

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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SPECIAL NOTICE.

"THE FREETHINKER" will shortly be ENLARGED to SIXTEEN PAGES, still at the old price of ONE PENNY.

FOOLS AND FOOLING.

This is our parting kick at Theosophy, at least for the present. In itself the lunacy is hardly worth a moment's trouble, but it assumed a relative importance to Freethinkers in consequence of Mrs. Besant's perversion. The danger in this direction was one that had to be faced, and we faced it. Mrs. Besant has now come out in her true colors. What she discreetly held back from Secular audiences is now proclaimed from the housetops. The thin end of the wedge will make no progress now the thick end is clearly seen. Secularists will have nothing to do with Mahatmas, supernormal hocus-pocus, and all the other mysteries of Theosophy. Mrs. Besant's eloquence has lost its power over them. She will have to appeal to the general fool-crop, which, as Heine said, is perennial, and always large enough to sustain the latest novelty in superstition.

Mrs. Besant has explained why she and her chairwoman left the platform of the Hall of Science without waiting for discussion. The occasion was a painful one, and she pleads her "feelings." But this strikes us as rather "thin." Her "feelings" did not prevent her from grossly misrepresenting the National Secular Society; they only prevented her from waiting to see her misrepresentations corrected.

The high priestess of Theosophy has been lecturing at St. George's Hall to a more fashionable audience than assembles at the Hall of Science. She recommended the practice of telepathy. Two people were to act in concert at a distance from each other. One was to reduce his mind to a perfect blank—a feat which some Theosophists should find easy; the other was to project his thoughts into his friend's empty brain. By practising this a quarter of an hour every day for six months, they would be able to dispense with the electric telegraph. Probably few people, except the cracked ones, will think the game worth the candle; and we fancy the Postmaster-General is not apprehensive of a loss of revenue.

Mrs. Besant said she would not produce the Mahatma letters. They were private communications. Then why did she make them public? Her policy is to use them as evidence up to the point of investigation. She is willing to be examined, but she will not be cross-examined. She declared that "she was unable to give any proof of the genuineness" of the letters. This is a point which Freethinkers should note.

In another lecture Mrs. Besant talked of the Mahatmas working up the French Revolution. This is history with a vengeance. She also regarded Jesus Christ as a Mahatma who was "voluntarily re-

incarnated for the sake of helping man." Such is the stuff with which she proposes to regenerate the world.

Colonel Olcott is more rampant than Mrs. Besant. He is credulous enough for anything. He gravely tells the *Chronicle* interviewer that Madame Blavatsky, by a mere effort of will, detached hundreds of roses from their stems in the garden, and dropped them on the heads of her guests and disciples in the drawing-room. It is a wonder he did not keep one of the roses as evidence, like the gentleman who proved the story of the Flood by bringing a stone from Mount Ararat.

Colonel Olcott, Mrs. Besant, and the rest of the tribe of mystery, tell us what somebody else was able to do. They are discreet enough not to say what they can do themselves. But a certain Theosophist, Colonel Desmond, throws discretion to the winds. He is willing to give a public performance. He boasts of being able to move heavy pianos without touching them, by a mere effort of volition. He declares his readiness to stake £1,000 on his success, and his challenge has been accepted by Mr. Stuart Cumberland, who is ready to deposit £1,000 on the other side. If Colonel Desmond is able to produce "any declared occult manifestation which is not capable of a natural explanation" Mr. Stuart Cumberland will lose his money. But will the Colonel come up to the scratch? According to the *Star* he gave an address which does not exist in the Directory, and a letter sent to him there was returned through the Dead Letter Office.

Right on the heels of Colonel Desmond comes a Hindu with a long name, dating from Lincoln's-inn, who declares that Hinduism gives people occult powers as well as Theosophy. He offers to deposit another £1,000, which he is to forfeit if he does not prevent Colonel Desmond's efforts from taking effect, or "exhibit before the same audience still more wonderful and marvellous possession of superhuman powers."

This is a fresh development of fooling. It reminds us of the early ages of Christianity, when the Fathers challenged the Pagan priests to a public competition, to demonstrate which religion could perform the biggest miracles.

When the *Chronicle* took to booming Mrs. Besant the public mind was deeply agitated. The sense of wonder, the love of the marvellous, which men inherit from their savage progenitors, was strongly appealed to. Eyes opened wide and mouths opened wider. Were we on the eve of a new revelation? But day by day the mystery grew shabbier. Reaction set in, and Theosophy is now a universal subject of ridicule. Its marvels cannot bear the light of investigation. They must be taken on trust. And the public is turning away from the folly, with the muttered reflection of "The same old game."

We are glad to have done our part in the exposure of this delusion. It was a painful thing to attack it unsparringly when its chief exponent was a lady who had been for so many years a leader of our own

party; not one of its deepest thinkers, or most original minds, but one of its most eloquent and popular advocates. Truth, however, is higher than mere politeness, and duty is superior to complaisance. The work had to be done, and it fell upon us by virtue of our position. Never will we permit the Secular party to become the happy hunting-ground of cranks, faddists, or mystery-mongers. Our philosophy does not boast of explaining the infinite universe. We mistrust short-cuts to the "unknown."

G. W. FOOTE.

AMOROUS HYMNS.

A CURIOUS religious work has found its way into our hands. It is entitled *Hymns, or The Voice of the Bride*, with the motto appropriately taken from the Song of Solomon ii., 14, "Let me hear thy voice, for sweet is thy voice." It was published in 1889, and is "to be obtained from Mr. J. Ker, 150 Denmark-hill, London, and Mr. F. Beddow, Cleeve House, Ravensdale-road, Stamford-hill, London." To what sect the hymns belong does not appear. The preface states they are written "for God's people"; but God's people are, let us hope, of no particular sect. Evidently the Jews are not intended, for one of the first hymns is to "Jesus Jehovah"—an expression which smacks of Swedenborgian heresy. We are credibly informed the volume is used in a sort of Agapemone. It is at any rate redolent of that feeling which is so often found in religious devotion, in which sensual and platonic affection commingle. A few specimens will give a better notion of our meaning than any description. Thus hymn 9 begins:

Thou'st filled me with life, Lord;
Thou'st sunk me in love,
And sweetly hast sealed me
Thine own gentle dove;
But O though Thou'st crowded
Thy blessings on me,
My brightest of bliss, Lord,
Is abiding in Thee.
Love! Love! Sweet, sweet Love;
O hail, holy Love! O hail, holy Love!

This iteration of love and dove proceeds through the book. In the next hymn we have:

Ear never hath heard of
The depths of Thy love
As it freely flows forth
Unto me, Lord, Thy dove.

And in hymn 11—

Then tell me, Where doth glory dwell?
I will, I will, I will—
'Tis the light of the eye that is purity,
The sweet of the smile that is love,
The strength of the youth that is holy truth,
The lion that is led by the dove.

This is spiritual enough. But imagine a number of budding young damsels singing the following:—

O my beloved, here is my rest,
Here in Thy bosom, here on Thy breast!
One with Thy Spirit, one with Thy will,
O my beloved, all, all is well,
All, all is well; all, all is well
O my Beloved, all, all is well.

O my Beloved, tell me, O tell,
Why art Thou fairer, dearer, Lord still?
Why in Thy bosom deep do I dwell?
Why, my Beloved, why is it well,
All, all, etc.—

Concluding their service with the following "Doxology":

O that glory! who shall share it?
Lo, He comes! we love to hear it;
We are not of them that fear it;
Come, Lord, come!

Come, then, all Thy love revealing;
Come Thyself, no more concealing;
Come, Thou Holy One, all healing,
Come, come, come.

Scriptural authority for the dove is given in a hymn entitled "The Better Part."

O my Jesus, art Thou love?
Dost thou call me Lord thy dove? (Cant ii., 14)
O then, let me never rove
From thy dear feet.

The singer in the same hymn wishes both to "in Thy bosom lie" and also to be at his feet.

Another hymn, evidently inspired by the Song of Solomon, begins:

And who is this that, like the morn
In beauty looketh forth;
More clear than sun, than moon more fair,
And terrible on earth?
'Tis she, my sister and my spouse,
My love, my dove, my own;
'Tis she I love to look upon,
'Tis my undefiled one.

Another one begins:

O my Lord! all love excelling,
Sweetly whisper, Thou art mine
In Thy bosom, brightly dwelling,
I will answer, I am Thine.

The general sentiment, indeed, of the collection is expressed in the following lines:

He's love in all its tenderness,
As fond as it is free;
Yes, He's love without beginning
That end shall never see;
He's love that lives in light alone,
Yes Life, Light, Love is He;
O, He's this is my beloved,—
He's all in all to me.

Hymn 35 reminds one of the epistles which, when read in breach of promise cases, convulse the court with laughter.

O why should'st thou wander, love,
E'en for an hour,
Or lose for a moment
Thy gentle repose?
O believe me, thy life
Is a delicate flower
That shrinks from the cold
Where its secret petals close.

Then rest thee, thou loved one
Rest sweetly in Him
Whose smile is thy sunshine,
His bosom thy home;
So thy leaf shall not wither,
Thy blossom be dim,
But yield to its owner
Its richest perfume.

The longest hymn in the book is entitled "Where is that Land of Pure Delight." It pictures the state of Adam and Eve in Eden, where

There in innocence they walked,
The image of their God,
And there of Him they haply talked,
Their all their only God.

But concludes that the land of pure delight is not in Eden, but here.

Here where I walk with Him in white,
And we are all alone;
Here where I learn, with deep delight,
That he and I are one.

The readiness with which ungratified sexual passion runs into religious emotion has often been remarked by physicians. Much corroboration could be brought from the devotional books of monks and nuns. About twenty years ago a Catholic priest in England issued a volume of *Anthems to Mary*, nearly every one of which was written in the most erotic vein of Tom Moore. One of the "Seven Great Hymns of the Mediæval Church" was the famous *Veni Creator* paraphrased by Dryden. Another began:

Jesus, the gem of Beauty
 True God and Man they sing
 The never-failing Garden
 The ever-golden Ring ;
 The Door, the Pledge, the Husband,
 The Guardian of his Court,
 The Day-Star of Salvation,
 The Porter and the Port.

The Latin hymn writers, like the moderns, dwelt with gusto on the physical effects of the crucifixion. A noted hymn ran—

Hail! holy wounds of Jesus, hail. . .
 Brighter than brightest stars ye show,
 Than sweetest rose your scent more rare ;
 No Indian gem may match your glow,
 No honey's taste with yours compare.

Some of the most amorous hymns are in a collection used by the Moravian Brethren in the last century, published in 1754. Here is a specimen verse found in Hymn 441 :

Now, Jesu, love's pure Fire,
 Come fetch me to thee home,
 To Thy Breast I aspire.
 My soul's Adornment! come.

Another (448) :

Jesu's Blood! O come and glide
 Through me, and in me abide.
 Jesu's blood! streams thro' the whole,
 Thro' my Spirit, Body, Soul:
 My heart pants and longs for Thee,
 Thirsting, I beg heartily,
 Jesu's Blood come over me.

A common sentiment is given in Hymn 467 :

My spirit's desire appeases he,
 I dwell in Him and He in me!
 He comes to me with kiss of grace
 And I to him with blushing face.
 He is my bridegroom, I His bride,
 My soul to him in marriage ty'd ;
 Nothing shall sep'rate Him from me
 Nor me from Him eternally.

Hymn 481 :

So then I will sleep happily,
 Jesus! in thy embraces ;
 Thy watchful care shall cover me,
 My bed shall be thy mercies.
 My pillow is thy Breast,
 My dream, that solace blest,
 Which from thy holy side distils,
 Wherewith thy Spirit my heart fills.
 As oft as this night my pulse beats
 My Spirit shall embrace thee ;
 Oft as my heart its throbs repeats,
 I'll part for thee and praise thee.
 Thus I to sleep recline ;
 Lord Jesus! I am thine;
 Yes Jesu Jesu! thou art mine.
 And I am now and ever thine.

Positivists have often urged on behalf of religion that it has done valuable service in preserving emotion. We think much more might be said of its having perniciously wasted human love on supernatural objects, by whom it cannot be needed, and so hindering its free flow to humanity.

J. M. WHEELER.

The *Grimsby News* has been writing on suicide. The article is a curious mixture of sense and nonsense. We cordially agree with the observation that suicide is not a purely individual act, at least in very many cases. People have no more right to avoid their obligations by cutting their throats than they have by running away. Nothing is more abjectly base than for a man to commit suicide and leave his wife and children to the care of "God." But the *Grimsby News* is quite wrong in supposing that Materialism leads to self-slaughter. Materialists are ready to echo the statement that "No one has so clear a conviction of his obligation to fulfil the whole art and science of living, as he who realises that he inherits the work and aim of nature for millions of years preceding himself"—providing the statement is stripped of all theological meaning.

THE BRADLAUGH MEMORIAL.

FROM his own point of view, Mr. J. M. Robertson gives a long account of the matter I dealt with last week. His arguments I do not intend to notice. The time for discussing is past; it is now the time for action. But Mr. Robertson's account abounds with inaccuracies, some of which I think it necessary to correct.

(1) I did not say, with respect to the Memorial Fund, what is put into my mouth. I did not say I should "ask the Executive to withhold the money from the Memorial Hall Company as now constituted." The Company has no right to the money. The language of the circular appealing for subscriptions is as follows:—"Donations will be held by the National Secular Society, or by the appointed Treasurer on its behalf, until the project is ripe for execution; when the total amount will be invested in the Hall and Institute in the names of a sufficiently large number of elected persons, who will act as Trustees for the Freethought party."

I presume there is no one who thinks the project "ripe for execution." Until it is, the money will not be invested in the Company, and only a madman would propose that it should be.

What I told the Directors on Thursday, September 3, was this:—The N. S. S. will hold the Memorial donations until the Company has a practical scheme in view. If the N. S. S. Executive approves the scheme by a satisfactory majority, the money will be invested in shares. If it does not approve the scheme, the subscribers will have to be consulted. It would be dishonest to use the money for any other purpose, but the Company will not be allowed to usurp the functions of the N. S. S.

(2) It is not a fact that one of my "main contentions" was that "the Memorial is not worth going on with." I said that the policy of waiting did not need my assistance; that I was bound to throw my energies into the immediate task of securing the Hall of Science; that there was nothing to prevent my promoting the Company actively at some future time, especially as it was deemed advisable to wait ten, twenty, or thirty years; that in the meantime I would not embarrass the Company, but give it a reasonable use of my paper for its notices, announcements, and appeals.

(3) I did not "tell the directors," during the discussion on Mr. Smith's offer, that the project meant the raising of "a lump sum of £4,500 within a few weeks." Mr. Smith only asked £2,000 in all, and offered to let £1,000 remain on mortgage. The deposit money, which was at first to be £500, I got him to reduce to £100. The sum of £2,000 would have put us in absolute possession of the lease, premises, fixtures, and furniture. The £2,500 for rebuilding the front premises could have been raised at leisure, as the lease allowed ten years for that expenditure.

(4) It is untrue that "not the slightest attempt was made by anybody even to look about for a site." Those who objected to my scheme did not look about, or if they did they kept their information to themselves. But I looked about. As a matter of fact, I told the Directors of one site in Old-street, about fifty yards from the Hall of Science. No buildings of any value to us stood upon it, and the ground-rent required on an 80 years lease was £1,000 a year. This worked out at 2s. per foot, while the ground-rent of the Hall of Science plot—with useful buildings standing upon it—worked out at 1s. per foot.

(5) It is not true that the Directors at the meeting referred to "decisively rejected" my proposal. The minute book shows what occurred. An amendment was carried against my proposal, but the amendment itself was lost on being put as the substantive resolution. This was debating-society work and not

real business. I determined as Chairman that the Directors should vote Aye or No on my proposal. I therefore called another meeting. True, it was held forty-eight hours after the previous meeting, but that was the longest time I could induce Mr. Smith to keep his offer open, and it was only as a personal favor to me that he kept it open at all.

(6) It is not true that I "would not allow this matter to be discussed at the shareholders' meeting even after [I] had formally ruled that the directors had ceased to be such until re-elected." What I ruled was, that the directors did *not* cease to be directors until their report was accepted or rejected; that directors could not discuss before the shareholders the accuracy or inaccuracy of their own report,—ordered to be drafted at one directors' meeting and formally passed at the next; and that the formality or informality of any particular directors' meeting should have been raised, if at all, in a constitutional manner on the Board, and decided by a deliberate vote.

(7) It is not true that "they"—that is, the directors who supported me—"voted on the N. S. S. Executive to pay a rent of £250" for certain uses of the Hall of Science for one year. The Executive meeting was a large one, Mr. Robertson himself was present, and the vote was unanimous.

(8) It is not true, according to Mr. Robertson's concluding sentence, that I and my supporters are "seeking to withhold from the purposes of the Company a large sum of money expressly subscribed for those purposes." I have already explained this matter. The money is safely locked up, and will never be used by the N. S. S., while I am President, for any other purpose than it was collected for, unless there should be a deadlock, in which case the subscribers will have to decide the matter for themselves.

Having corrected Mr. Robertson's principal mistakes, I have a word to say in conclusion, and I do not intend to return to the subject unless I am absolutely compelled.

Mrs. Bonner has secured the support of "D.", who used to contribute very able articles to her father's paper. I do not know how much he has subscribed to the Memorial Fund or how many shares he has taken in the Company, and I believe he was never a member of the N. S. S. "D." protests against the Memorial to Mr. Bradlaugh being "linked with or subordinated to any other object or institution, however good in itself." That is, I presume, he wants a Bradlaugh Memorial Hall, not associated with any special principles or party, but under the management of a happy family of Atheists, Agnostics, Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Mohammedans, Brahmins, Radicals, Socialists, and Tories. I at least will be no party to such an ineffable absurdity, for I have seen more than one hall erected by Freethinkers lost to them in this way, and at this moment Mr. Joseph Symes, at Melbourne, is turned out of the premises he labored so hard to obtain.

Again I appeal to the Circular inviting subscriptions and announcing the formation of a Company. It was solely addressed to "the Freethinkers of Great Britain and Ireland," and the very first paragraph stated that "the Executive of the National Secular Society has resolved to raise a fund for erecting a Freethought Hall and Institute in memory of Charles Bradlaugh, whose name will thus be continuously associated with the spread and maintenance of those principles which were the inspiration of his life."

Upon that circular, the policy of which was endorsed by the N. S. S. Conference, I take my stand. From the first I foresaw the possibility of the difficulties that have arisen, and I looked at every word sent out to the public with a scrupulous eye. I have now to say that I will not budge an inch. Let those who desire to honor the memory of Charles

Bradlaugh in other ways, devise their own schemes and raise their own money. Before they pervert *this* scheme they have to reckon with me, with the Executive of the N. S. S., with its whole organisation throughout the country.

Members of the National Secular Society! it is your battle that I am fighting. I call on you to rally round your President. G. W. FOOTE.

TO THE SECULAR PARTY.

AFTER an absence of more than seven years in the United States and Canada, where in my propagandist labors I have been remarkably successful, and formed friendships which will remain dear to me, I once more take up my residence in my native country. From the first day I landed in Liverpool (early in July last), I have received so many kind and pressing invitations and favorable inducements to remain in England, that I have resolved to devote the rest of my life to the service of the Freethought movement on this side of the Atlantic. My love for, and attachment to, Secular philosophy have grown with time, and have become more and more consolidated as experience has demonstrated its utility for good and proved its efficacy in meeting the progressive aspirations of modern thought. Secularism has appeared to me, from the morning of my life, to be a system essentially adapted to the requirements of intellectual growth and ethical culture; and now, in the midday of existence, I more than ever recognise its potency in the emancipation of the human mind from the snares of superstition and the follies of wild mystic imaginations. Based upon the known, Secularism deals with the practical issues of daily conduct, imparting to action a healthy and dignified tone, which exalts it above sickly pretensions and humiliating professions. Secular principles are the emblem of intellectual activity and of moral industry. Wherever they are consistently acted upon the improvement of character must be inevitable.

Great indeed have been the changes in our party in this country since I left its shores for the American continent. Faces once familiar are now gone for ever, but we have the consolation of knowing that the beneficial results of the work accomplished by the departed remain in our midst. When the unfortunate news of the death of Mr. Bradlaugh reached Canada I wrote in *Secular Thought* that it had fallen to the lot of but few self-made men to deserve by their intrinsic worth, and to command by their daring courage, such uniform admiration as that which had been bestowed on the late member for Northampton. The legacy that he has left is a rich one, and will prove so if it be used wisely. It is for us to emulate, so far as possible, the good traits in his character, and to show our reverence for his memory by endeavoring to exemplify in our daily lives those qualities indicated by his ever favorite words, "earnestness" and "thorough."

It must be exceedingly gratifying to all friends of the movement to witness its present improved condition and the evidence of the encouraging future which lies before us. Never in the history of Freethought in England have its prospects appeared so bright as they do at present. There is a complete union upon the part of those who have been entrusted to direct its course, and upon all essential features of propagandism agreement obtains as to what to do and how it should be done.

The National Secular Society has a worthy successor to Mr. Bradlaugh as its President in Mr. G. W. Foote. As I stated in *Secular Thought* when I first read of his appointment to that office, he is in my opinion the best man in England for that position, and what I have recently seen of Mr. Foote's management fully justifies that opinion. He possesses rare ability, keen discrimination, and almost unlimited energy.

These are qualities necessary for any one to command who has to perform the important duties of the President of the N. S. S. It is incumbent upon all Secularists who have the success of their cause at heart to render Mr. Foote active support. It is possible that differences of opinion upon minor matters will sometimes exist; that, however, ought not to prevent any one from giving his or her allegiance to one who upon all main points represents our views. It is my determination to work heartily with the President and to assist him to the best of my ability in conducting the Secular movement in such a manner that it shall reflect credit on the workers and also enhance the power and usefulness of the Freethought organisation of Great Britain.

I desire to acknowledge my appreciation of the great kindness that has been shown me both in private and in public by the Secular friends of this country since my return. The hearty reception accorded me in every place that I have visited is a pleasant reminder that I still occupy a warm place in the hearts of those whose friendship I won years ago. My future endeavor will be to so act as to deserve that confidence and goodwill of which I am now receiving so many welcome indications.

It is very gratifying to witness the renewed activity of Mr. George Jacob Holyoake in his favorite field of Secular advocacy, and I desire to record my sincere thanks to him for his aid and counsel to me in making my arrangements to settle down in England. The hearty co-operation which Mr. Holyoake is giving Mr. Foote and myself in our Freethought work is valued by us, and will certainly prove an advantage to the movement in general.

To Mr. Daniel Baker, of Birmingham, the Secular movement is indebted for an act of generosity that reflects the highest credit upon him. It has long been his earnest wish to see Secularism placed on a solid basis in his native town, and of course I feel highly flattered that, unsolicited, he has made me the recipient of a generous gift for the purpose of carrying out his desires. No effort of mine shall be spared to improve the position of our movement, not only in Birmingham, but also throughout the Midland Counties. At the end of the first year of my labors in the new field I hope that good results of the work done in that time will be apparent. One of the conditions made by Mr. Baker in presenting the gift was that a certain amount of money should be secured apart from himself to enable the contemplated improvements to be successfully carried out. The amount already subscribed has been expended as approved by all concerned in the matter. An additional one hundred pounds are immediately required for payment of alterations etc., of the premises at Baskerville Hall. I appeal to all my friends, and particularly to those in the Midland Counties, for pecuniary assistance to enable me to commence the work. Mr. G. J. Holyoake and Mr. Foote very kindly support this appeal. As soon as the money is subscribed Baskerville Hall shall be made a credit to Birmingham, and Secular advocacy, with the help of the local Branch of the N. S. S., will be conducted on a more comprehensive plan than conditions hitherto have permitted.

I shall be pleased to hear from districts surrounding Birmingham, with a view of forming a Federation of the Freethinkers of the whole of the Midland Counties.

CHARLES WATTS.

South London friends will be interested to know that the *Johannesburg Star* for Aug. 8 mentions the marriage of Mr. E. B. Rose to Miss Ingle of Durban. May their inglen side be brightened with roses.

Mr. Symes, in giving extracts from the recent utterances of Dr. Momerie, says: "The above is a full and complete justification of Voltaire, Paine, Bradlaugh, and all other opponents of Christianity. We have but to work, wait and endure persecution, and the very clergy repeat our teachings."

ACID DROPS.

General Booth has gone abroad, but he has taken care that proper instructions are issued to his mendicant army for the conduct of self-denial week, from Sept. 27 till Oct. 3. Even the "little soldiers" are told to do without sweetmeats, etc., to put their brains to work for collecting money by selling rabbit-skins or what not. "Then you must learn to beg well. Begin with all your relatives. Call at every house. Don't take the first No for an answer. You will have two Saturdays to collect in, as the week does not end until Oct. 3." In short, he would make his little soldiers little beggars.

In *The Doctrine and Discipline of the Salvation Army*, published for officers by order of the General, the following instructions are given: "Be careful to get all the money you can; especially by having the collections carefully made. Have plenty of collectors. Get properly made boxes. Accustom your people to collect with cards and boxes at their own homes or among their friends and neighbors." Would not the Begging Army be its most appropriate denomination?

This year being, according to the Catholic legend, the six hundredth anniversary of the migration of the Virgin Mary's house at Nazareth from Palestine, a host of pilgrims are visiting it at Loretto. According to the story, when the Saracens took Palestine, that they might not destroy the sacred edifice, it was bodily precipitated, like a Mahatma letter, from Palestine to Dalmatia. This was in 1291. But in 1294 it was once more removed by angelic or astral agency to Loretto.

This is the Holy yarn to which, in 1518, Leo X. pledged the papal infallibility. The truth of the matter seems to have been that when the Saracens did destroy the sacred edifice and no more coin could be got from pilgrims to Palestine, some ingenious monks built a duplicate to show in Dalmatia. That was too much out of the way for the pilgrim stream, so the holy house was removed to Italy, where it has brought in coin to the church for nearly six hundred years.

Mr. William Rossiter—a gentleman who is a feeble debater, though he is doing to all appearance a good work in connexion with the South London Art Gallery—publishes some "Weekly Notes," in the current issue of which there is a report of his lecture on Secularism. Mr. Rossiter finds that neither Mr. Bradlaugh, Mrs. Besant, nor Mr. Foote ever understood religion. He admits their powerful oratory, but their powers of mind are not up to the Rossiter level. This is to be regretted, of course; but if Freethought leaders do not understand Mr. Rossiter's Christianity, it seems quite as certain that Mr. Rossiter does not understand their Freethought. For the rest, he is an amiable old gentleman, and we don't want to quarrel with him.

On one point, at any rate, Mr. Rossiter shows discrimination and impartiality. "There is a report," he says, "that Mrs. Besant, though not ceasing to be a Secularist, has left the Secularist platform because she is not there permitted to speak of Theosophy. Some complain of this as unreasonable on the part of the Secularist leaders, but it is difficult to see how it could be otherwise. No clergyman would allow a Secularist to preach in his pulpit, though many clergymen have spoken in Secular halls; and Secularist societies believe in Secularism as much as the clergy believe in Christianity."

Hugh Price Hughes holds out a beckoning finger to Mrs. Besant. "Let her leave Madame Blavatsky," he says, "and turn to Jesus Christ." That would be a climax.

When Mrs. Besant first became a Theosophist, we wrote (*Freethinker*, July 7, 1889): "Mrs. Besant, after all, doesn't explain *why* she became a Theosophist; but she has evidently plunged right into it, as one might expect from her enthusiastic nature. Whether she will bring up pearls or mud from the bottom remains to be seen." After two years' experience we have noticed nothing but mud. Her secular, social, and humanitarian activities have one by one been resigned, and her sole devotion given to a misty Theosophy, and mystic Mahatma letters.

The *Daily Chronicle*, in booming Theosophy, devotes some space to the ashes of Madame Blavatsky, the bulk of which it

appears Col. Olcott thinks ought to go back with him to India. The London headquarters, he thinks, should have a less quantity, and keep some for New York till the Americans have a proper shrine. But how about the lady's native country Russia? The lady weighed some 300 pounds, and there ought to be enough ashes to go round.

The mantle of the Blavatsky has not fallen on the shoulders of Mrs. Besant. That poor lady has to go to India and meet, or avoid if she can, the hornet's nest stirred up by her predecessor. Nor has it fallen on the shoulders of Col. Olcott, though he asserts he has seen the Mahatmas five or six times. He offended those mysterious beings by permitting Mr. Hodgson, of the Psychological Research Society, to examine the Mahatma shrine, and its communication with Madame Blavatsky's bedroom. No. The mantle has fallen on the shoulders of Col. Arthur Desmond, who is anxious to exhibit its wonder-working powers to the President of the National Secular Society.

If you should ever happen to meet "a remarkably fine looking man with a spiritual glow in his face," you may know that you are in the awful presence of a Mahatma, for this is Col. Olcott's sole description. He says there is one English Mahatma, but he is reticent as to his name. Perhaps it is Col. Desmond. The *St. James's Gazette*, however, boldly asserts it is Sir William Harcourt. Every one allows he is a fine looking man, famous for his spiritual glow. Madame Blavatsky was no Mahatma, perhaps because she smoked too many cigarettes, nor can Mrs. Besant become one for reasons known to esoterics. Besides, there are no female Mahatmas nor Sister-Brothers.

The Catholic *Weekly Register* takes up the false report of Secularists becoming Theosophists, and roundly asserts that "the most grotesque instance of *fin de siècle* credulity is to be found not in the Cathedral of Trèves, but among the back-sliding Secularists of the Hall of Science."

It was always understood that M. Grévy was a Freethinker, but his family brought the priests to his death-bed, and it is claimed that the extreme unction was administered to him. This is denied, however, by a correspondent in a Paris journal. "I am assured," he says, "that extreme unction was not administered. M. Grévy, as a matter of fact, received no religious consolation, having formally declined the visit of the priest and died a Freethinker."

Pious Billy has stirred up the bigotry of his subjects. The editor of the Berlin *Kladderadatsch* is being prosecuted for a cartoon ridiculing the Holy Coat of Trèves. The cartoon is called a libel on the Catholic Church. Who on earth could libel the Catholic Church?

Eastbourne is fair on the primrose path that leads to the everlasting bonfire. It votes the Salvation Army to be an unmitigated nuisance, and in the rooms of the Young Men's Christian Association recently was posted a notice to the effect that Bible study that evening would not be held on account of the regatta fireworks display.

When Bob Ingersoll was in Europe last he visited Westminster Abbey for the first time. As he was contemplating the tomb of Nelson, the guide said: "That, sir, his the tomb of the greatest naval 'ero Europe or the whole world hever knew—Lord Nelson's. This marble sarcoughogus weighs 42 tons, and hinside that is a leaden casket, 'ermetrically sealed, weighing over two tons. Hinsi that is a mahogany coffin holding the hashes of the great 'ero." "Well," said the Colonel, after thinking a while, "I guess you've got him. If he ever gets out of that, cable me at my expense."—*Chicago Tribune*.

A candid friend says that one of last week's "Acid Drops" was not scriptural. J. C. would not have raised the steerage fare to America; he would have walked across. But could he have kept it up for three thousand miles?

Prophets have fallen on evil days. E. W. Clarke, a street preacher, has been sent to prison for fourteen days for causing an obstruction at Kennington. On being removed to the cells he cried out, "Repent and be baptised, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ!"

The Rev. Frederick Fuerst, late of Belleville, Kentucky, is off to fresh pastures. Just as some members of his congregation were going to tar and feather him for taking bold liberties with a lady member, he was arrested by the police, but he procured bail and did not turn up for trial. He left many creditors behind him, and his bail-men have lost 500 dollars on the transaction.

Canon Diggle, preaching at Liverpool, explains Mrs. Besant's "withdrawal from the Secular fold to the ranks of the Mystics" by the theory that "she had for years, unconsciously perhaps, been violating the spiritual part of her nature." This can only mean, if it means anything, that she fell under the malignant influence of Charles Bradlaugh. Naturally this is a view which Churchmen are more likely to take than Secularists.

Who is W. E. Hurndall, M.A.? We see his name on a handbill as lecturing in East London on "Mrs. Besant and Secularism." The female sex is excluded, and all males under eighteen. What a disgusting appeal to public pruriency!

A Conference convened by the Conditional Immortality Mission has been held at Brighton. The chief feature was an onslaught on the Christian doctrine of hell by a Mr. J. J. Jones, who quoted some striking passages from Ingersoll and J. S. Mill on the subject. So far good. The Conditional Immortality people show that the Freethought assault on the Christian doctrine has had some effect. But their substitute strikes us as the quintessence of sublimated vanity. They say immortality is not for everyone, only it always happens that they themselves are of the elect, and expect to live in joy for ever, though others are, as the Bible says, like the beasts that perish.

Jewish converts to Christianity are much the same in New York as England. One of the chosen named Max Winterling has published an affidavit, in which he sets forth that, arriving in New York without friends, he was taken up by the Rev. Jacob Freshman and his mission for converting the Jews, and never having received a thorough Jewish education, "soon fell a prey to the convincing proofs of Christianity as depicted by Mr. Freshman and his aids." He was duly baptised, and then discovered that the other converts scoffed in private at Christianity, and laughed at Mr. Freshman's ignorance. The few old Bible proofs in favor of the New Testament became ambiguous and obscure. He says, "When I presented my difficulties to Mr. Freshman, his sole reply was that I must not permit the Devil to get the best of me." Finally he returned to Judaism, and warns Christians against wasting their money and innocently promoting and encouraging dishonesty and hypocrisy.

The *Daily Telegraph* tells a ghost story. It appears that a lady-ghost, dressed in green—an appropriate color—haunts a *chateau* belonging to the ancient family of Le Gonidec, near Le Mans. She has a special fancy for a particular room, and whoever sleeps in it has painful experiences. Anxious to lay the ghost, the proprietor of the *chateau* called in the local bishop. The man of God slept in the haunted room, but he received a visit from La Dame Verte, and he has been ill ever since.

Well now, we are open to do business with the ancient family of Le Gonidec. If they make it worth our while, we will occupy that haunted room and frighten the ghost.

The *Sunbeam*, a Portsmouth monthly nurse of Baptism—under the auspices of the Rev. J. Kemp, announces itself as "circulated gratuitously." Surely the announcement is superfluous. The man or woman who would buy it must be dying for an investment.

Up in the left corner of the *Sunbeam* there is a list of contents, two successive lines of which read very funnily:—

Why Not Receive Christ?
In a Dark Cellar.

This very dull *Sunbeam* crows over Mrs. Besant's shaking off the dust of Atheism from her feet. It also suspects that Mr. Bradlaugh would have done the same if he had lived. *If he had lived!* Ah! alas, for us, and happily for you, he died.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, September 20, at 11.30, Clerkenwell-green, "The Gospel according to Spurgeon." At 7, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C., "The Way to Heaven."

Sept. 27, Manchester.

October 4, 11, 18, Hall of Science. 25, Camberwell.

November 1, Portsmouth; 15, Leicester; 22, Wolverhampton; 29, Grimsby.

December 6, Hall of Science; 27, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—September 18, Crook; 20, Newcastle-on-Tyne; 27, Birmingham. October 4, Birmingham; 11, Manchester; 18, Birmingham; 25, Hall of Science. November 1, Hall of Science; 8, Birmingham; 15, Birmingham; 22, Portsmouth. December 6 and 13, Birmingham; 20 and 21, Leicester.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent direct to him at 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, London, E.C.

REX REGIS.—Mr. Wheeler will write on the early adversaries of Christianity.—Glad to hear you approve the President's attitude.

J. TARDUT.—Mr. G. J. Holyoake had at least sufficient interest in the Bradlaugh Memorial Hall Company to induce him to take ten shares. These he paid in full. His £10 exceeded the total payments of half those who voted the other way at the shareholders' meeting.

D. W.—Too late for this week. Shall appear in our next.

J. P. GILMOUR.—We will insert it, with slight modifications, next week.—Mr. Foote is delighted to hear of the revival of Freethought in Scotland, and glad to learn that the hard-headed Scotsmen approve his attitude as President. You justly remark that "Our only hope is in compact organisation and effective discipline."

A. B. MOSS.—Pleased to hear of your fine meeting in the afternoon at Victoria-park.

J. SPRING (Grimsby).—Glad to have your approval. Shares can be applied for immediately. They will be allotted directly the Articles are received from the Registrar. The shares are £1 each, payable 2s. 6d. on application, 2s. 6d. on allotment, and in subsequent calls as may be found necessary. See another column for further information.

D. R. CROW.—We should not have troubled about Mrs. Besant and her Theosophy if she had not misrepresented the N. S. S., and if the newspapers had not echoed the misrepresentation. It is always well to stand right with public opinion when we can honestly do so.—Dr. Aveling is not a member of the N. S. S.

F. SWATTS.—Cuttings received with thanks.

C. D.—Your explanation seems to us far-fetched, though it is certainly ingenious.

T. BIRTLEY.—(1) We believe your view of the object of the Bradlaugh Memorial is shared by at least nine-tenths of the Secular party. Mr. Foote and his most trusted colleagues remain shareholders, and will take action if there is any actual attempt to pervert the Memorial. The first Board of Directors carefully scrutinised every application for shares. (2) Glad to hear that the good results of Mr. Moss's tour are still felt. (3) See paragraph.

JAMES MOFFAT says that he has tried without success to get a Weymouth newsagent to keep the *Freethinker* on sale. He also says that about three dozen copies are sold weekly at Yeovil. J. M. adds: "I think you will stick to the old flag and the old platform." Rather!

ANXIOUS.—There can be no question as to the safety of the shareholders' money. The ladies and gentlemen left on the Board are indubitably honest, whatever opinion may be entertained as to their practical ability. The possible danger lies in a different direction. Hitherto the directors of the Memorial Company have satisfied themselves of the *bonâ fides* of applicants, and have only allotted shares to known Freethinkers. This wise precaution may now be abandoned; indeed, the present directors have not the same means of judging as the old ones; and two of them, at least, are ready, if not eager, to introduce outsiders. If we find a fresh policy pursued we shall take immediate action. Shareholders' meetings can be called, if necessary, without the directors; and it would be better to wind up the Company than let it drift beyond the control of the Freethought party. You may rely upon our vigilance. The Company and the Memorial Fund both owe their existence to us; without us there would have been neither shares nor subscriptions to dispute about.

C. H. KELF.—Glad to hear Mr. Foote's letter did appear in the *Freeman's Journal*. Glad also to hear that you avow your Freethought in Cork, and yet are elected a delegate on the Trade Council. We share your view as to the trouble in store for the Irish priests.

T. A. WILLIAMS.—Thanks. Write again when necessary.

J. TOMKINS.—(1) Your well-meant letter is too late. Mr. Foote's mind is absolutely made up, and we believe we can say the same of his colleagues. He gave the Directors of the Com-

pany every chance of accepting a practical scheme; he pleaded to them in vain, and he appealed to the shareholders' meeting in vain. He cannot waste time for ever. He must now try to secure the Hall of Science for the Freethought party. Whether it ultimately becomes the Bradlaugh Memorial will depend upon the shareholders. (2) We do not observe any "split in the party." So far as "the party" is concerned, we never felt the ground firmer.

THE official address of the Battersea Branch is now 54 Landseer-street, Battersea-park-road, where the *Freethinker* and all Secular literature can be obtained on Thursday evenings.

J. KEAST.—Mr. Foote may visit Bristol shortly to debate with a Christian minister.

H. WISEMAN.—Letters like yours go in the waste-basket.

W. KEEBLE.—Cuttings are always welcome.

G. A. HEMING.—Colonel Olcott is credulous enough for anything; yet there seems some method in his madness.

J. HUGHES.—Harriet Martineau's heterodox views are expressed in her *Autobiography* and in her letters to H. G. Atkinson. You would have to order through a bookseller. Perhaps Mr. Forder could supply you.

W. KING.—There is no satisfactory life of Thomas Paine in print. Mr. M. D. Conway has completed one, which will be published shortly by an American firm. It is sure to be excellent, and we fear expensive.

J. FISH.—Received with thanks. Yes, we knew of the Cheshire Branch. It has been noticed in our columns. We wish it all success.

J. R. WILLOCK.—Glad to receive your favorable report of Mr. Stanley Jones's lectures at Manchester. When his tour is finished he will report upon it for the *Freethinker*.

J. ROGERS.—Mr. Foote will visit Plymouth early in the new year if you can obtain a good hall.

T. CLARK.—Pleased to have your approval. Pleased also to learn that in five years you have got us twenty-five new subscribers. We wish other friends would go and do likewise. The verse stands over. We are too full this week.

MAHATMAS.—Your witty epigram expresses nine-tenths of the truth.

S. SODDY.—We dealt with the matter a few weeks ago. You hit the weakest point in the lady's explanation.

H. R. CLIFTON, 29 Parolles-road, Upper Holloway, N., is the new secretary of the Finsbury-park Branch. Mr. Osborn has resigned in order to complete his studies.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren—Liberty—Freethought—Ironclad Age—Menschentum—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 Sunday Chronicle—New York Truth—Church Reformer—Eastbourne Chronicle—Portsmouth Evening News—Modern Thought—Brighton Guardian—Brighton Examiner—Chat—Northern Daily News—Plowshare and Pruning Hook—Newcastle Weekly Chronicle—Cosmopolitan—Reynolds's Newspaper—Reading Observer.

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.

The *Freethinker* has always been a phenomenal paper. It started without funds or guarantees, and paid its way from the first, which we never heard of any other Freethought paper doing before. Then it set the priests and parsons mad, and turned the bigots green. Next it got its Editor sent to prison, though when he came out again he "blasphemed" worse than ever. By and bye it sailed on a new tack. The size was increased from eight to twelve pages. That was considered a very risky speculation. But the circulation of the paper went up, up, up. Now we are going to INCREASE THE SIZE TO SIXTEEN PAGES. No such paper, at such a price (we intend to stick to the penny), was ever seen since the world first heard of Freethought. Of course we shall hear the croakers and stick-in-the-muds cry "Danger, danger!" But, as Hamlet says, we defy augury.

When the *Freethinker* is enlarged, as it will be in a fortnight, we shall introduce new features. It is our intention to give some Book Chat, which will not be stiff and pedantic, but as interesting as we can make it. We have also an idea hatching as to regular, carefully written reports of Secular work and progress in all parts of the country.

This is just the time for our friends to do what they can to help us. Our enterprise (though we say it, that shouldn't) deserves encouragement. Some of the better-to-do readers—say 500 or 1,000 of them—could take an extra copy

weekly, or even more. Others could try to get us new subscribers among their acquaintances. Others could stir up newspapers and get them to sell and display the *Freethinker*. If they only did us justice our circulation would double, and perhaps treble, before Christmas.

All the slowly worked-up profit the paper is yielding us we are going to sink in this new experiment—so great is our desire to make the *Freethinker* worthy of the party it represents. Our reward, it is to be hoped, will come. If it does not, we shall have the satisfaction of having toiled and sacrificed for the most glorious cause beneath the sun.

This evening (Sept. 20) Mr. Foote will deliver his new lecture on "The Way to Heaven" at the London Hall of Science. In the morning he delivers his final open-air lecture this season at Clerkenwell Green. He hopes the local Freethinkers will bring something handsome for the collection boxes, as the Secular Federation is greatly in want of money.

Lecturing in abnormally hot September weather ought to be stopped by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. Sunday last was a brilliant day—especially for the lucky folk at the seaside. In London it was sweltering. Mr. Foote got wet through twice with perspiration. In the morning, despite a still sore chest, he lectured to an immense audience in Victoria Park, and replied to two opponents. On reaching home he was obliged to have a cold bath and change every rag he had worn to the Park. His very coat had to be hung out in the garden to dry. In the evening it was still worse. The Hall of Science was packed in every part, and the heat was almost intolerable. Once again, on reaching home, the stripping process had to be gone through, and the black coat was still wet on Monday morning.

One of Mr. Foote's opponents in Victoria Park advised him to take a leaf out of Mr. Spurgeon's book. Mr. Foote asked, Which leaf? Six weeks at Mentone, *à la* Spurgeon, would be an agreeable relief to an overworked man. Even Spurgeon's £3,000 a year or so is a "leaf" Mr. Foote could put up with.

After the lecture in the Park was over, the audience stood back a bit, and coppers, occasionally diversified by silver, were shied in. There was a perfect rain of them, and the committee were busy in picking them up. They made a good show together, and the London Secular Federation will be considerably profited.

Mr. Foote's evening audience at the Hall of Science was not only very large but extremely enthusiastic. His sentiments were cheered to the echo, and a tempest of applause followed the peroration, in which he declared that though Mrs. Besant was gone, Mr. Bradlaugh's memory still animated the Freethought party, who would fight on under the old flag; and when the day of fierce battle came, like the great god Pan in the old Greek myth, Charles Bradlaugh would fight beside them, and his strength would be added to theirs.

A few questions were asked after the lecture, but Mrs. Besant's attitude towards the Secular party did not seem to have a single defender in the whole of that great meeting. There was also a conspicuous burst of applause when Mr. Foote declared that, as President of the National Secular Society, he would never give way to mere sentiment, or drift along the stream, or let his course be decided for him; but rather, in the spirit of his great predecessor, form his own policy—not without consulting men of judgment—and stand or fall by it.

Last week Mr. Charles Watts gave three lectures in Aberdeen to excellent audiences, which increased in numbers each night. The local papers gave fair reports of all the lectures, remarking that they "were eloquent and argumentative, and received most enthusiastically." At the suggestion of Mr. Watts, a meeting has been called with a view to form an Aberdeen Branch of the N. S. S. We shall be pleased to hear that this effort has been successful.

Last Sunday Mr. Watts lectured three times in South Shields, and, according to report, he received the heartiest reception that he has experienced since his return to England. His many friends came from miles round to give him a welcome. The enthusiastic applause, particularly at the large

gathering in the evening, must have been very gratifying. This week Mr. Watts lectures in North Shields, Bedlington, Spennymoor, Middlesbro', and concludes his tour in the North at Newcastle next Sunday, September 27.

What a fresh spirit of youth flourishes in the seventy-seven year old body of the veteran G. J. Holyoake. We spent an hour or two with him the other day at Brighton, and while age has affected his eyesight and piled the snows upon his head, it has not affected the alertness of his mind. The well-exercised brain holds out, and probably will hold out, to the last. We joined him in a cigar, and were glad to see he enjoyed "the divine weed." Nothing is finer than to see a patriarch smoking, and sending out sentences of ripe wisdom after the puffs of tobacco incense. Mr. Holyoake talked of the past, before we were born; yet he was keenly alive to the present, and almost boyish in his expressions of interest in the immediate future of the Freethought party. When he talked in the serene way of his intentions in the years to come, we laughingly observed "You are mapping out a big future." "Yes," he said, "I don't intend to die yet. There are some things I *must* do, and other things I *must* see. Besides," he added with a twinkle, "I must do justice to my annuity." Well, we hope he will—for many and many a year.

Mr. Holyoake invested £10 in the Bradlaugh Memorial Company, hoping that the Hall of Science would be purchased by the shareholders for reconstruction. He was disappointed, but he spends no time in vain regrets. He joins the new Syndicate, takes shares though his purse is anything but a millionaire's, and is busily enlisting the support of his friends. This is how the old veteran labors and sacrifices for the cause. Surely, then, the younger soldiers of our army will strive to better the example.

Every member of the Syndicate for purchasing and maintaining the London Hall of Science is a member of the National Secular Society. With one exception they are all "old hands." Mr. W. Cooper has been a Secularist for ever so many years, though not a prominent one, and his business capacity (he is a bank director) will be of great assistance. Mr. Foote is President of the N. S. S.; Mr. Reynolds is treasurer; Mr. Forder is honorary secretary; and Messrs. Holyoake, Anderson, Standing and R. O. Smith are vice-presidents. All of them, too, belong to the Old Guard. Mr. T. P. Smith is a brother of Mr. R. O. Smith. Their father was a Freethinker before them, and the names he gave them—Robert Owen and Thomas Paine—bespeak his convictions.

Mr. R. O. Smith, by the way, has sufficient belief in the future of the Hall of Science, under the new management, to induce him to join the Syndicate and take up the maximum number of shares allowed by the Act to one shareholder. Mr. Smith's experience and business ability will be invaluable to his colleagues. He desires to go on working for the cause, for his heart is in it, but he cannot bear the whole burden of responsibility for the place on his own shoulders.

Mr. Robert Forder had a fine meeting in Regent's Park on Sunday afternoon. Unfortunately the Branch representatives did not appear with the stand, and Mr. Forder had to obtain a chair to speak from.

Mr. Forder lectures at Edinburgh this evening (Sept. 20) for the local Secularists. His subject is "Theosophy: an Old Superstition in a New Dress." We hope Mr. Forder will receive a hearty welcome, and succeed in reforming the Edinburgh Branch of the N. S. S.

Mr. Forder will also go on to Aberdeen, where a new Branch is being formed. He will be there on Wednesday evening. Dundee could be visited likewise, and even Perth, if anyone in those places will make arrangements. Mr. Forder's address till Monday night will be care of J. Dewar, 48 Hanover-street, Edinburgh.

The ever-lively *Sunday Chronicle* of Manchester, has a sensible article on "The Mahatma." It pities Mrs. Besant for falling into this new and puerile superstition, and concludes thus: "No. We will not have the Mahatma! We will not deal in conjuring tricks and go's who know too much to face the knowledge of man. We have not lost our regard and respect for Mrs. Besant; we believe in her honor and in her faithfulness—but here is the parting of the ways."

We cannot 'receive' the Mahatma. (He is a fraud, or a fiction. We must decline to have dealings with him in either case.)

The *Weekly Dispatch*, edited by Dr. Hunter—one of the sanest of advanced journals—devotes an article to Mrs. Besant's lecture on Theosophy at St. George's Hall before a more fashionable audience than assembles at the Hall of Science. The writer pokes fun at the lady's fad, hints that with all her eloquence she is really shallow, and says her head is not strong enough for her tongue. Mrs. Besant is Irish, and like many natives of the Green Isle, she has a "fatal fluency" of speech. She was an eloquent spokeswoman on the Freethought side, but the *Dispatch* remarks that it was Charles Bradlaugh who had the practical judgment and the faculty for government.

The Battersea Branch will hold its quarterly Tea and Soirée next Sunday, September 27, at 5.30. Tickets (6d. each) can be had at the hall, or at 54 Landseer-street, Battersea-park-road. The members' quarterly meeting takes place at three o'clock on the same date. Freethinkers in the neighborhood should join on this occasion and thus help the cause in Battersea.

Mr. W. Heaford's translation of a volume by M. Naquet is highly praised in a two-column review in the *Daily Chronicle*. We have not ourselves received a copy from the publishers. Mr. Heaford wields a capable pen, and we have arranged for occasional articles from it to appear in the *Freethinker*. The first will appear next week.

There seems a misunderstanding as to the N. S. S. special lectureships. At the last Conference the Executive was authorised to deal with the matter, and the Executive resolved to begin absolutely afresh, in order to avoid the invidious task of weeding the old list. All persons who desire a Special Lecturer's diploma—whether they previously held one or not—should apply to the Executive through the secretary. Each application will be dealt with upon its merits. There is no salary attaching to the special lectureship, but it will be worth something indirectly, besides giving the holder a certain representative position.

Mr. Forder writes:—"I notice with very great pleasure that Miss Hills, late of Canterbury, and now of London, a most genial and cultured lady, whom I have known for a long time as a pronounced Freethinker, is to lecture on our platform at Sheffield on the 27th inst. I should like to ask the Freethinkers in the district to give her a good reception on that day."

Mr. Jonathan Wadmore, of Monk Bretton, Barnsley, who joined the N. S. S. in 1883, deems it his duty now to rejoin, owing to the secession or resignation of a few members who ought to have been the last to have deserted the Secular cause. There are many more Secularists in Barnsley whom we should be glad to see in our ranks as active members.

Freethought, of San Francisco, has had to amalgamate with the *Truthseeker*, which will henceforward have a special department devoted to the work on the Pacific coast. This will be conducted by Mr. F. L. Browne, who, since G. E. Macdonald retired from *Freethought* for a more lucrative position, had charge of the office editorial duties.

Freethinkers in America have the right of free bequest. At least we judge so from the publication of the following from Miss Ira Craddock, the corresponding secretary of the American Secular Union:—"Liberals desiring to leave a substantial testimonial behind them with which to help in carrying on the work of enlightening the world, can do so by incorporating the following form into their will: 'I give to Richard B. Westbrook, of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in trust for the American Secular Union, to aid that Society in its philanthropic efforts to establish the principles of perfect religious liberty in this country and to secure the complete separation of Church and State (.....amount here.....).'"

Brotherhood, edited by an earnest Christian Socialist and opponent of Secularism, Mr. J. Bruce Wallace, has a good portrait of Robert Owen, who certainly was no "Christian" Socialist. It also has a portrait and some particulars of our veteran friend E. Craig, of Rahaline.

A debate between Mr. G. W. Foote and a Christian minister may take place shortly at Bristol. Negotiations are pending, and a fuller announcement will be made as soon as possible.

Freethinkers in the Chester-le-Street district will please note that Mr. Watts's engagement there for Sept. 19 is cancelled. The Co-operative Hall was suddenly wanted for another purpose, and the Society has paid all the expenses incurred by the Branch.

M. Renan is always delightful in his annual *causerie* with his compatriots in Brittany. He says he means to live to be eighty, and to write a history of the French Revolution, of Athens, of Brittany, of Science and of Freethought, and then go on to the language and literature of China. May he live to do it. The world will be well amused if not instructed.

Christopher Marlowe, who is now honored with a statue in his native town of Canterbury, was a frank Freethinker. But for his untimely death he would have been prosecuted for blasphemy, an information having been filed against him in the High Court of Justice.

Secularists in Plymouth and the neighborhood are requested to attend a meeting this evening (Sept. 20) at 100 Union-street, Plymouth, for the purpose of arranging fresh work for the Branch.

Miss Ada Campbell, a Freethought lecturer from Australia, who has recently been touring with success in the United States, is now at Liverpool. She is anxious to lecture for Secular Societies in this country. We have not had the pleasure of hearing the lady ourselves, but we have seen some highly complimentary reports of her speeches. Miss Campbell's address is the Royal Hotel, Lord Nelson-street, Liverpool.

THE LONDON HALL OF SCIENCE.

At a recent meeting of the Shareholders of the Bradlaugh Memorial Hall Company a feeling was expressed by many in favor of a freehold site. This renders the Hall of Science in their view ineligible, and a majority of the shareholders recorded a resolution to that effect. The Memorial Hall, therefore, in their opinion should be elsewhere. Owing to the great cost and difficulty of procuring such a site as is contemplated, and the still greater cost of erecting a suitable Hall and Institute, many years must elapse before the project can be accomplished. In the meantime the National Secular Society must retain a central place in London for its meetings and lectures, and the use of the Hall of Science has been secured for its purposes for a period of one year. The lessee is also willing to sell his interest to the Freethought party. The lease has 28 years to run under the present conditions, and if within 10 years a sum of £2,500 is expended in rebuilding the front portion of the premises, and improving their appearance and convenience, possession can be retained until 1977. Thus the party would possess a National Secular Hall of Science associated with Mr. Bradlaugh's name and career.

A Syndicate is being formed to carry out this object. Further particulars will be given as soon as possible. Meanwhile those who wish to assist are invited to communicate with Mr. Robert Forder, who kindly acts as Secretary for the present, or with the President of the National Secular Society.

G. W. FOOTE	GEORGE STANDRING
G. J. HOLYOAKE	R. O. SMITH
GEORGE ANDERSON	T. P. SMITH
W. H. REYNOLDS	W. COOPER
ROBERT FORDER	

TOURING AROUND.

AFTER a continuous spell of outdoor propaganda from March to mid-August, involving two addresses in different parts of London almost every Sunday, I was glad to recuperate my exhausted energies by some arduous work of a similar kind in the bracing air of the north. On August 15 I went to Huddersfield, and discoursed to an enormous audience at the Market Cross. Some loud-lunged local bigots did their utmost to create disturbance, but tact and good temper availed to defeat their purposes. The following day I lectured at Manchester, the afternoon lecture being in the open air, and the audience both attentive and numerous. The two other lectures were given in the handsome hall in the Rusholme-road. On Monday I had to lecture at Farsley, during the pouring rain, to a large audience. The gathering was most attentive and orderly. The next evening I lectured under more favorable atmospheric conditions at the same place, and this time to a largely increased audience. Farsley should certainly develop into an important Secular centre, judging from the promising materials afforded by the eager willingness of its people to hear the enunciation of Secular principles. On the following Saturday I returned to Huddersfield, and found a more tractable disposition evinced by the huge gathering at the Market Cross. I was listened to with every mark of consideration by men who the week before had roared themselves hoarse against me. On Sunday, August 23, I lectured three times at Sheffield to small but appreciative audiences. On August 25 I was advertised to give an outdoor address at Grimsby, but the soaking wet compelled me to relinquish the idea. I therefore held forth to a few score people at the Hall of Science, and volunteered to lecture on the following night in the Market-place. This time the weather was favorable, and the audience very large. Some very stupid opposition was offered by an earnest but illiterate man, who nearly raved himself into hysterics against my blasphemies. I finished my tour, and completed my fifteenth lecture at Hull on Sunday, August 30. This Branch has lately taken in hand the outdoor propagation of our principles, and I trust the excellent outdoor audience I had there on my visit may encourage the members to persevere in this branch of our work.

I feel gratified with the many evidences afforded at these meetings of the growth of Secular principles, and trust that in succeeding years increased energy will be put forward in all the centres referred to, in order that personal apathy may not retard the triumph of the cause.

WILLIAM HEAFORD.

STAND FIRM AT TOTTENHAM.

On Sunday afternoon I was requested by the policeman in charge of the common at Tottenham to move some yards away from our usual station, owing to extreme sickness in a house close by. I did so. Then I was asked to move still further by a resident, but discovered that the whole thing was a "get up," and decided to stand my ground. In this I was supported by a large company of all sorts of views. As a protest against the attempt to stop public meetings on common lands, the following resolution was unanimously carried with acclamation: "That this meeting pledges itself to support any meeting on the common, being lawfully assembled, which may be interfered with whilst exercising its right of free speech on the public land, and to take steps to prevent such illegal interference." The North Middlesex Branches will meet this (Sunday) evening, at 7 o'clock, at 2 Rock-street (side entrance), Blackstock-road, Finsbury Park, to consider the situation, and to decide upon what steps should be taken in the event of other open-air stations on common lands being similarly attacked.—SAM STANBING.

OBITUARY.

We regret to record the death of the great Jewish historian and rationalist, Professor Heinrich Graetz, who died last week. Professor Graetz made few concessions to Christianity, and did much to lead his people to juster notions of the Bible, whose inspiration he denied. He held to the late date of Ecclesiastes and the book of Daniel, and denied the historical accuracy of the book of Esther. His chief work is a *History of the Jews*, an abridgment of which is published in English.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE BRADLAUGH MEMORIAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I shall be obliged by your insertion of the following correction of certain inaccuracies of fact which appear in your article under the above heading on Sept. 13.

(1) I have never "resigned" my membership of the N. S. S. My subscription lapsed last Christmas only, and I was about to renew it when certain circumstances made me alter my decision. You ought to know better than to assert that I "resigned" when my "father relinquished the Presidency," for my name was put down by the Executive for nomination to the vice-presidency at the following Conference. Owing to the birth of my little son in April, I found that my work was more than I could manage, and I asked to have my name withdrawn as I did not wish to seek re-election. You yourself wrote me an exceedingly complimentary letter on this very matter. I refer to the *National Reformer* for May 11, 1890 (p. 299), in confirmation of my statement. Had I resigned in the previous February, the Executive could not have nominated me to hold office.

(2) Your statement as to Mr. Forder obtaining no answer from me is either ignorantly or wilfully untrue. I happened to meet Mr. Forder casually in my husband's office at 63 Fleet-street after the Memorial Committee was formed, and when there was all the talk about Mrs. Besant's exclusion; he mentioned that something had been said as to my being on the Committee, and asked if I were willing to serve if I were invited. I replied that if I was wanted I was quite willing to serve, but that personally I did not care for being on committees, and at the moment I had so much other work and worry. This is the only communication I ever received, direct or indirect, from any official connected with the Bradlaugh Memorial Committee. I was never formally invited to serve, and hearing no more from Mr. Forder, concluded (rightly, if I may judge from the tone of your article) that I was not wanted.

(3) I have not tried to "belittle the Hall of Science," and have purposely written not a single line against it except in a private letter, in which I alluded to its insanitary condition, its want of proper exits, and asked if my correspondent was familiar with its "London reputation." Always moved by the desire to say nothing against the Hall of Science, which has many pleasant and a few painful associations for me, I framed my amendment in the manner I did.

(4) I have nowhere referred to the Paine Memorial Hall, so that the irrelevance, sir, is with you and not with me.

H. BRADLAUGH-BONNER.

20 Circus-road, London, N.W.

[The tempestuous tone of Mrs. Bonner's letter warns me to be brief. (1) Certainly Mrs. Bonner did not *technically* resign, but she declined to stand for re-election as a vice-president; and although this did not happen on the very day of Mr. Bradlaugh's relinquishment of the Presidency, it happened only a short time (two months) afterwards. The "exceedingly complimentary letter"—which I do not regret—was not on account of Mrs. Bonner's withdrawal, but on account of the past. I know nothing, and desire to know nothing, of any private reasons for not belonging to the N. S. S. (2) It was at my request that Mr. Forder, as secretary, asked Mrs. Bonner if she were willing to serve on the Memorial Committee. I have consulted Mr. Forder again on the matter, and as his recollection does not agree with Mrs. Bonner's, I will not pursue the subject. (3) These extraordinary insinuations against the Hall of Science, with which Mr. Bradlaugh was associated for twenty-two years, I prefer to pass over in silence. (4) Mrs. Bonner did refer to the Paine Memorial Hall at the shareholders' meeting.—Nothing shall tempt me to resume this discussion.—G. W. FOOTE.]

Mrs. de Navarro, formerly Mary Anderson the actress, relates: "Mr. W. S. Gilbert, who knows that I am a Catholic, likes to tease me a little about it. He told me once a story about a man who was killed in a railway collision, and when he got to heaven they wouldn't let him in because he had died without absolution. 'Well, that isn't my fault,' said the man. 'If I had had time I would have seen a priest, but I was killed in a collision. How could I get one?' St. Peter didn't see what he could do, although it did seem hard that the man should have to suffer without its being his fault. 'Can't you get some priest in there who will come out and give me absolution and then it will be all right?' This seemed a good way of fixing the thing up, and St. Peter went off to get the priest. He was gone some time and finally came back alone, looking distressed. 'There isn't a priest in the place!' he said."

Punch sums up the Theosophy craze as "All-round-my-hat-mas."

The Rev. H. Rudge, formerly curate of Newent, died in Gloucester Gaol from delirium tremens.

Two thousand lives are reported as lost in one town through the floods in Spain. Of what account were they in their Creator's eyes? Troops have to be sent to bury the dead to avoid a pestilence.

Godly Mr. Stead, in his *Review of Reviews*, takes advantage of the Mahatma mania to ask for certificates of ghosts and ghost stories. No doubt he will get plenty. He starts off a few specimen ghost stories to draw others. Verily superstition lies deep.

The *Hospital* admits that "the temptations to equivocation and want of candor are very great in the Church," and says "there is no doubt that many of the preachers of all churches have to close their eyes and ears against much of the illuminating knowledge and criticism of the present day."

In reply to the statements of Miss Golding, "the escaped nun," the Lady Superior says she can produce a letter in which Miss Golding said she did not wish to see her brother or other friends. Of course she can. A woman who was starved and ill-treated, fearing death, or worse—the madhouse, would write anything which promised peace from persecution.

The Rev. Father Mailluchette has been arrested at Detroit for eloping with the young wife of Napoleon Thibert. The priest had seduced the young woman before marriage, introduced her to the husband, and himself performed the marriage sacrament to cover up his own liaison and continue it. The young couple went to Kansas City to live, and the good father, who had obtained a three months' vacation, accompanied them. Thibert stated that shortly after their arrival there, he came home one night and found the priest and his wife in a compromising position. Father Mailluchette took his departure, and about ten days ago a telegram for Mrs. Thibert fell into the hands of her husband. It was from the priest, and made an appointment to meet her in Detroit. The husband told his wife he was going to Denver, but instead, went to Detroit and waited the arrival of his wife, with the result already stated. At the police station the young woman admitted criminal intimacy with the priest, both before and after her marriage to Thibert. The priest brazenly denied everything. As there was no evidence of any wrong done in this city the priest could not be held.

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: 7, Mr. C. J. Steinberg, "Evidences for the Existence of God."
Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): Sunday and Monday, at 8, social gatherings. Wednesday, at 7.30, dramatic class. Thursday, at 8 committee meeting.
Camberwell—61 New Church Road, S.E.: 7.30, Mr. J. M. Robertson, "The Theology of Tennyson and Browning."
Hall of Science, 142 Old Street, E.C.: 7, Mr. G. W. Foote, "The Way to Heaven."
Milton Hall, Rawley Crescent, Kentish Town Road, N.W.: 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "The Doctrine of the Trinity."
West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow: 7.30, Mr. Thornton Smith will lecture. Thursday, at 8, open debate.
West London—Clarendon Coffee Palace, Clarendon Road (close to Latimer Road Station): Friday, at 8.30, discussion.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park Gates: Mr. E. Calvert, 11.15, "The Soul"; 6.30, "The Bible and Slavery."
Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, Mr. T. Thurlow, "Scepticism Justified."
Camberwell—Station Road: 11.30, Mr. G. Standring, "Morality Without Superstition."
Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, Mr. G. W. Foote, "The Gospel According to Spurgeon."
Edmonton (corner of Angel Road): 7, Mr. C. Cohen will lecture.
Finsbury Park (near the band-stand): 11.30, Mr. J. Taylor, "True and False Ideals"; 3.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "The Christian Creed."
Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, Mr. Lucretius Keen, "Is there a God?"
Hyde Park (near Marble Arch): 11.30, Mr. W. Heaford will lecture.

Kilburn—Salisbury Road (close to Queen's Park Station): 6.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "How I became a Freethinker."

Kingsland Green: 11.30, Mr. Harry Courtney, "The Three-headed God."

Lambeth (corner of Belvedere Road, opposite St. Thomas's Hospital), Westminster Bridge: 6, Mr. R. Rosetti, "God is Love."

Leyton (open space near Vicarage Road, High Road): 11.30, Mr. Toleman-Garner, "The Lord's Prayer."

Midland Arches (corner of Battle Bridge Road): 11.30, Mr. C. J. Hunt, "The Christian Creed"; 3.30, Mr. Sam Standring, "The Presbyterian God—a Reply to Rev. Z. B. Woffendale."

Mile End Waste: 11.30, Mr. F. Haslam, "Who was Jesus and what did he Teach?"

North Finchley—Coleridge Road: 3.30, Mr. J. Taylor, "Prepare to meet thy God."

Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, Mr. A. B. Moss, "Quack Reformers."

Plaistow Green (near the Station): 11.30, Mr. C. Cohen, "Scenes from History."

Regent's Park (near Gloucester Gate): 3.30, Mr. W. Heaford, "Secular and Christian Salvation: a Contrast."

Stratford—Matthew's Park Estate, Ham Park Road: 3.30, Mr. S. H. Alison, "Soul, Spirit, Ghost."

Tottenham (corner of West Green Road): 3.30, a lecture.
Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.30, Mr. C. J. Steinberg, "Miracles"; 3.15, Mr. C. Cohen, "Christianity and Civilisation."

Wood Green—Jolly Butcher's Hill: 11.30, Mr. W. J. Ramsey will lecture.

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge Street: 11, members' social meeting; 7, concert.

Chester—Corn Exchange: Saturday, Sept. 19, at 7.30, Mr. Stanley Jones, "Has Man a Soul?"

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick Street: noon, debating class, Mr. Woodburn, "My Progress from Christianity to Secularism"; 6.30, Mr. Shaw, "The Sabbath."

Liverpool—Camden Hall, Camden Street: Mr. Stanley Jones, 11, "The Basis of Secularism"; 3, "Jesus and his Parents"; 7, "Christian Opposition to Science."

Manchester N. S. S., Secular Hall, Rusholme Road, Oxford Road, All Saints: 6.30 Mr. Harry Smith, "Animal Intelligence."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Lecture Room, Nelson Street: Mr. Charles Watts, 11, "The False Claims of the Bible"; 3, "Secularism: its Twofold Advantage"; 7, "Is Unbelief a Crime?"

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington Street, Southsea: 7, Mr. Googe, "Woman Suffrage."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rookingham Street: 7, instrumental and vocal music, recitations, etc.

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King Street: 7, business meeting, arrangements for Mrs. Besant's lectures.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Leeds—Woodhouse Moor (near the band-stand): 6, Mr. John Grange will lecture.

Manchester (corner of Denmark Road): 3, Mr. Harry Smith, "Some Reasons why I am Not a Christian."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

TOUZZEAU PARRIS, 28 Rivercourt Road, Hammersmith, London, W.—Sept. 27, Milton Hall. Nov. 22, Hall of Science.

STANLEY JONES, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.—Sept. 19, Chester; 20, Liverpool; 22, Northampton; 23, Northampton; 27, Rushden. Oct. 4, Battersea; 11, Portsmouth; 18, Finsbury Park. Nov. 1, West Ham.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon Road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Sept. 20, morning, Westminster. Oct. 4, Camberwell; 11, Westminster; 18, morning, Hall of Science; 25, Camberwell. Nov. 15, Reading.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley Road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—Sept. 20, morning, Clerkenwell Green; afternoon, Finsbury Park; 27, morning, Hyde Park; evening, Hammersmith. Oct. 4, morning, Pimlico; 11, morning, Camberwell; 18, morning, Mile End; 25, Manchester.

TOLEMAN-GARNER, 8 Heyworth Road, Stratford, London, E.—Sept. 20, morning, Leyton; 27, morning, Clerkenwell Green. Oct. 11, evening, Ball's Pond. Nov. 29, Ball's Pond.

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