they are in detail like the cities of Revelation. Carter has gone into retirement, and some of his disciples say he will again appear with signs and miracles. His converts hold nightly "ghost dances" and orgies, and are growing so wild that trouble is feared.

There are plenty of Messiahs, red, white, and black now-a-days, and they invariably get their followers into trouble. They set the red men and black men dancing, and give religious hysteria and jim-jams to white fanatics.

Whatever may be thought of the eventual extirpation of the lower races, the butchery of Indian women and children, though it calls forth no condemnation from the pulpits, is a

reflection upon the humanity of the civilised and christianised United States soldiers.

The Ritualistic *Church Times* devotes an article to denouncing Evening Communion. According to the High Church party, the Lord's Supper—not where he eats, but where he is eaten—should be the Lord's breakfast. Unless the holy eucharist is partaken fasting its virtue may be lost through the divine particles becoming contaminated by contact with partially digested bread and cheese.

While Dr. Dale, of Birmingham, has been rebuking the church-goers for coming late, a preacher of Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, has been bringing much more serious charges against members of his congregation. Suddenly stopping in the midst of his sermon the other evening, he exclaimed in tones of anger: "There is flirting, talking, note-writing, gum chewing and visiting going on here; I will stop until you get through." After waiting fifteen minutes, the indignant minister found they did not "get through," so he left the pulpit and instructed the janitor to turn the congregation out and lock the church up.—*Daily Chronicle*.

A writer on the "Negro Problem" in the *Times* points to the physical differences in the negro as indicative that he cannot keep pace with the white man. His arms average two inches longer, his brain ten ounces lighter, his skull thicker, and in infancy the sutures closing earlier, a lark heel and low instep; all these features bring "God's image in ebony" nearer the ape and primitive man.

The Catholic population of Canada is estimated at 2,048,000, mostly situated in the province of Quebec.

As a result of the corn averages of the past seven years, each £100 of church tithe will for 1891 be worth only £70 9s. 3¼d. This will be very depressing for the clerical interest, though taking the average as a whole since tithes were commuted, the parsons have got over £102 for every £100.

According to the *Star* (though it sounds like an old "chestnut") a thief has been visiting Plumstead houses on Sunday evenings while the occupants were at church. In one of these houses he chalked this advice on the table—

Instead of going to church and pray,
Better remain at home and keep the thieves away.

Archdeacon Wilson, vicar of Rochdale, has been discoursing "to men." Why women were excluded does not appear unless the Archdeacon believes, with some orientals, that women have no souls to be saved or damned.

Touching upon miracles, Archdeacon Wilson said they must not be regarded as supernatural, but as "instances of the operation of a law already dimly discernible, by which the influence of an intensely spiritual nature and will in one man acted on the mind—and through the mind on the body of another." Perhaps the Archdeacon will tell us how this explains the miracle of the loaves and fishes. Did Jesus act on the minds of the multitude, and make them fancy they had a good feed when they only had a crumb apiece? If so, it is a pity the clergy—or even the bishops—have not enough spiritual nature to act in the same way on half-starving Englishmen in this severe weather.

Dr. Magee has dropped into the £10,000 a-year and other perquisites appertaining to the archbishopric of York. He is not the worst of prelates. He has Irish eloquence and blarney, and the sense to see that the Sermon on the Mount won't work in actual life. But fancy a man who has stated this being made head of the English Church in the Northern Province.

Mr. Foote's *Impossible Creed*, an open letter to Bishop Magee, should excite fresh interest now the Bishop has "gone up higher."

The Pope conferred decorations upon three French priests whose salaries have been suspended by the government for interfering in elections, whereupon the French government recalled from Rome the Abbé Puyol, who obtained these decorations, thus planting a blow at the Pope over the Abbé's shoulder.

It appears that a woman, well known at Bow-street Police-court, goes under the appellation of "Mog the Fireman." Under the influence of drink she ascended a fire-escape, and excused herself on the ground that she "heard of Jacob's ladder and wanted to get to heaven!"

Succi, who, like Dr. Tanner, emulated the forty days' fast of Jesus Christ, has been challenged by Jacques, who claims to have beat the record by a fast of forty-two days. They are to fast till one cries, "Hold! enough." What a pity Moses, Elijah, Jesus and other fasters of antiquity cannot put in an appearance.

Piety is no longer a protection. The Westgate Congregational Church, Peterborough, has been burnt down, and on Sunday too!

Religionists, who usually suffer from zeal without knowledge, should take note of Prof. Huxley's anecdote of travelling in Ireland. When the British Association was held at Belfast he was in haste to visit a friend, and, jumping on to a jaunting car, told the carman to drive there as fast as possible. Nearly jerked off his seat by the velocity with which the driver went, he called out, "My good man, do you know where I want to go?" "No, yer honor; but anyway I'm driving fast." Huxley applies the anecdote to the Booth scheme and similar religious enthusiasms.

Dr. Parker recently preached on the Devil. The sermon is reported verbatim in a Christian paper. It is about the poorest stuff we ever read. Yet we find Dr. Parker, in the very same journal, called "the George Meredith of preachers." We condole with Mr. Meredith in his misfortune. But there is this grain of comfort. After being compared to Dr. Parker he can never meet with a worse insult.

The *St. Pancras Guardian* reports that the amount of the collection at St. Stephen's, Pratt-street, Camden Town, on Sunday morning last, was 1s. 2½d. Of this sum 1s. was given by a churchwarden. Hallelujah.

The *Christian Commonwealth* rejoices over the "wonderful discovery" of Professor Marshall, who thinks he has found an original Aramaic copy of Christ's teaching, from which the four gospels were all developed. But if the Professor's find is a real one (which we hardly believe) where does the rejoicing come in? Nearly two thousand years after Christ (say) we find out that the gospels are hashes of the original joint, and the *Christian Commonwealth* is prepared to celebrate the long delusion with a breakdown.

Professor Agar Beet writes in the *Contemporary* on "The Certainties of Christianity," which are evidently *not* certain, or they would not require to be defended after the lapse of eighteen hundred years. One of Professor Beet's points is that the Epistles of Paul and the gospels are practically the same as when they left their authors' hands because of the marvellous agreement of the ancient manuscripts. But the oldest manuscript does not go beyond the fourth century—nearly three hundred years after the death of Paul—and any quantity of alterations may have been made before then. As to the *marvellous agreement* of the manuscripts, it is enough to say that there are at least 150,000 different readings in them, which is a pretty stiff figure for a poor man who has to make a proper choice on pain of damnation.

Professor Beet makes much of the fact that the Christian nations are the only progressive ones. But the Christian nations are Europeans, or the descendants of Europeans, and the Europeans were the only progressive people *before* the birth of Christ. Professor Beet's argument is a common one; Mr. Gladstone has made it do service; nevertheless it is founded upon an utter ignorance or neglect of history and ethnology.

Dr. Schliemann had a superstitious corner in his ardent brain. When he was young an old woman advised him to put on his left stocking first, as this would bring him luck, and he followed her advice to the end of his life. This is a good illustration of faith. The left-leg superstition is as good as any other, if a man must have one; nay, it is better than most, for it doesn't lead a man to interfere with his neighbors' legs.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, January 18, Friendly and Trade Societies' Hall, Northumberland-street, Huddersfield; at 11, "A World without God"; at 3, "Is the Bible Inspired?"; at 6.30, "Heaven and Hell."

January 25, Hall of Science.
February 1, Hull; 8, Leeds; 15, South Shields; 22, Newcastle.
March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29, Hall of Science.
April 12, Camberwell.

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.
- SPIRITUAL FREETHINKER.—We cannot waste time in mere word-splitting.
- H. TOWNSEND.—Thanks for your interesting letter. Our hands are too full at present to look through your manuscript, and there is little sale for pamphlets unless the authors are well known.
- R. WRIGHTMAN.—Mr. Foote will write you in a few days as to a date.
- H. LONG.—There is no *religious* census in England, or we should advise our readers to put down irreligion in plain language on the census paper.
- E. POWNCEBY, secretary of the London Secular Federation, 7 Finsbury-street, E.C., will be glad to hear at once from Branch secretaries and others who have not yet settled for the dinner tickets.
- J. SAUNDERS.—Of course Mrs. Besant will always command respectful attention, especially when she lectures on subjects of practical interest to Englishmen.
- DR. J. R. MONROE.—Glad to hear from you. The *Ironclad Age* reaches us somewhat irregularly, but is always a welcome visitor. Hearty greetings.
- DAYLIGHT.—As the writer calls it "a legend" there is no more to be said. Facts are facts, but who is going to confute legends? Given seven trees thrusting their roots into one grave, there is nothing astonishing in the growth of a legend about the phenomenon. In the same way the head of many a jackass has been legendised into a hedge-row ghost.
- M. L. B.—Many thanks for your good wishes. If you join the N. S. S., you must send your name and address to the secretary, but if you join as a passive member your name will be kept strictly private.
- G. V. BALL sends his annual subscription of 10s. to the N. S. S. for general purposes. Other subscribers will doubtless follow suit.
- FORDER TESTIMONIAL FUND.—We have received the following M. L. B., 1s.; Sunderland Branch, £1; Farsley Branch 2s. 6d.
- AMEN.—An ancient joke.
- F. WESTERN.—Always glad to receive jokes or cuttings.
- T. PHILLIPS.—Glad to hear the Speanymoor Branch is progressing; also that your members relished our article on "Our Father." The new lecturing scheme will be got under weigh as soon as possible.
- THE Farsley Branch sends us 5s. for the N. S. S. General Fund and 2s. 6d. for the Benevolent Fund.
- B. BRIGGS.—Thanks for the cuttings. "The decay of Secularism" is a very poor dodge.
- J. B. O.—Thanks for the cutting and your good wishes. Church bells should (at least in most cases) be abolished as a public nuisance.
- PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren—Liberty—Freethought—Ironclad Age—Menschenthum—Echo—Neues Frereligioses Sonntags-Blatt—Freidenker—The Liberator—Der Arme Teufel—Secular Thought—Boston Investigator—Western Figaro—La Vérité Philosophique—Progressive Thinker—Kent Messenger—Leicester Daily Post—Edinburgh Evening News—Twentieth Century—Flaming Sword—Countryman—Catholic Times—Knaresborough Post—Eastern Argus—Lucifer—Truthseeker—Merthyr Express—Loyal American—Cape Register—Open Court—Two Worlds—Newcastle Daily Journal.

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

Barring the cold London was like purgatory on Sunday. The fog was like the thick Egyptian darkness; it could be felt. In the evening Mr. Foote arrived at the Hall of Science to lecture on the Grand Old Book. There was a larger audience than he expected in such circumstances. Rising to begin his discourse, Mr. Foote said: "Mr. Chairman and—how shall I address the rest of you who have come out from your comfortable firesides to hear me on a night like this? I feel like addressing you as heroes and martyrs of Free-thought." After the lecture a gentleman proposed, and another seconded, a vote of congratulation to Mr. Foote, hoping he would spend many more birthdays in good health, and none of them in prison.

On Thursday, January 8, Mr. Foote opened the London Secular Federation's course of Free Lectures at the Athenæum in Tottenham Court Road. There was a fair attendance, and most of those present were comparative strangers to our movement. They appeared to be deeply interested in the lecture, and certainly relished the discussion.

A fresh course of these Free Lectures, to be opened by Mr. Foote, will be delivered on the Thursday evenings in February at the Temperance Hall, Battersea. The local branch is counting on these lectures to give a fillip to the movement there.

Professor F. W. Newman has written *Some Contributions to the English Life of Cardinal Newman*, which will be published immediately by Kegan Paul and Co. As soon as this work appears we shall give our readers some account of it.

Of the three Newman brothers—all distinguished for intellect—one became a Catholic, one a Theist, and the other an Atheist. A brief, but very interesting account of the atheistic brother, Charles Robert, is given by Mr. Wheeler in the N. S. S. Almanack. His atheistic writings appeared in Mr. Holyoake's *Reasoner*. We have obtained Mr. Holyoake's permission to reprint these writings in book form. Mr. Wheeler will contribute a biographical introduction, which will be supplemented by a brief preface from the pen of Mr. Holyoake.

Charles Robert Newman's articles appeared in the *Reasoner* from October 7, 1860, to April 21, 1861. We are anxious to obtain a copy of this portion of the *Reasoner* set to reprint from. Has any of our readers a copy to spare? We will buy it, or borrow it and return it uninjured. Any reader who can oblige us in this matter would enhance the favor by communicating early.

Mr. A. B. Moss has an article in this week's *Short Cuts* on "How G. R. Sims goes Slumming."

Pious Sam Smith, M.P., got a terrible dressing in last week's *Sunday Chronicle*. It is reported, though we don't vouch for it, that poor Sam has been in bed ever since, while the knocker is nailed down on the front door.

The Westminster Branch held its half-yearly meeting on Sunday. A favorable report and balance-sheet were presented, and plans were adopted for fresh work during the new year. It was decided to have an annual dinner in future.

The *Norwood Review* gives a good report of the funeral of the late Mr. Harry Blyth, a member of the N. S. S., and well known in the district as an advanced reformer. Bitter as the weather was, more than a hundred friends of the deceased gathered at the grave, and "a very impressive address was delivered by Mr. Forder." Our suburban contemporary remarks, in an editorial leaderette, that the funeral "afforded remarkable evidence that, although the Norwood Branch of the N. S. S. has ceased to exist, a large amount of vitality and cohesion remains with its adherents. Consistency is their

strong point, and here they were assisted by the genuine character of the deceased."

The new secretary of the Nottingham Branch is Mr. J. E. Stapleton. He is a very capable successor to Mr. Atkey, who has been obliged for private reasons to resign the office, without in any way losing a jot of interest in Secularism.

In the *Liberator* Mr. Joseph Symes has been exposing the falsehood of Bible prophecy. Dealing with the predicted destruction of Tyre in Ezekiel, who declared it should be no more. Mr. Symes shows from Smith's Dictionary of the Bible and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, that Tyre has continued a flourishing town, and that it at present has a population of 5,000.

Mr. J. P. Mendum, the publisher of the *Boston Investigator*, has reached a ripe old age. Since last July he has been unable to attend to his duties at the *Investigator* office and Paine Memorial Buildings, Boston. The employes of these institutions have addressed him a sympathetic letter, expressing their esteem and hopes for his speedy recovery.

George Macdonald, one of the editors of *Freethought*, San Francisco, possesses a vein of genuine Yankee humor which would make him an acquisition on any paper. He has had a tempting offer to leave his present venture for a better paying situation, but prefers to stick by the Freethought flag. Bravo, George! May your infant son grow to be proud of you!

Our American friends are getting up numerous signed petitions against the Sunday Rest Bill and in favor of the Sunday opening of the World's Fair at Chicago.

Our gallant Swedish contemporary *Fritänkaren* prints a portrait of J. M. Wheeler with a biographical and critical notice from the pen of Captain Otto Thomson.

The Rev. Howard McQueary, of Ohio, is being prosecuted for heresy promulgated in a book on *Christianity and Evolution*.

The articles on Servetus in *De Dageraad*, by J. van den Ende, have been reprinted in pamphlet form. The Dutch collection of Bible contradictions, *Tegenstrijdige Teksten in den Bible*, is now in its fourth edition and is doubtless doing much to open the eyes of our Dutch neighbors.

Professor J. P. N. Land, of Leyden, the editor (with J. van Vloten) of Spinoza's *Opera*, is seeing through the press a collected edition of the philosophical works of Arnold Gaulinex, Spinoza's Flemish contemporary and fellow heretic.

Mr. H. C. Lea, author of a History of the Inquisition, has published a new work at Philadelphia entitled, *Chapters from the Religious History of Spain*.

Being rather short of Sugar Plum materials this week, we may as well devote a little space to a letter from Edward Hannath, of Hull. It is couched in no very complimentary terms, but we forgive the writer, perhaps a good deal more readily than he will forgive himself when he has read these paragraphs.

Mr. Hannath wants to know what Mr. Foote meant in his last Presidential Notes by "continuing to lecture on his old plan." Does this mean, he asks, that Mr. Foote sweeps into his purse all the profits of his lectures, leaving nothing for the poor Branches?

"All the profits" is good! Many a Branch knows what all Mr. Foote's profits mean. He tries to give them all a turn. Sometimes he has a good day, sometimes a bad one. During the recent wretched weather he has not earned bread and cheese by lecturing. The North West London Branch can testify that his receipts for his last three Sunday evening lectures at Milton Hall have not amounted to more than a guinea altogether—that is, seven shillings per lecture. After this, he can afford to smile at Mr. Hannath's recommendation that all allusions to the grasping character of priests (like the poor Bishops, for instance) should be cut out of the *Freethinker*.

Now look at another aspect of the case. Mr. Foote has

been a strenuous promoter of the Free Lecture courses in London. The Federation has organised 28 lectures in all during the past twelve months, and of these Mr. Foote has delivered no less than 13. He has not received a penny of remuneration, and has paid his own train and bus fares. More "grasping," Mr. Hannath! More exploiting of the poor Branches!

Mr. Hannath wants to know whether Mr. Foote shares any loss on his lectures. That question shall be answered when a loss arises. Practically the Branches run no risk. It is Mr. Foote who runs the risk. He pays his railway and hotel fare, besides giving his time, and takes the chance of weather and a hundred other circumstances that may make or mar audiences.

Of course Mr. Foote doesn't usually lecture for seven shillings. That goes without saying. Some places pay poorly, and others fairly well. But nothing is certain. There are curious fluctuations. Mr. Foote's first Sunday lectures in Sunderland brought him £11, or about £8 net, an exceptional amount. His second visit was spoiled by the weather and an ill-situated hall, and he did not take enough to pay his travelling expenses.

Mr. Hannath hails from Hull. Well, let us turn to Hull. Mr. Foote lectured there on the Sunday before the Church Congress, had good audiences, and took £9, or £7 net—a good day that made up for two or three bad ones. But things have changed. The Branch has speculated since, not wisely but too well. The big hall Mr. Foote lectured in was taken for good, but less known lecturers, who were paid a certain fee. Heavy losses were incurred, and the Branch got in debt. Then it wrote to Mr. Foote to cancel his engagement. He replied that he took the chance of payment, and that the engagement must hold. He was then asked, what about the Branch's risk if the proceeds did not cover expenses? He replied that he would bear all risks, if necessary—his own expenses and the local expenses too. Now, as Mr. Hannath hails from Hull, he will perhaps ask himself whether Mr. Foote's conduct to Hull in particular has been very "grasping."

A word in conclusion about Mr. Foote's "plan" of lecturing. When he took the field (goodness, how many years ago! and he is only now forty-one) nobody offered him a fee. Branches said "Come if you like, we shall be glad to hear you, but we can offer you nothing; if there is any balance left, after paying the last farthing of expenses, you shall have it, and welcome." It was a poor prospect, but Mr. Foote's heart was in the work, and he was young and healthy and strong, and did not know what it was to be tired, and lived upon very little, and smiled at Fortune every time she frowned. Once he delivered Sunday lectures at Oldham; his expenses were £2 10s., and his takings 7s. 6d. Oh, it was rare old "grasping." But audiences improved in time, and the balance wheeled round on the other side, but at the best of times it has never been more on an average than the wages of a good artisan. Anyhow, Mr. Foote is not wedded to this system beyond a possibility of divorce. If the Branches all round could and would pay him a decent fee for his lectures, he would take it and say "bless you!" But he is not going to take a fee less than his present earnings where he has worked up good audiences, and run the risk in other places. No, no! It must be one system all round. And until it can be so, this particularly grasping lecturer will continue the "old plan." When he stood before the jury and Lord Coleridge, he said—"Young as I am, I have for many years fought for my principles, taken soldier's wages when there were any, and gone cheerfully without when there were none, as I mean to do to the end." Those words were true at the time, and they are true now.

Mr. Hannath, you mean well, but you have made a mistake. Mr. Foote too, like other men, has made many mistakes in his time. So the pair of you had better shake hands, and say with Browning—

Good to forgive,
Bost to forget.

Mrs. Potts—"Just to think of you talking to me in such a style. You, who used to swear I was an angel." Mr. Potts—Look here, my dear, that isn't fair. What is the use of witting a man about the fiction he dealt in fifteen years ago?"

FATHER IGNATIUS, THE SELF-MADE MONK.

BY HUGH O. PENTECOST.

*(Delivered Sunday, December 21, 1890.)**(From the Twentieth Century.)*

[CONTINUED.]

He is an entirely different sort of man from those preachers who are manufactured in theological seminaries, and who go to the church that offers them the highest salary, and preach a gospel that they believe will not offend the persons who pay them to explain away the truth and make Jesus Christ mean the exact reverse of what he said.

Father Ignatius read in the New Testament: "Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;" "And everyone that hath left houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or children, or lands for my name's sake, shall receive a hundred-fold and shall inherit eternal life." He read these passages, he believed them to be the words of God, and he acted on them. He gave up what most men seek because he believed his Savior wished him to.

He read: "Every one that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery already in his heart." He read: "There are eunuchs which made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it let him receive it." He saw that Jesus encouraged men not to marry. He believed that he would please Jesus by living a virgin life, and so he took a vow of celibacy.

He read: "Behold, to obey is better than to sacrifice;" "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein." "The mind of the flesh is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God." He saw that the New Testament discourages thinking. He understood that no man who does not stifle his reason can be a Christian; that a man who asks questions will wreck any system of theology; that the Holy Ghost never talks to the brain; that a thinker never can be a believer; that reason and religion cannot thrive in the same person. He saw that if he was to be a perfect Christian he must bid farewell to his intellect, and so he took a vow of obedience and agreed to believe the dogmas of evangelical Christianity even though his common sense should declare that they cannot possibly be true.

Now, I do not say that Father Ignatius is right in having taken his vows of poverty, celibacy, and obedience. Far from it. In my opinion he is dead wrong.

Poverty is a curse. It is a root of all evil, a cause of all misery. No sane person would be poor if he could help himself without losing his self-respect. No person should be poor. Poverty is the enemy of health, culture and happiness. Poverty (not as an individual misfortune but as a social phenomenon) is a disgrace and a crime. No man should glorify it. No man should voluntarily suffer it. Every man should hate it with a perfect hatred and seek to avoid it and destroy it by every honorable means.

The very worst thing Jesus ever said was: "Blessed are the poor, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." That saying has been the lash in the hands of the rulers and the clergy by which the people have been whipped into servitude, or perhaps I would better say it is the subtle potion by which the proud spirit of men has been chloroformed into submission. When Jesus uttered those words he thought he was saying a kindly thing to the poor, whom he really loved, but he actually forged a ball and chain which have dragged on them for ages and I fear will hinder them for many years to come.

And as poverty is a curse, celibacy, in the present state of human development, except for a very few, is unnatural. I have not so much objection to Father Ignatius's doctrine of celibacy as to his doctrine of poverty. He does not teach that all men and women

should be celibates, but that only those should be who are able to completely dominate their sexual passions by the mind. If a man really can entirely eradicate his sexual instincts, and finds his highest happiness in doing so, I do not say that he does not thus achieve a kind of stoical grandeur. But I am sceptical as to any man's ability to do this, in the present state of human development, and if he fails in his task, a mere abstinence from women may leave him subject to more humiliating weaknesses.

I believe that Father Ignatius necessarily sins against himself in being voluntarily poor if he can be honorably rich, and it is altogether probable that he sins against himself in being a celibate, though this is not as in the other case, necessarily true.

As for the vow of obedience, it, like the vow of poverty, is necessarily injurious to the person who lives up to it. Poverty is a curse. Celibacy, in the present state of human development, is unnatural. Obedience, in the sense in which Father Ignatius uses the word, is a disgrace.

There is every good reason why we should discover those movements of matter that we call the laws of nature, and conform ourselves to them, but there is no good reason why any one should obey a God, not a trace of whom can be found, and there is certainly no good reason why one human being should obey another. Monkish obedience involves the complete subjection of the mind and will to the mind and will of another. Such obedience should never be demanded or accorded. He who requires it, be he God or man, is a tyrant, and he who yields it is a slave.

If there were a God who demanded the subjection of the human mind and will, he would not be worthy of such a sacrifice of manhood and womanhood. If there are rulers who compel their subjects to obey them, they thereby confess that they have to accomplish by brute force what they lack the wisdom and justice to achieve. If there are parents who exact obedience from their children, they are unfit to have children. If there are husbands who expect their wives to obey them, they ought to be ashamed of themselves. If there are wives who wish their husbands to obey them—well! they ought to be cursed by having milksops who would do it.

When a person is so situated that he is not allowed to think for himself and do what he likes, so long as he does not physically attack another, he is less than a man. And when a person voluntarily subjects his brain and will to another, he makes his disgrace deeper by regarding it as if it were a virtue. Monks and priests do this, and this is why it is commonly and truthfully said: "A priest is neither a man nor a woman."

From this you may gather that I do not approve of Father Ignatius's theories nor his manner of living, but I do admire him more than the priests and clergymen and Christian laymen who live more rationally, because he actually does try to do what the New Testament tells him to do; because he is a real Christian; because his religion, irrational as it is, means something to him. He does not profess to believe it is blessed to be poor and then indulge in all kinds of legal rascalities to accumulate riches. He does not profess to believe in personal purity and then, for financial or social reasons, marry some one he does not love, and enjoy some one he does not marry. He does not profess to believe in obedience to God and his superiors and then violate every law that a good God ought to make or a superior person approve.

(To be concluded.)

Certainly, if the Bible is such a revelation as men claim, it has egregiously failed to answer the purpose for which it was intended, seeing that men, equally able, earnest, and sincere, differ among themselves radically and hopelessly.—*J. W. Chadwick.*

THE HINDOO SCEPTIC.

I THINK till I weary with thinking,
Said the sad-eyed Hindoo King;
And I see but shadows around me—
Illusion in everything.

How knowest thou aught of God,
Of his favor or his wrath?
Can the little fish tell what the lion thinks,
Or map out the eagle's path?

Can the finite the Infinite search,
Did the blind discover the stars?
Is the thought that I think a thought,
Or a throb of the brain in its bars?

For aught that my eye can discern,
Your God is what you think good,
Yourself flashed back from the glass,
When the light pours on it in flood.

You preach to me to be just;
And this is his realm, you say—
And the good are dying of hunger,
And the bad gorge every day.

You say that he loveth mercy,
And the famine is not yet gone;
That he hateth the shedder of blood,
And he slayeth us every one.

You say that my soul shall live,
That the spirit can never die—
If he were content when I was not,
Why not when I have passed by?

You say I must have a meaning;
So rust dung, and its meaning is flowers.
What if our souls are but nurture
For lives that are greater than ours?

When the fish swims out of the water,
When the bird soars out of the blue,
Man's thought may transcend man's knowledge,
And your God be no reflex of you.

THE SALVATION FIASCO.

East London was the birthplace of the Salvation Army. I well recollect Mr. Booth starting his mission there in 1865. Now let us see what impression the Army has made on East London in five and twenty years. Take the Tower Hamlets, in the centre of which Mr. Booth first planted his flag. These include Bow, Limehouse, Mile-end, Poplar, St. George's-in-the-East, Stepney and Whitechapel, which together have a population of nearly half a million. According to the "Protestant Dissenters' Almanac for 1891," the Army has one meeting-place in Stepney, one in Limehouse, and one in Poplar. That is all. Taking London over the border, there are meeting-places at Canning-town, Plaistow, Stratford, Leyton and Barking. In the great parish of Bethnal-green the Army occupies one railway-arch. In Shoreditch, another great East-end parish, it has one meeting-place, in a mews. In Hackney, a still larger parish, beside the Clapton Homes, it has three meeting-places. Of course, these are ordinary meeting-places of the Army, and are exclusive of its shelters and homes for fallen women. The testimony of many East-end clergymen and Nonconformist ministers that the Army was a failure at the East-end only confirmed my own observations as an East-ender, bred and born; but I was really astonished to find how complete the failure had been. Whitechapel Church would take all the Tower Hamlets Salvationists and leave room to spare.—"Urbanus," in the *Echo*.

OBITUARY.

Harry Blyth, an active, earnest, honest Freethinker, of Dulwich, has gone to his final rest. He was followed to the grave by a goodly muster of the friends from Sydenham, Anerley, Penge and Norwood, and a large number of the members of his trade society. He died calmly and certain in the hope that his views were the best for this world or any other. I read the service at the graveside to a very large assembly.—R. FORDER.

PROFANE JOKES.

Sunday-school Teacher—"And when the wicked children continued mocking the good prophet, two she-bears came out of the mountain and ate up over forty of the wicked children. Now, boys, what lesson does this teach us?" Jimmy Primrose—"I know, sir, it teaches us how many children a she-bear can hold."

Mamma (as Daisy rises from saying her evening prayer)—"Dearie, why didn't you confess your naughty act to God, and ask him to forgive you?" Daisy—"Because, mamma, I did not want to have such a thing to get out of the family."

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. C. J. Hunt, "History of the Inquisition."

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station), 7.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "God's Six Days' Hard Labor." Monday, at 8, social gathering. Thursday, at 8, committee meeting.

Bethnal Green Branch N. S. S.—"The Monarch" Coffee House, 166 Bethnal Green Road, E., 5, quarterly meeting of members; 7, Mr. T. Thurlow, "The History of the Bible."

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E., 4, quarterly meeting; 6, tea; 7, entertainment (members 6d., public 9d.). Friday, at 7.45, Science Classes (Hygiene and Chemistry).

East London—16 Durham Row, Stepney, 2, annual meeting. Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End Road, 8, Mr. W. C. Lyons, "When were the Gospels Written?"

Edmonton—Angel Assembly Rooms, Silver Street, 7, Mr. J. Fagan, "Belief, Disbelief, and Unbelief."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C., 7, Mrs. Annie Besant, "The God of Israel—II."

Leyton—Mr. Beadle's, 10 Daisey Villas, Manor Road, 7, a meeting of members and friends.

Milton Hall, Kentish Town Road, N.W., 7, Orchestral Band; 7.30, Mr. George Standring, "Has Christ Saved the World?" Monday, at 8.30, social meeting. Tuesday, at 8, singing and dramatic class (practice).

Tottenham—Assembly Hall, Seven Sisters' Road (two doors from High Street), 3.15, a Freethought lecture.

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow, 3, members' quarterly meeting; 6, tea and social gathering. Tuesday, at 8, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Christianity: How it Began and Why it Lives."

West London—Athenæum Hall, Tottenham Court Road, Thursday, at 8.15, Mr. George Standring, "Secularism and Christianity." Free.

Westminster—Liberal and Radical Club, Chapter Street, 7, Mr. F. Millar, "Salvationism and Darkest England"

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead Road (entrance, Maxey Road), 7.30, Mr. E. Calvert, "Religion and Secularism Contrasted."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates, 11.15, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "Christ's Fables."

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge Street, 11, members' quarterly meeting.

Glasgow—Albion Hall, College Street, 12 noon, debating class, Mr. J. P. Gilmour, "The Theology of Burns,"; 6.30, Mr. MacLuskey, "The Present Trade Crisis."

Huddersfield—Friendly and Trades Societies' Hall, Northumberland Street, Mr. G. W. Foote, 11, "A World Without God"; 3, "Is the Bible Inspired?"; 6.30, "Heaven and Hell."

Liverpool Branch N. S. S., Camden Hall, Camden Street.—3, Discussion Class; 7, Mr. Gowland, "The Bible and Modern Civilisation."

Manchester N. S. S., Secular Hall, Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saint's, 6.30, Mr. Stanley Jones, "The Struggles of Science." Free. Wednesday, at 8, dancing (admission sixpence).

Newcastle-on-Tyne—4 Hall's Court, Newgate Street, 3, discussion, "What is Secularism?"

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck Street, debate between Mr. T. Slater (of Leicester) and Mr. D. Frank English (of Manchester) on "Will Socialism Benefit the English People?"

Plymouth—100 Union Street, 7, Mr. Proctor, "The Bible and Science."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea, 3, debating class, "Secular Sunday-schools"; 7, Mr. Bell, "Is Unbelief a Crime?"

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham Street, 3, members' annual meeting; 7, Mr. W. H. Houlden "Edward Carpenter, Poet" (concluded).

Spennymoor—Victoria Hall, Dundas Street, 10.30, meeting to arrange for Mr. Foote's visit; 6, Mr. W. Woodhall, a reading.

Sunderland—Albert Rooms, Coronation Street, 7, Mr. T. R. Fox, "Early Christian Heresy."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Jan. 18, Leicester; 20, West Ham. Feb. 1, Rusliden; 8, Camberwell; 15, Woolwich; 22 (morning), Battersea. March 1, Woolwich.

STANLEY JONES, 3 Leta Street, City Road, Liverpool.—Jan. 18, Manchester; 25, Birmingham. Feb. 8, Liverpool.

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