

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

## CHRIST'S OLD COAT.

THE little town of Trier (Trèves) will soon wear a festive appearance. Pilgrims will be flocking to it from all parts of Germany, and God knows from where besides. Its handful of inhabitants have obtained licenses to open hotels and restaurants; every inch of available space has been let, so that whirligigs, panoramas and menageries have to be refused the sites they apply for; every room in the town is to be let, more or less furnished; and not only is the tram company doubling its line, but the railway company is constructing special stations for special trains.

All this excitement springs from a superstitious source. After an interval of several years the Church will once more exhibit an old rag, which it calls the Holy Coat, and which it pretends is the very garment we read of in the Gospels. Such a precious relic is, of course, endowed with supernatural qualities. It will heal the sick, cure cripples, and, let us hope, put brains into idiotic heads. Hence the contemplated rush to Trier, where more people will congregate to see Christ's coat than ever assembled to hear him preach or see him crucified.

The pilgrims will not be allowed to examine the Holy Coat. Few of them, perhaps, would be inclined to do so. They have the faith which removes mountains, and swallowing a coat is but a trifle. Nor would the Church allow a close inspection of this curious relic, any more than it would allow a chemist to examine the bottle in which the blood of St. Jannarius annually liquefies. The Holy Coat will be held up by priests at a discreet and convenient distance; the multitude of fools will fall before it in ecstatic adoration; and the result will be the usual one in such cases, a lightening of the devotees' pockets to the profit of Holy Mother Church.

According to the Gospels, the Prophet of Nazareth had a seamless overcoat. Perhaps it was presented to him by one of the rich women who ministered unto him of their substance. Perhaps it was a birthday gift from Joseph of Arimathæa. Anyhow he had it, unless the Gospels lie; and, with the rest of his clothes, it became the property of his executioners. Those gentlemen raffled for it. Which of them won it we are not informed. Nor are we told what he did with it. It would be a useless garment to a Roman soldier, and perhaps the warrior who won the raffle sold it to a second-hand clothes-dealer. This, however, is merely a conjecture. Nothing is known with certainty. The seamless overcoat disappeared from view as decisively as the person who wore it.

For many hundreds of years it was supposed to have gone the way of other coats. No one thought it would ever be preserved in a Church museum. But somehow it turned up again, and the Church got possession of it, though the Church could not tell how and when it was found, or where it had been while it was lost. One coat disappeared; hundreds of years

afterwards another coat was found; and it suited the Church to declare them the same.

At that time the Church was "discovering" relics with extraordinary success and rapidity. Almost everything Christ ever used (or didn't use) came to light. His baby linen, samples of his hair and teeth, and the milk he drew from Mary's breast, the shoes he wore into Jerusalem, fragments of the twelve baskets' full of food after the miracle of the loaves and fishes, the dish from which he ate the last supper, the thorns that crowned his brow, the sponge put to his lips on the cross, pieces of the cross itself—these and a host of other relics were treasured at various churches in Europe and exhibited with unblushing effrontery. Even the prepuce of Jesus, amputated at his circumcision, was kept at Rome.

Several churches boasted the same articles. John the Baptist's body was in dozens of different places, and the finger with which he pointed to Jesus as his successor was shown, in a fine state of preservation, at Besancon, Toulouse, Lyons, Bourges, Macon, and many other towns. Of all these things the reader will find ample information in the fifth chapter of *Crimes of Christianity*.

John Calvin pointed out, in his grim *Treatise on Relics*, that the Holy Coat of Christ was kept in several churches. In our own time, a book on this subject has been written by H. von Sybel, who proves that the Trier coat is only one of twenty that were exhibited. All were authentic, and all were guaranteed by the same authority. Holy Mother Church lied and cheated without a twinge of compunction.

Nineteen Holy Coats have gone. The twentieth is the last of the tribe. While it *pays* it will be exhibited. When it ceases to pay, the Church will quietly drop it. By and bye the Church will swear it never kept such an article in stock.

Superstition dies hard. It also dies viciously. The ruling passion is strong in death. A journalist has just been sent to prison for casting a doubt on the authenticity of this Holy Coat. Give the Catholic Church its old power again, and all who laughed at its wretched humbug would be choked with blood.

Protestants, as well as Freethinkers, laugh at Catholic relics. Were we to quote from some of the old English "Reformers," who carried on a vigorous polemic against Catholic "idolatry," we should be reproached for soiling our pages unnecessarily. John Calvin himself, the Genevan pope, declared that so many samples of the Virgin Mary's milk were exhibited in Europe that "one might suppose she was a wet nurse or a cow."

Freethinkers, however, laugh at the miracles of Protestantism, as well as those of the Catholic Church. They are all of a piece, in the ultimate analysis. It is just as credible that Christ's Coat would work miracles, as that Elisha's bones restored a corpse to life or that Paul's handkerchiefs cured the sick and diseased. All such things belong to the same realm of pious imagination. Thus, while the Protestant laughs at the Catholic, the Freethinker laughs at both.

G. W. FOOTE.



## REVERENCE.

We sometimes hear, even from those who have advanced a little way on the path of Freethought, a complaint of our want of reverence. It is represented as pardonable to differ from the popular theology, but then we should treat it in a reverential spirit, and the want of this spirit is even represented as a serious defect of character. Now we, who, having neither respect for nor fear of the established religion, do not pretend to give it reverence, yield to none in our admiration and appreciation of all that commends itself to us as worthy. We honor the brave fireman who risks his own life to save others. We admire the great and esteem the good of all ages. We thrill with sympathy when we read the story of human love and devotion. But we are totally lacking in that mysterious virtue, reverence.

Wordsworth says: "We live by admiration, hope, and love." These sentiments are indispensable. To attempt to erase them would be the height of folly. But the test of a man is, To what are these sentiments directed? What does he hope for and admire? What is it he loves? Is it worthy or unworthy? When we are asked to exercise the faculty of reverence, we usually find it is towards something we cannot even respect. We are told to reverence the Bible and its heroes, an arbitrary God and his ministers, and perhaps the Queen and all in authority under her. To us this is a sufficient indication, that by reverence is really meant an unreasoning submission to authority. And this interpretation is historically correct. The sense of reverence has grown out of the widespread custom of the taboo.\* It is based on fear; it means prostration before power, either real or imaginary; and while we can admire humility, admiration, and due respect, this is an attitude of mind with which we have no sympathy. We cannot reverence the barbarism of our ancestors.

Mr. Alfred Williams Momerie, while still a "reverend," preached on this subject in the chapel of the Foundling Hospital, and his discourses, which stand out from other sermons of the day by their breadth and ability, are published in his volume *Church and Creed*. Mr. Momerie pleads for what he calls "true reverence," which, he says, has its root not in fear but in love. Now this is giving a new meaning to the word, and we venture to say perverting it from its historic associations. No one can be less inclined than us to quarrel about words. We care no jot what we are called or what terms are used so long as it is understood what is meant. Half of the errors against which we contend arise from the abuse of words to which no definite and adequate meaning is attached. But the historic fact is, that the sentiment called reverence has grown from the influence of fear, and not from that of love. Not only is it true that deities were revered who were more like demons, but they were revered on that very account. And so with the reverence demanded and accorded to kings when they were believed to hold their authority as of divine right. The sentiment meant an unreasoning dread of those who had power of life and death. We hold, therefore, that Mr. Lecky understates the matter when he says in his *History of European Morals*: "Reverence is one of those feelings which in rationalistic systems would occupy at best a very ambiguous position; for it is extremely questionable whether the great evils which have grown out of it, in the form of religious superstition and political servitude, have not made it a source of more unhappiness than happiness."† Mr. Lecky is self-contradictory and inconsequential when he goes on to say that the reverential spirit is essential to a supreme degree of excellence in character. What he means is that a sense of humility towards that which is really lofty and noble, and of admiration for the true, is necessary.

\* See *Freethinker*, Feb. 22 and March 8.

† Vol. I., p. 141.

Mr. Momerie cites the passage at length from Mr. J. S. Mill's *Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy*, in which he concludes by saying: "I will call no Being good who is not what I mean when I apply that epithet to my fellow-creatures. And if such a Being can send me to hell for not so calling him, to hell I will go." This, he says, "expresses the highest conceivable reverence." The statement shows how widely Mr. Momerie differs from the religious world, for it was this very passage which was used to show that Mill was unfitted to sit in Parliament. We should say it shows a manly or a noble spirit, but we fail to detect the quality known as reverential. But people differ as widely as to what is reverence as to what is religion. We think, indeed, these words might be dispensed with, at any rate until a common signification can be attached. Mr. Momerie himself supplies an instance. While he added the title "reverend" to his name we held him in no esteem, though we recognised his abilities, and therefore accorded him a measure of respect. Now that he has dropped his title, come out from the canting crew, and lost his professorship of logic at King's College by his bold avowal of heresy, we respect, admire, and esteem him, though we do not hold him in reverence. The clergy are not generally revered because of their title. The letters "Rev." before a name usually imply less respect than the letters "Esq." after one. But originally they implied the sentiment of reverence. This sentiment remains in the Irish peasant, who not only calls his priest "your riverence," but actually reveres him as one who can refuse him absolution and excommunicate him—as one, in short, who can make or mar him in this world and save or damn him in the next. We can understand how men like Charles Voysey feel they have, upon leaving the Church, as good a right to the title "reverend" as they had before quitting it. But their adoption thereof is not a proceeding which ensures our respect, since we hold that the title originally denoted a superstitious feeling which such men should rather be anxious to erase than to retain.

The demand that religious questions shall be treated in a reverential spirit may be taken as indicating how our opponents would like the warfare against their superstitions to be conducted. A wise general will give the politest attention and most careful consideration to such indications, and proceed accordingly. When told by believers that we should treat stories of spooks, Mahatmas, and miracles with reverence, we always feel inclined to laugh more heartily than ever.

J. M. WHEELER.

## A GOOD CHURCH MEMBER.

But for religion we are assured that society would go to the bad at once and in a heap. Religion curbs the evil passions put into us by the heinous sin of our great-great grandmother Eve. The sin was apple eating. A woman always wants to be munching something. We have known scores of 'em who ate clay and slate pencils, but none of these were damned, for God doesn't damn near so many as he used to, nor for sins half so little. A woman could eat a hay-stack now, or a whole bed of onions, without making God the least bit mad. But her breath! Whew! But as we started out to say, religion allays our bad passions and is the great safeguard of society for good behavior and good citizenship. "Religious morality" protects society. When a man hasn't religion real bad he is mighty apt to be afflicted with religious morality. Here is Brother Samuel Clemson offered as a sample copy in illustration:

DELPHI, IND., June 17.—Samuel Clemson was arrested yesterday on an affidavit sworn out by his seventeen-year-old daughter, Minnie, charging incest. He was taken into court this afternoon, pleaded guilty, and was sentenced to ten years in prison. He was placed on a train for Michigan City within ten minutes after sentence was passed. Clemson is 38 years of age and has his fifth wife. He was a Church member in good standing.

The man after God's own heart didn't beat this Christian record except in magnitude.—*Ironclad Age*.



## INGERSOLL ON CREEDS.

*(From the "New York Morning Advertiser.")*

WHATEVER may be said of his belief in revealed religion, Robert G. Ingersoll is respected by all intellectual antagonists for thorough sincerity, absolute fairness in debate and unquestionable ability in the presentation of his argument.

His views, therefore, on the recent attitude of the general assembly at Detroit in the case of Dr. Briggs, the alleged heretical utterances of the Rev. Heber Newton, and the desertion of one creed for another by the Rev. Dr. Bridgman, are of peculiar interest just at this time. Colonel Ingersoll has just returned from a trip through the west, and in speaking of these incidents, he said:—

"There is a natural desire on the part of every intelligent human being to harmonise his information—to make his theories agree—in other words, to make what he knows, or thinks he knows, in one department agree with and harmonise with what he knows, or thinks he knows, in every other department of human knowledge.

"The human race has not advanced in line, neither has it advanced in all departments with the same rapidity. It is with the race as it is with an individual. A man may turn his entire attention to some one subject—as, for instance, to geology—and neglect other sciences. He may be a good geologist, but an exceedingly poor astronomer; or he may know nothing of politics or of political economy. So he may be a successful statesman and know nothing of theology. But if a man, successful in one direction, takes up some other question, he is bound to use the knowledge he has on one subject as a kind of standard to measure what he is told on some other subject. If he is a chemist, it will be natural for him, when studying some other question, to use what he knows in chemistry; that is to say, he will expect to find cause, and everywhere succession and resemblance. He will say: It must be in all other sciences as in chemistry—there must be no chance. The elements have no caprice. Iron is always the same. Gold does not change. Prussic acid is always poison—it has no freaks. So he will reason as to all facts in nature. He will be a believer in the atomic integrity of all matter, in the persistence of gravitation. Being so trained, and so convinced, his tendency will be to weigh what is called new information in the same scales that he has been using.

"Now for the application of this. Progress in religion is the slowest, because man is kept back by sentimentality, by the efforts of parents, by old associations. A thousand unseen tendrils are twining about him that he must necessarily break if he advances. In other departments of knowledge inducements are held out and rewards are promised to the one who does succeed—to the one who really does advance—to the man who discovers new facts. But in religion, instead of rewards being promised, threats are made. The man is told that he must not advance; that if he takes a step forward it is at the peril of his soul; that if he thinks and investigates, he is in danger of exciting the wrath of God. Consequently religion has been of the slowest growth. Now, in most departments of knowledge man has advanced; and coming back to the original statement—a desire to harmonise all that we know—there is a growing desire on the part of intelligent men to have a religion fit to keep company with the other sciences.

## THE MAKING OF CREEDS.

"Our creeds were made in times of ignorance. They suited very well a flat world, and a God who lived in the sky just above us, and who used the lightning to destroy his enemies. This God was regarded much as a savage regarded the head of his tribe—as one having the right to reward and punish. And this God, being much greater than a chief of the tribe, could give greater rewards and inflict greater punishments. They knew that the ordinary chief, or the ordinary king, punished the slightest offences with death. They also knew that these chiefs and kings tortured their victims as long as the victims could bear the torture. So when they described their God, they gave to this God power to keep the tortured victim alive for ever because they knew that the earthly chief, or the earthly king, would prolong the life of the tortured for the sake of increasing the agonies of the victim. In those savage days they regarded punishment as the only means of protecting society. In consequence of this they built heaven and hell on an earthly plan, and they put God—that is to say, the

chief, that is to say, the king—on a throne like an earthly king.

"Of course, these views were all ignorant and barbaric; but in that blessed day their geology and astronomy were on a par with their theology. There was a harmony in all departments of knowledge, or rather of ignorance. Since that time there has been a great advance made in the idea of government—the old idea being that the right to do came from God to the king, and from the king to the people. Now intelligent people believe that the source of authority has been changed, and that all just powers of government are derived from the consent of the governed. So there has been a great advance in the philosophy of punishment—in the treatment of criminals. So, too, in all the sciences. The earth is no longer flat; heaven is not immediately above us; the universe has been infinitely enlarged, and we have at last found that our earth is but a grain of sand, a speck on the great shores of the infinite. Consequently there is a discrepancy, a discord, a contradiction between our theology and the other sciences. Men of intelligence feel this. Dr. Briggs concluded that a perfectly good and intelligent God could not have created billions of sentient beings knowing that they were to be eternally miserable. No man could do such a thing, had he the power, without being infinitely malicious. Dr. Briggs began to have a little hope for the human race—began to think that may be God is better than the creed describes him.

"And right here it may be well enough to remark that no one has ever been declared a heretic for thinking God bad. Heresy has consisted in thinking God better than the church said he was. The man who said God will damn nearly everybody was orthodox. The man who said God will save everybody was denounced as a blaspheming wretch, as one who assailed and maligned the character of God. I can remember when the Universalists were denounced as vehemently and maliciously as the Atheists are to-day.

## THE CASE OF DR. BRIGGS.

"Now," continued Col. Ingersoll, "Dr. Briggs is undoubtedly an intelligent man. He knows that nobody on the earth knows who wrote the five books of Moses: He knows that they were not written until hundreds of years after Moses was dead. He knows that two or more persons were the authors of Isaiah. He knows that David did not write to exceed three or four of the Psalms. He knows that the book of Job is not a Jewish book. He knows that the songs of Solomon were not written by Solomon. He knows that the book of Ecclesiastes was written by a Freethinker. He also knows that there is not in existence to-day—so far as anybody knows—any of the manuscripts of the Old or New Testament.

"So about the New Testament, Dr. Briggs knows that nobody lives who has ever seen an original manuscript, or who ever saw anybody that did see one, or that claims to have seen one. He knows that nobody knows who wrote Matthew, or Mark, or Luke, or John. He knows that John did not write John, and that gospel was not written until long after John was dead. He knows that no one knows who wrote the Hebrews. He also knows that the book of Revelation is an insane production. Dr. Briggs also knows the way in which these books came to be canonical, and he knows that the way was no more binding than a resolution passed by a political convention.

He also knows that many books were left out that had for centuries equal authority with those that were put in. He also knows that many passages—and the very passages upon which many churches are founded—are interpolations. He knows that the last chapter of Mark, beginning with the sixteenth verse to the end, is an interpolation; and he also knows that neither Matthew, nor Mark, nor Luke ever said one word about the necessity of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, or of believing anything—not one word about believing in the Bible or joining the Church, or doing any particular thing in the way of ceremony to ensure salvation. He knows that, according to Matthew, God agreed to forgive us when we would forgive others. Consequently he knows that there is not one particle of what is called modern theology in Matthew, Mark, or Luke. He knows that the trouble commenced in John, and that John was not written until probably one hundred and fifty years—possibly two hundred years—after Christ was dead. So he also knows that the sin against the Holy Ghost is an interpolation; that "I came not to bring peace but a sword," if not an interpolation, is an absolute contradiction.



So, too, he knows that the promise to forgive in heaven what they should forgive on earth, and to bind in heaven what they should bind on earth, is an interpolation; and that if it is not an interpolation, it is without the slightest sense in fact.

(To be concluded.)

#### THE AGNOSTIC'S CREED.

From whence I come, or whither go,  
My creed is this, I do not know;  
Into this creed all others flow.

I am a flickering spark of mind,  
Vast darkness is before, behind—  
Darkness to me, for I am blind.

Lo, in a blade of grass there dwell  
Dread mysteries I cannot spell,  
Higher than heaven, deeper than hell.

Things were and are and are to be;  
I peer not into mystery,  
And cry, made bold through fear "I see!"

Things were, and are, and go their way,  
Whether they govern or obey;  
With them I go and cannot stay.

"I do not know"; all thought sublime,  
All prophecies of former time,  
But hide this pearl in seas of slime.

And I, who neither fear nor trust,  
Holding this creed because I must,  
Shall not be mocked, alive or dust.

GEORGE HORTON.

#### CHRIST SCHWEINFURTH IN TROUBLE.

It appears that it was Kansas City white cap Christians that tried to mob and crucify the Jesus of Rockford, Illinois. The savior was in Kansas City preaching very good sermons for a god that had been dead nearly two thousand years and just come to. Christ was taking his ease in his inn, and the rabble, learning he was going to be tarred and feathered by good and true Christian white cappers, three hundred strong, congregated about the premises before the arrival of the pious white cappers, to see the fun. Jesus of Rockford, seeing the crowd about the premises, thought it time to heed the warning he had received, and so he lit out. When the white cap mob appeared they found the Lord had spirited away the savior. It is to be hoped that he will be allowed to remain in his earthly heaven in peace. He is as good and as law abiding as any other impostor in the land who is making a living by preaching the exploded and lying rot that Jesus Christ was the son of a God, and that he died to redeem the world from sin.—*Ironclad Age*.

Mr. A. Butterfield, writing to the *Truthseeker* from Sinaloa Mexico, where there is a Freethought co-operative colony, tells of a method of gambling they have among the Mexicans at one of their religious festivals. He says, "One fellow had a blanket with the Father, Son, and Ghost inside a ring, with the picture of holy saints all around. Then they shook dice. Some bet on their favorite saint, some on God, and some on Christ." The writer adds: "Their fire-works were splendid. They sent sky-rockets five hundred feet and back on a rope. A company of devout brought Jesus down to see the fire-works. He was fixed on a block  $4 \times 1\frac{1}{2}$  feet made by taking some of the lead out of a tea chest and tacking it to the board with mesal fibre under it to make the face plump. He had ears of red flannel and the lips the same, glass marbles for eyes, and wore an embroidered blanket. The ladies made him bow very nicely when the rockets went off, then they fell on their knees, crossed themselves, mumbled some prayers, and then put Jesus away in a box which was used for a gambling-table until the next day noon. The priests and state make a little out of such affairs."

The following inscription has been discovered on a tomb in an old churchyard:

Here lies the body of Jonathan Ram,  
His soul's in the bosom of Abraham.—  
That's all very well for Jonathan Ram—  
But, say, how about poor Abraham?

#### ACID DROPS.

Some of the purists of this age would like to see a revival of the old Roman censorship, and Mr. W. T. Stead would probably be the first candidate for the office. This gentleman has "immorality" on the brain. He is never happy without having some "sinner's" head in chancery, and how he enjoys the punching! But this is not enough. Mr. Stead called a meeting recently at the City Temple to denounce the concupiscence and other vices of this stiff-necked generation. Dr. Parker took the chair, and Mr. Stead and that delicate lover of truth, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, were the principal speakers. Both of them come up to Swift's definition of a nice man—a man with nasty ideas. Why don't they cease stirring puddles and cesspools? Why don't they give over playing the Pharisee, and attend to the sufficiently arduous duty of living *themselves* up to their best lights? It is an easy form of virtue to be always hunting down "sinners."

By the way, at this City Temple meeting, Mr. Stead declared—and the declaration was endorsed by the wise and accurate Hughes—that "the battle for religious liberty was won by Cromwell and the Commonwealth two centuries ago." A wilder falsehood never was propounded. Cromwell was certainly ahead of his age, but the Puritan Commonwealth was more tyrannical than Laud. It was under Charles II., a profane voluptuary, and not under the "Saints," that the writ *de heretico comburendo* was abolished. During the present century Catholics and Jews have been enfranchised, and Freethinkers are still outlaws in their collective capacity. Mr. Stead's history is on a level with his moral philosophy.

Dr. Parker and Mr. Spurgeon are not very friendly. The Doctor, however, offered up a prayer for Spurgeon's recovery the other Thursday morning at the City Temple; but he managed to make the prayer the vehicle of a delicate reflection, for he "thanked God for the ministry of affliction, which humbles the sufferer, and takes out of him all pride and self-sufficiency." Probably some of Spurgeon's admirers will think a little suffering, of this sort, a good medicine for Parker.

"Do you simply believe," asks Dr. Parker, "that there was a young man once who was better than any other young man who ever lived, wiser than Socrates? Or do you believe in Jesus the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world?" For our part, Dr. Parker, we believe in neither. We are not so simple as to "simply believe" in the prize good young man of Galilee, who was wiser than Socrates; and as for his taking away the sins of the world, we have yet to learn that he has done it. Is not Dr. Parker, are not tens of thousands of Christians, still preaching lustily against "sin"?

The Fatherhood of God is the startlingly original title given to his Thursday afternoon discourse by Dr. Joseph Parker. Why doesn't he try something less trite and hackneyed. The Motherhood of God, for instance; that would fetch the females. And why not? What is the good of a Father without a Mother? Jesus Christ had a mother without any father, but his creatures are left in the opposite predicament.

It is a sign of the growing influence of woman that all the new sects, from the Jezreelites to the Koreshans, go in for the bisexuality of deity. The idea that there was anything feminine about God would have reminded the old Jewish prophets of Baal and Ashtorath, and possibly have frightened them into fits. But the early Nazarenes held that the Holy Ghost was feminine, and the book of Revelation describes the deity as having "paps."

Ministers are one by one resigning all the features which characterised early Christianity. The belief in devils has departed. Only a few, and those mostly interested parties, preach the near approach of the end of the world; and the doctrine of eternal hell is either given up or quietly kept out of sight. Yet these doctrines were the very life of early Christianity, and it is questionable how long its body will wriggle with both head and tail cut off.

The Rev. John Dickson, of St. Ninian's, Leith, is the



laughing stock of the Scotch papers for his frequent denunciation of those who prefer taking a trip to going to kirk on the Sabbath. He retorts that "True wisdom does not dwell in editors' brains," and reminds them that the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. He is one of the good old sort, a true follower of John Knox, whom the Scotch are graduallly deserting.

Humbag is rampant at the shrine of St. Anne de Beaupre, Quebec. A despatch says, "Hardly a day passes that miracles are not performed. Yesterday a man named Desire Raymond, from Lewiston, Me., who was suffering from a fractured leg and unable to walk without crutches, received holy communion, and afterwards walked away from the sacred table without his crutches, wholly cured." People who laugh at faith-healing in our own day ask us to credit even more remarkable occurrences said to have happened a long while ago.

An Irishman, twenty-seven years of age, suffering from paralysis of the right side, went to St. Bridget's Well, near the cliffs of Moher, in county Clare. While praying to the blessed saint, the unfortunate man slipped, fell head foremost into the well, and was drowned. Moral—never trust to Saint Bridget.

Mary Jane Heathcote, of Chingford, has been found guilty of wilful murder, though the jury add that she was of unsound mind through influenza. She drowned her two children in a brook. From a letter to her husband, it appears that she had been praying day and night, which, if not a symptom of insanity, is enough to cause it.

The *Observer* says that Dr. Maclagan, the Archbishop-designate of York, in addition to his salary of £10,000 a year, still draws the pension of £150 a year awarded to him after only five years' service as a lieutenant in the army.

The Church Congress at Rhyl will give first attention to the Church in Wales, but a section of the proceedings will be devoted to scepticism, when Sir G. Stokes and Mr. R. Holt Hulton, of the *Spectator*, will back up the Rev. A. T. Harrison and other clericals in maintaining the Christian position.

Some of the Christianised natives of Samoa having exhibited cannibalistic propensities, and mistaken the texts about eating flesh and drinking blood, the missionaries explained to Baron von Hübnér that "it takes several generations for Christian morality to get into the blood." Possibly it takes several generations for Christian ideas to get out of it, which may explain the occasional reversions to superstition.

A trial is now going on in France involving several million francs which the Marquise Plessir Beliere left to the Pope and which the heir at law disputes.

The Rev. John Jasper, the colored Richmond (Virginia) divine who excited some attention by a sermon proving from Scripture that "the sun do move," still, according to the *Truthseeker*, preaches the same sermon when requests for it are particularly numerous. There is a tacit understanding between the preacher and the public that when he delivers the celebrated sermon there shall be a more than ordinary output of coin when the contribution box comes round.

A Missionary Congress of luminaries of the Greek Church has been sitting at Moscow to inquire into the spread of the tenets of Stundists or evangelical Baptists. They have reported in favor of very stringent measures and ask the aid of the administration. They further recommend that factory inspectors should have power to organise religious conferences among dissenting workmen with a view to their conversion. Good orthodox Christians these with an eye to the texts, "Compel them to come in," and "those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me."

A number of Stundists have at the instigation of the priests been turned out of their employment and left the option of conversion or starvation. How blessed a thing is religion!

The Czar's brother Serge, the new Governor General of Moscow, sent greetings to the "session of missionaries against

the heretics." He also expressed an assurance that "the Lord will bless its labors to the glory of the Church and the satisfaction of all true orthodox believers." The poor Russian heretics are going to have a bad time.

Good Christians and superstitious Hindoos at Madras have been equally scandalised by "devil dancers" being introduced at a state ball given by Sir James Dormer, the Madras Commander-in-Chief. The Governor, the Commander-in-Chief, and other leading military men were attired in full diabolical costume with horns and tails, while their partners appeared as angels clothed in white, with gauze wings and sprays of lilies. It was only the "Bogie Man Lancers" danced in character, but it has led to sinister reflections when famine is so near in India that the government has already granted £10,000 for the relief of the peasants.

Scurrility is a favorite charge against Freethinkers when they ridicule the absurdities of the Christian faith. We doubt if any, however, could compete with the Rev. Dr. Lindsay, of the London Missionary Society, who is reported as saying that "Every great temple in India has from eighty to two hundred priestesses, every one of whom, because she is a priestess, is a public prostitute." He added that two opinions form the basis of Hindu belief. One is that a cow is a holy animal; the other that a woman is a wicked animal.

Now as a matter of fact, the only priestesses in Hindu temples are the wives of priests. To say they are public prostitutes is a barefaced calumny. Dr. Lindsay, we presume, alludes to the nautch girls, and these, if prostitutes, are certainly not public ones. The Hindu belief that the cow is tabu, has been the great means of preserving the country from utter desolation in times of famine. It is, in fact, a superstition founded on a wise social regulation, which is more than can be said for most Christian superstitions. Woman is certainly as highly esteemed and respected in India as in any Oriental clime. It was Solomon to whom is attributed the saying "one man among a thousand have I found; but a woman among all those have I not found." There is not in all the Bible so beautiful and noble a character as that of Sita, the wife of Rama, described in the Hindu epic "The Ramayana."

The Rev. E. J. Sale, of Romford, has been expelled from the Primitive Methodist ministry for declining to be examined in *Pope's Theology*, and asserting his disbelief in the doctrine of everlasting punishment. The *Primitive Methodist World* speaks of him as "a young man who can change his theological opinions with the weather"; but in the columns of *Grays Gazette* he answers the taunt in a very manly fashion. It appears that the Romford congregation was willing to retain him despite his known views, and the Poplar circuit was also ready to accept him; so it seems that heresy is spreading even among the Primitive Methodists.

There is nothing like religion for giving a man a sense of composure in trouble and serenity in danger. An earthquake at Evansville, Indiana, created a panic in several places of worship. At the Baptist church a rush was made for the doors, and a number of children were injured. The worshippers were afraid to go to heaven suddenly.

The Wesleyan Conference denounces the Government for "wilfully ignoring the demands of Methodist people for increased protection against sacerdotalism in the rural districts." As the Methodist people wilfully ignore the demand of Freethinkers for protection against religion in the public schools, we are unable to get up much sympathy with them in their misfortune.

At a Reading meeting of the Universities Mission to Central Africa, the Rev. E. Sturges observed that it was somewhat remarkable that although Christ lived at a time when slavery was practised all round him in its most terrible form there was no direct word against slavery in his discourses or in the New Testament. Very remarkable indeed, if God meant to abolish the slavery which he had permitted to his chosen people in the Old Testament.

"Yet," went on the man of God, "the spirit of his teaching was distinctly against slavery." This is a matter of opinion. We see nothing distinctly against slavery in the injunction to resist not evil.



This mission is £2,000 behind its income last year, and there was an earnest appeal for funds, without which it was frankly confessed the work could not go on.

If fowls should on religion parley,  
You'd find that they believe in barley.

"O. W. C." writes to the *Barnet Press* endeavoring to excite prejudice against the Freethought lectures at Finchley because delivered on the ground belonging to a public-house. He complains that for several Sunday evenings hundreds of men, women, lads, girls, and quite young children have been seen listening eagerly to the blasphemous and indecent Freethought speakers. Mr. S. Standing replies in a very temperate letter, pointing out that the Freethought lectures are not indecent, and that the Freethinkers are by no means responsible for drinking at the adjacent public-house.

A note in *Notes and Queries* (July 25) points out that as late as 1812 a woman was imprisoned in Bristol Gaol for two years on account of being excommunicated for not performing a penance enjoined by the Ecclesiastical Court, and for the expenses in connection therewith, which amounted to £30.

Mrs. Besant has been dealing out doses of Theosophy under the auspices of the Newcastle Branch of the N. S. S. These moonshiny discourses were reported in the local press. The evening lecture on "Crucified Saviors" was not reported. Only when she differs from the Secular party, and from her old self, do the newspapers give her publicity. Real Freethought, which is opposed to every form of superstition, including the mongrel form called Theosophy, is still the victim of a conspiracy of silence. All that Secularism gains by Mrs. Besant's use of its platforms is an advertisement of views which are opposed to its own principles.

General Booth made a funny speech before embarking at Southampton to visit the distant provinces of his empire. "I hope you will fare well in your brains," he said to the faithful crowd that assembled to see him off. Surely this was the most sensible wish he ever expressed. It is just in the matter of brains that the Salvationists need a miracle.

"I hope to live to see the time," said Booth, "when the Lord Jesus Christ will have the largest quantity of the best brain power in the world." This is an admission that the Lord Jesus Christ hasn't got it yet, and he has been nineteen hundred years "on the job." It also implies that Booth expects to live to a very great age. He and Methusaleh will be neck and neck.

The *Saturday Review* says of the Salvationists at Eastbourne: "In any other country this rascal rout would have their heads well broke, and their impudent employer would be laid by the heels for breach of the peace." But the *S. R.* only likes its religion from the established tap.

The *Newcastle Weekly Chronicle* prints a report from "a Scotch contemporary" of an excruciatingly funny meeting of the Unreformed Presbytery of Glasgow. It is sent to us in good faith, but we take it to be a clever skit. A certain soap firm offers £100 a year for five years for a blazing advertisement in front of the gallery, and the minister thinks it a capital offer, especially as it will lend security to his salary. One member of the Presbytery advocates an extension of the idea. The panels of the pulpit might be let for £10 apiece. Finally the soap firm's handsome offer is unanimously recommended "for the consideration of the congregation at its first meeting."

The Church of England has produced some rare flunkys. One of them, Archdeacon Sinclair, has said that he was struck "by the humble, unostentatious way the Emperor and Empress of Germany said their prayers." Did the Archdeacon expect them to be proud and ostentatious? If not, why was he "struck"?

By the way, Archdeacon Sinclair should be more accurate. There is no Emperor of Germany. William is the German Emperor.

In his article entitled "From Fetich to Hygiene," to appear in the *Popular Science Monthly* for August, Dr. Andrew B. White presents a terrible picture of the ravages of epidemics

in the times when prayers and processions were the only means relied upon to check them.

The Church of England is enormously wealthy, but the bulk of the swag is in few hands. According to the *Church Review* the number of benefices in the Church are so disproportionate to the number of the clergy, that, if preferment went by seniority instead of by favor, every curate would remain unbeneficed for twenty-three years. There are over 12,000 unbeneficed curates, and their numbers multiply three times as rapidly as the multiplication of livings. The tendency is to reduce the curates' pay to a mere subsistence wage, and the mass of them can never hope for anything better.

Says the *Ironclad Age*, writing of a new society to investigate spiritism which has been started in the States under the presidency of Minot J. Savage: "Supernaturalism and fraud are inseparable. Wherever there is belief in the supernatural there are sharpers and hypocrites to spur and ride that belief for all it is worth. This journal isn't even a sympathiser with the Rev. Minot's society of investigation. Let the spiritualists and mugwump Christians pitch in and help us put good behavior, good morals, and love of justice in the bosoms of the people now swollen with the empty air of religion. When that is done, and the delusion and fraud called the Christian religion, like witchcraft, is a thing of the past, then it will perhaps be well to look into the merits of that phase of the supernatural called spiritualism, either as friends and sympathisers, or as stubborn and stiff-necked repudiators of every phase of the unreal and the impossible in nature."

Dr. Monroe says some of the Christian dogmas will do if only turned inside out; for instance, while it is not true that man was made in the image of God, it is quite correct to say that God was made in the image of man. While the assertion that the soul is immortal and the body mortal is incorrect, the reverse is sound enough. Religion only puts the cart where the horse ought to be.

"Christ or Despair" is the title of an article in the *Christian World*. We reject the alternative. We do without Christ, and we do not despair.

The story of Jonah recently came up as the subject of what is called International Sunday-school Lessons, which are expounded in various religious papers. The *New York Evangelist*, a Presbyterian organ, declared there was no miracle in the story at all, and a number of others, including the *Inquirer* (N.Y.) and *Apostolic Guide*, left out all mention of the great fish, or whale, as it is called by Jesus.

The replies given by pupils in our elementary schools to questions put by the examiner are (says *Society*) often from their naiveté, their perversity of fact, and frequently their quaint innocent humor, the source of much innocent amusement, and having afforded subject-matter for most diverting reading. On Sunday last, at the distribution of prizes to the pupils of the religious classes in connection with the St. John's Wood Synagogue, the Rev. John Chapman, one of the most popular of Jewish clergymen, gave some of his experiences as examiner, the relation of which caused considerable laughter. One pupil was asked to relate the story of the sacrifice of Isaac, and this was her rendering: "Abraham was commanded by the Lord to take Isaac on the top of Mount Moriah and to sacrifice him. And Abraham placed his son on the altar, and drew out a big sharp knife, and he was just going to strike a blow when an angel tapped him on the shoulder, and cried: "It's all right; the Lord was only in fun!"

The *Christian Commonwealth* has a sort of agony column, in which it deals with the "mental troubles" of correspondents. One of these writes from South Africa. He is shocked at the sufferings of sheep out there. Hundreds die of disease and starvation, often in great agony, and he asks himself "If God is love, why does he allow such suffering?" This is a pertinent question, and it requires a straightforward answer. But the inquirer does not get it. Instead of receiving bread, he gets a mouthful of sawdust. He is told to trust in the wisdom of God; it will all come right in the end. Perhaps so, but we should like to have the opinion of the sheep. Of course we mean the four-legged ones.



## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

*Sunday*, Aug. 2, at 11.15, Battersea Park Gates, "Prepare to meet thy God"; at 7.30, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C., "The Tree of Knowledge."

August 9, morning, Finsbury Park; evening, Hall of Science. 16, South Shields. 23, Sunderland. 30, Liverpool.

September 6, Birmingham. 13, morning, Victoria Park; evening, Hall of Science. 20, morning, Clerkenwell-green; evening, Hall of Science. 27, Manchester.

October 4, 11, 18, 25, 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.

J. W. GOTT.—Why will you send Lecture Notices to 28 Stonecutter-street instead of 14 Clerkenwell-green? We are only responsible for what is sent to the right address.

F. O. W.—We cannot discuss Huxley's social views in this journal. Your idea of liberty is nearly identical with our own.

H. S.—(1) Diderot was a voluminous author. He edited the famous Encyclopedia, and wrote essays, stories, plays, conversations, and philosophical reflections. His writings are collected in twenty volumes. They are not translated, but you will find many striking extracts in Mr. Morley's *Diderot*. (2) The passage you refer to is in *Hamlet*—"There's nothing good or ill but thinking makes it so." (3) Danton was not a writer, but a great orator and statesman of the French Revolution. (4) We hope you will succeed in getting the *Freethinker* placed on the table.

J. W. SIMMS (Christchurch, N.Z.).—We have not issued the Comic Bible Sketches in a separate form since our stock was destroyed by fire. At the present moment we can say nothing as to the future.

AN AGNOSTIC.—Hardly in our line.

MAURICE HEMMERDINGER AND EUGENE RENAULT.—Mr. Foote appreciates your thanks for his defence of the French nation against Joseph Taylor's aspersions. Freethought knows no nationality; it is as wide as the world, and as liberal as the air.

C. K. LAPORTE.—Thanks. See "Acid Drops."

H. SNELL.—Canon Taylor's article on Missions appeared in the *Fortnightly Review*, October, 1888.—Sorry to hear that a foul-mouthed Christian tried to cause a disturbance at Camberwell. He should not have been allowed to proceed with vulgar abuse. If it is, as you suspect, the beginning of an organised attempt to stop the open-air lectures, the Branch will have to be very careful.

R. G. LEES.—J. C. Whitmore's list of Converted Infidel Leaders has been exposed again and again. No amount of exposure will check its circulation.

J. G. DONSON.—We never heard of the J. Booth who poses at Huddersfield as a converted infidel, nor do we believe that Mr. Bradlaugh ever lectured on "The Crimes of Christianity."

J. R. WILLOCK.—Glad to hear that Mr. Watts's lectures at Manchester were a brilliant success. We hope he will settle down in England. Mr. Foote is much in need of such a colleague; indeed he could do with a dozen. Inform us of any fresh phase of your own case.

W. JANNAWAY.—The Portsmouth Branch has lost a pillar in Mr. Brumage. We hope, however, you will all resolve to make up for the loss as far as possible by increased exertions for the "good old cause."

UNSECTARIAN.—Thanks for the cutting. Mr. Foote is to visit Shields this month.

T. PHILLIPS (Spennymoor).—Your letters in the local press must have been serviceable to our cause. You and the Branch are to be congratulated.

J. G. GIBSON.—Thanks. See paragraph.

TWO OF THE DAMNED.—It will be acknowledged by the treasurer. We are delighted, though not exactly surprised, to hear that the *Freethinker* "is winning its way in the rising generation of our [the medical] profession." Shall always be glad to hear from you.

P. W. BALDWIN.—Any ejaculation does to work off the steam, but there is a vigorous emphasis about "damn" which

makes it the most eligible. Besides, the word is religious; you meet with it in the Bible, and often in church; and it is so gratifying to combine swearing with piety!

E. M. VANCE.—See "Sugar Plums." You made a capital collection.

G. J. JUDD.—Always glad to receive papers and cuttings.

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—Truthseeker—Flaming Sword—Loyal American—Better Way—Newcastle Daily Chronicle—Newcastle Daily Leader—Sunday World—Portsmouth Evening Mail—Grays and Tilbury Gazette—Countryman—Sunday-school Chronicle—Spennymoor and Tudhoe Chronicle—Reading Observer—Open Court—Twentieth Century—Herts and Essex Observer—Barnet Press—Luton Reporter—Liverpool Daily Post—Glasgow Evening News—Modern Thought.

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.

Mr. Foote had a splendid audience in Regent's Park on Sunday morning. Mr. Rowney presided, and several ladies occupied chairs in front of the stand. Miss Vance, Miss Brown, and another lady whose name we did not catch, took up the collection for the London Secular Federation, which realised £1 14s. 5d. Altogether it was a good morning's work.

As Mr. Foote was leaving the Park he was stopped by two policemen. Don't be alarmed, good reader! They were in plain clothes and both of them Freethinkers. What is more, they were members of the N. S. S. Walking along with Mr. Foote to his carriage and pair (*videlicet*, a tram-car) they imparted the welcome news that Freethought is spreading rapidly in the police force.

In the evening Mr. Foote lectured at the Hall of Science on "The Gospel According to Spurgeon." Two speeches in opposition were made by Mr. Joseph Taylor. What with the hot weather and the warm discussion, the audience was in a high state of excitement. Mr. Taylor's statements were sometimes rash, and his arguments curious. Still we hope he will come again. He makes a very good chopping-block for the lecturer.

This evening (Aug. 2) Mr. Foote lectures again at the Hall of Science, his subject being "The Tree of Knowledge." On the following Sunday evening (Aug. 9) he is to discourse on "The Follies of Theosophy," with special reference to the recent utterances of Madame Blavatsky's most distinguished follower, some of which, we imagine, will rather surprise a Freethought audience.

The third of Mr. Foote's free lectures for the London Branches will be delivered this morning (Aug. 2) at Battersea Park Gates. The subject is "Prepare to meet thy God." Freethinkers in the district should bring their Christian friends. At the risk of being thought importunate, we also request them to bring something for the collection-box. Mr. Foote's object in these lectures is twofold; not only to give a fillip to the open air propaganda, but also to recruit the exchequer of the London Secular Federation. If weather is unfavorable the lecture will be delivered under the railway arch close by.

The open-air propaganda of Freethought in London is going on fairly well this summer, but we fancy too little attention is given to the sale of literature. One or two stations that once used to dispose of several shillings' worth on a Sunday morning are now doing next to nothing in this way. Every Branch should appoint an energetic member to look after the literature. After all it is *reading* which is most important, and the *lectures* are chiefly useful as an introduction to it.

The *Echo*, of Monday, July 27, gives in its "Portrait Gallery" a column to Col. Ingersoll. The sketch of "this audacious, but good-natured and honest champion of what is rather loosely termed Freethought" is as fair as could be expected.



The *Echo* admits that Ingersoll "counts his ardent American admirers by tens of thousands," and that "he can draw bigger audiences in the great cities than any other orator in his own country." It also allows that "all who have met him agree in saying that he is one of the most charming and affectionate of men." Further, it is said that "His career is unblemished, his home-life all but perfect, his friendship generous and sincere."

Ingersoll's oratory is thus described: "His power on the platform is wonderful. A well-knit, powerful figure, with a large, shapely head, perfectly smooth face, bright, expressive eyes, and with a well-modulated voice, he makes a good appearance: And his addresses are so full of mingled epigram, humor, pathos, satire, eloquence, that he carries all before him. Highly cultivated men, thinkers, professors, would find a good deal of his oratory comparatively crude. But it is not meant for them, it is intended rather for the average man, and it has unquestionably a great hold over him."

The Leeds Branch is carrying on a very effective open-air propaganda. Mr. John Judge lectured last Sunday on Woodhouse Moor to a large, orderly, and attentive meeting. He was opposed by Mr. Frank Carson, organiser and lecturer at the Mechanics' Institute. Mr. Judge made a spirited reply. The next meeting will be held on Sunday, August 9, when Mr. Fisher is to lecture on "The Bible in Board Schools."

Mr. T. Phillips, of Spennymoor, has, in the local *Chronicle*, been defending Freethought, on the question of Science and the Bible, against all comers.

Our readers in the Tyneside district will remember that the annual excursion of the North Eastern Secular Federation takes place to-day (Aug. 2). South Shields is the trysting place. Visitors should make their way to Trow Rocks, about three-quarters of a mile south of the pier. Mr. S. M. Peacock, the president, lives at South Shields, and as he is a man who always means business the excursionists may look forward to finding all the arrangements in apple-pie order. Secretaries of Branches should let Mr. Peacock know by Saturday morning how many are coming. We hope to hear of fine weather, a big gathering, and a thoroughly enjoyable day. Let the "saints" make the most of this social occasion. The South Shields Branch is bent on hospitality, and if Jupiter Pluvius takes a holiday on Sunday there will be many happy hearts in the north-country Brighton.

Freethinkers coming to South Shields from places where there is no Branch of the N. S. S. are earnestly requested to confer with Mr. Joseph Brown, the able and hard-working secretary of the N.E. Secular Federation, with a view to starting Branches in their districts.

Mr. Brown sends us the Federation's annual report, which is a most encouraging document. Much good work has been done during the past year, and there is still a balance on the right side. We hope the well-to-do Freethinkers in the district will support the Federation liberally. Mr. Brown will be delighted to receive subscriptions. He will take shillings and will not refuse bank notes. His address is 86 Durham-street, Bentinck, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

A musical and dramatic entertainment will be given at the Battersea Secular Hall on Sunday evening, Aug. 9. Tickets (3d. and 6d.) can be obtained at the hall, or 32 Stanley-street Queens-road, Battersea. The proceeds will be devoted to the Bradlaugh Liability Fund.

The *Echo* of Friday and Saturday last week had a notable paper on "The Irish Priest," by an Irishman. The writer showed that the priests constitute a great secret society, an *imperium in imperio*, and that they are now fighting as much for personal prestige as for the interests of the Church. If Parnell has to succumb before them, his fall will be dearly purchased by the triumph of clericalism.

A native Christian minister of Ceylon laments in the *Methodist Times* the revival of Buddhism in that island. The Buddhists have started a Women's Education Society, and are establishing many schools, which, the correspondent laments, are doing harm to Christian schools by drawing off the children of Buddhist parents. And then they have a

wide dissemination of tracts and pamphlets against Christianity.

At the recent parliamentary elections in Holland the Abbé Schaeppman, the leading light of the clerical party, was ousted from his seat by a Liberal.

We are glad to see that Joseph Symes is lightening the too-heavy labor of filling his many columns in the *Liberator* by reprinting articles from the English Freethought papers. The number before us reproduces Mr. Robertson's criticism of Dr. Coit, and Mr. Foote's article "Are Secularists Cruel?"

Mr. Symes draws attention to the fact that "The *Oxford and Cust Observer* (a New Zealand paper), of April 18, reprints an article of Mr. Foote's from the *Freethinker*, as from our London Correspondent!" Joseph remarks that "Honest editors seem as hard to find as parsons of that description." But the editor, perhaps, has been imposed upon by the correspondent.

The Secularists of Portsmouth held a social gathering to bid farewell to Mr. and Mrs. Brumage, who have moved to London. Mr. Hore, in the name of the members of the Branch, presented Mr. Brumage with a gold pencil-case and Mrs. Brumage with a handsome ornamental flower vase. In making the presentation Mr. Hore characterised Mr. Brumage as the founder and father of the Secular cause in Portsmouth, and highly eulogised his services to Freethought in connection with the School Board and the Society.

The Belgian Freethinkers meet in Conference at Ghent this year. The dates are August 15 and 16, and the place Minard's Theatre. We send our Belgian friends our cordial good wishes.

Mr. W. W. Collins sends us from Christchurch, New Zealand, a copy of his pamphlet on "Charles Bradlaugh, Sunday-school Teacher, Iconoclast, and Statesman." It was published directly after Mr. Bradlaugh's death and should have reached us before. It contains an eloquent eulogy of our lost leader, and an excellent sketch of his career. We should be glad to know that it has a wide circulation in New Zealand and Australia.

The Freethought Association at Christchurch has also published an "In Memoriam" pamphlet, containing the matter which appeared in the *Northampton Mercury*, on February 6. It includes an account of Mr. Bradlaugh's last hours, the Memorial Service, and the Funeral, and a number of interesting anecdotes and bits of verse.

Mr. Collins also favors us with a letter and some newspaper cuttings, one of which is a report of the opening of a new Secular Hall at Christchurch, on June 14. Mr. Collins officiated at the ceremony, and the building was crowded. In the morning Mr. Collins delivered the dedicatory address; in the afternoon there was a musical recital by the children; and in the evening another discourse on "Secularism, the Real Religion of Humanity." Mr. Collins informs us that the Hall will hold six hundred people. There are also offices, a reading room, and a library. The only regret of Mr. Collins and his colleagues is that Mr. Bradlaugh did not live long enough to hear of their success. "His name," Mr. Collins says, "is greeted with intense enthusiasm, as indeed is your own."

Christchurch Freethinkers are evidently not paupers. Mr. Collins says they were organising a Grand Ball when he was writing, the tickets were to be five shillings each, and seventy or eighty double tickets were already sold. Mr. Collins adds that the Sydney Secularists were calling upon him to return, but he could not leave Christchurch until his work was completed.

*De Dageraad*, of Amsterdam, opens with a solid article on Natural Science and Hypothesis, by T. M. Overstra. Our contemporary contemplates giving its readers a translation of Lecky's *History of Rationalism in Europe*. We should like to see J. van D. Ende, who makes the translation, do an original paper on the contribution of Holland to the Freethought movement in Europe.

"D" contemplates issuing a volume of his Freethought



writings under the title "The Method of Unreason and Other Essays." We hope this project will not remain among good intentions, for "D" is no less worthy of being heard as a theological and biblical critic than as a political economist.

We have received Part II. and also (rather late in the day) Part I. of *Freethought Readings and Secular Songs*, published by Mr. R. Forder, and compiled by Mr. J. M. Wheeler. These parts are well printed, and the work, when completed, will make a handsome volume. The first part of the title is justified by the contents, but we cannot say as much for the second part; and, in fact, the two ideas, which will hardly coalesce, should have been kept distinct. A few pieces have no author's name; others have the name of Mr. "Anon," who is responsible, we should imagine, for both classes. The parts before us contain some capital poetry, with some verses that are not poetry at all; but the former predominate, and on the whole the collection should find a sufficient body of patrons, as it certainly supplies a long-felt want. We notice but one piece of prose in the collection. Would it not be better to intersperse prose selections more freely?

By the way, there is to our eye a bad misprint on page 52, in the fine passage from George Chapman. We know not what edition Mr. Wheeler has consulted, but unless our memory is treacherous the word "needful" should be "lawful." The former is extremely weak; the latter is strong and masculine, in the true style of that noble Pagan spirit.

A big book on the *Development of Theology in Germany and Britain* by Dr. Otto Pfeleiderer, has recently been translated. Though he mentions James and John Stuart Mill in this country, Dr. Pfeleiderer has nothing to say of so pronounced a heretic as Schopenhauer in his own land. The work is rationalistic while holding on to orthodoxy with one finger. Of the late Bishop of Durham's vaunted reply to *Supernatural Religion*, Dr. Pfeleiderer says, "The answer which Bishop Lightfoot offered in the name of orthodoxy is extraordinarily weak . . . even if all the Bishop's deductions were correct, the general result of the author's inquiries would not be in any way altered."

The discussion of the subject of eternal punishment still continues in the *Sunday-school Chronicle*, and reveals a considerable amount of heresy in an unexpected quarter, viz., among Sunday-school teachers. The result of the controversy will probably be the demonstration that if eternal punishment is given up a number of other dogmas will have to go with it.

Mr. Charles Watts lectures on Sunday (Aug. 9) at the Hall of Science, Rockingham-street, Sheffield. We hope he will have good meetings. He must have many old friends in that district.

"If our Church leaders," says the *Christian World*, "would get such a hold of the masses as did, for instance, Mr. Bradlaugh, they must exhibit some approximation to his knowledge of their questions."

Subscriptions are coming in slowly at present to the Bradlaugh Memorial Fund. This is natural perhaps as the Liquidation and other Funds are also still in the field. But there must be many intending subscribers who have not yet remitted, and they are earnestly requested to do so as soon as possible. Before long some decisive steps will have to be taken with respect to the Bradlaugh Memorial.

The first statutory meeting of shareholders of the Bradlaugh Memorial Hall Company (Limited) will be held at the London Hall of Science on Tuesday, August 25, at 8 p.m. The directors' report will be submitted for discussion, and a fresh board will be elected; of course, the old directors are eligible for re-election. Very important business will have to be transacted, and all who wish to have a voice in shaping the Company's future should apply for shares without delay. Mr. Foote will himself lay serious proposals before the meeting, and he has a right to ask Freethinkers who have confidence in his leadership to take shares before August 25, with a view to assisting him, as far as they honestly can, in carrying out what he deems essential to the success of the idea which the Company was formed to promote.

## THE SUREST WAY TO HEAVEN.

(From the New York "Truthseeker.")

Four murderers were legally killed in this state on the 7th instant. All but one, a Japanese, went to heaven direct. The Jap, being a heathen, is now in hell. All were brutal men, who deserved to be secluded from the rest of the world for the remainder of their lives. They were unfit to be at large, as is a tiger, and could have earned their board by producing useful articles.

The following extract from a daily paper shows how easy it is to get to heaven, or at least to convince a murderer that he is going there: "The condemned men spent their last hours of waking in prayer with their spiritual advisers, the Rev. Fathers Creeden, Lynch, and Hogan, the Rev. Mr. Edgerton, and the Rev. Mr. Law, chaplain of the Tombs. They knew at six o'clock Monday night that they would die at sunrise the next morning. The news was broken to them by the ministers. It did not seem to surprise them. When the news was broken to Slocum, he seemed not to hear it; he began at once to talk about something else. Father Hogan was with him. 'Father,' he said, 'are you sure that such a wicked man as I will be saved?' 'Sure of it,' said the priest. 'Why, there is no doubt of it.' And then he told a story of two women. One led a pure life, and gave to charity liberally. She was a hypocrite in some things. She died without repentance, and was lost. The other was a harlot. Oh, she was one of the worst women that ever lived. She cared not the snap of her finger for religion. She cared for nothing that was good. She was simply wicked. She was taken sick, and on her deathbed she came to a realising sense of her sins. She repented and was saved. This seemed to comfort Slocum very much, and his face brightened up, but his spirits wavered. 'It is not that I fear death,' he said; 'so miserable a fellow as I is better dead than alive, and I have the courage to face death, but it is the courage to face heaven that I lack.'

"Slocum was not wrong when he said he had the courage to face death. As the time approached he became more and more wrapped up in the contemplation of the heavenly future, and when summoned by the keepers to pass under the fatal doorway his hands were clasped, and his face wore a wrapt and exalted expression. He obeyed the directions of those in the execution room and spoke intelligently, but his thoughts seemed far away. He died with scarcely a struggle.

"Wood was of a different make. His nature was more even, not so subject to fluctuations as Slocum's. When he accepted religion he became a serious man. Religion became almost his only thought. It was natural, therefore, that his last hours should be different from Slocum's. There was no such exaltation in his case. Similarly there were no such moments of depression. Wood never doubted when once he became a Christian. As the time approached he talked calmly with the priest. Their talk was of heaven. As the priest painted his joys, Wood gradually grew into a higher state of faith and expectation, and it was with joy most evident that he walked into the death chamber and seated himself in the chair which was to be the means of his attainment of his highest happiness."

If anything could be wanting to disgust people with the Christian scheme of "salvation," the priest's talk and the "conversion" of the brutal murderers would surely furnish it.

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## MELVILLE'S MARDI.

[CONCLUDED.]

IN the land of Maramma, or religion, is the inaccessible peak of Ofo, perhaps devotion. Infatuated pilgrims wearily climb and climb, till slipping from the rocks, they fall backward, and oftentimes perish at its base. "Wherefore," says Media, "do you mortals undertake the ascent at all? why not be content on the plain? and even if attainable, what would you do upon that lofty clouded summit? Or how can you hope to breathe that rarefied air, unfitted for your human lungs?" Pani, the blind priest, seeks to show them over the island, but wants much recompense for his trouble. "I thought superfluities were worthless, nay sinful," said Babbalanja. "I am but a lowly laborer," says he, meekly crossing his arms, "but does not the lowliest laborer ask and receive his reward." Mohi undertakes to conduct them. Here they find the deadly upas woods, the consecrated waters in which the devout bathe their garments that long life may ensue, but get rheumatics; the stone image which is declared to be a living tree, and gods here there and everywhere, in number as many as the follies of Mardi. "All the images of the gods were found defaced by hostile devotees of rival gods." It is needless to say that Yillah, the ideal, is not met with in Maramma.

Babbalanja thus discourses on what Mohi relates of Alma, *i.e.*, Christ: "The prophet came to dissipate errors, you say; but, superadded to many that have survived the past, ten thousand others have originated in various constructions of the principles of Alma himself. The prophet came to do away with all gods but one; but since the days of Alma the idols of Maramma have more than quadrupled. The prophet came to make us Mardians more virtuous and happy; but along with all previous good, the same wars, crimes, and miseries which existed in Alma's day under various modifications, are yet extant. Nay, take from those chronicles, Mohi, the history of those horrors, one way or other, resulting from the doings of Alma's nominal followers, and your chronicles would not so frequently make mention of blood. The prophet came to guarantee our eternal felicity; but, according to what is told in Maramma, that felicity rests on so hard a proviso that, to a thinking mind, but very few of our sinful race may secure it. For one, then, I wholly reject your Alma; not so much because of all that is hard to be understood in his histories as because of obvious and undeniable things all round us, which to me seem at war with an unreserved faith in his doctrines as promulgated here in Maramma. Besides, everything in this isle strengthens my incredulity; I never was so thorough a disbeliever as now." Yes, Babbalanja, there are no more thorough heretics than those who have studied religion in the light of history.

Babbalanja tells how his father (heathen philosophy) was persecuted and burnt in the name of Alma. "And from those flames, they devoutly swore he went to others—horrible fable!" Said Mohi, "Do you deny, then, the everlasting torments?" "'Tis not worth a denial; nor, by formally denying it, will I run the risk of shaking the faith of thousands, who in that pious belief find infinite satisfaction for all they suffer in Mardi." "How," said Media, "are there those who soothe themselves with the thought of everlasting flames?"

"One would think so, my lord, since they defend that dogma more resolutely than any other. Sooner will they yield you the isles of Paradise than it. And in truth, as liege followers of Alma, they would seem but right in clinging to it as they do; for, according to all one hears in Maramma, the great end of the prophet's mission seems to have been the revealing to us Mardians the existence of horrors, most hard to escape. But better we were all annihilated than that one man should be damned."

Yoomy says: "Could I, I would not believe it. It is at variance with the dictates of my heart; instinctively my heart turns from it, as a thirsty man from gall."

In illustration of religion, Babbalanja tells a story of nine blind men with long noses, who each touch a different trunk of an immense wild banyan tree with its thousand branches striking into the earth. Each swore there was but one tree, and he was touching the true and original trunk.

Of the dead he says, "But they have gone to the land unknown. Meet phrase. Where is it? Not one of Oro's priests telleth a straight story concerning it; 'twill be hard finding their paradises. Touching the life of Alma, in Mohi's chronicles, 'tis related that a man was once raised from the tomb. But rubbed he not his eyes, and stared he not most

vacantly! Not one revelation did he make. Ye gods! to have been a bystander there!

"At best, 'tis but a hope. But will a longing bring the thing desired? Doth dread avert its object? An instinct is no preservative. The fire I shrink from may consume me. Already have we been the nothing we dread to be. Nothing abideth; the river of yesterday floweth not to-day; the sun's rising is a setting; living is dying; the very mountains melt, and all revolve—systems and asteroid; the sun wheels through the zodiac, and the zodiac is a revolution. Ah gods! in all this universal stir, am I to prove one stable thing?"

It will be seen that *Mardi* is a philosophical and Free-thought romance. It breathes an air of freedom as of the sea, and in parts the writing rises to the dignity of a prose poem. In its cadence you may hear the whistle of the briny breeze or the rippling of the water as it breaks into frolicsome foam.

J. M. W.

## CATHOLIC LIBERTY.

A Roman Catholic priest of Chicago refused to christen a child "Garfield." He said in defence of his action:

"I could see no valid reason why I should name the child of a Christian after Garfield. I do not know of anything in the life of Garfield that stamps him pre-eminently as a Christian. I presume he was a good man and a good citizen. I think it quite likely that he was a wise statesman and President.

"I remember, however, that he was a minister in early life, and afterward forsook the cloth for politics.

"I do not remember, either, that Garfield died with the consolation of any church. He may have done so, but I never heard of it.

"A Catholic who dies without extreme unction or the last rites of the church dies the death of a dog."

Catholics are a liberty-loving set. How they do admire independence! They are just the fellows to fight for human freedom. They are all willing and anxious to go somewhere and die for any and all kinds of liberty. A Catholic is the last man to submit to tyranny. Any day you can hear one of these fellows tell what he would do to help the "old country," break the yoke of despotism. Why, the British lion would twist off his own tail out of pure terror, should a genuine Irish Catholic open his mouth at him. And yet, not a Catholic in the United States dares name a child contrary to a priest's command. There's independence for you! There is Catholic liberty! The only freedom a Catholic ever had was the freedom to obey. He never had the liberty to rebel—to think and act for himself. There is no liberty where men obey priests.—*Boston Investigator*.

## FOR CHRIST'S SAKE.

Knowing Dr. Monroe's tender consideration for the ministers of the Almighty, we give insertion to the following rebuke to ourselves from the pages of the *Ironclad Age*:—

"The London *Freethinker* seems to forget that crook-work done for Christ's sake is sanctified and made straight, or it never would have printed this cruel insinuation:—'If the head physician of a hospital in the receipt of an annual salary of £1,000 or more were to leave the work to a young sawbones to whom he offered £100, he would be called a swindler. Yet this is what is continually done in the Church, where the work of rich livings is usually done by curates who are comparatively poorly paid.'"

There are people who give themselves to the Lord, but they take all the money out of their pockets before they do it.

"Your money or your life!" "Would you rob a professional brother?" "Are you in the profession?" "I am managing the local church bazaar." "Pass on friend."

King Kalakaur, of the Sandwich Islands cannot help being a good man. The reason assigned is that his ancestors ate so much missionary in their time that it worked into their system and was transmitted to their descendants.

Parson (to a very sick man): "Now, if you have any earnest desire in your heart, name it." Sick man: "I want to get well!"

"The devil arose from his little bed,  
And he washed his face and he combed his head."  
Poet, we would not be deemed profane,  
But we ask again, and we ask in vain—  
The devil, no doubt, did just as he oughter,  
But where in Hades did he get his water?"



**SUNDAY MEETINGS.**

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

**LONDON.**

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): Monday and Tuesday, at 8, social gatherings. Wednesday, at 7.30, dramatic class.

Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E.: 7.30, Mr. S. Soddy, "Other Worlds than Ours."

Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C.: 7.30, Mr. G. W. Foote, "The Tree of Knowledge."

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow: 7.30, Mr. Arthur Lovell, "Is the Bible Orthodox?" Thursday, at 8, open debate.

West London—Clarendon Coffee Palace, Clarendon Road (close to Latimer Road Station): Friday, at 8.30, members' monthly business meeting.

**OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.**

Battersea Park Gates: 11.15, Mr. G. W. Foote, "Prepare to meet thy God"; 7.15, Mr. F. Haslam, "Daniel, the Lion Tamer."

Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, Mr. James Marshall, "Christ and Christianity."

Camberwell—Station Road: 11.30, Mr. S. Soddy, "The New Testament."

Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, Mr. Stanley Jones will lecture. Edmonton (corner of Angel Road): 7, Mr. C. Cohen, "Scenes from History."

Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "Christianity and Cruelty."

Hyde Park (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Mr. Neil Corbett, "Historical and other Objections to Christianity—a Reply to Mr. R. Dunn (C. E. S.)."

Kilburn—Salisbury Road (close to Queen's Park Station): 6.30, Mr. W. Norrish will lecture.

Kingsland Green: 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "The History of the Inquisition."

Leyton (open space near Vicarage Road, High Road): 11.30, Mr. Charles Johnson, "The Plagues of Egypt."

Midland Arches (corner of Battle Bridge Road): 11.30, a lecture.

Mile End Waste: 11.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "Heaven and Hell—what must it be to be there?"

North Finchley (opposite "The Swan"): 11.30, a lecture. Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey, "That Whale Story."

Plaistow Green (near the Station): 11.30, a lecture. Regent's Park (near Gloucester Gate): 3.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "History of the Inquisition."

Stratford—Matthew's Park Estate, Ham Park Road: 3.30, a lecture. Tottenham (corner of West Green Road): 3.30, Mr. E. Calvert, "Is the Bible a Divine Record?"

Victoria Park (near the fountain): Mr. C. Cohen, 11.30, "Belief"; 3.15, "Christianity and Civilisation—Part VI."

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill: 11.30, Mr. E. Calvert, "The Soul."

**COUNTRY.**

Glasgow Branch N. S. S., Excursion to Greenock; train leaves St. Enoch Station at 7.50 a.m.

Heckmondwike—At Mr. John Rothera's, Bottoms: 2.30, a business meeting.

Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden Street: 11.30, committee meeting; 7, Mr. Doeg, "Tough Yarns Spun by Sky Pilots."

Manchester N. S. S., Secular Hall, Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saints': 6.30, a lecture.

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea: 7, a meeting.

Sheffield Branch N. S. S., Excursion of members and friends to Glen Home; meet 'bus at corner of Arundel Street and Norfolk Street at 2.15 prompt.

**OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.**

Bradford—Hammerton Street, Leeds Road: 6, Mr. A. B. Wakefield, "Why the Clergy Fear Discussion."

Manchester (near Local Board Offices at Gorton): 11, Mr. Jones will lecture. Corner of Denmark Road, afternoon, a lecture.

Newcastle—Quayside (near big crane): 11, Mr. A. T. Dipper, "What the Bible Really Is."

**LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.**

CHARLES WATTS.—Aug. 9, Sheffield; 16, Failsforth; 23, Hall of Science, London; 30, Edinburgh. Sept. 2, Paisley; 7, Glasgow.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—July 26 to Aug. 9, Holiday Tour. Aug. 16, morning, Battersea; 23, morning, Westminster; 30, morning, Woolwich. Sept. 6, morning, Clerkenwell; 13, morning, Bethnal Green; afternoon, Victoria Park; 20, morning, Westminster.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley Road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—Aug. 2, morning; Kingsland Green; afternoon, Regent's Park; 9, morning, Pimlico; evening, Kilburn; 16, morning, Clerkenwell; evening, Lambeth; 23, morning, Hyde Park; evening, Hammersmith; 30, morning, Camberwell; evening, Lambeth.

STANLEY JONES, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.—Aug. 2, morning, Clerkenwell Green; 16, Luton; 23, Leyton; 30, Halstead. Sept. 6, Rochdale; 13, Manchester; 20, Liverpool.

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