

# The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

## WALT WHITMAN.

WALT WHITMAN'S death can have taken no one by surprise. For years he had been at the brink of the grave, and the end comes as a relief. A great soul may be cheerful, or at least serene, in all circumstances; but there is neither pleasure nor dignity in living on as the ghost of one's self.

Few superber specimens of physical manhood than Walt Whitman's have appeared on this planet. "He looks like a man," said Abraham Lincoln, as his gaze followed the poet past a window of the White House. Whitman stood six feet two, his limbs and torso were splendid, and his head was magnificently proportioned. His vitality must have been wonderful, and his health was absolutely perfect until after the War, during which he too assiduously nursed the sick and wounded, to the lasting detriment of his phenomenal constitution. The flame of his life burnt on for another thirty years, he is now dead at the ripe age of seventy-four, but his strength was seriously undermined, and he is far better entitled to be called a martyr than many who have more cheaply earned the distinction.

Walt Whitman's great personality can hardly be disputed. He impressed himself as something colossal on all who came into close contact with him. The magnetism of his presence in the military hospitals was more sanative than the doctors' physic. Men, women, and children felt glad and satisfied in his company. His large, frank, healthy nature radiated a perpetual benediction. One who knew him intimately has said that he never saw upon Whitman's features any trace of mean or evil passions. The man was thoroughly wholesome. Even his occasional free utterances on sexuality are only sins against decorum. They do not violate nature. He never spoke on this subject with the slobbery grin of the voluptuary, or the leer of prurience. He was at such moments simply unreticent. Meaning no harm, he suspected none. In this respect he belonged to a less self-conscious antiquity, when nothing pertaining to man was common or unclean, and even the worship of the powers of generation was not without dignity and solemnity.

Some of the foremost Englishmen of our time have acknowledged Whitman's greatness and sanity—notably Carlyle, Ruskin, and Tennyson. Mr. Swinburne is the only one who has unsaid his praise. Tennyson's intimacy with Whitman—always through correspondence—was simply beautiful. A superficial reader of human nature might have enquired what they had in common—the rough, amorphous American poet, and the exquisite English poet, a flower of millenniums of culture? But there is something deeper than form. It is substance. There is something deeper than language. It is manhood. And on the common ground of the deeper things of life, the American and English poets—otherwise so diverse—clasped hands as it were across the sundering ocean.

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Whitman's claim to be considered a great poet, or even a poet at all, has been the subject of hot dispute. But such questions are not so settled. Only give time enough, and every writer falls by mere gravitation into his proper place, from which all the controversies in the world can never shift him. Where the evidence is largely subjective, as it must be in appraising genius, there is sure to be much in our judgment that is incommunicable. The logic of events, as we say in politics; or the proof of the pudding, as we say in the vernacular; is not so brilliant as logical sword-play, but it has the merit of being decisive.

Whitman's poetry looks strange to a reader accustomed to conventional models. It positively offends his eyesight. The ear may detect a certain rhythm, but where are the set lengths of orthodox versification? Here, however, there lurks a fallacy. Poetry is not the antithesis of prose. The antithesis of prose is verse. Some of the finest and noblest poetry in the world's literature is not cast in rhyme, though rhythm—often subtler than all possible rules—is indispensable. Yet there is something precious in poetical form; ay, and something durable. Many an exquisite lyric, with no great depth of feeling or reach of thought, has come down the stream of time, and will float upon it for ever. No doubt Dr. Johnson was right in calling it a waste of time to carve cherrystones, but precious stones are the more valued and admired for the art of the lapidary. Whitman did not cultivate versification. He almost despised it. He sneered at "dulcet rhymes." Yet this may hinder his access to posterity. Mr. Meredith hints as much in his sonnet entitled "An Orson of the Muse," which surely refers to Whitman. He allows him to be the Muse's son though he will not wear her livery.

Him, when he blows of Earth, and Man, and Fate,  
The Muse will hearken to with graver ear  
Than many of her train can waken: him  
Would fain have taught what fruitful things and dear  
Must sink beneath the tidewaves, of their weight,  
If in no vessel built for sea they swim.

That Whitman, however, could do great things with rhythm, and without rhyme, is proved by his "Funeral Hymn of President Lincoln," which James Thomson ranked with Shelley's "Adonais," and Mr. Swinburne called "the most sublime nocturne ever chanted in the cathedral of the world." That this is a great poem, and will live, we have not the slightest doubt. Some other of Whitman's poems will doubtless live with it, but whole masses of his poetry will probably sink to the bottom—not, however, before doing their work and delivering their message.

Because of his want of form, Whitman suffers more than other poets in extracts. We shall make none, but refer the reader to the whole body of his poetry. Some of it is almost wearisome; the rest will repay study. It contains the utterance of a great soul, full of love and friendship, patriotism and humanity, brooding over the everlasting problems of life and death. Untrammelled by schools and systems, Whit-

man was a true Freethinker. Cosmopolitan as he was, he preached the gospel of individuality.

"This is what you shall do: love the earth and the sun and the animals, despise riches, give alms to everyone that asks, stand up for the stupid and the crazy, devote your income and labor to others, hate tyrants, argue not concerning God, have patience and indulgence towards the people, take off your hat to nothing known or unknown, or to any man or number of men, go freely with powerful uneducated persons and with the young and mothers of families, re-examine all you have been told at school or church or in any book, dismiss whatever insults your own soul; and your very flesh shall be a great poem, and have the richest fluency, not only in its words, but in the silent lines of its lips and face, and between the lashes of your eyes, and in every motion and joint of your body."

Whitman appealed to the brotherhood of all and the dignity of each. He declared he would have nothing which every other man might not have on equal terms. The business of the great poet was "to cheer up slaves and horrify despots." Men, too, should keep in close communion with Nature, yet always feel that they could "be good or grand only of the consciousness of the supremacy within them."

"What do you think is the grandeur of storms and dismemberments, and the deadliest battles and wrecks, and the wildest fury of the elements, and the power of the sea, and the motion of nature, and of the throes of human desires, and dignity and hate and love? It is that something in the soul which says,—Rage on, whirl on, I tread master here and everywhere; master of the spasms of the sky and of the shatter of the sea, and of all terror and all pain."

America, perhaps even more than England, has need of Whitman's teaching as the poet of Democracy. He derided "the mania of owning things," he scorned distinctions of caste and class, he sang the divineness of comradeship—and, what is more, he practised it. Full-blooded, strong-limbed, rich-brained, large-hearted men and women are a nation's best products, and if a nation does not yield them its wealth will only hasten its doom and pollute its grave.

G. W. FOOTE.

#### WITCHCRAFT IN NEW ENGLAND.

"The awful words, 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live,' have rung through the centuries, and have served as a justification for probably more judicial slaughter than any other sentence in the history of human jurisprudence."—H. C. LEA, *History of the Inquisition*, iii., 396.

It is now two hundred years since a series of witch-hangings in Salem, Massachusetts, gave that pious town a reputation which must endure through American history. These were not absolutely the last judicial executions for the divinely denounced crime of witchcraft,\* but this was the final great outburst of a fanaticism which it has been calculated was the means of Christians putting to death no fewer than nine millions of persons, mostly women. In England there were few trials for witchcraft after the famous one at Bury St. Edmunds in 1664, when the pious and upright judge Sir Matthew Hale sentenced two poor women, Amy Duny and Rose Cullender, to be executed for witchcraft, asserting, in the face of growing scepticism, his belief in witchcraft, "first, because the Scriptures affirmed it; secondly, because the wisdom of all nations, particularly our own, had provided laws against witchcraft." The last judicial execution in England was in 1716, when Mrs. Hicks and her daughter, aged nine, were hanged at Huntingdon for selling their souls to the Devil and raising a storm by pulling off their stockings and making a lather of soap.

There were, of course, special reasons for the outbreak of the witch mania in New England, as in this country during the Puritan period. The settlers were pious Puritans, who sought to model their laws and lives entirely upon the word of God. They universally believed in demoniacal possession. They saw clearly that to deny it was to refuse credence to the

gospels. The Bible expressly laid it down that witches should be put to death, and they deemed it their duty to root out and destroy them. Fanaticism had, moreover, engendered a peculiar type of nervous affection, which still occasionally shows itself, and has contributed to make New England the home of cranks of all kinds.

In 1689, the Rev. Cotton Mather, a leading light in the colonial Presbyterian church, put out a volume entitled *Memorable Providences relating to Witchcrafts and Possessions*, in which he, like the rest of Christians in his time, was a firm believer. This book had a second edition in 1691, under the title *Late Memorable Providences*. There can be no doubt it was largely responsible for the spread of the delusion and the ensuing bloodshed, though Mather himself was personally of a kindly disposition. It detailed many recent cases of demoniacal possession, and was well calculated to act with woeful effect on nervous persons. At the same time prophecies of the speedy end of the world were afloat, and Satan was supposed in consequence to be particularly active.

Early in 1692, the young daughter and niece of the Rev. Mr. Parris were afflicted with a nervous disorder which the minister and inhabitants regarded as preternatural. Two miserable Indians, man and wife, who attempted to cure the girls by some native charms or drugs, only made them worse, and being suspected of sorcery were sent to execution. The hysterical mania spread to the girls' companions. In an entranced condition they believed they saw spectres. There can be no doubt most of the young girls were diseased, yet some share of the perennial satisfaction of self-deception, and of the pleasure of malignant accusation of persons disliked, may have contributed to the charges being made against so many persons. Twelve years afterwards, Ann Putman, who at the time was a girl of twelve, confessed "it was a great delusion of Satan that deceived me in that sad time, whereby I justly fear I have been instrumental with others, though ignorantly and unwillingly, to bring upon myself and this land the guilt of innocent blood." It will be noticed in her confession she was as superstitious as in her accusation, for in both she laid the blame on the Christians' usual scapegoat, the Devil.

In the early part of the excitement the Rev. Mr. Lawson preached a sermon that was very popular at the time, in which he says of Satan: "He contracts and indents with witches and wizards that they shall be the instruments by whom he may more afflict the bodies and minds of others." The man of God continued: "Arm, arm, arm! and let us admit no parley, give no quarter; let none of Satan's forces or furies be more vigilant to hurt us than we are to resist and oppress them." He calls on the magistrates to "check and rebuke Satan." This sermon of Mr. Lawson's was at once printed, endorsed by the Boston magistrates, and dedicated to the presiding magistrates and pastors of the Mother Church at Salem. Those in whose presence the girls were seized with convulsive fits or pains were pointed out as the cause of the disorder. As the mania spread considerably over a hundred and fifty persons were imprisoned, and many fled the country. A commission was appointed, and gravely received the most ridiculous evidence. One person, for instance, deposed that the Devil appeared to him with a body like that of a monkey, feet like a cock's, but the face much like that of a man. A child of five years old was indicted by some of the afflicted, who appealed to the mark of little teeth on their bodies as proof that it had bitten them. A striking proof of the general superstition is the fact that fifty-five confessed to having had dealings with devils, some avowing that they had ridden on broomsticks to the witches' meeting, and that the Devil had appeared to them in the shape of

\* English laws against witchcraft were repealed in 1736. In Prussia there was a judicial execution for witchcraft as late as 1796.

a cat, etc. Indeed it was policy to confess, since those who did so were only imprisoned. Those who were hanged—and altogether there were nineteen hung between May and September, 1692—were those who protested their innocence. They died hated and unpitied. A twentieth judicial murder was that of the stout-hearted Giles Corey, who indignantly refused to plead to the preposterous indictment against him. To force him to plead, weights of iron were laid upon him and increased until life was extinct. He was crushed to death, as devoted fathers and husbands were, here and there in the Middle Ages, who bravely chose to save their families from the consequences of attainder, by dying untried. Upham relates how, as his body yielded to the pressure, his tongue protruded from his mouth, and the sheriff—"a man," says Mackay, "who, if the truth were known, perhaps plumed himself upon his piety"—took his cane and forced it back again into his mouth.

The Rev. Cotton Mather drew up an apology for these atrocities in the form of a treatise, *More Wonders of the Invisible World*, in which the executions were justified from the Bible as well as by the precedent of similar and notorious instances in the mother country, and from the generally accepted doctrines of Christian Europe. His father, the Rev. Increase Mather, Principal of Harvard College, also undertook to show that the Devil, to affect his purposes, could sometimes assume the shape of a saint. This he proved in his *Cases of Conscience Concerning Witchcraft and Evil Spirits Personating Men*.

The persecutions only ceased because the accusers aimed too high. Fortunately, in their indiscriminate accusations, one of the informers involved the wife of a minister. Alarmed at the unexpected result of his own agitation, the man of God began to think they had gone too far, and the only executions after that time were those of two dogs, who, being convicted of being accessories, were solemnly hanged.

Let us not too deeply reproach the men and women of that age. Regarding the Bible as an infallible authority, they were logical in their applications. Rather let us remember that, in our own time, men have been imprisoned for blasphemy, and that, on the testimony of Mr. Berry the hangman, others have been executed who were really insane. Let us thank the brave Freethinkers who, like Reginald Scot as early as 1584, protested against the persecution of innocent women. Let us thank the physicians who, like Esquirol, Pinel, Tuke and Maudsley, have studied insanity instead of torturing the insane; and, by showing the reciprocal influence of mind and body, have served to explain, and thereby exploded, the superstitious belief in spirits and in witchcraft.

J. M. WHEELER.

#### THE TIRED WOMAN'S EPITAPH.

Here lies a poor woman who always was tired,  
Who lived in a house where help was not hired.  
Her last words on earth were, "Dear friends, I am going  
Where washing ain't done, nor sweeping nor sowing,  
But everything there is exact to my wishes,  
For when they don't eat there's no washing of dishes.  
I'll be where loud anthems will always be ringing,  
But having no voice, I'll get clear of the singing.  
Don't mourn for me now, don't mourn for me never—  
I'm going to do nothing for ever and ever."

The notion that crime can be restricted or prevented by punishment owes its origin, like many other fallacies, to religious superstition. The Bible is the bulwark of the present infamous criminal system. When we reflect that the public mind is enslaved to this book of murder, hate, and revenge, it does not seem strange that our systems should be modelled on the general ideas contained therein.—*J. C. Winn.*

#### THE GARDEN OF EDEN.

THAT the Bible contains some valuable truths and useful injunctions Secularists readily grant, but they also recognise that throughout the book there are follies and fictions which theologians have exalted into supposed wisdom and truth. It is this fact which has placed the Bible in a false position, making it appear as if it were entirely a record of realities rather than what it undoubtedly is, in many parts, a register of ancient fancy and primitive imagination.

The first important fiction in the Hebrew records that has been recorded as a fact is what is termed the Garden of Eden, a place which it would be extremely difficult to geographically locate. This primitive enclosure was made the scene of those remarkable acts which form the basis of popular orthodoxy. It was there, it is said, where man and woman originated, where they fell from an original state of purity, thereby causing sin and death to enter into the world; and it was also there that his Satanic Majesty was introduced to the mortal gaze. This monarch, we are informed, has since then practically ruled the majority of human beings, and that despite the desperate efforts made by a crucified Savior to counteract the powerful influence of this "Prince of Darkness." Of course this Garden of Eden as described in the Bible is now regarded as a myth by the intelligence of the present age. Its description is in keeping with the mythologies of other nations, for almost all people have supposed the existence of a golden age at the commencement of the human race. True, the age described in Genesis was far from being perfect, but still it was probably as near perfection as the limited mind of the writer could conceive. The date assigned in this birth-place of theological fictions for the origin of man is much too late, inasmuch as human beings had been in existence thousands of years before the time when this sensational drama is alleged to have been enacted.

If we glance at the incidents of this drama, and at the persons who figure therein, we shall see how thoroughly absurd the whole story is when judged by the standard of modern thought. The principal character is represented by Deity, who appears to have been a kind of superior man, who walked in the garden in the cool of the day like an eastern potentate. He miscalculated the result of his work, and was ignorant of the whereabouts of Adam when he hid himself. This Deity professes to have formed man from the dust of the earth, an act which is opposed to the teachings of science; for it has been shown that the elements in dust do not correspond with those found in the human body. The exalted state given to Adam does not correspond with the details of the record, for he does not appear to have been very highly intellectual, as he simply occupied himself in tilling the ground. He went about in a state of nudity, which is characteristic of the savage. He had no exalted tastes, and could have had none of the wisdom born of experience. True, he named the animals, but he does not seem to have been sufficiently aware of the cunning of the serpent to protect himself against its seductive power. Dr. Adam Clarke, the celebrated Methodist commentator, supposed the serpent to have been a monkey, but neither monkeys nor serpents talk as a rule. Clearly, therefore, a talking animal indicates a region of fiction—not of fact. Modern theology declares this serpent to have been the Devil in the form of a snake; but there is no intimation of this given in the record, and the Jews certainly did not so understand it. Besides, the statement that "the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field" shows that something more than a spirit was referred to, and, moreover, the curse was pronounced on a serpent, and not on a devil.

The creation of Eve was evidently an afterthought, for the work had been pronounced good without her

presence. According to the story she was made from a rib of the man, which is an absurd statement. Her appearance was said to be the commencement of mischief, an allegation not very complimentary to woman. Adam and Eve were prohibited from eating one particular kind of fruit, with the threat that death should follow the disobedience of the command. This, however, did not occur. The tempter avowed that the eating of the fruit would not be followed by death, and he appears to have spoken the truth. What really did immediately follow the partaking of the forbidden fruit was the acquirement of knowledge and a decidedly improved condition of affairs. Thus we are told that as soon as this so-called sin was committed the man and woman proceeded to clothe themselves, an act of decency, showing that they had become wiser, and so the alleged fall was really arising. The Devil is thus credited with at least two good things—giving additional knowledge and supplying a sense of modesty.

The recorded events that followed this transformation scene are both absurd and undignified. A series of curses were pronounced, such as a passionate father might utter to a refractory school-boy. The serpent was informed that it must change its mode of locomotion and eat dust "all the days of thy life." But judging from the fossil remains of the snake tribe found in the strata, serpents never travelled in any other way than they do now, and most certainly they do not eat dust, or even dead animals, as they always eat their food alive. The curse on the woman was inhuman in the extreme. To accompany the giving birth to children, which should be the most interesting and unalloyed incident in the drama of life, with the pain and agony that are now associated with that event, is a sad reflection upon the justice and humane desires of any being. Fortunately the suffering at such periods is not universal and is largely due to artificial habits engendered by modern customs. It is not general even to-day amongst many savage races. The twofold curse pronounced on man and the ground is most pitiful and ridiculous. Labor is no curse, but a blessing. Indolence may often be a curse, but what would existence be without labor? The great drawback in reference to labor as experienced in "the divine order of things" is that too many persons have to perform far more than their fair share of work, while others do comparatively none. Then why should the ground be cursed? Thorns and thistles are both useful to man. Think of Scotland, one of the most orthodox nations on earth, having the thistle for its national emblem. But were not thorns and thistles included in the alleged plant creation of the third day? If so, they were in existence before the supposed transgression. Ultimately we are told that Adam and Eve were expelled from this garden. The expulsion, however, could hardly be regarded as an evil, for it opened up the rest of the world to man, and from it all travel and exploration arose. Suppose the "Fall" had not occurred, should we all have been confined to that simple garden to-day?

The fact is, the whole of the proceedings connected with the Garden of Eden and its subsequent results exhibit the Christian God as being destitute of all qualities necessary to goodness. He deliberately implanted in the hearts of Adam and Eve those springs of evil, whose natural and inevitable predestined and pre-ordained fruit he afterwards chastised with all the rigor of his rule. He placed them in a paradise where everything is described as being calculated to please the eye, cheer the heart, and enrich the mind, only to make the pangs and sufferings of the desert into which they were afterwards plunged the more painful and severe. He instilled within them the instinct of love, and the holy feelings of conjugal and paternal relation, only to inflict the immediate pain of giving birth to a murderer and a fra-

tricide, and the still further sorrow of the reflection that future parents were to be the progenitors of myriads of human beings; each one of whom should be the inheritor of their curse, and from the seed of whom it shall never depart, even after the most painful and protracted probation. With a cruelty that is more ingenious, if possible, than all the rest, the very woman whom this God sends as a helpmeet and a solace to man is, in the order of his providence, made the cause of all his woe, the curse of the world, the introducer of evil, and the desecrator of the earth. "Better, far better," Adam might have said to Deity, "had it been that you made me spiritless and unintelligent as the lowest and most despised of the brute creation than to endow me with rational curiosity and an inquiring mind, which, in combination with the allurements of the companion you gave me, and the temptations with which you surrounded me, have been the cause of my moral degradation and physical suffering." Is it not to be regretted that a God of infinite power, instead of making his children recipients of happiness and comfort, should enact a scene which he knew would incur for them misery and woe?

CHARLES WATTS.

#### EDUCATION IN IRELAND.

THE proposal to make education practically free in Ireland, and, more important still, to make it compulsory, raises the very important question of the treatment of Ireland in the past in regard to education. Like the rest of the government, it has been shameful. Liberal and Conservative Governments have alike neglected their duty, and have had to pay sometimes very dearly for their neglect. If the Roman Catholic Church had been ignored, and School Boards established in Ireland at the same time as in England, the power of the Church would have been weakened, and free, compulsory education would not have been resisted to the extent it will be at present.

The petty tyranny exercised in national schools under the present system is enormous. The schools are nearly all the property of some denomination, and are under the shadow of or in connection with some church. The result of this is that the selection of teachers rests with the church authorities, and only those teachers are chosen who are readiest in assisting in church work, their qualifications as teachers being a secondary consideration. The teachers themselves would only be too glad to be free from this incubus of church work which is forced on them, taking up a great deal of time, and poorly, or sometimes not at all, paid for. The truth of this is attested by the fact that the teachers are almost unanimously in favor of the present proposals of the Government, which are in the right direction. The opposition, however, of the historic enemy of progress, the Holy Roman Church, will probably wreck the prospects of any educational improvements at present; and this opposition is so cleverly conducted and put forward with such plausible sophistries, that those in favor of educational reform in Ireland and unacquainted with the local facts may be deceived as to the necessity or utility of compulsion.

Here are some extracts from a speech delivered by Archbishop Walsh at Arklow on Sunday, March 6:

"Your call upon me to come here just now is the answer of Arklow to the slur that is being put upon your country. I am sure you have read about it in the newspapers. They talk of passing an Act of Parliament to force you to do your duty by your children in sending them to school, and I take it that you meet that insult—for it is an insult—by proclaiming by your presence here to-day that you need no Act of the British Parliament to teach you your duties as Christian parents. At the present moment Ireland and her people, especially the fathers and mothers of the children of Ireland, stand upon their trial before the bar of public

opinion on the disgraceful charge that so utterly forgetful have Irish parents become of the teachings of religion, and so utterly neglectful have they shown themselves of that elementary duty of the parent—the duty of seeing to the education of his child—that nothing short of an appeal to British law can now be of effect to force them to the discharge of this essential duty. I call it a disgraceful charge. The whole thing from beginning to end is an indictment against you—against the people of Ireland. What heavier indictment could be laid against you? None. If you are bound to feed your children and to clothe your children, as you well know that you are, you are no less bound to educate your children, and you know it just as well. Well, then, here comes this new Education Bill, the result, to some extent, of the cry got up by the national school teachers of the country. Put into plain language, the agitation got up on the part of the national teachers on this point comes to this, that they practically charge you, as the fathers and mothers of the present generation in Ireland, with the cruel neglect of the best interests of your children. They lay the charge against you that so utterly lost are you to your sense of duty that things have now come to such a pass that you have to be compelled to do your duty to your children by threats of fines and imprisonment. If you are guilty, by all means be prepared to take the consequences of your unchristian neglect of the best interests of your offspring. But if you are not guilty (as I for one hold you are not), then be prepared to speak out for yourselves like men. Whatever you do, as you value the good name of Ireland, do not lie down in silence under this disgrace."

The magnificently assumed tone of injured innocence on the part of "his Grace of Dublin" is calculated to deceive even the very elect. The grim humor of it appears when we state that there are 100,000 illiterate voters in Ireland, and that the school attendance is far below the average of England and Scotland. A low estimate of the number of those who cannot read or write in Ireland places them as one in every twenty-five; and in Norway I was informed, on good authority, the illiterates are not one in a million.

The whole secret of the worthy bishop's vehemence and casuistry is the possibility of the schools conducted by the Christian Brothers being literally wiped out under a reformed system. These schools are completely under the thumbs of the priests, the Christian Brothers belong to a clerical order, are celibate, and spend their spare time in house to house begging for subscriptions to their order. Education in the hands of these gentlemen is simply a process of making good Roman Catholics first, and teaching knowledge afterwards. Special books are provided in which history is perverted to the glorification of the Church and every means, fair and foul, are taken to safeguard the interests of Roman superstition. More prayer is learnt than grammar, and submission to authority (clerical especially) is more deeply instilled than geographical location; the duty of attention to all the formalities—and they are many—of the Roman creed is made more important than the acquiring of knowledge practically useful. Every hour as the clock strikes, the entire school suspends the work at the moment and says a prayer to the Virgin or one of the crowd of saints swarming around the throne of grace. And a very Christian Brother has occasionally been engaged thrashing a refractory boy as the clock struck, when he would suspend operations with the right hand to cross himself, mumble a "Hail, Mary!" meanwhile retaining a grip of the culprit, and, after this devotional exercise, finish the chastisement. The boy being punished is supposed to indulge in a prayer with the rest, and his sincerity under the delicate circumstances may be left to conjecture.

The desire of conciliating the papal hierarchy in Ireland seems to be entertained by both political parties in England, with the result that those who are anxious for freedom—real freedom—in Ireland, have to suffer restrictions unknown in England, and the influence of the Church grows stronger day by

day: for she never relaxes for a moment her insidious methods of strengthening her hold—and the control of education is the most powerful weapon of defence she wields at present. W. M. KNOX.

#### THE MARRIAGE OF GOD AND THE DEVIL.

BY H. FRANK.

(From the "Twentieth Century.")

(CONCLUDED.)

I FIND God and the Devil are married, too, in the political and economic world. This is a little surprising; for while we might look for the Devil in such company, we should never expect to find him there as the spouse of God. The State, as it exists to-day, is not the symbol of government. It is simply the symbol of political machine rule. It is the embodiment of bossism and the incarnation of corruption. Therefore, as it stands in authority, we have here a God whom we all worship, authorising the iniquity which exists because of our devotion to a superstition.

I do not mean to imply that government will ever pass wholly away. I think they who argue so are illogical and visionary. But I do emphatically believe that government as exemplified in the political forms which exist to-day will assuredly pass away, and that before long. To show you what I mean, take the three forms of government which the State has developed within different periods. There have been three kinds of State government in all the past. First, there was the slave-ruling State, then the State of the feudal lords, and lastly the State of the capitalists. Now, I presume the worshippers of the first form of government—the slave-ruling State—used to preach to their dupes as follows: "God has declared through all his prophets that to be free is not the just estate of those who travel through this vale of tears. Freedom is vouchsafed only to those who have been chosen and fore-ordained from all time as the elect of God. If the masses should be free now they would lose all the enjoyment which awaits them when they shall first acquire their freedom in the happy land beyond the stars. Therefore, blessed are the slaves; blessed are they who serve their masters and obey the forms of tyranny; blessed are they who endure the whip lashes of their overseers and drivers—for, for every scar which the lash has here made upon your back you shall be repaid thirty, sixty, and a hundred-fold in the world where freedom is the heritage of all. Therefore, while here learn rightly to obey your masters that you may learn to become masters of yourselves hereafter."

Well, "the dear people" thought this was beautiful preaching—a real revelation, and such oracles as only inspired prophets could deliver. So they sweated, and suffered, and licked the blood which the whip lashes gashed from their veins, and thanked God for the privilege of living in such a beautiful world full of the promise of eternal life. This condition lasted for many centuries. Slowly men began to see daylight on the subject. They caught a faint glimpse of the real God they were worshipping, and rose *en masse* against him. Then after many revolutions came another form of government to delude mankind. This was the feudal system. That form of government was of course as essentially a condition of slavery as was the preceding one. But it was diguised. Ah! there's the rub. That's the way governments always succeed. Their true character is disguised. The devil of iniquity is concealed by the overawing majesty of the God of authority. In that system of government the baronial or feudal lords duped their vassals by making them believe they enjoyed their freedom, because they were privileged to fight and die for their masters. The preachers of that age doubtless spoke as follows: "The God of all wisdom, majesty, and glory has ordained from the beginning of all time that the civilisation of man depends upon the iron rule and the luxurious situations of a few whom he has chosen for his own happiness before the foundation of the world. It is ordained by this same all-wise God that if you will faithfully obey your feudal lords—if you will not demur against the few crumbs of privilege on which they feed you—if you will be content to become a part of the soil as a tree is, and never try to learn the pleasure of voluntary locomotion, but simply sleep when he tells you to sleep, wake when he calls you, cultivate the thin strip of land he gives you to live on, and when he orders you to battle,

buckle on your armor, asking not to live or die, but simply obeying his mandates; if you will realise how good God is to appoint over you such a gracious liege lord, and will conscientiously obey his every command, then there will await you a crown beyond the stars that will make you a prince in heaven to rule and have vassals of your own, just as your lord rules and has vassals here." And to all this the stolid masses shouted "Amen" and sank deeper in their degradation.

We are wont to look upon these people as fools. We call the God they worshipped a Devil. But to-day we are as great fools as they were, and worship a Devil as iniquitous. The State is, as we know, to-day simply the symbol of organised capitalism. It exists for the sake of the capitalist alone, while the propertyless wage workers are as menial slaves as ever were the vassals of feudal lords. We wonder how people could ever have massed themselves into an army of thousands to fight and die for their kings, or how they would allow themselves to be taxed into destitution for the comfort of the ruling dynasty. But to-day we are doing the self-same thing. We submit to the control and authority of political machinery as obsequiously as ever did the slaves of old. If kings and queens lived in luxury off the hard-earned coins of their subjects, are we not to-day suffering our rulers to live as richly off ourselves? Take this as a specimen. The papers report that our worthy Tammany chieftans are to be carried to Albany to attend the approaching convention in three special trains consisting of thirty luxurious cars, and will each of them spend a small fortune during their brief visit at this political rendezvous.

Who pays the bills?

Politicians to-day tax us as severely, in proportion to their opportunity, as did kings in olden times tax their subjects.

The State runs all its machinery for the benefit of the capitalist. He controls the land, the money, the waterways, and systems of transportation; he owns the factories and all the tools; he utilises the ingenuity and skill of wage workers and appropriates their hard-earned wealth, growing rich off their poverty; he collects the rents and exploits all the profits—he is, in short, the authorised robber of the economic world, and the State gives him *carte blanche* to oppress, to enslave, to rob, while his wretched victim can do nothing but growl and grumble—for if he rebels he must starve.

That form of government which symbolises the oppressive control of organised capitalism must pass away. Whether it shall be through revolution or without it none can tell. But so long as the social and religious God of this age boasts his marriage with this Devil of social and economic iniquity, so surely is he intensifying the exasperation of the suffering masses, and so surely is he sowing the seeds of approaching revolution.

In our present economic status, the God of capitalism is wedded to the Devil of social oppression. The demands of justice, the rights of man, and the high-water mark of our present civilisation, call for an immediate and unqualified divorce. Let the God of capitalism and the Devil of economic tyranny be forever separated. Then, let them both go down together.

#### WHAT PRICE HUGHES?

During the recent visit of a popular Wesleyan minister to Newcastle, a well-known sporting bookmaker in Newgate-street was startled by a client coming to him in hot haste, and exclaiming, "What price Hughes?" "What's that ye say?" said the bookmaker. "What price Hughes?" was the reply. "But thar isn't such a horse in the race, man." "Is that so? That's queer. Aa heard a gentleman in Grainger-street just say te another, 'What price Hughes the day?' an' aa thowt aa wad come an' hev a bit on the animal messel'!"—*Newcastle Weekly Chronicle*, Feb. 20.

**THE BLESSINGS OF CHRISTIANITY.**—In 1247, Innocent IV., in making over the see of Bosnia to the Archbishop of Kalosca, alludes to the labors performed by him and his predecessors in the effort to redeem it from heresy. They had meritoriously devastated the greater part of the land; they had carried away into captivity many thousands of heretics, with great effusion of blood and no little slaughter of their own men and waste of their substance.—*H. C. Lea, "History of the Inquisition,"* vol. II., p. 298.

## ACID DROPS.

A German peasant named Puschke, living at the village of Dulaek, has carried his Imitation of Christ to the length of crucifying himself. Of course the papers say he is insane, but that only means that he is thorough-going. He went into a stable, tied his legs together, and drove nails through his feet, fastening them to the ground. Then, lying outstretched on his back, he nailed down his left hand, and with his right hand stabbed himself repeatedly in the chest. His wife found him lying unconscious, and he was taken in hand by the doctors, who hope to save his life.

Puschke should go about as a revivalist if he recovers. He would be a big draw. "Christ and him crucified, by the crucified Puschke." Wouldn't it look well on the posters?

Dr. Maudsley, in his *Pathology of Mind*, tells how he met Jesus Christ in an asylum, and he proved to be a very quiet gentlemanly fellow. There has now been committed to Brentwood Asylum, one Charles Haselton, of Edgware-road, by trade a chimney-sweep, who declared that he was God Almighty, and had been told to capture the Devil. He smashed a number of windows in High-street, Windsor, with the result that his Almightyness is now safely incarcerated.

We pointed out lately how, through a mistake of the missionaries in China, the Lord Jesus Christ gets confounded with the Pig Jesus Christ, the word used having the same sound. Another instance is told by a missionary as illustrating the difficulty of making the Chinese comprehend Christianity—how the "inner man" throughout the New Testament is supposed to mean woman, that being the idiom in their language.

There are at least five modern Messiahs doing business in the States at present, not to mention Mr. Foulke, the successor to Madame Blavatsky. No. 1 is Lewis the Light, who got into prison when in England for proclaiming his mission at Westminster Abbey. No. 2 is Christ Schweinfurth, at Rockford. No. 3, Prince Michael Mills, at Detroit. No. 4, Cryus Romulus Teed, founder of Koreshanity and editor of the *Flaming Sword*, who is in a large way at Chicago; and No. 5, Prophet T. L. Harris. There is in addition a female Christ, in the person of Mrs. Martin, of Cincinnati. This branch of industry is a remunerative one.

Thomas Lake Harris, the post prophet, who took in Lawrence Oliphant and set Lady Oliphant to the wash-tub, is asserted by his devoted followers at Fountain Grove, Santa Rosa, California, to have discovered the elixir of life and grown young again. He was born in 1824, but he has given proof of his rejuvenation by marrying the lady who acted as his secretary.

"Woman's position is supplementary," says the *Christian Commonwealth*. This is the barn-yard cock's doctrine, only he does not express it so nicely. It is also the Christian doctrine. The man was not made for the woman, but the woman for the man, exclaimed holy Saint Paul. Of course he belonged to the male persuasion, like our barn-yard friend aforesaid; and so have all the good Christians who have since upheld the same view. Yet in the face of this fact, and worse still if "Scripture" be ransacked, it is declared that the Bible is woman's best friend.

Henry Varley writes from Cardiff to the *Christian Commonwealth* on "Moses and Inspiration." This busybody (not Moses, but Varley) has been pouring out the vials of his rancid wrath upon Dr. Clifford for being too advanced in Biblical criticism. Now, however, he has to defend himself, and in doing so he shows that he also is capable of finding the Bible inspired or uninspired as it suits his purpose. For instance, he cannot help seeing that slavery and polygamy were sanctioned by the Mosaic law; but for all that, he declares that they were "out of line with the will of God." Thus Varley knows all about the will of God when he finds it convenient; only he objects to other Christians going farther than he does. Which is Varley all over.

Dr. Parker has a delightfully easy theory of inspiration. "That which inspires," he says, "is inspired; The Bible

inspires me, therefore it is inspired." This argument, if it deserves the name, would prove the inspiration of thousands of books as well as the Bible; nor does it occur to Dr. Parker that a personal test is beyond discussion, or that what *he* may find "inspiring" may be to another man "weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable."

Dr. Vaughan, the successor to Cardinal Manning in the archbishopric of Westminster, comes from a line of Catholic priests and soldiers. His father was Col. Vaughan; he has an uncle Roman Catholic Bishop of Plymouth, and two other uncles Jesuit priests. He is active in propaganda, and his election will please the upper class English Catholics, as he is not likely to be either so Irish or Radical as Cardinal Manning.

A Liverpool Baptist preacher, the Rev. C. F. Aked, has been fraternising with a local Unitarian preacher, even to the length of exchanging pulpits with him. This has aroused the ire of other Baptist ministers, and the matter is to be brought before the Union Council. How these Christians love one another!

The poor Russian Jews are placed "between the Devil and the deep sea." The Czar will drive them out of his territory, and the Kaiser won't admit them into his. Unknowing the regulations, many of the chosen race make their way to the German frontier, and some, on attempting to evade the frontier guards, have been shot down. The Relief Committee estimate that 400,000 persons are now trying to leave Russia. The exodus is only comparable to that from Spain in the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella.

John Boulster Cox, a Plymouth Brother, of Croydon, got into trouble by going to communion and crumbling up the bread and emptying the wine cup on the floor. The magistrate read him a lesson, and henceforth he will probably be less avaricious of the body and blood of Christ.

God Almighty visited the vicarage of Woodville with a flash of lightning, doing considerable damage. The insurance company allowed an estimate of £49 9s. 6d. for repairs, but the Rev. E. Z. Little refused to settle the bill for £27 5s. The man of God, after carrying on an altercation with the judge in court, was condemned to pay. He has shown himself little in character as well as in name.

The Rev. G. Cockburn Dickenson, vicar of Hartford, with his son and daughter, have been fined for assaulting a laborer under singular circumstances. The young people went to the Hartford Baptist Chapel in a ludicrous disguise, and a holy squabble ensued.

John Goodall, local preacher, has been found guilty of indecently assaulting Mary Ann Siddals at Tamworth on January 11. The woman got out of the compartment of the train she was riding in to escape from the fellow; in so doing she fell upon the line, and was so injured that for a considerable time she lost her memory; but it gradually returned, and she was able to give evidence against her assaulter. Had her mind remained a blank the wretch might have escaped, for he enjoyed a godly reputation, and he has most piously protested his innocence.

Henry Allen, teacher at the Sansom-walk Sunday-schools, St. John's, Worcester, has been committed to trial on a charge of attempted indecent assault on Edith Phoebe Davis, a girl of eleven. Allen is one of the shining lights of the city, being teacher of the men's Bible class as well as Sunday-school superintendent.

The wife of Rev. Augustus S. Withington, of New Haven, Conn., has obtained a divorce from him on the ground of adultery and general immorality. Where is the "refining influences" of religion?

Trinity Church, Southend, was the scene of a disturbance on Sunday morning. Two rival men of God carried on the service, and one of them had to be taken to the police station. Surely this is settling spiritual affairs with the arm of the flesh. The Lord himself should have indicated which gentleman he preferred to minister in his holy habitation.

There was a lively time at a colored church in Louisville Ky., the other evening. Rev. Mr. Tedings was making a vigorous attack upon sin and was denouncing the backsliders and lukewarm Christians in the rear of the church. Among the latter was Fannie Alford. She took the abuse as long as she could contain herself. Finally she sprang up and ran down the aisle and with one blow stretched the preacher flat on the pulpit. The brethren and sisters ran to the assistance of their pastor and Fannie knocked them right and left. When Fannie finally succeeded in getting out, her clothes were nearly all torn off and she was covered with blood, but she had whipped nearly every member of the church.—*Ironclad Age*.

A teacher questioning his class on scripture history, asked a little boy who was the holiest man. "Moses, sir," said the little boy. "How do you know he was the holiest man?" asked the teacher. "Because, sir," was the quick response, "I often hear my father say 'Holy Moses.'"

Christ Schweinfurth, the German American Messiah, who has set up a "Heaven" near Rockford, Illinois, is a defendant in a damage suit for 50,000 dollars, and Heaven is to be attached. The plaintiff is G. W. Coudrey, of Chicago, whose wife left her husband to go to Heaven, and who has endowed the prophet with her money. If Mr. Coudrey's suit is successful it will precipitate many others, and Heaven may be broken up and Christ Schweinfurth made bankrupt.

Canon Hayman is chairman of the Canadian Pacific Colonisation Corporation (Limited). He has been sued by Miss Knox for £300, which she alleged that she had been induced to invest by false declarations. Justice Kekewich, in the Chancery Court, gave judgment for the plaintiff. His lordship said that he was obliged to think Canon Hayman a fool or worse; but he couldn't think him a fool, and was compelled to believe that he knew the statement made to Miss Knox was false.

Mr. Matthews, the Home Secretary, declines to state the number of clergymen who have been convicted during the past seven years, as such a return is not necessary for the consideration of the Clergy Discipline Bill.

A shooting affray has taken place in a negro church at Augusta, Georgia, a colored bishop named Jones being shot while officiating in the pulpit.

"Oh, papa," said little Nellie,  
And a new thought to her springs,  
"What ailed the fallen angels,  
Couldn't they work their wings?"

The rector of St. George's, Southwark, means to have his pound of flesh, though he imprisons seventeen of the vestrymen of his parish in order to get it. Up to the present they have refused to make the Church Rate, and if they will only show the same spirit in this matter as Dr. Allinson, they will contribute to sweep away the last remnants of Church robbery.

The Pawnee Indians near Oklahoma have been again executing their ghost dance in expectation of the coming Indian Messiah, and are stated to be eager for the war-path, and threatening vengeance on the whites for depriving them of their lands. The Messiah craze arose among the Jews under somewhat similar circumstances. It began when they were taken into captivity to Babylon, and reached its final fury under Barchochba when under Roman rule, and the Emperor Hadrian destroyed their city a second time.

Sceptical Patient (to Faith Doctor)—"How do you propose to cure this pain in my chest, doctor?" Faith Doctor—"I shall pass my hands over your chest a few times, then tell you the pain is gone, and it will be gone." Patient—"Ah, yes. Will you dine with me, doctor? You can perform the cure afterward." Doctor—"With pleasure." Patient—"Well, take this loaf of bread, and rub it on your stomach a few times and say you have had your dinner, and you will have had it. If the experiment is a success we will go on with the chest cure."

The following items are taken from a report on public schools mentioned in the *Guardian*. 1. Oxford—"Whatever

you may hear to the contrary, you may be well assured that a large proportion of those who have been boys at our public schools come to the university deplorably ignorant of the Bible." 2. Cambridge—"As regards the state as to the religious education of men entering the university, my impression is, I regret to say, an unfavorable one."

Price Hughes cadges for his West London Mission all over the country. "Unless you Christianise London, London will heathenise you" he told the people at Portsmouth. So he expects provincial Christians to come to the help of the Lord, that is the help of Price Hughes, against the mighty.

The minister announced that Brother Ebenezer Cantwell would read a paper before the Y.M.C.A. on "The Devil," and added, he hoped there would be a good attendance, as brother Cantwell was full of his subject.

Some of Johnny McNeill's flowers of speech are given in the *Weekly Scotsman*. Johnny breathes freely now he has his foot upon his native heather. His tongue shares in the freedom, and Johnny will soon be able to take a good place in the pantomime.

According to the Rev. John Robertson, the sittings of the Glasgow Free Presbytery are unedifying, undignified, and smacking of the bear garden. Some of the ecclesiastical squabbling, he says, would have "disgraced a back beer-shop"—that is, if the back beer-shop would let them.

Being annoyed by congregational coughing, the boss of a Liverpool gospel-shop advised his flock to bring Keating's lozenges the following Sunday. This was noticed in the *London Star* by a blasphemous funny man, who who headed his paragraph—

Peace on earth and mercy mild,  
Two for man and one for child.

Bournemouth bigots don't want a Board school. They have had a meeting to oppose the nuisance, and Dean Gregory was among the speakers. He said that Board schools were the cause of modern strikes, and for this he is taken to task by the *London Daily Chronicle*. But, after all, there is a good deal of truth in Dean Gregory's observation. He is not such a fool as he looks—or rather as the *Chronicle* takes him to be. So far as strikes are expressions of the working man's intention not to put up with the old oppressions, we think the "godless" Board schools are largely responsible for them.

Country Rector to small boy: "Well my little man, what trade would you like to be?" "Small Boy: A passun zur, and work one day a week."

The Rev. H. W. Andrews made a scene in Christ Church, Coalville, by denouncing from the pulpit certain members of the choir who had given their services in aid of the Catholic Church. The denounced persons rose and left the church, followed by their friends.

The quotation given on p. 205 from Dr. Kenealy's *Book of God* was taken word by word from the first part of Paine's *Age of Reason*, to which Dr. Kenealy made neither reference nor acknowledgment. Dr. Kenealy was a Pantheist, but a very eccentric one.

Mrs. H— is a young married lady, and an Episcopalian. Her husband is not a member of any church, but, as all good husbands should, he frequently attends church with his wife. His first attempt, however, to conform to the Episcopal form of service was so mortifying that he was almost tempted to forswear church-going altogether. It was Easter Sunday, and his wife had tried to coach him beforehand, naturally wishing him to take part with her in the service. "Remember now, my dear," she said, "that the rector will come forward and say, 'The Lord is risen,' and you will respond with 'He is, indeed.' You will remember that, now, won't you?" "Well, I guess I can remember three words," replied Mr. H—, a little testily. An hour later they were at the church. The rector came forward at the proper time, in the beginning of the service, and said solemnly, "The Lord is risen." Promptly and distinctly came the response of Mr. H—, "Is he, indeed?"—*Philadelphia Record*.

The fact that the date of Easter changes every year is sufficient to show that it commemorates no historical occurrence, but an astronomical change. In some old calendars, March 27 was always marked as that of the resurrection of our Lord the spring, that is, as the birthday of the sun was placed shortly after the lengthening of the day, so his resurrection was placed shortly after the vernal equinox, that day itself being assigned to our Lady. March 25, moreover, was anciently believed to have been the day when Christos was put on the cross (see Rev. Robert Owen's *Sanctorale Catholicum*).

April 1, the Feast of Fools, is appropriately kept in the Church as "the memorial of the beginning of our Lord's preaching."

Good Christians are disgusted upon learning that Hindus who break caste by travelling have to purify themselves by partaking of the excretions of the cow. Yet this is the very order which God gave to his prophet Ezekiel, as a substitute for a yet more filthy one (see Ezekiel iv. 14, 15).

Dr. E. H. Gifford has been denouncing from the university pulpit the Rev. Dr. Cheyne for asserting the Maccabean authorship of the 110th Psalm. He finds it incompatible with his profession to "unfeignedly believe in the canonical books of the Old and New Testament."

The political sermons and propaganda of French priests have led to several disturbances in French churches. It appears from the report in the *Daily Telegraph* that the Abbé Laurencon, curé of St. Joseph's Church, Belleville, announced conferences, with discussion, with Socialists. The Abbé Lenfant roused some feeling by reproaching atheistic Socialists with neglecting suffering humanity. Instead of being allowed to reply, another priest was put forward as *advocatus diaboli*, putting forward so weak a case as to serve as a foil to the Catholic champion. When he had done, a Socialist got up and began with the usual word "Citizens." "There are no citizens here," said a burly Catholic, who seized him by the collar and dragged him towards the door; whereupon a row ensued, the Socialists singing the Carmagnole and the Catholics the canticle "Je suis Chretien."

Father Forbes, the Jesuit who is expelled from France, stated his case to the British Embassy. As he was not even defended in the French Chamber, it is hardly likely that Lord Salisbury will embroil us with our neighbors across the channel on his account.

The Friend of the Clergy Corporation exists for the purpose of helping poor sky-pilots who only get from £100 to £150 a year. It even provides some of them with cast off clothing. The Prince of Wales is patron, and the Duke of Northumberland president. On Wednesday, May 25, the Corporation is going to have a swell dinner at the Hotel Metropole, at which the Duke of Fife will take the chair. Money will be collected then for the poor ministers of the gospel of poverty. "Blessed be ye poor" is all very well in church, but it works out badly in practice.

Believers in special providence should try to account for this peculiar answer to prayer. Mrs. Izette Johnson, wife of Lieutenant Johnson, residing at Cambridge Barracks, Woolwich, retired to bed, and when her husband followed a quarter of an hour later he found her kneeling at the bedside dead.

#### HOW TO HELP US.

- (1) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.
- (2) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (3) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Fordor will send them on application.
- (5) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (6) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.



**MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.**

Sunday, April 3, Hall of Science, Old-street, E.C., at 11.15, "Poverty, Old Age, and State Pensions"; at 7, "Charles Haddon Spurgeon: Man, Preacher, and Theologian."

Thursday, April 7, Workmen's Club and Institute, High-street, Walthamstow; at 8, "Why I Cannot be a Christian." Admission free.

April 10, Hall of Science; 17, Sheffield; 24, Hall of Science. May 1, Glasgow.

**TO CORRESPONDENTS.**

**MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.**—April 3, Manchester; 10 and 17, Birmingham; 24, Sheffield. May 1 and 8 (morning and evening), Hall of Science; 15 and 22, Birmingham.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent direct to him at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

W. T. LEEKEY.—Cuttings are always welcome.

T. ELWIN.—Mr. Wheeler's photograph is not on sale. Mr. Holyoake's, we believe, can be obtained of Mr. Forder, price 2s.

THREE PUZZLED.—Your question seems sufficiently answered.

SORANUS.—We have a glut of copy at present. "Commissioner" Railton is hardly worth notice when he writes on Science or Freethought. Let him stick to the big drum.

J. TOMKINS points out that compulsory attendance at church was repealed by the statute 9 and 10 Victoria, cap. 59. But the whole state of the laws affecting religion is very chaotic.

W. C. WALTON.—*Freethinker* was sent last week to your old address. Send new one, and three more numbers shall be sent.

J. BURRELL.—We always find room for such notices, though we often have to cut them down.

F. J. CARTER.—We believe the second edition of *Religious Systems* is the same price as the first (7s. 6d.) The verse has some merit, but is hardly up to our mark.

R. J. MURRAY.—Sorry we cannot advise in that way. "General Literature" would cover half the bookshelves in the British Museum. "History" is also too wide. History of what? Make up your mind more precisely, and we will recommend a few good books!

J. TULLIN.—*The Economy of Human Life* is not a genuine Eastern work, but was written by Robert Dodsley the publisher (1703—1764). It was ascribed to the Earl of Chesterfield and went through many editions. Copies can be often picked up for a few pence. The Golden Rule may be found in the Hindu *Hitopadesa*, in the Buddhist *Dhammapada*, and in the works of Confucius and Mencius.

YOUNG FREETHINKER.—(1) You can hardly expect us to answer such an impudent question. (2) Secularism is committed to no public declaration on the subject of marriage. Most Secularists believe in marriage as a civil institution, which should be tempered by a rational law of divorce. Show your Christian friends Colonel Ingersoll's eloquent pamphlet on this question.

S. B. SYKES.—(1) There is no report of the Logan-Foote debate. Mr. Foote offered £11 (an outside London price), but the Bristol reporters refused it. (2) The three concluding numbers of *Bible Romances* are in hand, and will be issued shortly. (2) Our edition of Voltaire's Theological Works is in active preparation.

S. H. ALISON.—Thanks for cuttings.

MAC.—We dealt with that Watford yarn two or three years ago. The fact obviously gave rise to the legend. Pleased to hear you find this journal so interesting.

D. W.—There are several alleged cases of animals committing suicide. It is hard to determine.

S. ACKROYD.—Well written letters in the local newspapers are of great service to our cause. Glad to hear the Huddersfield Branch will carry on an active open-air propaganda during the summer.

E. COX.—The paragraph stands. We have nothing to alter.

E. SMEDLEY.—(1) Intelligence is a characteristic of nervous organisations in a certain state of development. It is impossible to indicate the precise point where it commences. (2) Before we say whether there is "dead" matter and "living" matter, we must ask you to define those words. (3) Man is compounded of the same materials as other parts of nature. He conforms to the general laws of organisation.

A. J. H.—Mirabaud's (D'Holbach's) *System of Nature* is not a scarce book. An odd volume of it is of no value whatever.

R. ROBINSON.—The man Bailey may amuse a certain order of Christians with his foul addresses on Atheism and Atheists, but it would be paying him too high a compliment to meet him in public debate. We must draw the line somewhere, and we draw it at Bailey. Leave him severely alone.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Fritankaren—Truthseeker—Lichtfrund—Freidenker—Liberator—Two Worlds—Western Figaro—Boston Investigator—Freedom—Liberty—Der Arme Teufel—Progressive Thinker—Cosmopolitan—Flaming Sword—Better Way—Echo—Ironclad Age—Lucifer—Crossbearer—Burton Chronicle—North London Guardian—Leek Times—

Worcester Daily Times—Daily News—Twentieth Century—Essex Weekly News—Christian Globe—Leeds Times—Open Court—Midland Evening News—Secular Thought—Independent Pulpit.

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.

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.

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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.

**SUGAR PLUMS.**

There were good meetings at the London Hall of Science on Sunday. Mr. Foote's morning lecture was on "The New County Council." Some criticism was offered by an Anarchist Socialist. Prior to the evening lecture there was some good singing, and a reading by Mr. Foote of George Meredith's "Juggling Jerry." The lecture on "Prayer and Providence" was followed with keen interest and heartily applauded. Two Christians opposed, one an old gentleman fond of astronomy, who made an excursion into infinite space and lost himself there. The doctrine of special providence was not much helped by their advocacy.

Mr. Foote lectures at the London Hall of Science again to-day (April 3). His morning lecture is "Poverty, Old Age, and State Pensions." In the evening the subject is "Charles Haddon Spurgeon: Man, Preacher, and Theologian." Prior to the lecture there will be musical selections, and a reading by Mr. Foote from Walt Whitman. After the lecture Mr. Foote has something special to say to London Freethinkers.

The third of Mr. Foote's special course of lectures on Jesus Christ was delivered at the London Hall of Science on Thursday, March 24, the title being "God the Son." The lecturer dealt with the question elaborately, and tried to show how the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus Christ grew up gradually in the Christian Church. Opposition was offered by the Rev. C. L. Engstrom, secretary of the Christian Evidence Society. After an hour's discussion the meeting dispersed. The last lecture of the course is down for Thursday, March 31, the subject being "The Code of Christ."

Mr. Foote is going on a lecturing tour in Scotland early in May. He will certainly visit Glasgow, Edinburgh, and Aberdeen. Cannot the Freethinkers in other places arrange for week-night lectures? If they can, they should communicate with Mr. Foote immediately.

The essay on "Was Jesus Crucified?" by a member of the Chicago Bar, which has just been reprinted in the *Freethinker*, is undoubtedly one of great merit. Mr. George Anderson is so highly pleased with it that he desires to see it published in cheap pamphlet form for general circulation, especially amongst orthodox Christians. For this purpose he offers £5 towards the cost of publication. We have accepted his kind offer, and undertaken to publish the pamphlet at our own risk at the price of one penny. It shall be well printed on good paper. Should any other persons wish to subscribe towards the circulation of this very useful pamphlet, we shall devote whatever they may send us to placing copies in the hands of Mr. Forder for distribution among the Branches and individual Freethinkers who will help to put it in circulation.

A series of social gatherings were commenced at Baskerville Hall, Birmingham, on Thursday, March 24, when about 120 ladies and gentlemen attended and thoroughly enjoyed themselves, from 8 o'clock until 11.30, at dancing, singing

and reciting. Mrs. Watts provided an ample supply of refreshments. The non-dancers indulged in social chat, card-playing and draughts. Members of the local Branch of the N. S. S. officiated as M.C.'s and stewards, and some excellent music was on hand. Great credit is due to Messrs. Burrows, Taylor, Partridge, Millichamp, Parsons and Kerslake for their valuable assistance. The next social will be held on Wednesday, April 6, by special request. Tickets one shilling each including refreshments, use of cloak-room, etc.

Mr. G. H. Martin (author of *Antidotes for Superstition*) will make his first appearance in the provinces as a lecturer this Sunday (April 3) in Baskerville Hall, Birmingham. He speaks morning and evening. We shall be pleased to hear that Mr. Martin has received a hearty welcome from the Secularists in the Midland counties.

Mr. Charles Watts lectures three times to-day (Sunday, April 3) in the Secular Hall, Manchester. No doubt he will meet with his usual success, particularly as he intends dealing more especially with the work of the Christian Evidence Society. On Monday evening Mr. Watts will lecture in the Secular Hall, John-street, Hanley.

The recent debate in Sheffield between the Rev. Dr. McCann and Mr. Charles Watts appears to have been a decided success. The local papers gave a fair and lengthy report of each night and complimented the disputants on the good feeling they manifested towards each other. The large audiences maintained a strictly impartial attitude throughout, as there was an absence of an exhibition of hostile feeling on either side, while the applause was exceedingly enthusiastic.

The Sheffield friends accord Mrs. Charles Watts great praise for her dramatic recitals, which she recently gave in that town. Branches of the N. S. S., when they have no lecturer engaged, should arrange with Mrs. Watts (who is a member of the N. S. S.) for a Sunday visit.

The Bethnal Green Branch had a successful social gathering on Sunday. Over 120 sat down to tea, and a larger number "assisted" at the entertainment, given by the Milton Hall Amateur Dramatic Company under the direction of Miss E. M. Vance. Several new members were enrolled. The next party will take place on May 1.

Libra Hall was crowded on Tuesday evening when Mr. Foote lectured on "Why I cannot be a Christian," and as all the seats were paid for we presume the Bethnal Green Branch will find the proceeds useful in helping to carry on its propaganda. Some criticism was offered by a smooth-spoken gentleman named Jones, who complained of the absence of the vicar of Old Ford, who, he said, should have been present to defend Christianity. The chairman made a friendly reference to the Hall of Science scheme, which was warmly applauded.

Mr. H. Snell lectures to-day (April 3) at Southampton. He possesses ability and great earnestness, and we hope the Southampton friends will give him a cordial reception.

Some time ago we announced that we were preparing an edition of Voltaire's Theological Works. It will run to two, and perhaps three, bulky volumes. About twelve sheets of the first volume are finished, and we hope to begin publication in the early part of the summer.

Another volume we have in the press is *Bible Studies*, by J. M. Wheeler. The volume opens with an Essay on Phallic Worship among the Jews, and includes many of the best articles contributed by Mr. Wheeler to the *Freethinker* and *Progress*. All the essays and articles in the volume have been carefully revised, and in some cases considerably amplified.

The Battersea Branch held its quarterly meeting last Sunday afternoon. The balance-sheet showed a deficit of 12s. 11½d. (a good part of which was made up by donations later in the day). Four new members joined during the quarter, and three more while the meeting was being held. Mr. G. Shambrook was elected president, Mr. Potter as vice-president, Mr. Day treasurer; the secretary and other officers were re-elected. At 5.80 members and friends sat down to

tea; after which a good entertainment (including a farce by the Branch dramatic club) took place. At ten o'clock dancing commenced. All present spent a very enjoyable evening.

The Battersea Branch hires Chatham Hall this evening (Sunday, April 3) for a lecture by Mr. J. M. Robertson—his subject being "The Meaning of Atheism." Mrs. Bradlaugh-Bonner will preside.

Mrs. Louisa Samson writes a vigorous letter to the *North London Guardian*, protesting against the exclusion of her husband from the Commission of Stoke Newington Free Library. Mr. Samson started the Free Library movement in Stoke Newington, and at the first election he was returned at the head of the poll. His Freethought views were then unknown, but he showed "the cloven hoof" by trying to introduce Freethought books, and orthodoxy has scored another paltry triumph; not exactly at Mr. Samson's expense, but rather at its own; and in that sense, perhaps, we ought to be grateful to the bigots.

The *Progressive Thinker*, of Chicago, devotes considerable space to a report of the mass meeting held in that city, in favor of the Sunday opening of the World's Fair. It also has a good article on the subject.

Last week, at a sale of autographs at Sotheby's, a letter from Thomas Paine, dated April, 1790, giving an account of his interview with C. J. Fox, and speaking of the probable appearance of Burke's pamphlet on the French Revolution and his intention of answering it (which he did in the famous *Rights of Man*), was sold for £5 15s.

The *Freidenker*, of Milwaukee, is now printing the scattered fragments in prose and verse left by the German Freethinker, Albert Dulk, collected and contributed by his widow, Else Dulk.

*Secular Thought* of Toronto (Mr. Charles Watts's old paper) seems to be flourishing under the direction of Mr. J. S. Ellis. The number before us has an interesting list of contents. We notice that it reproduces Mr. Foote's article on "Fluxley's Mistake" from the *Freethinker*.

According to the *New York Sun* "regular theatrical prices prevailed" at the Broadway Theatre recently when Colonel Ingersoll delivered his lecture on "Myth and Miracle." Every bit of standing room was occupied, the stage was covered with chairs at a dollar and a half each, and lots of people were unable to get inside the building. "When the cheerful Colonel appeared," the *Sun* says, "the audience fairly went wild with expressions of delight. For two hours the speaker held the undivided attention of the entire house. He was cheered continuously."

Some time ago it was reported that Mr. B. F. Underwood, an American Freethought advocate of high standing, had become a Spiritualist. The report was published in several papers, including Mr. Stead's *Review of Reviews*. In *Secular Thought* for March 19 a denial of Mr. Underwood's "conversion" is given on the highest authority, namely his own. Mr. Underwood writes that he has found some "curious genuine phenomena" among a large mass of "delusion, collusion, and fraud," but instead of "ascribing them to the intervention of spirit," he believes they are "all explicable by and through the powers of the human mind."

The French "Comité d'Etudes Morales" has put forward a circular on the subject of egoism and altruism. It contains definitions and statements from Herbert Spencer, Bentham, Dr. Büchner, B. Malon, Clemence Royer, Dr. Letourneau, J. M. Guyau, and many others, including the committee.

Mr. George Anderson writes to us as follows: "I read your appeal to the party to take up shares in the Hall of Science purchase scheme. I had a long and intimate connection with Mr. Bradlaugh. I should be sorry if a place where he was so long and well known—as he was at the Hall of Science—should not be secured to his memory, and rendered more worthy of the party by the additions now proposed. To prove my sincerity in this respect, I hereby offer to subscribe for 10 shares for every 100 shares subscribed for by others beyond the first 1,000. I enclose cheque for £10 to meet the first 100, and shall be glad to supplement it on

hearing from you. I put the matter in this form, on the principle that only those deserve to be helped who make an effort to help themselves."

This is a generous offer on Mr. Anderson's part. We hope it will stimulate the backward, and even induce those who are already members of the National Secular Hall Society to increase the amount of their shares.

DEBATE IN SHEFFIELD BETWEEN DR. JAMES McCANN AND MR. CHARLES WATTS.

I REPORTED in the *Freethinker* a few weeks ago that a very successful course of four lectures had been given here by Mr. Charles Watts, as a counterblast to a long series of lectures given by Mr. Celestine Edwards, of the Christian Evidence Society.

One of our local papers, in noticing the addresses of Mr. Watts, remarked that the visit of Mr. Edwards to Sheffield would prove to be by no means an unmixed blessing, as one result had already been the visit of Mr. Watts, whose powerful arguments would find work for the Sheffield Christian Evidence Society for a long time to come. A verification of that prediction has been clearly apparent in the widespread interest which has been manifested, and which culminated last week in a debate on the relative value of Secularism and Christianity.

During the lectures referred to Mr. Watts invited the C.E.S. to bring Mr. Edwards or their best man to debate with him. That society evidently saw that Mr. Watts had made a deep and favorable impression—that he had won for himself and his cause such attention and sympathy as rendered his work extremely dangerous to their cause, unless it could be neutralised. They therefore sought a champion, and found one in Dr. McCann, and I must say that in their choice they showed excellent judgment. His courtesy was such as to win him hearty applause and sincere respect even from those who most disagreed with him.

The debate took place at the commodious Music Hall, Surrey-street, on the nights of Tuesday and Wednesday, March 22 and 23, the subject being "That Secularism is Superior to Christianity for Meeting the Needs of Mankind." The hall on each occasion was crowded with a thoroughly representative audience, a most striking feature being the intense interest and good order manifested throughout the discussion.

Mr. Watts, in opening the debate, gave a rapid but lucid exposition of Secularism, showing what it is, its principles, its teachings, its necessity, its superiority to Christianity, its claims for rights which were denied by Christianity, and without which human liberty and progress were impossible.

In rising to controvert Mr. Watts's affirmation, Dr. McCann said he was prepared to accept about nine-tenths of Mr. Watts's Secularism, but contended that there was something which had not been presented; that he had, in fact, taken the skeleton Secularism and hidden it in beautiful garments taken from the Christian wardrobe. Such a representation he could not accept, and would endeavor to show it as it is. He objected that Secularism is practically Atheism, therefore dependant for guidance on mere human reason, whilst Christianity gave the advantage of the higher wisdom, God. That it was materialism; everything, therefore, the result of blind chance. That it was utilitarianism; therefore made men selfish. That it was necessitarianism; therefore made man irresponsible—a mere machine. This being Secularism, he claimed it was not adequate to solve the problem of "Man, whence and whither?" to satisfy his aspirations and furnish a lever for his improvement. In contrast, he presented a Christ whose love in suffering, in life and death for man, was not only reciprocated by man in love for Christ, but passed into love for the brethren—human brotherhood. He spoke of his life as of perfect example and his teachings as of perfect wisdom; therefore all-sufficient for the guidance of man.

Mr. Watts, in replying, claimed that the principles and teachings of Secularism which the Dr. so much admired—but claimed as being borrowed from Christianity—were not essentially the private property of Christianity or any other religion; that they were more or less embodied in every code of ethics; that they were the common property of mankind, and in fact that all that was good in Christianity was taught long before that faith existed. Secularism was free, and had the perfect right (which it used) to select the best from all the systems and creeds—a breadth of eclecticism

which Christianity might not use; hence one of the superior features of Secularism. He denied that Secularism was necessarily Atheism, claiming that it was broad enough to include Theists. He admitted that it was Materialism properly understood, but that did not mean "blind chance," but that the universe was governed by unchangeable law. He contended that man was not "a mere machine" for possessing volition, he was an active factor in the circumstances by which he was controlled. He claimed that even according to the New Testament the Christ which his opponent had presented was only partially shown, for though Jesus loved, his hatred was occasionally the most intense imaginable, and was provoked without justice and reason; that he was imperfect in wisdom, and limited in power; that his teachings were contradictory, and many of his precepts useless because impracticable.

Mr. Watts wound up with an eloquent and effective peroration looking forward to the day when superstition, bigotry and prejudice would disappear, and truth and justice be the guide of humanity.

Apparent results justify me in saying that his efforts here have been productive of a great advance in the spirit of Secularism, and the attainment of that which he so much desires; it has been manifested in his eliciting from Dr. McCann important concessions, which, being well received by the audience, showed a decline of some of the objectionable features of Christianity. Some of the concessions were these: That this life claims primary attention—That reason and experience are man's best guide;—and, whilst admitting the vast importance of education, That the New Testament contained no scheme of education.

Further advantages are visible in the growing attention and respect for the principles of Secularism and its advocates, and on the whole we feel justified in claiming a victory beneficial alike to the victor and the vanquished.

W. A. LILL.

"AGGRESSIVE FREETHOUGHT: ITS WORK AND LIMITATIONS."

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

THE sub-committee appointed by the Executive of the N. S. S. to manage the lecturing engagements at the Hall of Science has asked me to speak in that hall on Thursday, April 7, at eight o'clock. I have never been able to detect any frenzied desire upon the part of the public to attend at my lectures, and I believe that the evening may be profitably employed in a friendly informal conference upon the conditions and limitations of the aggressive anti-Christian work which, as it seems to me, is our sole reason for existence as a Society. If my fellow-workers in the movement care to attend on that evening for the purpose suggested, I will gladly compress my opening remarks into the briefest possible compass consistent with clearness, in order to afford the fullest opportunity for a discussion which would certainly be interesting and would probably be useful. If any friends decide to attend with a view to discussing the subject, I shall be obliged if they will advise me of their intention by postcard addressed to 7 and 9 Finsbury-street, E.C.

G. STANBING.

NORTH-EASTERN SECULAR FEDERATION.

On behalf of the Council of the N. E. S. F., I beg to acknowledge the following subscriptions to the Propaganda Fund:—Arthur J. Lovell, 5s. Conference Guarantee Fund: Newcastle-on-Tyne Branch, £2; Ox Hill Branch, £1; Blyth Branch, 10s. 6d. Branches are requested to send in their promised subscriptions to the Guarantee Fund as soon as possible.—JOSEPH BROWN, Hon. Sec., 86 Durham-street, Bentineck, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

OBITUARY.

WESTMINSTER.—It is my painful duty to record the death of Mrs. Agnes Martha Perry, who died on March 19 after a long and painful sickness, which she bore with great fortitude. When nearing her end she sought an interview with Mr. W. Wheeler and the undersigned to say that she would like her funeral carried out in accordance with the principles of Secularism. In her the N. S. S. loses a staunch member, as was her husband, the late Mr. W. Perry. On Tuesday, March 22, the funeral took place at the Woking Necropolis. Mr. Stanley Jones ably officiated, and Mr. W. Wheeler, by the request of the deceased, made a short address. Before leaving the grounds the funeral party made a visit to the grave of our late great leader.—J. BURRELL.

## BOOK CHAT.

An interesting and valuable illustrated work by the celebrated hypnotist, Dr. J. M. Charcot, and Dr. Paul Richer, is *Les Démoniaques dans l'Art* (Paris, Delahaye and Lecrosnier). They show that the ancient pictures of Jesus casting out devils, as well as of the saints in their exorcisms, really represent patients under the influence of hysteria and other natural disorders. Raphael, in his picture of the possessed youth in his famous Transfiguration, has depicted a convulsionary in an unnatural attitude. Rubens, however, in his group of the "Possessed," has depicted the signs of nervous hysteria in a most faithful manner. A chapter on "Les Démoniaques Convulsionnaires d'Aujourd'hui" shows that patients in the grand attack of epileptic hysteria go through a series of convulsions, part of which is called "periode de clownisme," in which they take positions as extraordinary as that formerly ascribed to their being possessed by demons. A chapter on "Les Extatiques" indicates that the saints in ecstasy were really afflicted with the same disorder as those said to be possessed by demons.

M. G. Carré et Cie. have put out a new *Vie de Bouddha* by M. E. Lamairesse, who appends a description of Buddhism in Burmah and Siam.

Professor A. B. Davidson, in his new volume on *Ezekiel*, speaks of certain portions of the writings of the prophet being "incredibly confused." This looks like a severe reflection on the Holy Ghost.

Some Catholics, in the face of the most incontestible evidence of the martyrdom of Bruno, have endeavored to cast doubts upon the fact of his having been burnt. It is noteworthy, then, that the fact is fully admitted in the authoritative *Dictionnaire Apologétique de la Foi Catholique*, by Dr. J. B. Jaugey. It says: "It is the cause, and not the fact of suffering, which makes the martyr. And what was the cause to which Bruno sacrificed his life? It was the cause of Atheism, to which Pantheism logically leads by suppressing the divine personality." It adds: "He belonged to the class of these intellectual malefactors for whom our epoch is so indulgent, but whom our fathers had the good sense to punish more severely than vulgar criminals."

The British and Foreign Unitarian Association, whose offices are at Essex Hall, Essex-street, Strand, have put out a volume of nine essays on *Religion and Life*, edited by Richard Bartram. The essays are by different Unitarians, and are of varied merit. They comprise Religion and Theology, by Dr. Drummond; Religion and Science, by C. C. Coe, to which important subject and what Mr. Coe says thereon we may return; Religion and Ethics, by Professor C. B. Upton; Religion and Trade, by J. R. Beard; Religion and Citizenship, by the editor; Religion and Amusements, by J. E. Manning, M.A., who would suppress all plays without a good moral; Religion and Society, by P. H. Wickstead; Religion and Art, by L. P. Jacks; and Modern Religious Development, by W. G. Tarrant, the last being an interesting *resumé* of recent progress in what we should call the secularisation of religion.

The Baroness Bertha von Suttner, whose novel, *Die Waffen Nieder*—"Down with Weapons"—has been considered as powerful an auxiliary in putting down the war spirit as *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was in the crusade against slavery, has started a monthly peace journal with the same title. She is a Freethinker, and among her collaborators and well-wishers mentions several eminent European Freethinkers, such as Ernest Haeckel, Dr. Ludwig Büchner, Fr. Bodenstedt, B. Carneri, Max Nordau, Charles Lemonier, and M. G. Conrad.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE MALTHUSIAN DEFENCE FUND.—J. R. Robson, 2s.; Manchester Branch N. S. S., 10s.; A. Hemingway, 2s.; F. Phillips, 1s.; E. Browne, 1s.; A Friend, 2d.; J. R. Willock, 2s.; — Thornett, 1s.; Two Friends, 1s. 6d.; D. Lee, 2s.; J. Bilcliffe, 2s. 6d.; A Friend, 3d.; W. Bailey, 2s. 6d.; collected at Mr. Robertson's lectures at Manchester, 14s. 1d.; A. R. Atkinson, 1s.; A. Lord, 6d.; J. F. Moul, 1s.; Mr. Winterton, 6d.; Mrs. Winterton, 3d.; Mr. Coppock, 6d.; Mr. Davis, 6d.; Mr. Blount, 6d.; Mr. Parrot, 3d. Total amount received up to March 25, £14 13s. 2d.; total expenditure, £26 9s. 7d.; leaving a balance of £18 3s. 7d. Estimated cost of forthcoming trial, £20. Friends having collecting cards are earnestly requested to send them in by April 2, after which a final statement will be published.—JOSEPH BROWN, Hon. Sec. Newcastle Neo-Malthusian Defence Committee, 86 Durham-street, Newcastle-on-Tyne.

## VOLTAIRE'S WORKS.\*

THE fact that above a hundred years after Voltaire's death M. Georges Bengesco devotes three large volumes to a Bibliography of his Works proves, not only the amazing fertility of the great French Freethinker, but the permanent interest taken by his countrymen in his works. Half a century ago the eminent French bibliographer, M. Quérard, enlarged his article "Voltaire," in his great work *La France Littéraire* into a separate volume; but M. Bengesco, coming behind, not only finds plentiful gleanings, but gives much additional information as to the occasion of writing the various pieces, their separate editions, etc. The usefulness of such a work will be apparent when one considers, not only the fecundity but the duplicity of the author. Of over 1,900 separate pieces here catalogued (irrespective of correspondence), the majority were published anonymously or with pseudonyms. No less than one hundred and thirty different pen-names were used by Voltaire in his warfare with superstition. I have called this duplicity, but it should be understood Voltaire did exactly what was necessary in order to perform his work; and but for his underground method would have been re-imprisoned in the Bastille, or permanently laid by the heels, instead of living to the old age of 84, and having the satisfaction of seeing the world becoming a little more humane and tolerant through his efforts. And these efforts were truly astounding. Of no writer can it more truly be said, His pen was mightier than the sword. To the gigantic task of freeing the mind from the shackles of superstition and oppression by the force of his own genius, he brought unlimited wit and unwearied perseverance. His works are not only the most stupendous literary achievement ever performed by one man, they are all infused with the cause of humanity. No difficulties deterred, no failures disheartened him. He employed every species of composition: verse, prose, tragedy, comedy, history, dialogue, epistle, essay, or epigram, as it suited his purpose. Argument or rillery came alike to him. He made reason amusing, and treated the ridiculous with ridicule. This, his great merit as a writer, has been the occasion of the obloquy attached to his name by bigots. They can never forgive that he forced people to smile at their superstitions. Much, of course, of Voltaire's multitudinous work was directed to immediate ends, and but for his grace of style would be of little present interest. But after all winnings by the ever swaying fan of time, much is left of enduring value, and the name of Voltaire remains a glorious example of what a man may achieve who is strong in his love of humanity. J. M. W.

## IN THE WRONG SHOW.

One Sunday a cowboy from the plains struck a Texas city, and after supper started out to see a variety show he had been told of. In about half-an-hour he came back to the hotel.

"Hello, Jim," said the clerk in surprise, "the show ain't out yet, is it?"

"No, but I am."

"What's the matter?"

"The duffers put me out, that's all; and, by gravy, before I'd time to pull my gun they clamped me, and two big policemen had the bracelets on me."

"What were you trying to do?"

"Nuthin'. Only I went in for my rights, and got bounced, you see, clerky. I slid in without payin' a red cent, and I thought I was playin' 'em sharp. I sat down just as a long-faced man on the stage began to read out of a book, and I began gettin' ready for a chance to laugh. After the snoozer got done readin' I wuz goin' to encore him, but he stuck wur he wuz, and just then the music box in the corner tooted away, and everybody in front of me stood up. That riled me mad. I began to yell, 'Down in front, down in front, will you. Set down in front.' And the next thing I knowed, two fellows in store clothes collared me, and shot me right into the claws of a policeman. I kicked, in course; but what could I do in a one-to-four crowd, and the judge clean agin me?"

"Why, Jem, you must have got into a church."

"So they told me. And when I showed up what a fool I wuz they let me go, and told me I'd oughter get a sign and hang it on myself, so's the cows wouldn't eat me fur grass. What time the next cars go out?"

\* *Voltaire. Bibliographie de ses Œuvres.* Par Georges Bengesco. Paris: Emile Perrin.

THE FALL OF GOD.

WHEN blushing trees their glowing burdens bore,  
One autumn morn, midway 'twixt dawn and noon,  
Full six and fifty hundred years before  
Man's prying eye saw mountains in the moon—

In short: On earth's first last-day of the week,  
At nine o'clock, o'dial, or o' sun,  
A pair of gods resolved, in sudden freak,  
That human life, that hour, should be begun.

A pair of gods, or was there only one?  
A god of double-sex, or one of each?  
Since he who runs may read, let quieriests run  
And read what God's own holy scriptures teach.

These gods did reproduce themselves in man,  
And here we are, like male and female gods;  
Poor man! poor gods! All ape the monkey plan;  
Apes, man, and gods, like peas from kindred pods.

This precious God produced a perfect pair,  
In nakedness and ignorance complete,  
Then, solemnly, to them he did declare  
His purpose, whilst intending its defeat—

O Unit, Twin or Triplet! O what pow'r!  
Designer, sculptor, model—all in one;  
What self-control! to keep throughout that hour  
From screaming out with laughter at the fun!

The luckless pair were sent into the field  
To fight a subtle foe by God equipped  
With potent arts designed to make them yield,  
And then, for having yielded, they were whipped!

In God, we're told, all creatures live and move;  
In God did live and move the tempting snake;  
The tempted fell; the tempter thus did prove  
That God and he were partners in the "fake."

But ev'n the God-backed serpent had to smart  
For having been made strong enough to win;  
His legs were lopped, and then he had to start  
To crawl upon his stomach for the sin.

The victim's weakness, and the victor's strength  
Are each a phase of one resistless pow'r;  
The shortest span is part of greatest length,  
And part of ages is each fleeting hour.

The losers lost because too weak to win;  
The winner won because too strong to lose;  
The God-given force of each was cursed as sin  
By God himself, because—he so did choose.

The air with foul infection he did fill;  
Caused weeds to grow with most unseemly haste;  
Arranged that folk should nearly aye be ill,  
And gave to doctor's draughts an awful taste.

Heav'n's blessing blights the earth from east to west;  
The land, the sea, the air, the tree, the sod:  
Yet priests and parsons say, "'tis all for best";  
That God the good pronounced it good—good God!

O Fount of Force! Dynamic source of Right!  
Whose might preserves thine acts from moral flaws!  
Since wrong it is to win, or lose, a fight,  
But right to strive, may all our fights be "draws."

G. L. MACKENZIE.

"I wish to say to the congregation that the pulpit is not responsible for the error of the printer on the tickets for our dance in the Sunday-school room. The dance is for the benefit of the arch fund, not for the 'Arch Fiend.' We will now sing hymn 6, 'To err is human, to forgive divine.'"

Parson (after service): "I was glad to notice that my sermon affected you so profoundly, sister Winch. I saw you weeping at the close of the discourse." Mrs. Winch: "Twarn't that, parson. My gran'son here give me a cayann lozenger in place of pep'mint, an' when I get him home I'm a-goin' ter thin out two good slipper soles on him."

Parson: "Yes, Johnny, every word in the Bible is true." Johnny: "Well, how about the family record page sister Maud has been doctoring up?" If Johnny only knew other persons have been interested in doctoring up the old book beside Sister Maud.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President, G. W. FOOTE.

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

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

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

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

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

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You say your reason is a gift of God.  
Suppose you use it then. Say not I tempt.  
To whom is it you pray "O lead us not  
Into temptation"? Give each one his due.  
Who tempted Abraham to slaughter Ike?  
'Tis said I tempted Jesus; but I ask,  
Who, it is said, led Jesus unto me?  
Why should I play the farce of tempting God?  
Mine is this world already, and they own  
I shall at length possess the most of souls.  
Have I for this ere sacrificed my son?  
No. I myself have borne the world's whole sins;  
For each one says "the Devil tempted me"; so he sins  
And lays the blame on his one Savior, me.

LUCIFER.

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, J. B. Coppock, "The Birth of Worlds" (lantern illustrations); members' quarterly meeting after the lecture.

Battersea-Chatham Hall (adjoining Battersea Park Station); 8, J. M. Robertson, "The Meaning of Atheism" (3d. and 6d.). Tuesday, at 8, social gathering. Wednesday, at 8, dramatic class.

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road; 6, tea (tickets 6d.); 7, music; 7.30, Mrs. Louisa Samson, "Prayer" 9.30, free concert.

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.; 11.30, debating class, impromptu speaking; 7.30, T. Crisfield, "Hypnotism; what is it?" (illustrations after the lecture).

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, G. W. Foote, "Poverty, Old Age, and State Pensions" (free); 6.45, music; 7.15, G. W. Foote, "Charles Haddon Spurgeon: Man, Preacher, and Theologian" (3d., 6d., and 1s.). Thursday, at 8, G. Standring, "Aggressive Freethought: its Work and Limitations."

Hammersmith—Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove: Thursday, at 8, Touzau Parris, "Facts about the Bible."

Milton Hall, Hawley-crescent, Kentish Town-road, N.W.: 7, orchestral band; 7.30, Mrs. Annie Besant, "The End of Mr. Stead's Ghosts."

West Ham—Secular Hall, 121 Broadway, Plaistow: 7, Vegetarian lecture. Thursday, at 8, open debate.

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead-road (entrance, Maxey-road): 7.30, C. Cohen, "Miracles"; members' meeting after the lecture.

#### OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, J. Rowney, "Messrs. Moses and Co." Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, C. Cohen will lecture.

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Soul Idea"; 3.30, A. B. Moss, "The Trial of Christianity."

Hammersmith-bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, H. Courtney, "Saints and Sinners."

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, C. J. Hunt, "Evolution and Design."

Kilburn—Salisbury-road (near Queen's Park Station): 3.30, N. Corbett, "Belief or Damnation: which?"

Mile End Waste: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Why we Attack Christianity."

Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Secularism v. Christianity."

Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 3.30, J. Rowney will lecture.

Tottenham (corner of West Green-road): 3.30, Lucretius Keen, "Hastings on the Bible."

Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15, C. J. Steinberg will lecture; 3.15, C. Cohen, "Freethought."

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers-hill: 11.30, E. Calvert, "Does the Bible Sanction Slavery, and is it Woman's Friend?"

#### COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: G. H. Martin, 11, "What is Christianity?"; 7, "Some more Antidotes to Superstition."

Blackburn—Spinners' Institute, St. Peter-street: afternoon and evening meetings.

Bradford—Laycock's Temperance Hotel, Kirkgate: 3, members' annual meeting; tea provided at 6d. each.

Derby—Mr. McGuinness's, 20 Newland-street: 7, George Harper, Selections from English Poets.

Edinburgh—Labor Hall, 50 South Bridge: 2.30, reading circle for young members; 6.30, A. Paul, "Mistakes and Delusions."

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: J. D. Crawford, M.A., 2.30, "Evolution and Immortality"; 6.30, "Faith and Freethought."

Hanley—Secular Hall, John-street: Monday, at 7.30, Charles Watts, "The Bible and Modern Thought" (3d. and 6d.).

Heckmondwike—Mr. John Rothera's Bottoms: 2.30, members' half yearly meeting.

Hull—Cobden Hall, 6 Story-street, Albion-street: 6.30, J. Sketchley, "Education: Clerical and Otherwise."

Leeds—Gladstone Hall, New Wortley: Sam Standring, 3, "Christianity's Failure"; 6.45, "Triumphs of Secularism"; members' meeting after evening lecture. Admission free.

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 11, Tontine Society; 11.45, committee meeting; 7, L. Small, B.Sc., "The Origin of Man."

Manchester N. S. S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints: Mr. Watts, 11, "The Political World: What of the Future?"; 3, "Spiritualism and Materialism Tested by Reason"; 6.30, "What Christians have to Defend." Singing by the choir before the lectures.

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 11.30, Mr. Keppel's logic class; 3, meeting of the Conference committee; 7, A. Dawson, "The Superiority of Secularism to Christianity."

Plymouth—100 Union-street: 7, a meeting.

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 2.45, reading circle; 7, Mr. Armsden, "A Criticism of 'Thoughts of a Human Automaton.'"

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 7, R. E. O'Callaghan, "The Principles of Vegetarianism" (lantern illustrations). Wednesday, at 8, R. E. O'Callaghan, "The Value of Abstinence from Flesh Foods to Working People" (with cookery demonstrations by Mrs. O'Callaghan).

Southampton: H. Snell will lecture.

South Shields—Free Library Hall, Ocean-road: Miss Ada Campbell, 3, "Hereditry"; 7, "Christianity and Truth."

Sunderland—Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street: 7, W. Cooper, "God and the Devil."

#### LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 28 Rivercourt-road, Hammersmith, London, W.—April 3, Merthyr; 17, Hall of Science; 24, Milton Hall.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Gredon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—March 30, West Southwark Liberal and Radical Club. April 3, afternoon, Finsbury Park; 10, morning, Mile End; 17, morning, Westminster; evening, Woolwich; 24, morning, Hornsey. May 1, morning, Camberwell; 8, Clerkenwell; 15, morning, Westminster; 22, morning, Mile End. June 5, morning, Camberwell; 12, Clerkenwell; 19, morning, Hornsey. July 3, morning, Camberwell; 10, Clerkenwell; 17, morning, Westminster.

H. SKELL, 3 Monk-street, Woolwich.—April 3, Southampton; 10, morning, Bethnal Green; evening, Battersea; 24, morning, Victoria Park; evening, Camberwell. May 1, morning, Victoria Park; evening, Battersea.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—April 3, Hyde Park; 10, Kilburn; April 17 to May 1, Annual Tour. May to Sept., all mornings booked.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—April 3, morning, Bethnal Green; afternoon, Victoria Park; evening, Woolwich; 10, morning and afternoon, Victoria Park; 17, morning, Mile End Waste; evening, Libra Hall; 24, afternoon, Victoria Park; evening, Plaistow. May 1, morning, Bethnal Green; afternoon, Finsbury Park; evening, Edmonton; 8, morning and afternoon, Victoria Park; evening, Edmonton; 15, morning, Mile End Waste; afternoon, Regent's Park; evening, Edmonton; 22, morning, Lambeth; afternoon Victoria Park; evening, Leytonstone; 29, morning, Clerkenwell Green; afternoon, Victoria Park; evening, Edmonton.

SAM STANDRING, 2 Morton-street, C.-on-M., Manchester.—April 3, Leeds; 4, Manchester; 10, Wigan; 11, Manchester.

C. J. STEINBERG, 103 Mile End-road, E.—April 3, morning, Victoria Park; 10, afternoon, Finsbury Park; evening, East London. May 15, June 19, and July 17, mornings, Lambeth.

STANLEY JONES, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.—April 3, morning, Finsbury Park; 15 and 17, Chatham; 24, afternoon, Tottenham. May 1, morning, Clerkenwell Green; evening, Walthamstow; 8, Newcastle; 9, South Shields; 10, North Shields; 15, evening, Battersea; 22, morning, Old Pimlico Pier; 29, morning, Wood Green. June 5, Conference; 12, morning, Kingsland Green; 29, morning, Battersea. July 17, morning, Kingsland Green. Aug. 7, evening, Hammersmith; 28, morning, Lambeth.

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