

# The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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## MUTILATED CHRISTIANS.

COUNT TOLSTOI, the famous Russian writer, after living a fast life in his youth, and subsequently settling down and rearing a large family, has come to the conclusion that sexual intercourse is sinful to a Christian. The teaching of Paul on this subject is clear and emphatic. To put the too plain language of the apostle in a less startling form, it is best for men and women to have nothing to do with each other. Even men that have wives should be as those that have not. The teaching of Jesus, however, is more enigmatical; but Count Tolstoi, in an article in one of our magazines, has made out a very good case from the Gospels in favor of the view that to a true Christian marriage is impossible. His article was a kind of challenge to orthodoxy, but it remains unanswered; the champions of the fashionable faith being, apparently, afraid to cross swords with him on this delicate and dangerous ground.

One of the sayings of Jesus about some men who are eunuchs from birth, and others who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake, has never been without its faithful followers. Long before the Christian era, indeed, there were devotees of this curious superstition; so that in this, as in other respects, nothing new was introduced by "the only true faith." When the great Origen emasculated himself he only imitated the practice of the priests of Cybele.

It is not surprising that a certain number of Christians should obey Jesus literally when we remember that circumcision was the seal of God's covenant with the Jews. Every son of Israel is a mutilated being; though, it is true, with the proverbial economy of his race, he has only given to the deity what he could conveniently spare.

Without a long historic survey of Christian mutilation—which would be an interesting study in pathology—we may observe that a certain Russian sect of religionists follow Jesus implicitly, according to their interpretation of his teaching. The Skoptzi number from fifty to seventy thousand. As might be expected, they are a harmless, docile set of mortals. They are ascetic in all things. In most respects they resemble the Quakers. Mr. Poulteny Bigelow, in an article in *Harper's*, says that they are slandered and persecuted by the orthodox Church; but, as a matter of fact, they lead exemplary lives. We can hardly follow him, however, when he says that they "represent a most healthy, enterprising, and moral force." They are certainly liable to the charge of "seeking the destruction of the human race." Mr. Bigelow seems misinformed as to their carrying out their ascetic views "after the birth of one or two children." We believe their children are generally born before they

join the sect. Nor is Mr. Bigelow quite candid in referring to their distinctive rite as a "curious practice." The subject is a ticklish one, but if it be dealt with at all there is no necessity to conceal the truth.

An account of the Skoptzi is given in Mantegazza's *L'Amour dans l'Humanité*. Mantegazza is a professor of anthropology and a member of the Italian Senate. Not having a copy of the original work, we use the French translation by Emilien Chesneau. It is a powerful, scientific study of the genesic instinct in all ages and all parts of the world. Prudish and prurient persons should leave it alone; but it is profoundly instructive to the student of humanity.

The Skoptzi appeared and spread in Russia during the reigns of Catherine II. and Alexander I. Their distinctive rite was castration. It was performed with a hot iron, and was thence called the *baptism of fire*. Afterwards the amputation was made with a knife; the operation being performed by a special official, like circumcision among the Jews. Soldiers, sailors, and prisoners performed it upon themselves. Various methods are resorted to at present; there are different stages of mutilation, designed by religious appellations; the final stage being the entire elimination of the reproductive organs. Even the women are miserably mutilated.

Some of the Skoptzi avoid mutilation and observe a voluntary asceticism. Perhaps it is this portion of the sect that Mr. Bigelow refers to as having "one or two children" before sterilisation.

It is the belief of the Skoptzi that the forbidden fruit of the Garden of Eden was sexual intercourse. Original sin is therefore to be frustrated by castration. Jesus, they say, preached and practised it; and he was imitated by the primitive Christians. The Skoptzi regard themselves as the only true followers of Christ. They are certainly his most thorough-going followers.

"The appearance of the Skoptzi," says Mantegazza, "is that of all eunuchs; pale and fat, like overgrown children. The good looks of the women are soon lost. With the men the beard is lacking or very thin. Stein asserts that their character is profoundly modified by castration, and that they display egotism, cunning, hypocrisy, and avarice."

Religious fanaticism, especially of the ascetic order, is exceedingly stubborn. All the efforts of the Russian government have not suppressed the Skoptzi. They have spread over Russia and into Roumania. We suspect that they will only disappear before the growth of a higher civilisation.

There is little reason to fear that mutilated Christians will become common. Human nature is always stronger than asceticism, and the law of Natural Selection is against the suicidal religionists. Nevertheless it is worth while asking whether the teaching of Jesus is so valuable when it nurses such sects as the Skoptzi. To say that they are mistaken is only to affirm that the teaching of Jesus is obscure or unintelligible.

G. W. FOOTE.



## IDOLATRY.

"In place of the old material idolatry we erect a new idolatry of words and phrases. Our duty is no longer to be true and honest, and brave and self-denying and pure, but to be exact in our formulas; to hold accurately some nice and curious proposition; to place damnation in straying a hair's breadth from some symbol which exults in being unintelligible, and salvation in the skill with which the mind can balance itself on some intellectual tight-rope."—J. A. FROUDE.

MANY Bible readers must have been struck by the vehemence with which the Hebrew prophets denounce idolatry. Prohibited in the Decalogue,\* and punished with death,† it was also the occasion of the most contemptuous abuse. Idols were called "dunghy gods" and "abominations."‡ Those who read my essay on "Phallic Worship" in *Bible Studies* will see there was cause for these denunciations. The idols to which the Jews were particularly prone were of a sensual character, and were indeed representations of the mysterious principle of life and generation. Though under the immediate guidance of their deity the chosen people continually relapsed into idolatry. This was really their ancestral faith, as is indeed fully admitted in Joshua xxiv. 2, "Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time . . . and they served other gods." Rachel stole the gods of her father Laban and sat on them. Jacob, in anointing the stone with oil (Gen. xxviii. 18), performed a common act of idol worship. It is evident from 2 Kings xviii. 4 that the Jews burnt incense to a brazen serpent down to the days of Hezekiah. Gideon and all Israel worshipped an ephod at Ophrah (Judges viii. 27), and the prophet Hosea (iii. 4) announces as a misfortune that "the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim." In Ezek. xxi. 21 the word teraphim is translated "images," and it is evident from this passage that they were used as oracles for magical consultation. Judges xviii. 14-31 shows that teraphim and graven images were worshipped by the descendants of Moses down to the time of David (see Revised Version). David's wife, Michal, kept teraphim in her house; it was in shape similar to a man, for the story records that "Michal took an image, and laid it in the bed and put a pillow of goat's hair for his bolster, and covered it with a cloth." It is evident David took no more heed of the second commandment than of the seventh. Possibly he had never heard of it.

In much of heathen idolatry there was something tender and humane. Rude stone images were often attempts to keep in remembrance some revered father or chief. The author of the Wisdom of Solomon (xiv. 15) observed:

"For a father afflicted with untimely mourning, when he hath made an image of his child soon taken away, now honored as a god, who was then a dead man, and delivered to those that were under him ceremonies and sacrifices.

"Thus in process of time an ungodly custom grown strong was kept as a law, and graven images were worshipped by the commandment of kings.

"Whom men could not honor in presence, because they dwelt far off, they took the counterfeit of his visage from far, and made an express image of a king whom they honored, to the end that by this their forwardness they might flatter him that was absent, as if he were present."

The worship of idols carries us back to the beginnings of religion. *Primus in orbe Deus fecit timor*: terror made the first gods, and ugly devils they were. Idolatry sprang from fetishism, the regarding of any special object, such as stone, shell, tooth or claw, as

lucky or the reverse. Images were supposed to embody the qualities of the spirits they represented. In Congo fetishes or idols are placed in the fields to protect the growing crops, and do, in fact, act as scarecrows. Herbert Spencer, in his *Principles of Sociology* (vol. i., p. 333) says how among the more advanced peoples there persists the idea that the idol of the god, developed, as we have seen, from the effigy of the dead man, is the residence of a conscious being, is implied by the following statement of Erman respecting the Russians of Irkutsk:

"Whatever familiarities may be permitted between the sexes, the only scruple by which the young women are infallibly controlled, is a superstitious dread of being alone with their lovers in the presence of the holy images. Conscientious difficulties of this kind, however, are frequently obviated by putting these witnesses behind a curtain."

Like beliefs are found in several different races. Among many peoples, when the gods are unpropitious, their idols are beaten. Portuguese and Italian sailors have been known to pitch their images of the saints, and even of the Virgin, into the sea, when their prayers brought no cessation of a storm. Bodin tells that, at Toulouse, the children dragged, in open day, in sight of all the people, the holy images, and even the crucifix, to the river to oblige them to send rain. In India the Brahmins will put their idols in chains, and say they shall not be released until their debts are paid. The alarmed populace think it highly meritorious to contribute to the deliverance of their gods. The Brahmins, be it noted, deny the charge of idolatry as stoutly as any Catholics. They declare their many-armed images only symbolise the one great being who manifests in many forms, and whose power extends in every direction. Romanists always deny idolatry, yet Cardinal Bellarmine, in his *De Imaginibus Sanctorum*, teaches that images of Christ and the saints may be worshipped in the proper sense of the word, so that the devotion does not stretch beyond the image it represents, but remains at rest in the image itself.

Viewed as an organised system, Christianity is certainly as open to the charge of idolatry as Paganism. Priestley says Christian idolatry began with the deification of Jesus; but it did not end there. Christianity is indeed but a modified Paganism. The old idols were crumbling to decay when Christianity replaced them with new ones. Many of the Christian saints are simply Pagan deities re-christened.\* Pope Sixtus V. had the audacity to substitute a statue of Paul for that of the Roman Emperor on the column of Antoninus at Rome. The worship of saints, images, and pictures still forms the most considerable element among the largest numbers of Christians—those of the Roman and Greek Churches. Nor can Protestants escape the charge. Jesus Christ is just as much an idol as the Virgin Mary. They are bibliolaters, "bowing themselves in dust before a book." So much did the early Methodists regard the Bible as a fetish that they consulted it before every undertaking. Nearly all the sects are text-ridden, and the Bible texts are veritable idols, none the less stupid because blindly learned by rote and kept in shrines of the brain, neatly arranged in rows and always ready to be brought out. Idolatry, or word-worship, is the besetting sin of all Christians. When blind reverence and senseless worship of their idols obstruct the path of progress, it is necessary to show them that as much as the rude images of the fetish worshippers they are the offspring of man's mind and his own creation.

J. M. WHEELER.

"Say, Charlie, don't you often get awful scared here alone when your papa and mama are away to church?" "Why, no. You see I'm never really alone. Mama says God is always with me." "Oh, but I should think you'd rather have some of your own folks."

\* Exodus xx. 4, 5. "The Persians have among them neither statues, nor temples, nor altars, the use of which they censure as impious, probably because, in opposition to the Greeks, they do not believe that the gods partake of our human nature."—*Herodotus* i., 131.

† Exodus xxii. 20, Deut. xiii. 1-15, xvii. 2-5.

‡ Deut. xxix. 17 (margin); 2 Chron. xxxiv.

\* See Middleton's *Letter from Rome and Roma Antiqua et Recens.*



## SECULAR FACTS IN HISTORY.

DURING the period of theological supremacy historians dealt more with religious and political movements—with the doings of priests and kings—than with the nature of man and the influence of science, education, and of his general surroundings, on the formation of character. Hence, for ages the principles that determined the progress of nations were not understood or even studied to any great extent, the result being, that the moulding of human conduct was referred to causes—theological or metaphysical—which could not be apprehended by reason or verified by experience. This fact will probably account to some extent for the perpetuation of the erroneous notions once entertained respecting the nature of man and the government of the universe. Until the Secular method of studying human actions and examining phenomena was adopted but little hope could be entertained that the delusions taught by the Church as to man and his environment would be given up, and that a more accurate interpretation of facts would be recorded. Fortunately some modern writers of history, having become imbued with the Secular spirit of the age, have confined themselves more to the known and less to the speculative, and thus we obtain a better idea of the real elements that have operated upon the nature of man and in the organisation of society.

An important historical fact of a Secular nature is, that in modern times the natural sciences have been carefully studied, and it has been discovered that both man and the universe are governed by fixed and unerring laws. This conclusion has been arrived at through the patient and unprejudiced investigations of philosophers and scientists whose minds were free from theological bias. Upon this solid basis Secularists rest their claims, and they are thus enabled to interpret the general facts of nature without having recourse to theological or alleged supernatural explanations which for ages crowded both sacred and profane history. True with our present knowledge many events may not be predictable, still there are numerous problems now solved by natural law the solution of which a hundred years ago was ascribed to supernatural causes. With every succeeding generation since the days of Galileo and Newton the belief has grown that all events in the realms of nature are referable to method and order.

This advance, however, from theological speculation to the Secular mode of dealing with phenomena, is not so apparent in the treatment of nations as it is in the consideration of human character. The movements of nations have been attributed to such uncertain causes as the dictation of priests, the command of kings, or the whims of the populace; all of which resulted in conditions of society varied and contradictory. For instance, what was declared right in Russia was deemed wrong in Rome, and what was applauded under the brief reign of Edward VI. was condemned under the stern rule of Mary. The same lack of appreciation of the regular operations of natural law obtains to-day among the credulous members of society. They still believe that man is moved by some supernatural cause, and that he is governed by laws different from those that regulate the general order of nature. Now Secularism affirms that increased knowledge will result in the belief that the same causes and circumstances will produce similar effects, both in nature and in society.

The value of Secularism is involved in the question whether history affirms that the actions of men have been the result of chance, of supernatural interference, or of causes traceable to their own nature, and to the circumstances by which they have been surrounded. In ancient times people believed that chance was an ultimate cause, just as some theologians of the present time think that human actions are predetermined by

a supreme eternal power or will. According to this view no advance in knowledge or virtue would increase the source of happiness or diminish the cause of misery; all intellectual and physical effort would be paralysed. Moreover, if the transmutations of the human race are the result of an infinite intending mind, then both good and evil must be ascribed to that mind which would destroy all self-reliance and also contradict the popular conception of an infinitely good being. Secularism seeks to account for varying phenomena by observing the effects of the external agents upon mankind and upon the organisation of society. From experience we learn that physical and mental agencies act and re-act on each other, and thus produce the phenomena of any given period.

Another Secular fact in history is that, in proportion as communities leave the old theological *régime*, they recognise that the causes of human actions can be traced to the order and method of nature, instead of attributing them to some shifting, irregular and subtle agency beyond all comprehension and calculation. Acting upon the Secular method, the average duration of life can be predicted, and the number of criminal acts in a year can be calculated to a proximate degree, and this even in such cases as murder and suicide. Now it would be impossible to account for these uniform results without referring them to causes definite and uniform. Suppose human conduct to be the product of supernatural interference, no calculation could be made as to its nature and results. The study of mankind to be fruitful for good must be freed from the useless and perplexing hypothesis of theologians. History being directly concerned with the actions of the human race, it would be nothing more than a bare record unless it endeavored to show by what means actions were produced, and what were the conditions that affected their nature and consequences. These facts have an important bearing on the Secular view of life, because they undoubtedly prove that any system which ignores the great truth that physical changes in external nature influence the formation of opinions, manners, customs and destiny of nations, must fail to accomplish any permanent good among the human family.

Secularism recognises also that the progress of the intellect and the development of the reasoning faculties depend not only upon the amount and kind of knowledge, but, what is of equal importance, upon its diffusion among all classes of the people. The Secular study of history reveals the value of this hitherto neglected factor in the causes of human progress. No matter how rich the mines of a country may be, unless they are worked they will produce no increase of wealth. The same is true of knowledge; if it is not diffused among the people, it must fail to affect an improvement in their mental or physical condition. That this must necessarily be so appears obvious if the lesson of history be properly understood. In a well-informed association of human beings the character of all public actions will be determined by one test, that is, the general good of the community. There is no alternative to this except a return to the old method by which the thoughts and conduct of men were at the mercy of the priest and despot in times of ignorance, misery and mental slavery.

CHARLES WATTS.

## THE AGES OF FAITH.

Occasionally during the Middle Ages the proprietress of bordellos was an abbess, who appeared greedier of terrestrial profit than the rewards of self-denial; and sometimes the scandalous deportment of anchorites visiting such houses became a matter for the monastic chroniclers. In the year 1321 an English cardinal purchased a Lupanar in London as a profitable investment for sacerdotal funds.—G. F. Fort, "History of Medical Economy during the Middle Ages," p. 339.



## A FREETHINKER AT LARGE.

## X.—SUNDAY MORNING AT THE MIDLAND ARCHES.

MANY years ago the late Lord Bramwell (then a Baron of the Court of Exchequer) tried at assizes a case in which an aged professor of heraldry was examined as a witness. Presumably the man of *gules* and *argent* bungled the matter sadly; for Bramwell, in his charge to the jury, contemptuously described the heraldic one as "a stupid old man who didn't even understand his stupid old business."

Now I make bold for to say that the stupid old parsons don't even understand *their* stupid old business. Their powers of invention were so feeble, their imagination was a thing so draggle-tailed and broken-winged, that the most horrible form of torture they could conceive was a "hell" which, even in its original form, was crude and commonplace, and, in its latest editions, may even be regarded as a pleasant retreat. Hell! full of warmth, light, brightness! *This* a place of punishment? Perish the childish thought! If the damned *must* have something to crush them, wither them, and yet keep them always "on the go" in a state of cruel agony,—why, let 'em to all eternity deliver open-air lectures on Sunday mornings every day in the week, at the Midland Arches, St. Pancras.

This was the idea which impressed itself strongly on my mind after a recent visit to a spot that has for many years been the arena in which (*inter alia*) the battle of aggressive Freethought in London has been fought. But I am beginning at the end, and must "try back," if haply the reader will follow me.

The sun was shining brightly on the Sunday morning when I emerged from the Battle Bridge-road, and saw before me the famous "Midland Arches." The scene is a curious one, and I will try to picture it for the edification of those who are unacquainted with its fearsome avenues and dark recesses.

Figure to yourself, then, a central point at which some six or seven roads converge. Eastward, a row of graceful gasometers lend an indefinable charm to the prospect. In front and to the right stand the termini of the Great Northern and Midland Railways. Over all extend the iron-built arches which give their name to the spot. So much for the topographical side. In the matter of noises, a volume might be written. Coleridge's seventy separate and well-defined stinks in the city of Cologne are as nothing to the noises of the Midland Arches. First, there is the incessant rumble overhead of interminable goods trains. An engine will slowly draw about 2,000 trucks across the arches; then carefully look them over and push them back again. Occasionally a steam-whistle will cleave the quivering air, adding a shrill treble to the *basso profundo* of the truck-wheels. In the road, lines of tram-cars run to and fro between the Angel at one end and his Satanic Majesty only knows how many places at the other. Clattering milk-vans dash by at frequent intervals with their empty tins dancing a wild can-can to their own music. Itinerant vendors of oranges, ginger-beer, sarsaparilla, and other popular dainties, proclaim the virtues of their wares. Sprinkle lightly with miscellaneous carts, cabs, etc., and you have Midland Arches on a Sunday morning.

In this inventory I have, of course, omitted the strife of tongues, for that is a separate business with which I now concern myself. On the north-west side of the open space is a long strip of pavement upon which the clans gather on Sunday mornings. The end adjoining the roadway is sacred to the Christian Evidence Society, and from that point the groups range themselves side by side until the teetotalers at the far end rest under the holy shade of the gasometers. You shall find on that strip of ground, on a fair morning, Christians, Freethinkers, Socialists, politicians, and temperance advocates—all in full blast at one and the same time. Across the road, a few side-shows of

Home Rulers and others will also be found busily engaged.

On the morning of my visit I first went to the Christian Evidence stand, as the Secularists had not at that time put in an organised appearance. Nor, I discovered, had their rivals: for the stand was occupied by an amiable old gentleman whose object in speaking was simply to warm the place slightly until the appointed orator arrived. The dear old fellow clutched a friendly lamp-post what time he told his listless audience that the infidels, whilst talking much of evidence, did not know what evidence meant. If they *did* know, they would see at once that the evidence for the authenticity of the gospels was valid and conclusive in every particular. He went on to speak of Tacitus and Josephus, and thus effectually dispersed his audience, save a few small girls who remained in the hope of getting some of the leaflets with which the old gentleman's pockets were filled.

By this time the Freethinkers had got into position, and I went straightway to their stand. An old and active worker, Mr. Leekey, acted as "chairman" (of course, without a chair), and in a loud, clear voice he gave out the preliminary notices. Now the others had commenced work, and that strip of pavement was a veritable Babel, in which Christianity, Freethought, politics, Socialism and teetotalism were mingled in inextricable confusion. At our own stand the lecturer was an apparently young man, whose name I failed to catch when announced by the chairman. As the speaker mounted the stool he looked round with an air of hopeless resignation to his fate which aroused the deepest pity in my heart. He commenced his address by explaining the objects and work of the N.S.S., and urging those who sympathised in that work to join the Society. Then he plunged into the lecture, and for a few minutes proceeded with a fair amount of success, his audience listening patiently and attentively. But presently the chairman at the next stand had finished his introduction, and got his lecturer to work. And what a lecturer it was! His words flew out rapidly and unceasingly, in a harsh and powerful monotone, resembling the clatter of a threshing-machine. I saw the face of the poor Freethought lecturer turn pale as a large part of his audience moved off to the steam-talking machine on his left. For a few moments the Secularist stopped, as if in doubt whether to continue his lecture or to leave the stand and cut his throat. The manifest sympathy of his attenuated audience, however, seemed to put new life into him, and he struggled manfully on. But I could not remain. I went round the corner and wept.

When I returned, half an hour later, I found the state of affairs reversed. The steam politician had talked himself out; the Secularist had just finished, an opponent had appeared, and three or four hundred people had gathered round the Freethought stand. The opponent proved to be a Mr. Cox, an acolyte of the Rev. Z. B. Woffendale's. In a very excited manner he denounced an article on the Christian Evidence Society, which had recently been published in the *Freethinker*. He roundly stigmatised it as a disgrace to the Secular party. He could understand fun; but that article was not humorous, it was inspired solely by malice. In his reply, the lecturer protested against the introduction of matters that had not been referred to in his address; but, as an article in the *Freethinker* had been alluded to, he requested Mr. Cox to show him where, in the course of that article, the Christian Evidence Society had been mentioned from beginning to end. This, of course, the opponent could not do; but, returning to the charge, he urged all Freethinkers to procure a copy and preserve it as a proof of Secularists' baseness. Whereupon the lecturer, visibly prompted thereto by Mr. Leekey, mentioned the name and address of a local newsagent who would supply all demands.

At this point the din of the arches was increased by



the unmelodious singing of some hymns, and I found that a flock of lambs from Papa Woffendale's chapel had come to raise *their* voices—as if there were not already sufficient noise. The Freethinker protested against this crowning interruption, and playfully described it as a form of persecution which Christians had adopted when they could no longer burn their enemies at the stake. The ever-serious Cox, however, took this description *au pied de la lettre* (a little French always looks well in an article), and upon this he continued his denunciations of Secularism and all that pertained to it. But at length the lecturer appeared to have come to the end of his patience, for he told the audience that he would no longer follow Mr. Cox in his erratic excursions, but, after thanking them for their attention, would go straight home to dinner. That seemed to me the most sensible thing he had said during the morning.

As the people dispersed I went round to Mr. Leekey (with whom I am acquainted) and asked him to tell me the name of the Secularist lecturer who had just left the place. Imagine, if you can, my amazement when Mr. Leekey, shouting in my ear (for the noise was still deafening), told me that I had been listening to

GEORGE STANDRING.

#### A BETTER WAY.

HUSHED is the dirge of woe  
Wailed out in years gone by,  
When the preachers taught that this world was  
Save a place to prepare to die. [naught  
A child in chains was youth,  
Man but a flagellant,  
And woman only a brow-beat slave,  
Repealing senseless cant.

A grander song we sing,  
With voices full and strong;  
That joy and love should enrich each life,  
And wretchedness is wrong,  
Wisdom and weal increase  
Instead of wane away;  
The Eden Adam was far beneath  
Our good men of to-day.

There is no yawning hell  
Eternally aflame;  
The sporting spirit which captured souls,  
Squire Satan was his name,  
"Drummed out of camp" has been—  
"Sat down on" far and near;  
The world's great thinkers and moralists  
Have left him in the rear.

The heaven of utter rest  
Which used to satisfy,  
Would terrorise any modern man  
And make him hate to die.  
To wear enormous wings,  
And sing, and sing, and sing,  
In heavy crown, and trailing robes,  
Were such a tiresome thing!

The way we hope to gain  
The heights of righteousness,  
Is not through the blood of a sinless Christ,  
Oozed out in dire distress;  
But solely through ourselves,  
And patient, constant work;  
For we dare to think that a working saint  
Is nobler than a shirk! F. R. TUTTLE.

#### HOW TO HELP US.

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

#### SHALL WE LIVE AGAIN?

(CONCLUDED.)

To command assent, any event like the alleged resurrection of a body of a person after death must be sustained by observation and experience. The mere assertion of it in a book proves nothing beyond the belief of the writer, or the report that such was a belief entertained at or before his time. It has been argued that we must accept it because no one has or can disprove it. But we can show its improbability in itself, and point to the fact that it does not admit of proof. I cannot deny the statement that there are "mansions in the skies," nor has any astronomer observed them—they have not "caught his eye," as members do that of Mr. Speaker Peel. If you said there were cottages on the moon it would only be an assertion, although the terms moon and cottage are clearly understood.

Science has no word to utter in favor of a bodily resurrection or an immortal life; it is not dreamt of in our philosophy. Before we can have the dread of something after death, we must have a belief in an after-death and in something to dread. Poets may give to airy nothing a local habitation and a name, but it is composed of airy nothing—the reality of imagination only. The great miracle of genius is to make things which are not appear as though they were. Poets can travel through space, sailing on a wish from world to world. It is said that men of genius are dull and eccentric, and hence their wonderful achievements astonish us. But unhappily too many have the other characteristics without the genius, which may in some measure account for the many strange and incredible opinions that float around us and down the stream of time.

Some minds, it may be admitted, are so constituted that they conclude in spite of all facts and arguments, "It must be so, or whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire, this longing after immortality?" I am doubtful if any man who has this feeling can explain how he got it. But why not allow the poor soul to enjoy it? Why take it away from him?

In the first place, it appears a duty to teach what we know—if anything—or what is at least probable, reasonable, in harmony with what we do know. In the next place, talking of taking away a man's belief is simply nonsense; he can't take it away himself; it must take itself away if it goes at all, as darkness disappears in the face of the morning sun. Opinions fade away if unsupported by evidence, true or false. Directly it appears that the earth moves around the sun, the opinion that it is stationary and is attended by a moving illuminator vanishes. No man gives up a belief in hereafter so long as it appears to him credible. It is the same with all beliefs, however absurd or ill-founded.

Some believe in the very old Pagan doctrine of an immortal soul. To accept this I should require two things proved—first, that I have a soul; and, second, that it is immortal. The assertion that some portion of man never dies ought to admit of direct observation; that man is not mortal must mean that. Whatever survives cremation must be the immortal soul, if anything besides ashes does survive.

A definition of soul might lead to its identification. But in order to obtain one we must find out what it is that lives after man is cremated—supposing him cremated alive, like the Oxford bishops. I cannot conceive any answer to this question, so must say I do not know. It is easy to put together a form of words about the soul, its departure, and destination; but the difficulty is in pointing out the thing signified. It is commonly remarked on the death of a person that "the spirit hath fled" and is gone to heaven; while the simple fact is, the person has "ceased to breathe"; gone into a sleep from which



there is no awakening. I recently inquired for an old acquaintance, and was told he was "in the kingdom of heaven," where several people have expressed a wish to meet me. From what I have read about heaven and a good many people that have gone there, it is not a place that would suit me at all. But supposing it a desirable residence—where is it? and how do you get there? In my early days it used to be "up above," but since I have read a little about light and astronomy, it is—like the firmament and the windows mentioned in Genesis—out of sight, vanished. Supposing the soul able to travel, like light, about 180,000 miles a second, and heaven to be in some space outside our system of worlds (it is not inside), it would possibly arrive there in the course of over 90 millions of years. Although that time is insignificant compared with eternity, it seems a long journey to undertake when you are over seventy. I for one do not feel strong enough to undertake it, especially as the place, as described by St. John, is one against which I have a strong aversion. It might suit jewellers and managers of menageries and fairs, and people fond of spectacular displays, but not me. I would sooner stay on the earth under an improved climate. At the same time, I should be sorry to be an obstacle in the way of others going who like it. They have my best wishes and hopes that they will enjoy themselves "for ever and ever."

An everlasting unchangeable chant, Holy, Holy, Holy, with lightning and thunder—an eternal, incessant whirl of enjoyment without a lucid interval! To me this seems to contain the seeds of eternal misery. It means perpetual motion, restless, sleepless—unbroken change of scene or sensation. Instead of desiring this, my desire would be to escape it. If called upon to state the highest condition, the most perfect state of man of which I can conceive, it would be a state in which he would want nothing and desire nothing, and that I believe to be the state of all who cease to live.

CHARLES COCKBILL CATTELL.  
("Christopher Charles" of the N.R.)

## ACID DROPS.

Lady Gibson Craig, whose estate is about five miles from Edinburgh, has an under-gardener named Adam Knight, who has been two years in her employ. Now Adam—we mean *this* Adam—is a Freethinker and a reader of this journal, and tidings of his awful opinions reached her ladyship's ears. The culprit was summoned to appear in her presence. He attended and the interview lasted an hour. At first the lady began arguing with her gardener, but, getting the worst of that, she fell back upon her "authority." Adam was asked if he would attend church in future and keep his "ideas" to himself. This he declined to do, though he offered to give up his ideas altogether if her ladyship could prove they were wrong. Thereupon the honest gardener was given notice to leave. He goes out on August 12, with another servant infected with the same disease of independence.

It is only the Christians who do this sort of thing. Who can imagine a Freethinker discharging a servant because he was a Christian? Lady Gibson Craig may be a Lady, but she is not a lady. Only a bigot and a despot would try to injure another person for a difference of opinion; which is all the crime in this case, for if Adam Knight differs from Lady Craig, to precisely the same extent does Lady Craig differ from Adam Knight. On the whole, we would rather smoke a pipe with Adam under a hedge than share the hospitality of his "Lady" employer.

Mr. Hannay, a London magistrate, fined Thomas Pearce twenty shillings or ten days for riotous conduct in Hyde Park. The prisoner pleaded that he was upset by hearing "a man who was declaring there was neither God nor Devil." Apparently he tried to disprove the latter half of the declaration.

Mr. Hannay had a certain sympathy with Thomas Pearce. He spoke of "person's feelings being outraged by hearing

doctrines shocking to them openly proclaimed." Poor feelings! But, after all, the persons shocked have an easy remedy. They can just walk away—with their feelings.

The Liverpool *Daily Post* publishes a letter from J. E. W. Atkinson, a negro, hailing from the United States. He says he is a black Christian, and he is sick of the white Christians over there, who hate and insult the colored ones, and lynch them "upon the most feeble accusation." He wants to come to England, and wishes some maid or widow to marry him. He is thirty-one and six feet high. "I will be obedient," he says; and he also promises not to drink or chew, not to stay out late at night, and to go to his wife's church. Finally, he has small hands and feet, and reads English, Greek, and Latin. Surely such an assemblage of good qualities will find him a partner. He is open to receive letters from white ladies in England, Scotland, or Ireland.

While the cholera is spreading in Southern Russia, Persia, and Armenia, the doctors say the great obstacle to every sanitary measure is the fatalism of the people, who say, "If it is not Allah's wish, we shall not die in our dirty dwellings; but if Allah wishes us to die, then we may live in a golden palace and still die." Another thing which contributes towards spreading cholera is the custom of burying the dead standing, so that they are not sufficiently covered with earth. This is in order to save trouble when Gabriel blows his trumpet on resurrection morn. Here, as elsewhere, improvements cannot be made because the old customs have the sanction of religion.

A correspondent says: "Sprung as a rule from the peasant class, the rural Russian priest—who is described as 'always uncultured, uneducated, and unrefined,' and often a drunkard—commonly uses his office as a fulcrum for 'sweating' the peasant, upon whose ignorance he trades."

Seven persons are reported as killed by lightning in America. A house in the suburbs of Richmond, Virginia, was struck, and a man, his wife, and three children were killed. At Brickhead, Georgia, a school for colored children was set on fire by the electric discharge. Fifty scholars and two teachers were in the building. When they were dragged out it was found that two had been killed and three so seriously hurt that their recovery was despaired of.

Mr. Henry Macdonald, of the *Twentieth Century*, has been to Palestine, and has a very poor opinion of the country, which he finds sterile and wretched. He says: "If there had been soil in ancient days, it must have miraculously disappeared, as there are no traces of it, even where it might have been washed to. A people from the deserts of Sinai might imagine any country where a tree grew or where it even rained, as a 'land flowing with milk and honey.'" The ascription of boundless wealth to Solomon, Mr. Macdonald says, must be put down to the patriotic exaggeration of a late writer. Jaffa oranges are now about the best thing produced in Palestine. Religious wars, superstitions and animosities among the rival churches and creeds have contributed to make the holy land an abomination of desolation.

The *India Messenger*, of Calcutta, referring to an entertainment attended by Sir Charles Elliot and his party for the purpose of witnessing the nautch dance, says: "When will Christian governors refuse to be entertained with nautches?" It adds that "the slightest indication of their wishes would put an end to nautches on such occasions." And *Unity* adds: "It is indeed a severe reproach to the 'Christianised' inhabitants of India that one of the lowest forms of amusement should receive sanction at their hands, when the better portion of the native population perceive its pernicious effects and do away with it."

The Rev. Samuel Barnes, of the Manse, Lordship-lane, East Dulwich, who was fined last May for ill-treatment of an old bay mare, was again summoned and fined for turning it out to graze while suffering from a suppurating wound. Horses have no immortal souls. These exclusively belong to animals of the Barnes species.

Job lots of angels, made by continental paupers, are constantly being exported to America for the decoration of Christmas trees and for children's school treat entertainments. Under a recent ruling of a revenue collector they are subject



to a tax amounting to 35 per cent. Hence angels are likely to become scarcer in the States.

The editor of the *American Grand Rapids Workman* declares he proposes to start on a new deal. From now onwards he intends to be a Christian. He says: "This becomes necessary for business purposes. We have seen others take this course for that reason, and we know there is money in it."

The person who honestly put himself down in the Victoria census as a "go-as-you-please Christian" should lift high his banner. He stands in the census in a minority of one. But all great movements begin this way. Go-as-you-please Christianity is in the air. It is all that is left of Christianity after passing through the sieve of Freethought criticism. Myriads should flock to the new sect, in fact are flocking, though under cover of various disguises.

While some are proposing to tax bicycles, others say they must be Christianised, or our young men will ride them to the Devil. The Rev. F. Heartfield finds they are a great cause of Sabbath-breaking, and bemoans the demoralising effects on children going to Sunday-school of the sight of people on bicycles cavorting over the country when good folks are trying to serve their Maker.

At Stirling there is a bye-law which provides that no passenger may be landed or embarked at the pier on Sundays between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. This is intended to prevent Sunday sailings, but a smart steamer on Sunday lifted 200 passengers at 7.45, and knocked the bye-law as high as a kite.

The *North Eastern Daily Gazette*, writing on the Theosophist craze, observes: "If we can suppose the late Canon Liddon when preaching in St. Paul's telling the congregation that he had received a letter from his dead friend Dr. Pusey, written in Dr. Pusey's handwriting and expressed in Dr. Pusey's style, and that as he had never told lies from the pulpit since he had been Canon of St. Paul's, he expected them to accept his statement as the proof of a life beyond the tomb—what account would Mrs. Besant have given of this proceeding?"

"Paranoics" is the scientific name proposed for "cranks" by Dr. H. S. Williams, medical superintendent of the Randall's Island Hospitals. To the "paranoic," Dr. Williams says, a new fad, especially if it be an occult one, is meat and drink. "Revivalism, spiritualism, faith cure, Christian science, theosophy are his pastimes. In short, everything that is vague, visionary, occult, finds a following—often the originator—among the paranoic ranks."

An elector in Bedfordshire, being asked by a Primrose dame to vote Tory because the Liberals were attacking the Established Church, replied: "What I says about the Church parsons is: If you take away their book, they can't preach; if you take away their gown, they mustn't preach; and if you take away the money that comes out of the Dissenters' pockets from them, they say that they'll be hanged if they do preach."—*Truth*.

One of our readers recently went from London to Newcastle by one of the Tyne Steam Shipping Company's boats. During the voyage the ship ran into a heavy fog, speed was reduced to dead slow, and the fog-horn sounded loud and often. Some people on the fore-castle, however, kept making a noise, and the captain threatened to clear them below. "What a lot of stupid people there are," he said; "I think some of them must be putting their trust in Providence." The passengers standing round him laughed, and assured him that they trusted in the captain.

Archdeacon Sinclair has been giving a course of sermons against gambling in St. Paul's Cathedral, taking his text, curiously enough, from Luke xix. 13-27, a passage which sanctions usury, if not gambling. No direct prohibition of gambling can be found in the old book, and it is notorious that God's chosen people are inveterate gamblers. Divine sanction was given to casting lots, which was an early form of gambling.

The line from Jaffa to Jerusalem, which will soon lead to picnic parties on the Mount of Olives, was originally suggested

by the author of *Rabbi Jeshua*, who, it is not generally known, was a distinguished engineer in the service of the Palestine Exploration Fund.

Superstition nearly settled the hash of the three miners who were rescued after being entombed for seventeen days in the Emerean coal mine, near Bilin, Northern Bohemia. One of the poor fellows, seeing light through a tiny hole made by one of the pitmen, shouted for help; and the superstitious miners, hearing his smothered cries and fearing the presence of ghosts, fled in terror. Happily the foreman was more sensible. He calmed the runaways, made up a rescue party, and after two hours' hard work the entombed miners were saved.

It seems likely that Islam will benefit by the squalid squabble between Catholics and Protestants in Uganda. On more than one occasion, while rival Christians have been quarrelling in the dark continent, the followers of Mohammed have stepped in and converted the natives into Moslems.

Moody has been revivallising at Stockton, and was interviewed by a representative of the *Northern Guardian*, who was anxious to know the secret of his success as a preacher. All Moody said was: "I do not know; but when large masses of people are gathered together the task of eliciting a response to your words is much easier." This is true enough as far as it goes, but Moody's success chiefly depends upon the power of inherited superstition. Moody's readiness of speech and fund of anecdote enables him to touch the springs of emotion, and then he has only to shake them over the gulf of hell to make them seek the Savior.

A prize fight opened with prayer is to be the coming novelty; and such a burlesque will be scarcely any more extravagant than the prayers preliminary to that "Wild West" gladiatorial show known as a national convention. The prayers made at the June conventions were crafty little stump speeches addressed to "the throne of grace" in behalf of the Republican ticket at Minneapolis, and of the Democratic ticket at Chicago; and the ingenious manner in which the party doctrines were impressed upon the deity was worthy of high praise. At Minneapolis the "supplications" were argumentative in support of the Republican "idea"; and at Chicago they insinuated that the Democratic enterprise was more worthy of divine patronage than was the rival combination.—M. Trumbull in *Open Court*.

Religious America is in arms against a proposal to have the Passion Play as a feature at the Chicago Exhibition. Every American is willing to go great lengths to make the "World's Fair the very biggest thing that ever was." But to have the Passion Play of Oberammergau is declared to be a trifle too much. "What damnable blasphemy is this?" demands Mr. C. A. Dana, of the *New York Sun*, who gives voice to the opposition in tolerably plain terms: "Think of such a thing in a place like Chicago, a city of shambles, amid the bluster, the bounce, the racket, and the fanfaronade of the exhibition!"

The *Glasgow Herald* says: "A Scotchman in Ceylon has become a convert to Buddhism, and is to be ordained as a Buddhist priest."

An Isle of Wight paper (the *Express*) publishes a story of petty priestly tyranny. It appears that two out of three girls standing in a village street, on observing a clergyman approach, made a dutiful curtsy. The third, however, stood stock still. Whether she was terrorised by the parson's appearance, or whether she did not deem him worth curtsying to, is immaterial. Up came the rev. gentleman and in a loud voice asked, "Why do you not curtsy as other children do?" As the girl still kept an erect position this gentle shepherd took her by the shoulders and forced her downwards till she assumed a sufficiently humble attitude, and then left her, perhaps to preach "Suffer little children to come unto me."

The death of the ex-Maharajah of Manipur is believed to have been brought about by his religious prejudices. Filtered water was provided for him and the other princes, but because it had passed through a mechanical process and, therefore, in their eyes become contaminated, they declined to drink it, preferring instead the filthy fluid obtainable from a tank in the vicinity of their residence. Disease was the



natural result, and the Maharajah was killed outright, while two of the other princes became seriously ill. The surviving princes show that they at least think there is something in the European diagnosis. Alarmed by the death of their relative, they have decided to drink the accursed water, and, what is more, have accepted the services of a European medical attendant.

That good man, Mr. W. T. Stead, it is reported, is trying to get his friends to move a resolution in the new House of Parliament, forbidding the presence of Sir Charles Dilke. Mr. Hugo Ames, editor of the *Dwarf*, is responsible for the statement that Stead, in posing as the incarnation of British virtue, is actuated by "private revenge." The *Dwarf* makes the statement that Stead called on Lady Dilke and offered to stop writing if a mutually beneficial arrangement could be made. Lady Dilke, who believes in her husband, indignantly declined. Hence, says the *Dwarf*, the incessant persecution by this "hypocritical charlatan."

The Rev. Dr. Mills, of Coventry, has made another's vicar's rate of 1s. in the pound, though two previous rates are still uncollected. The vicar swears the churchwardens owe him £960, but they have published a detailed statement proving that only £101 is owing to the vicar.

Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay has been said to be a negro religious chorus, and a correspondent of the *New York World*, declares it is the melody of the howling dervishes. It was a most surprising experience for the reporter to come up out of interior Turkey, where "Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay" had been heard each week at the Dervish worship, and find it the rage of all London and then to hear it whistled, groaned and hummed at every turn in New York.

The dervishes move in unison. With the "Ta-ra-ra" they bow their heads almost to the ground, quickly bringing themselves erect again. With a tremendous accent on the "boom" they turn their heads to the right and bend their bodies as much as possible, the motion only lasting during the "de-ay." Again they howl "Ta-ra-ra," bowing to the front, and on the "boom" this time turning the head to the left and bending their bodies in the opposite direction.

The correspondent says, gradually the outer garments are removed, and when the meeting is over it is not an uncommon thing to see them entirely nude, save their girdles. Perhaps it was in this fashion David danced before the ark of the Lord, when he was clad only in a linen ephod, much to the scandal of one of the Mrs. Davids.

At the investiture of the Roman Archbishop Vaughan with the pallium, the *Tablet*, his own organ, discovers much significance in the fact that the pallium is composed of the finest white wool. The significance, we take it, is that the archbishop's flocks are well sheared to keep up his dignity.

The Christian Re-unionists have kept up a prolonged picnic at Grindelwald. This pleasant Swiss resort is well adapted for men of God who wish to combine a cheap excursion with some pretence of work in the Lord's vineyard. Most of them know it is really only a holiday outing, for those must be very simple indeed who fancy the centuries' old differences of Christianity will all vanish under the influence of a vague evangelicalism. Christian re-union is as impracticable as undesirable. When the leopard lies down with the lamb the lamb will be inside.

An article on "Hymns and Hymn Writers" in the *Quarterly Review*, anent Dr. Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology*, suggests what changes of fashion there has been in the theology of hymns. Our forefathers used to chant

Be thou, O Lord, the Rider,  
And we the little ass;  
That to God's holy city  
Together we may pass.

Or Herrick's Litany to the Holy Spirit—

When the artless doctor sees  
No one hope, but of his fees,  
And his skill runs on the lees,  
Sweet Spirit, comfort me.

When his potion and his pill,  
His, or none, or little skill,  
Meet for nothing but to kill,  
Sweet Spirit, comfort me.

True devotion saw nothing funny in all this, or in putting among hymns for children the following:

The blessed Virgin's hallowed womb  
Received the godhead from on high!  
He left for that contracted room  
The crystal palace of the sky.

One of the hymns, cited in the *Quarterly*, on conjugal love, is of the amorous complexion found frequently among the mystically minded. It runs:

Where then is the rapturous pair  
Who conjugal pleasures possess?  
'Tis found with the man and the fair  
Whose only delight is to bless;  
Whose love is so ardent a flame  
That nothing can equal its fire,  
Whose will is in all things the same,  
'The same in their every desire.

This, however, is not so strong as a Mormon hymn we once heard sung. It ran:

The God that others worship is not the God for me,  
He has no parts or passions, and cannot hear or see;  
I want a God that's like a man—as stout, as strong and free;  
O that's the God, O that's the God, yes that's the God for me.

An old article in the *Gospel Magazine* is quoted in the current *Quarterly Review*. It computes the number of human sins, and setting them at an average of one per second, calculates that at ten years old each child has 315,360,000 sins. At thirty he will have 946,800,000; and, if he lives to be eighty, will carry to Satan a load of 2,522,880,000 sins. No wonder the comparatively good die young.

The *Jewish World* says, although many Jews are of great wealth, fifty-seven per cent. of those in England are dependent on charity, and with those in Russia the case is far worse. This does not look like the redemption of God's promises to his people.

Among the prophecies concerning the Jews is one that has been singularly reversed. Deut. xxviii. 44 prophecies that when they dwell among the stranger, "He shall lend to thee and thou shalt not lend to him." But the Jews have learnt a little since the days of Moses.

Six months' imprisonment without hard labor, and a fine of £400, is the sentence upon the Rev. Samuel George Cotton for cruelly ill-treating several children committed to his charge as manager of Carrrough Orphanage, county Kildare. "Suffer little children to come unto me," said Jesus. "Yes," says parson Cotton, "you make them come, and I'll make them suffer."

Being compelled to submit by the Court of Queen's Bench, the Southwark Vestry have to go on paying the Vicar's Rate, or the rector will have them all clapped in prison. They now think of buying off the man of God. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners have been approached with an offer of £5,000 to relieve the parish of the rector's rate for ever. £5,000 is a good round sum to get rid of one ecclesiastical harpy. J. C. was bought for thirty bob—some say thirty half crowns. Had the bag at that time contained £5,000 Judas would not have sold his master at the price, the Crucifixion would not have taken place, and there would have been no redemption. How lucky the Apostles were not worth £5,000 apiece!

"Aunt Martha," the old negress who came over to see the Queen, went to a Salvation Army meeting on Monday night at Exeter Hall. She sat on the platform and was introduced to the meeting by General Booth. After making a little speech she began shouting and dancing a kind of jig. As she did seem inclined to stop she had to be taken back to her place, where she sat with her eyes shut, swaying herself backwards and forwards. That is how negroes are apt to take religion. White Salvationists took it somewhat in that way in the old days before "the Army" began to grow respectable.



## MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, July 31, Hall of Science, 112 Old-street, E.C.; at 7.30, "The Triumph of Man."

August 7, Manchester; 14, Failsworth; 21 and 28, Hall of Science, London.

Sept. 4, Glasgow; 11, Aberdeen; 18, Hall of Science, London; 25, Bristol.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—July 29, Ebchester; 30, Oxhill; 31, Newcastle. August 7, Leicester; 14, Liverpool; 21, Manchester; 28, Grimsby. September 3 and 4, Rushden; 11, Town Hall, Birmingham; 18, Birmingham; 25, Hall of Science. October 2, Hall of Science; 9 and 16, Birmingham; 23, Glasgow; 25 and 26, Belfast; 30, Edinburgh; 31, Aberdeen. November 1 and 2, Aberdeen; 6 and 13, Birmingham; 20, Sheffield; 27, Hall of Science, London. Dec. 4, Hall of Science; 11, Manchester; 18 and 25, Birmingham.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent direct to him at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

THE Chester friend, who wrote to Mr. Foote with respect to the persecution of a leading local Freethinker, is requested to forward his name and address for a reply, his letter having got mislaid.

CYCLIST.—We are not an authority on army matters, but we have read that there is a cyclist corps in "the service."

J. ROSS.—If you go to Edinburgh call at Mr. Dewar's, bird-dealer, Hanover-street; a turning off Princes-street, opposite the Scott monument. Mr. Dewar is a veteran "saint," and will let you have a *Freethinker*.

J. BEVINS.—Pleased to see that working men can tax themselves to support a Freethought journal.

J. H. reports that Mr. Lawrence Gane, the Liberal candidate for East Leeds, promised to vote for the Liberty of Request Bill and the abolition of the Blasphemy Laws.

E. SEALEY.—It must be the agent's fault if there is any difficulty in obtaining the *Freethinker* at Birmingham.—We would rather leave the minister alone unless the case gets into the newspapers.—Your order is handed to Mr. Forder.

W. SPICE.—Your postcard arrived on Wednesday morning, too late for a paragraph, which we should have been happy to give the Woolwich Branch.

C. E. SMITH.—Always glad to receive cuttings.

E. ANDERSON.—We read the sentence differently, taking it to refer to Cooper's enthusiasm about reform, not to his religious opinions.

J. TOMKINS writes—"I am not to be numbered among wealthy Freethinkers, but I shall be pleased to subscribe 10s. a year to the Sustentation Fund, if you find that you can establish it. I would willingly do more if I could." The contingency is one that Mr. Tomkins must judge for himself. Our experience is that subscriptions are always raised gradually, and often slowly.

S. SORELL sends the amount of an extra penny per week for his copy of the *Freethinker* for six months, and says—"It strikes me that if those of us who could do this, were to do so, you would at once be relieved of all anxiety on this head, and the very poorest would still be able to get their *Freethinker* for one penny. Moreover, I think the paper is well worth twopence."

S. STANDRING.—Your official letter to hand. We shall be writing to Mr. Symes in a few days.

P. W. BALDWIN.—Pleased to hear that some of your acquaintances are likely to support the Sustentation Fund. We note your view that the best policy would be to double the price. A tract could not be inserted in every copy. The *Freethinker* is not folded at the publishing office, but supplied to the trade in sheets.

W. J. SCOTROW.—We cannot see how Stephen Denny's suggestion could be carried out. The *Freethinker* is distributed to the newsvendors by wholesale agents. Copies could not be traced after leaving our publisher's, and newsvendors don't like trouble, and won't take it unless they are obliged to. Those who care to pay twopence for the *Freethinker* could send the extra penny every quarter to us. That is the only way in which the extra payment could be made. We might, of course, print a twopenny edition on toned paper, but we fear it would lead to confusion.

JAMES MITTLAND (Aberdeen), in sending a subscription to our Sustentation Fund, says—"I will send 5s. per quarter in July, October, January and April, each year; I trust others who are able will do likewise, and encourage you to persevere in the work you have so nobly entered on."

W. H. MORRISH (Bristol), a veteran Freethinker, who has letters in his possession from Charles Southwell, contributes to our Sustentation Fund, and writes—"You will, I hope, have numerous responses to your appeal, as there are many wealthy but isolated Freethinkers, who, if they have not the time, talent, or inclination to write articles, or deliver lectures, can at least provide the 'sinews of war' for those who do. I know they would cheerfully admit that the *Freethinker*

is a noble pennyworth; full of interesting items, and deserves to be fully maintained in its useful mission of freeing mankind from the trammels of superstition."

SECULARIST suggests that if friends who can afford it would purchase (at trade price) all unsold copies at each Branch, for distribution, it would be a great saving to Mr. Foote and advertise the paper at the same time. Sixpence would nearly always cover the amount required; and if one could not afford it, two or three could club together and purchase them. Of course the same arrangement could be made with newagents.

J. GARVEN, who takes two copies of the *Freethinker* weekly and gives one away, says—"I hope you will not raise the price to twopence, but if you make it sixpence I must have it."

J. McLEISH.—Tell your friends that Mr. Foote's health is improving. He is not quite his old self yet, but he hopes to be so shortly.

THOS. ELLIOTT.—See "Acid Drops."

J. KENNEDY.—We note your advice, "raise the price to twopence." The rest of your letter is read in the friendly spirit in which you write.

W. H. HEATH.—Pleased to hear of the School Board successes at Edmonston; also that you sold twenty-seven *Freethinkers* last week as against a dozen the week before.

C. DOUG.—Always glad to hear from you.

A. KNIGHT.—See "Acid Drops."

YOUNG RECRUIT.—Thanks for your interesting letter. We hope you will develop into a sturdy soldier of Freethought.

W. SMITH, care of Mr. Pearson, Church Fields, Glasshaughton, Normanton, will be happy to distribute any Freethought literature that may be sent him.

H. C. sends £5 for "Mr. Foote's Holiday Fund," and thinks he would do well to give up lecturing altogether. Mr. Foote thinks there is plenty of lecturing left in him yet.—E. Sims also sends £1 to this fund.

W. SIMONS.—We hope you will see your way to continue the secretaryship. One must expect difficulties and discouragements in fighting for an unpopular cause.

E. HICKMAN.—There is too much truth in what you say, but there is no profit in railing at popular indifference. As Fielding said, 'tis no use damning the nature of things.

H. HUDDLESTON.—It is a very old bit of verso. We prefer something fresh.

F. E., 33 Frogmore-street, Abergavenny, will distribute any literature sent to him for the purpose.

JOSEPH BROWN, sec. N.E. Secular Federation, begs to acknowledge:—South Shields Branch, £1 17s. 3d.; Crook, 4s. 6d.; Blyth, 4s.; Bedlington, 3s.

E. SYKES.—We don't know of any such text.

W. BURRIDGE.—Thanks for the kind invitation, but Mr. Foote cannot go as far as Truro at present.

CANOPUS.—Under consideration.

JUSTICE.—The N.S.S. cannot afford to pay its President, and the present one does not complain of the fact. The loss on the *Freethinker* is a different matter.

W. MCC. promises to pay Mr. Foote £10 if the *Freethinker*, kept at sixteen pages, does not yield him £100 as editor and proprietor during the next twelve months.

J. D.—Your wife says "raise the price to three-halfpence"; you say "raise it to twopence." We have already considered both suggestions. It will be best to keep to the penny if the Sustentation Fund can be fairly supported. That is—if.

M. HANCOCK promises to subscribe 2s. 6d. quarterly to the Sustentation Fund.

A. W. F.—It is a perplexing question. You are in favor of the penny anyhow, even if we go back to twelve pages. But we don't care to do that; it doesn't leave room for what should go in the paper.

R. NICHOLLS says—"My way would be to take the bull by the horns and advance the *Freethinker* to twopence. This I consider you ought to have done when you increased the size of the paper to sixteen pages. If you published the paper at a halfpenny you would have about the same number of buyers."

A. J. H. says—"Make the paper twopence. I am sure it is worth it. Only don't stop it." No fear of that.

E. SIMS.—Mr. Foote will try to act on your friendly advice. He doesn't mean to kill himself if he can help it. We note your view that the price of this journal should have been raised to twopence when it was enlarged to sixteen pages.

G. WARD.—(1) See Mr. Wheeler's *Bible Studies* on Kadeshim, and recent articles on "Ancient Mysteries." (2) Psalm 89 is very obscure. (3) *Memra* over T. Scott's monogram means the word. (4) *The Jewish Life of Christ* can be purchased at 28 Stonecutter-street.

CARLOS (Swansea).—The subject of the analogies between Homeric and Christian theology cannot be dealt with in a sentence. Gladstone has a big book, *Juventus Mundi*, taking up the question.

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

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Der Lichtfreund—Boston Investigator—Open Court—Freidenker—Two Worlds—Der Arme Teufel—Liberty—Ironclad Age—Progressive Thinker—Independent Pulpit—Secular Thought—Western Figaro—Flaming



Sword—Freethinker's Magazine—Western Sussex Gazette—Northern Guardian—North Eastern Daily Gazette—Lucifer—Bulletin Mensuel Federation Française—Glasgow Weekly Herald.

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. SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements*:—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

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.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.

If being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

There was an excellent audience, for the time of the year, at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "The Doom of the Gods." He had recovered his voice—thanks to rest and sea air—and the work did not seriously distress him, though it left him a little fatigued. Prior to the lecture he referred to the report of the Inquiry Committee re the Hall of Science, and made some general announcements with respect to the future of the place in relation to Freethought. These announcements appeared to give general satisfaction. Mr. R. O. Smith, who presided, told the meeting that he himself was satisfied, and henceforth he should take his old position in the party—a position of silence and work.

Mr. Foote lectures again at the Hall of Science to-day (July 31). His subject is "The Triumph of Man." In a certain sense the lecture will be a continuation of last Sunday's, or rather its complement. Next Sunday (Aug. 7) Mr. Foote lectures three times in the Secular Hall, Manchester. He will be glad on that occasion to meet as many as possible of his South Lancashire friends.

It is intended to organise a choir at the Hall of Science. Freethinkers willing to take part in this enterprise are requested to communicate with Miss Vance, who is in attendance on Sunday evenings. Letters can be addressed to her at 24 Caroline-street, Camden Town, N.W.

After Mr. Foote's lecture on Sunday evening about forty N.S.S. members adjourned to the minor hall and enjoyed a conversation, varied with singing and music on the piano. The minor hall will be kept open every Sunday evening for the same purpose.

Next Thursday (Aug. 4) being the hundredth anniversary of Shelley's birth, a celebration of the event will take place at the London Hall of Science, and metropolitan Freethinkers should make a point of attending. They will never have another such opportunity. Mr. Foote will preside. Mr. George Bernard Shaw and other "Shelleyites" will take part in the proceedings. The admission is to be free.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND:—Two Wimbledon Bootmakers, 2s.; Dr. W. Mortimer (first subscription), 5s.; Young Recruit, 2s. 6d.; F. Garven, 1s.; J. McLeish, 2s. 6d.; J. Stewart, 2s. 6d.; A. Knight, 2s.; G. Melville, 1s.; S. Soper, 2s. 2d.; W. H. Morrish, £1 1s.; Jas. Maitland, 5s.; J. Bevins, 5s.; E. Hickman, £1; Justice, 1s.; A. J. H., 1s.; E. Sims, £1; M. Hancock, 2s. 6d.

Despite the fine weather and seaside attractions, Mr. Charles Watts had three unusually large and enthusiastic audiences last Sunday at South Shields. The gathering was the largest, we are informed, that Mr. Watts has had in the north of England since his return from Canada.

Mr. Watts lectures three times to-day (Sunday, July 31) in the Lovaine Hall, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Of course the friends from the surrounding districts will muster in good force and give him a hearty welcome.

The Battersea Branch will give a musical and dramatic entertainment on Monday, August 8, for the benefit of the N.S.S. Benevolent Fund—tickets 6d. each. As no expenditure will be incurred, every sixpence taken will go to the Benevolent Fund. It is hoped that all Freethinkers in south-west London will purchase tickets, even if they cannot attend. There will be dancing after the entertainment. Tickets can be had at the hall and at outdoor meetings.

Mr. W. Heaford goes North on a lecturing tour next month. He takes Sheffield on Aug. 21; then he goes on to Aberdeen, and thence to Belfast on Aug. 28. Between that date and his lecture at Hull on Sept. 4, he has week evenings to fill up, and we hope the Branches in the North of England will avail themselves of his services. Mr. Heaford is a man of thought and wide reading, and a very earnest propagandist.

A pamphlet just issued from our office should have a good sale. It is entitled *My Resurrection—A Missing Chapter from the Gospel of Matthew*. The discoverer of this curious document, and its introducer to the world, is Mr. G. W. Foote. It is as authentic as most of Matthew, and we fancy a great deal more interesting.

"Mr. J. M. Wheeler, an able contributor to the *Freethinker*, sends us a small volume bearing the title *Bible Studies*, in which he presents to the reader a great variety of curious information and out of the way knowledge, elucidating many old world practices, and proving that the Hebrews were not exceptionally wise or gifted. The book is temperately and carefully written, the work of a student and a thinker, and is a valuable contribution to Freethought literature."—*Two Worlds*.

The *Independent Pulpit* calls Mr. Foote's *Infidels Death-Beds* "a timely contribution to our Liberal literature . . . all the facts narrated are taken from authenticated historic sources, furnishing a full and complete refutation of the many clerical falsehoods that are current among credulous Christians."

Of Mr. Austin Bierbower's *Was Christ Crucified?* the *Independent Pulpit* remarks: "This is a suitable pamphlet for distribution among Christians, and will, if read by them, be the means of breaking the spell of superstition that now subjects them so abjectly to church dictation and authority."

Friends in Kilburn and the vicinity are earnestly requested to attend Mr. St. John's lecture at Salisbury-road this (Sunday) evening to assist in keeping order, as serious disturbances have occurred the last two Sundays, and a repetition is threatened.

In a previous issue we called attention to a collection by Miss M. A. Robins, of the Finsbury Park Branch N.S.S., for the Hospital Sunday Fund, and expressed a wish that Freethinkers should identify themselves more particularly with the *Saturday* Fund, as being less sectarian. The same lady has just been thanked by the Council of the Hospital *Saturday* Fund for a street collection of £22 18s. 10d., making, with the Sunday collection, upwards of £40 collected by her in a month. Miss Robins, who has been elected a "Governor" of the Women's Convalescent Home, has identified herself with the hospital collection movement for the past thirteen years, during which time she has collected several hundreds of pounds for the various medical institutions of the metropolis.

Mr. Cohen debated in Victoria Park on Sunday with the Rev. Mr. Brennan. There was a large and attentive audience. Mr. Brennan, who has always shown himself a gentleman, complimented Mr. Cohen on his knowledge, his memory, and his clear way of seeing things. He said he hoped to meet Mr. Cohen again, and the wish was instantly reciprocated.

Mr. Cohen's recent debate with the Rev. W. Hetherington at Walthamstow is published as a sixpenny pamphlet by Wittingham and Co., 91 Gracechurch-street. We presume copies can be had of Mr. Forder. Mr. Cohen acquitted himself admirably in this encounter.

The Hull Branch's third annual trip was a great success. A large party went to Aldboro and enjoyed a splendid day at



the seaside. They surprised the Christians by being so happy on a Sunday.

The annual picnic of the North-Eastern Secular Federation will take place next Sunday (Aug. 7). The rendezvous will be the city of Durham. Branches are requested to meet at 12 o'clock in the Market Place, and then proceed to Old Durham Gardens, where the picnic will be held. Each Branch must see to its own provisions. The Newcastle party will meet at the Eldon Hall at 9 and proceed to Durham by brakes. They will meet the South Shields contingent at Chester-le-Street. The return tickets are 2s. 6d.; children 1s. Apply to J. Brown, 86 Durham-street, Bentinck; Peter Weston, 77 Newgate-street; J. Summerfield, 61 Grove-street; or to the Branch Secretary.

One of Mr. Sam Standring's pupils in the lecturing class gave his first lecture at Pendlebury last Sunday with success. A second follows this week. Mr. Standring has opened up new ground at Eccles. We congratulate him (and the party) on his activity.

An important Conference of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Secular Federation will be held this afternoon (July 31) at 3 in the Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Manchester. Delegates are invited to tea at 5. Special lecture at 6.30. Subscriptions received: Blackburn, 10s.; Huddersfield, 10s.—S. STANDRING, Secretary.

Councillor James Maitland, a sturdy Freethinker, at a meeting of the Aberdeen Town Council, moved that the Museum be opened on Sundays as well as Wednesdays and Saturdays. This was opposed on the ground of its being a sort of slur on the Parks Committee. Mr. Maitland then gave notice that he would re-introduce the motion that day month. Probably he will be defeated, but it is something to have the question ventilated in Sabbatarian Scotland.

*Secular Thought* is giving its readers a fresh old debate—that between Mr. Bradlaugh and the Rev. R. A. Armstrong. The number before us also reprints Mr. Foote's article, "A Bishop in the Workhouse," and a column of items from the *Freethinker* entitled "Echoes from the Old Country." There is in addition a lot of original matter, and the paper is interesting throughout.

The New Hampshire Unitarians, at their convention, passed a resolution in favor of the opening of the World's Fair without conditions. One of the delegates praised Sunday newspapers, calling them educators.

Though it was a matter of regret to us that the ex-Rev. Hugh O. Pentecost was obliged to sever his connexion with the *Twentieth Century* for the sake of the dollars and dimes, it is satisfactory to learn that he is meeting with unqualified success in his new profession the law, and that he intends to occasionally contribute to the paper he formerly conducted.

Judge J. F. Richardson is doing a practical work in Texas. He is collecting statistics of the amount of Church property in the state which is exempt from taxation, and also the average attendance at the churches, with a view to publishing how much per head the state is paying for the religious instruction of a minority of its people, and how much is taken out of the pockets of Freethinkers to pay for denominational dogmas they do not believe.

Says the *Echo*: "A very bizarre provision was made in the will of the philosophic Jeremy Bentham, who enjoined his executors to embalm his corpse and dress it in the clothes which he was accustomed to wear in his lifetime, in order that he might form the text of a lecture to be delivered annually at a Literary Institute held at a School of Anatomy in Windmill-street, Haymarket. On one occasion the venerable philosopher's head fell off, and a wax one was made in its place, but the mummy with the waxen head has long since faded out of the public ken."

This last statement is incorrect. The remains of the philosopher are, we believe, still preserved in the London University College. One of the last works of the utilitarian was a pamphlet entitled *Auto-Icon*; or Farther Uses of the Dead to the Living. Its object was to show how, if dissected and embalmed, every man might be his own statue, and an object of enjoyment and instruction to the living.

## CASTAWAYS IN THE PACIFIC.

(Taken down in shorthand out of the mouth of an old salt.)

BY HUDOR GENONE.

ALL seafaring men, as perhaps you know, are mighty religious; that is, they are prejudiced against a great many things which some of the landmen don't look upon as of much importance. For one thing, they don't like having a parson aboard ship. Mind, I wouldn't have you get the idea that they don't respect religion, nor, for that matter, a parson; but the religion and the parson too must be in their own place, and that, sailors think, isn't on shipboard on a vyge.

I tell you all this, which, as I said, perhaps you knew already, to account for how all we, foremast hands on the ship "Mary Kate," of New Bedford, got hopping mad when the agent at Hong Kong sent orders to our skipper to have bunks fitted up aft for—just think of it!—four missionaries. Think how we felt! not one parson, but four, and two of 'em, as I'm a sinner, women. Rev. and Mrs. Polhemus, and Rev. and Mrs. Fairchild, bound on a mission to the Peewee Islands, and bound to ship with us to get there.

We got up a "round robbin," but that did no good; our skipper was as much set against the thing as the fo'castle, but in the end, for'ard and aft, we gave in, and put to sea with 'em all aboard.

"Depend on it," said Tom Seeley, shipmate I'd sailed with a dozen years; "depend on it, Bill (that's me), this 'll be the last vyge of the 'Mary Kate.'"

And it looked bad from the start, for we weren't more'n hull down before we ran into the teeth of a gale. It didn't last, but went down as quick as it sprung up. Then a dead calm, followed by another blow, and so it went on, now blowing big guns, and then no wind at all, and every gale from a fresh quarter—mysterious as you like.

Every man aboard laid it to the missionaries, and all of us felt sure it was a case of Dary Jones's locker if we couldn't somehow manage to get 'em quarrelling. How's that? you ask. Why, it's simple; if there's a parson aboard, and you get him riled, that breaks the spell. Trouble is most parsons are hard to rile; and as for them four, Land of Love, they hadn't been married over a fortnight, and both pairs like turtle doves, let alone bein' sea-sick and keepin' below.

Whether it was our makin' our minds up to get 'em quarrelin', or what—them that knows can tell; I don't—but the very next day a fair wind sprung up, and after that for a week we bowled along on our course, sou'-east by sou', runnin' eight knots, and every bit o' drygoods "Mary Kate" had doin' duty.

Likely ship was the "Mary Kate," and when she'd been on an even keel two days or so, the parsons and their ladies crawled out on deck, and tried to make out, poor misguided things, that they was happy. But la! if 't hadn't been for their havin' souls o' their own to save, them Peewee kanakas might ha' gone to blue blazes. At least that's my opinion. Land! what a deal of trouble some has with their souls, and no mistake. In a day or two, when they got their sea-legs on, they took to singing hymns and Bible reading, and services all day Sunday, and for a fortnight and more nothin' but that—at least that and love-makin'. What curious critters women are! Did you ever notice that? Make love one minute, and go for you next, reason or no reason. There was Mrs. Fairchild, she was one of that sort, and when I first heard her giving the dominie a piece of her mind I thought we'd have the fallin' out sure enough. But no, he never said a word—just took it. After that we fixed it with the masthead, and when she jawed he'd holler out, "Thar she blows," as if he'd sighted a whale. No use. She'd quit, and after things had simmered down, blow some more. "Thar she blows," from aloft, and that was all to it. Maybe she stopped of her own accord; maybe she "caught on," as the boys say nowadays, and maybe she quit jawin' on deck, and jawed all the more below—no tellin'.

But at last we fetched 'em. You know—or perhaps you don't—about that line in the Pacific where a day's lost or made in sailin' round the earth. You have heard of it, eh? well, as it happened, it came our luck to have an extra day, and that—Saturday. See? Now Sundays, out of compliment to our passengers, was kept mighty strict—no skylarkin', church service at eight bells, and a prayer meetin' for them that chose.



Tom Seeley was one that chose, bein' pious sorter natural, though a rare hand at a lark, for all that. Fact is it was Tom and the mate between 'em cooked up the plan; and next morning, which ought, you see, to have been Sunday, but wasn't, only Saturday over again, when those poor misguided young things came up on deck they found all goin' 'bout as ordinary on week days.

Mrs. Fairchild (Delia they called her) was first up, fixed out fine in her best bib and tucker, and holdin' on to a testament and hymn book. She look'd around, amiable like, but when she see Tom slushin' the port halyards, and me polishin' the binnacle, My! how puzzled she looked. Puzzled, and kinder scared, and then while she turned short and popped down the companion way, the masthead sung out, "Thar she breeches."

Later on all four come up, havin' I expect, talked it over, and sot around, readin' their bibles, and talkin' sober like, once in a while, and makin' out not to notice. Just before eight bells Mr. Fairchild went for'ard to the skipper, and was for havin' the crew piped aft—as had been done Sundays since we left port—for church service.

"Church service!" says the skipper, lettin' on he was mighty astonished. "No, indeed, not *this* day. Why? whatever are you thinking of? Isn't this comin' it a *leetle* too strong?"

All poor Mr. Fairchild did was to look more puzzled than ever, and to say, awful solemn: "I am grieved, deeply grieved, Captain, that you have taken this sudden, and, I must say, wholly unforeseen course. I trust that nothing we have done has caused the change."

"Change! What change?"

"Why," says Mr. Fairchild, spunkin' up a bit, "this inexplicable change in your views concerning the observance of the day."

"Day! what day?"

"The holy Sabbath day," says the parson. "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do"—

The skipper had all he could do up to that to keep from burstin' out; now he did burst out.

"Belay that, dominie," says he, well as he could for laughin'. "You're out in your reckonin'; this ain't the Sabbath day; this is Saturday, May 18, 1859."

Astonished. Why that ain't the word for it.

"Are you in earnest, Captain?" says he. "Are you in serious earnest? Can it be that we have all of us erred as to the date?"

Captain Long assured him (honestly enough) that there had been a mistake; so at last he gave in, and went aft. It was my trick at the wheel, so I overheard what went on. The fur flew thick, I tell you. One thought one way, and one another, till Mrs. Fairchild fetched her diary from below. That settled it. They couldn't get around that.

"Disgraceful; positively disgraceful," says Delia. "This trifling with sacred things is beyond endurance. Come, Archibald (for just then eight bells struck) get your book and open."

And when poor Fairchild, not yet entirely convinced, suggested mildly that possibly they might be mistaken even yet, she opened—on him! Did he think he married a sloop—a woman who needed to be told the day of the week? If so, it was time he learned better. It was absurd, and worse than absurd—it was blasphemous.

So she went on, and the man aloft puttin' in every two minutes or so: "Thar she blows; thar she blows."

Well, somehow they got through the services; as to how edifyin' they were isn't for me to say. Mr. Fairchild, seein' he was in for it anyway, went and got leave of the captain to ask all the watch below to join. Not one did, of course. When he came to Tom Seeley, and Tom said he'd like to be excused *that* day, the poor man looked sad, and said (Tom told me later) that he really had thought a good work had been begun with him.

We always had a plum duff Sundays, and when they came to the captain's mess table for dinner as usual (the mate, who messed with 'em told us) and there was no duff, this set 'em to thinkin' harder'n ever. To thinkin' and afterwards to arguin' again; but for all their talk, and another service too, they turned in no wiser than they began.

Next day, of course, bein' a real Sunday, and our

skipper no heathen, we started in keepin' it holy, as matter of course. The ministers and their wives turned up on deck after mess, Mrs. Polhemus with a pious novel, and Delia Fairchild, by gracious,—with her crotchet work. But when they found all the ship's crew in their Sunday best, and things generally in Sunday-go-to-meetin' trim, I tell you there was a racket. Brother Polhemus had brought up a checquer board; but the minute he saw how it was he dropped it quick, as if he'd been stung. Fairchild turned white as a sheet, and said, after a little pause to collect himself: "Oh! Delia, my dear, surely you must have been mistaken; do not, I beg of you, do that which, inexplicable as it seems, may be a desecration of the Sabbath."

He said that because Delia, not a bit flustered like the rest, had plumped herself down, and Sunday or not, was crocheting away for dear life.

"Oh! my dear, my dear," he went on, when Delia wouldn't notice him at all. "Pray let us do nothing which we may regret. Let us probe the matter further. At best there are grave doubts."

Not a word from Delia; but when Brother Polhemus ventured to remark, "Strange that none of us can recall the facts with any degree of particularity," she opened on him, sayin' it was quite enough for her that she recalled them; and how was it about her diary; and did he think she was a simpleton; and when Fanny Polhemus—a meek little woman—said, "Dear Delia, James never meant to imply that, she answered snappishly, "Yes, he did mean it, or what was equivalent to it."

Then Fanny began to cry, and Brothers James and Archibald (after their fashion) to dispute, and Delia to jaw, first one, then another, and all the time, now and then, overheard (because whales don't keep Sundays): "Thar she blows; thar she blows."

After awhile the truth came out—as, if you'll notice, it does, only give it time. In this instance it took most of the forenoon, so we all lost one round of church service; but the missionaries—thanks to Captain Long—got a good general knowledge of the nautical almanac, enough at any rate to sati-fy 'em how it was. Even Delia had to give in, though, la! how she did hate to; and when at last she gave in, it was to claim she was the one was right all through.

Did you ever know a woman act that way before? Did you ever know one act different? I never did. Pin 'em down, corner 'em, think you got 'em, think they can't get out o' ownin' up, and, by Crackey, they'll squirm out somehow and come up on top, and you'll be the one to feel mean. What it was Delia said further'n that I don't know, seein' I was aloft at the time; but the skipper said we was all cast-aways, and in my judgment he got the idea from her.

—*Twentieth Century.*

## CHRISTIAN MYSTERIES.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE "FREETHINKER."

MR. WHEELER's article reminds me of a book published some time ago by Ernest de Bunsen, on *The Hidden Wisdom of Christ*. Some Freethinkers will say it was very deeply hidden indeed. M. de Bunsen's view in this book was, that Christ had an inner doctrine which he revealed to his disciples. Matthew's gospel written for gross Jews, gives little of this, which was first proclaimed by Paul, whose gospel was therefore another and yet not another. Luke engrafted the secret doctrine on Matthew's gospel, and John revealed it yet more plainly. By these means he sought to account for the discrepancies and diverse teachings of the gospels. Later studies have led M. de Bunsen to see that the inner doctrine of the Christians was really Gnosticism, a western *rechauffé* of Buddhism, and in his *Angel Messiah* he brings out these resemblances, which are further investigated by Major Arthur Lillie, in his *Buddhism in Christendom*.  
LITTLE JULIAN.

From the minutes of the late Freethought Congress, held at Mechelen by the Belgian Freethinkers, it was found that during the past year the number of active, outspoken persons belonging to the Freethought Federation has increased from four thousand to thirteen thousand. This fact shows what can be accomplished by thorough organisation. Let us follow the example set by our Belgian brethren.



## BOOK CHAT.

Mr. J. L. Joynes, a Socialist writer, now in very bad health, has put out a volume of poems entitled *On Lonely Shores*.

\* \* \*

A little book has been published entitled *Bramwellana*, being selections from the wit and wisdom of the late Justice Bramwell. Among the good stories told of the freethinking baron (which is not in this authenticated collection) is one that he was once asked to draw up an indisputable last will and testament. He said "Indisputable! why even though God Almighty drew up his testament his inheritors have been disputing about it ever since. But then," he added, "he made the blunder of adding a codicil."

\* \* \*

It seems that the *Life of Mrs. Booth, the Mother of the Salvation Army*, fills three volumes, and that Commissioner Tucker, her son-in-law, has found difficulty in pressing it into this space "on account of the large amount of material placed at his disposal."

\* \* \*

"For the Shelley Centenary" is the name of a poem which has been written by Mr. Theodore Watts. It appears in the *Magazine of Art* for August, with a full-page illustration of an imaginative kind by Mr. Ricketts.

\* \* \*

Zola is going on a pilgrimage to Lourdes, not to worship the Virgin, but to collect materials for a new novel. He visited the Shrine last year, and has been struck by the opportunity for another realistic picture. M. Zola is said to have been threatened with chastisement by certain muscular Christians, who believe in the miracles at Lourdes, should he go there with the object of showing up the absurd and immoral side of these pilgrimages.

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Dr. Specht, editor of *Menschenhum*, has been honored by having his booklet on *Freethought and Culture* specially interdicted by the imperial censor of the press in Russia.

\* \* \*

The *Clarion* Summer Number, with its sprightly stories and smart illustrations, is the very thing to take for holiday reading. Nunquam, Mont Blong, McGinnis, Quimbus, Dangle, The Bouncer, Whiffly Puncto, and the poet Boggs supply a menu that ought to satisfy everybody. But then "one never knows."

\* \* \*

The last issued volume (xxxi.) of the *Dictionary of National Biography* has a brief notice of Francis Ket or Kett, who was burnt alive for blasphemous heresy in the castle ditch at Norwich, Jan. 14, 1589. Scrambler, Bishop of Norwich, in a letter (Oct. 7, 1588) to Burghley, as lord high treasurer, urged his "speedy execution, and a 'dangerous' person, of 'blasphemous opinions.'" The Rev. Alex. Gordon, who writes the notice, says, "It seems probable that Kett was a mystic of the type of Johann Scheffler." Scheffler was a Popish priest who, under the name of Angelus Silesius, wrote the *Cherubic Wanderer*, a collection of Pantheistic and mystical apothegms, in which he says:

God in my being is involved,  
As I in the Divine;  
I help to make his Being up,  
As much as he does mine.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake contributes to the volume a notice of Dr. William King, the co-operator, and there are also notices of Richard Payne Knight, whose sceptical principles are alluded to, and Dr. Robert Knox, author of *Races of Men*, of whom it is said "His religious opinions were Deistic."

"Cheer up, sonnie," said a friend to the dying journalist, "you have a bright future before you." "That's what's bothering me," gasped the editor. "I can see it blazing."

He: "Wife, where can I hide this five-pound note so that there will be no possibility of anyone finding it?" She: "Put it in the Bible, dear."

Magistrate: "You are rather a youthful witness, my boy. Do you understand the nature of an oath?" Juvenile Witness: "Lor' bless yer! rather! Why, I'm a printer's boy, sir."

Dutiful Nephew: "Now, aunt, let me cut you a little more; any particular part you like?" Aunt (very correct old party): "Well, Leonard, I really should like the—the—ecclesiastical proboscis!" She wanted the parson's nose.

## 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.]  
Secretaries may send in a month's list of lectures in advance.

## LONDON.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 8.15, entertainment. Monday and Tuesday at 8, social gatherings. Wednesday at 8, dramatic class.

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 5.30, tea (6d. each); 7.30, free concert and dance. Saturday at 7.30, dancing.

Camberwell—61 New Church road, S.E.: 7.30, T. Crisfield, "Hypnotism and Suggestion" (illustrated).

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.1: 7.30, G. W. Foote, "The Triumph of Man." The Minor Hall will be open to members at 9 p.m.

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, C. J. Hunt, "Christianity and Secularism"; 7, Stanley Jones, "Priests and Progress."

Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, Mr. St. John, "Man v. God."

Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, C. J. Steinberg, "Miracles." Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, C. Cohen, "The Evolution of the Devil."

Columbia-road (near Columbia Market), Hackney-road: 11.15, R. Rosetti will lecture.

Edmonton (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. Cohen will lecture.

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand): 11.30, A. Guest, "The Attitude of the Bible towards Woman"; 3.30, F. J. Boorman, "The Creation Story—a Reply to Mr. Gladstone."

Hammersmith (corner of The Grove): Thursday at 8, Mr. St. John, "Hereditry."

Hammersmith-bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, C. J. Hunt, "Evolution and Design."

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, W. Heaford, "The Idea of God."

Kilburn—Salisbury-road (near Queen's Park Station): 7, Mr. St. John, "Has Man a Soul?"

Kingsland Green (near Ball's Pond-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Creation."

Lambeth—New Cut (corner of Short-street): 11.30, Mr. Horsman, "Genesis and Science."

Leyton (open space near Vicarage-road, High-road): 11.30, H. Courtney, "Peace on Earth."

Midland Arches (near Battle Bridge-road): 11.30, C. Thomas, "Did Christ Reveal a New Religion?"

Mile End Waste: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Gospel Lies."

Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, F. Haslam, "Bible Stories: are they True?"

Plaistow Green: 7, J. Fagan will lecture.

Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 3.30, A. Guest, "Paley's Christian Evidences."

Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15, S. H. Alison will lecture; 3.15, C. Cohen, "Slavery."

Walthamstow—Markhouse Common: 6.30, H. Courtney, "The Apostles' Creed." Thursday at 7.45, C. Cohen will lecture.

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers-hill: 11.30, F. J. Boorman, "The Evolution of Man."

## COUNTRY.

Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: 6.30, business meeting; 7, Mr. Thatcher, "Geology and Genesis."

Derby—44 Howard-street: 7, W. Whitney, "Theology and Secularism."

Hull—St. George's Hall, 6 Story-street, Albion-street: 6.30, musical evening.

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 7, Mr. Doeg, "The Conflict of Religion and Morality."

Manchester N. S. S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints: 6.30, Sam Standring, "What shall the Harvest be?"

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Lorraine Hall, St. Mary's-place, Northumberland-street: Charles Watts, 11, "Materialism and Spiritualism Tested by Reason"; 3, "Christ and Buddha"; 7, "The Difficulties of Theism."

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

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 7, Mr. Hore, "The Age of the Earth."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 7, music, etc.

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street: 7, business meeting.

Sunderland—Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street: 7, W. R. Stansell, "Personal Deism Denied."

## OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Bradford—Upper Godwin-street: 6.30, A. B. Wakefield, "How I Became a Secularist and why I Remain one."

Hull—Corporation Field: 3, H. Porter will lecture.

Manchester—Stevenson-square: Sam Standring, 11, "Jonah, and other Tales"; 3, "St. Paul's Confession (Romans i. 14)."

## LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, 28 Rivercourt-road, Hammersmith, London, W.—Aug. 14 and Sept. 11, Hall of Science.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk street, Woolwich.—To July 31, Holidays. Aug. 7, m., Battersea; a., Finsbury Park; 14, m., Westminster; a., Regent's Park; 21, m., Camberwell; 28, e., Camberwell. Sept. 4, m., Mile End Waste; a., Victoria Park; 11, m., Bethnal Green; a., Regent's Park; 18, m., Wood Green; 25, m. and e., Camberwell.

O. J. HUNT, 48 Fordinzieley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—All mornings booked to September.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Botherhithe, London, S.E.—Aug. 7, Camberwell; 14, Southampton; 21, Westminster.



C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—July 28, Walthamstow; 31, m., Clerkenwell; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton. Aug. 4, Walthamstow; 7, m., Bethnal Green; e., Edmonton; 11, Walthamstow; 14, m. and a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton; 18, Walthamstow; 21, m., Mile End; a., Regent's Park; e., Edmonton; 25, Walthamstow; 28 m., Battersea; a., Victoria Park; e., Walthamstow.

SAM STANDRING, 106 Oxford-road, All Saints' Manchester.—July 31, Manchester. Aug. 7, Rochdale; 14, Hull; 21, Blackburn; 28, Manchester.

C. J. STEINBERG, 103 Mile End-road, E.—July 31, m., Camberwell; a., Finsbury Park. Aug. 7, m., Midland Arches; e., Plaistow; 14, m., Columbia-road; 28, m., Bethnal Green.

S. H. ALISON, 52 Chant-street, Stratford, E.—July 31, m., Victoria Park. Aug. 7, m. and e., Chatham; 14, m., Bethnal Green; e., Walthamstow; 21, m., Victoria Park; 28, m., Wood Green. Sept. 4, m., Columbia-road; 11, m., Lambeth; e., Swaby's; 18, a., Finsbury Park; 25, m., Bethnal Green.

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