

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.

GOD'S DAY.

THE origin of a periodical day of rest from labor is simple and natural. It has everywhere been placed under the sanction of religion, but it arose from secular necessity. In the nomadic state, when men had little to do at ordinary times except watching their flocks and herds, the days passed in monotonous succession. Life was never laborious, and as human energies were not taxed there was no need for a period of recuperation. We may therefore rest assured that no Sabbatarian law was ever given by Moses to the Jews in the wilderness. Such a law first appears in a higher stage of civilisation. When nomadic tribes settle down to agriculture and are welded into nations, chiefly by defensive war against predatory barbarians; above all, when slavery is introduced and masses of men are compelled to build and manufacture; the ruling and propertied classes soon perceive that a day of rest is absolutely requisite. Without it the laborer wears out too rapidly—like the horse, the ox, or any other beast of burden. The day is therefore decreed for economic reasons. It is only placed under the sanction of religion because, in a certain stage of human development, there is no other sanction available. Every change in social organisation has then to be enforced as an edict of the gods. This is carried out by the priests, who have unquestioned authority over the multitude, and who, so long as their own privileges and emoluments are secured, are always ready to guard the interests of the temporal powers.

Such was the origin of the day of rest in Egypt, Assyria, and elsewhere. But it was lost sight of in the course of time, even by the ruling classes themselves; and the theological fiction of a divine ordinance became the universally accepted explanation. This fiction is still current in Christendom. We are gravely asked to believe that men would work themselves to death, and civilised nations commit economical suicide, if they were not taught that a day of rest was commanded by Jehovah amidst the lightnings and thunders of Sinai. In the same way, we are asked to believe that theft and murder would be popular pastimes without the restraints of the supernatural decalogue fabled to have been received by Moses. As a matter of fact, the law against theft arose because men object to be robbed, and the law against murder because they object to be assassinated. Superstition does not invent social laws; it merely throws around them the glamor of a supernatural authority.

Priests have a manifest interest in maintaining this glamor. Accordingly we find that Nonconformists as well as Churchmen claim the day of rest as the Lord's Day—although its very name of Sunday betrays its Pagan origin. It is not merely a day of rest, they tell us; it is also a day of devotion. Labor is to be laid aside in order that the people may worship God. The physical benefit of the institution is not denied; on the contrary, now that Democracy is decisively

triumphing, the people are assured that Sunday can only be maintained under a religious sanction. In other words, religion and priests are as indispensable as ever to the welfare of mankind.

This theological fiction should be peremptorily dismissed. Whatever service it once rendered has been counterbalanced by its mischiefs. The rude laborer of former times—the slave or the serf—only wanted rest from toil. He had no conception of anything higher. But circumstances have changed. The laborer of to-day aspires to share with the highest blessings of civilisation. His hours of daily work are shortened. The rest he requires he can obtain in bed. What he needs on Sunday is not *rest*, but *change*; true re-creation of his nature; and this is denied him by the laws that are based upon the very theological fiction which is pretended to be his most faithful friend.

The working classes at present are simply humbugged by the Churches. The day of rest is secure enough without lies or fictions. What the masses want is an opportunity to make use of it. Now this cannot be done if all rest on the same day. A minority must work on Sunday, and take their rest on some other day of the week. And really, when the nonsensical solemnity of Sunday is gone, any other day would be equally eligible.

Parsons work on Sunday; so do their servants, and all who are engaged about their gospel-shops. Why should it be so hard then for a railway servant, a museum attendant, an art-gallery curator, or a librarian, to work on Sunday? Let them rest some other day of the week as the parson does. They would be happy if they could have his "off days" even at the price of "Sunday labor."

Churches and chapels do not attract so many people as they did. There is every reason why priestly Protective laws should be broken down. It is a poor alternative to offer a working man—the church or the public-house; and they are now trying to shut the public-house and make it church or nothing. Other people should be consulted as well as mystery-men and their followers. Let us have freedom. Let the dwellers in crowded city streets, who work all day in close factories, be taken at cheap rates to the country or the seaside. Let them see the grand sweep of the sky. Let them feel the spring of the turf under their feet. Let them look out over the sea—the highway between continents—and take something of its power and poetry into their blood and brain. During the winter, or in summer if they feel inclined, let them visit the institutions of culture, behold the beautiful works of dead artists, study the relics of dead generations, feel the links that bind the past to the present, and imagine the links that will bind the present to the future. Let their pulses be stirred with noble music. Let the Sunday be their great day of freedom, culture, and humanity. As "God's Day" it is wasted. We must rescue it from the priests and make it "Man's Day."

G. W. FOOTE.

HELL: AS DESCRIBED BY THOSE WHO HAVE SEEN IT.

[CONCLUDED.]

Of all moderns, Emanuel Swedenborg has most fully seen and described hell. About April 1745, having, as he records in his diary, eaten too freely—perhaps pork chops—he saw snakes, reptiles and other vermin under his table, and heard a voice saying, "Eat not so much." Henceforward heaven and hell were open to him. He became an inhabitant of two worlds beside his own. We are free to confess Swedenborg's hell was the most sensible and comfortable establishment then invented. His hell was, in the words of Shelley, much like London. Indeed, his heaven is a good deal like London too.* Between heaven and hell there is direct communication, as between Chicago and London. Swedenborg's work, entitled *Heaven and Hell*, is a masterpiece of homely imagination. He describes these places and their inhabitants as Defoe describes the island home of Robinson Crusoe. Hell, like heaven, is a place of delight. It consists of the delights of evil, as heaven does of the delights of goodness. The Lord casts none there, but each gravitates naturally to the sphere for which he or she is fitted. Of course the sexes are there, and brothels. He knew no fallen angels. All devils had been men and women, and essentially are men and women still. Consequently, despite what Jesus Christ says as to there being neither marrying nor giving in marriage in heaven, Swedenborg gives his testimony as an eyewitness that there are pure marriage unions in heaven and connections of an opposite character in hell. Swedenborgians explain the Gospel passage I have mentioned as meaning that there were in heaven no such marriages as the Sadducees were thinking of.

"There are hells everywhere, both under the mountains, hills and rocks, and under the plains and valleys. Most of the hells are threefold. In the upper parts they appear quite dark, because those dwell there who are immersed in the falsities of evil; but the lower parts appear as if on fire, because they are inhabited by those who are immersed in evils themselves; for darkness corresponds to the falsities of evil, and fire to evils themselves; and in deeper hells reside those who have acted from evil but more internally; in the less deep those who have acted more externally; and those who do this, act from the falsities of evil." In some hells are ruined cities, in the milder ones, rude cottages; in some, brothels—"full of all sorts of filth and excrement." "The hells are so distinctly arranged in order, according to the difference of every evil, that nothing more orderly and distinct can be conceived." Mr. William White, the Swedenborgian author of *Other World Order*, goes beyond this and says (p. 78): "Hell is a kingdom characterised by the most rigid propriety, where any infraction of order is severely repressed, and where manners and morals are developed to exquisite perfection."

A sometime Swedenborgian and continual Spiritist, the Rev. G. D. Haughton, B.A., in a work *On Sex in the World to Come*, holds that sex maintains itself in after life, but, like his master, is not clear on the question whether breeding is permitted. However this may be, there is reason to suspect that many prisoners and paupers on this earth would prefer a sojourn in Swedenborg's hell to their present detention in gaols and workhouses, where compulsory celibacy is enforced. Swedenborg calls the women in hell harlots; but, as he says of the men, "he is forbid, on pain of punishment, to connect himself with more than one," it would seem that the term

is misleading. The great all-informing idea of Swedenborg is that man's surroundings reflect his inner state. Milton suggested a similar thought when he made his hero say—

Which way I fly is hell; myself am hell.

Kit Marlowe, in his *Faustus*, gives utterance to a like idea:

Hell hath no limits, nor is circumscribed
In one self place; but where we are is hell,
And where hell is, there must we ever be.

Those in hell, being interiorly dark, have no sun, but only artificial light. They have bodies, needing food exactly as on earth; but Swedenborg omitted to tell what proportion of hell's inhabitants were devoted to agriculture, or how they otherwise supplied their bodily necessities.

Swedenborg admits connecting passages between the hells and heavens, but holds out little hope of the denizens of the former getting to the latter; for he holds that the good are continually becoming better, and the bad worse; the former destined to improve, and the latter to degenerate—a doctrine surely at variance with some of the facts of human nature. Burns, with his apostrophe to

Auld Nickie, Ben,
O, wad ye tak' a thocht on men,

has the advantage over all the theologians.

Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* is a wonderful amalgam of Freethought and mysticism. It begins: "As a new heaven is begun, and it is now thirty-three years since its advent, the eternal hell revives. And lo, Swedenborg is the angel sitting at the tomb; his writings are the linen clothes folded up.† Without contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human Existence. From these contraries spring what the religious call Good and Evil. Good is the passion that obeys Reason. Evil is the active springing from Energy. Good is Heaven; Evil is Hell." He goes on somewhat in the style of Swedenborg. "As I was walking among the fires of hell, delighted with the enjoyment of Genius, which to angels look like torment and inanity, I collected some of their Proverbs: thinking that as the sayings used in a nation mark its character, so the Proverbs of Hell show the nature of Infernal wisdom better than any description of buildings or garments." Here are some of the Proverbs of Hell:—A fool sees not the same tree that a wise man sees; The busy bee has no time for sorrow; If the fool would persist in the folly he would become wise; Shame is pride's cloak; Prisons are built with stones of law, brothels with bricks of religion; The nakedness of woman is the work of God; Joys impregnate, sorrow bring forth; The bird a nest, the spider a web, man friendship; The cistern contains, the fountain overflows; One thought fills immensity; No bird soars too high if he soars with his own wings; always be ready to speak your mind and a base man will avoid you; If others had not been foolish we should be so. As the caterpillar chooses the fairest leaves to lay her eggs on, so the priest lays his curse on the fairest joys; To create a little flower is the labor of ages; Damn braces; bless relaxes; Prayers plough not, praises reap not; Joys laugh not, sorrows weep not. As Blake says, "Enough or too much," for the reader of unascertainable wisdom. Evidently, if Blake is right, the people who go to hell are not altogether fools.

J. M. WHEELER.

† In another passage (p. 21) Blake says: "I have always found that angels have the vanity to speak of themselves as the only wise; this they do with a confident insouciance sprouting from a systematic reasoning. Thus Swedenborg boasts that what he writes is new; though it is only the contents or index of already published books." Swedenborg, he further says, with the confidence of a rival visionary, "has not written the new truth; he has written all the old falsehoods; the reason was he conversed rather with angels than with devils."

* See his *Continuation concerning the Last Judgment*, § 42, where he describes the heaven of Englishmen as "two great cities similar to London." Freethinkers may be interested to learn that "They who foremostly love the liberty of speaking and of writing, dwell in the northern quarter."

THE UNFORGOTTEN DEAD.

THOSE who did something in their day to originate or further the knowledge of new ideas, usually, though not always, looked forward to future recognition of their unrequited work. Neither cheer nor aid, as a rule, befel them—oftener obloquy and peril. Several have lately left us of whom special record is due. Apart from justice to them, is the question of justice to ourselves. Those who survive are under obligation to those who went before in the service of Freethought; and it were baseness to profit by the sacrifices of others and not requite them, so far as it can be done, by honoring remembrance of them.

Fifty years ago—in the days of the *Oracle of Reason*, of Southwell, Ryall, Miss Roalfe, Paterson, Chilton, and others—William John Birch (who but lately died in Florence) was, to the journalism and advocates who vindicated Freethought, what Mr. George Anderson has been in our day. Mr. Birch, though a gentleman in good society, openly befriended those who had no other friend. It was to him I dedicated my *Last Trial for Atheism*, as a "Friend who was twice a friend—who helped us when we were unknown and struggling." Notwithstanding his position, he gave his name as a supporter, and signed it to all his articles. At one time he gave me, without conditions, 600 acres of land to use in the interest of the cause I represented. When the bulk of his great fortune was lost I returned the land script to him for his own advantage, as none had better right to it when need came. He had great powers of research and amazing fecundity of ideas, which overran the boundaries of the volumes prescribed for them. I made for him the summary of his best-known work, prefixed to his *Philosophy and Religion of Shakespeare*. Mr. Wheeler, who has done so much to collect and record the lives and works of Freethinkers—the forgotten and the known—may one day enumerate Mr. Birch's works. Though his means became diminished, he continued to the end of his days to aid insurgent thinkers. In later years he spent his winters in Florence, but his pen never ceased until the day of his death. It was his custom to walk down in the afternoon to a Florentine library which Liberal professors frequented. The day before his death he did so. The next morning his servant heard a fall in his master's room, which he had but a few minutes left, and hastening back, he found him dead; and he was buried in the beautiful cemetery where Theodore Parker and Dr. Southwood Smith lie. He had a venerable presence in later years, and his cheery interest in mental progress remained unchanged to the end. In any company in which theological opinions were introduced, presuming on everybody's acceptance, Mr. Birch would at once express his dissent with the same easy and natural confidence as any clergyman present—always assuming that heresy had the same conversational rights as orthodoxy.

Another writer of brilliant parts whom we lately lost, was Mr. Percy Greg, who, under the name of Lionel H. Holdreth, edited the *Reasoner* for me, when I was, for a season, disabled. He was a student then, and when money was suddenly needed, he would go and win a scholarship which he did not need, and when the cheque was publicly given him in the London University, he would come to my seat and hand it to me as his loan to the propagandist cause. In the early days of Secularism, he came to me one Sunday morning after a lecture in the John-street Institution, London, with two other fellow students (since famous), and offered their services as disciples; and they gave their services. Mr. Greg's political and poetic writings, his remarkable novels, his philosophic works, and the last book he wrote—two large volumes—the *History of the United States*, from facts he alone had explored—all

display brilliant qualities of argument, investigation, and original thought. His *Devil's Advocate* is a mine of thought. One day reviewers will light upon his works and discover with astonishment the contributions he made to the solution of the greatest problems of his time. His boldness and thoroughness deterred orthodox and conventional *litterateurs*, in his lifetime, from reviewing or discussing his books. When I first knew him he had, like Shelley, cut himself off from a great career at Oxford, by refusing to sign the Thirty-nine Articles, in which he did not believe. He had a fierce sense of honor, as strong and clear on his dying bed as in life. His wonderful clearness of intellect led to his being high in the confidence of the greatest Conservative statesmen. He never agreed with me in politics, but the intimacy of our friendship was never estranged to the day of his death. It was in relation to me that he wrote his striking poem, "Why should the Atheist Fear to Die?" and other pieces.

Mr. H. G. Atkinson, the friend and correspondent of Harriet Martineau, was one of the few philosophers free from indifferentism. He annually made contributions to periodicals which had heretical ways. He had wide personal knowledge of all the men of thought of his day, and a greater mastery of material philosophy than any other contributor to our journals. He wrote, like St. Paul, in an unconnected way, but his letters abounded in curious anecdotes of men of thought, and flashes of philosophic light. Inheriting a moderate fortune, he devoted his life to philosophy and heresy. Being free from superstition, he did not despise the slaves under its ignominious subjection. Free himself, he gave his best thought to the freedom of others.

Mr. H. L. Green, of Buffalo, gave an account of the career and death of Philip Dawson in the *Freethinker's Magazine*. In these columns no mention has been made of his recent decease, at an age exceeding David's limit of seventy years. He took part, with the Marquis of Queensberry, at one of the anniversaries of the Leicester Secular Hall. He printed a philosophic *Code of Secularism*. Under his own name of Joseph Ellis he was known as the author of a notable volume of poems of which the most famous was entitled "Cæsar in Egypt." His mind was of the Elizabethan order, both in poetry and prose, marked by graceful fancy and a vigorous quaintness of expression. A far completer notice is due did space permit. He was like Mr. Atkinson and Mr. Birch, a philosopher who believed what he maintained, and maintained it because he believed it.

George Hooper, whom early readers of the *Reasoner* knew as "Eugene," died recently. He was one of the young writers—Supple, Stack and Merrit, who all became notable in after days—who took part in Secular advocacy at the advent of that form of opinion. He joined me in editing the *People's Review*, the first sixpenny review issued. His best known work was his history of Waterloo and the famous battle there. He went with me to the *Leader*. For many years before his death he was connected with the *Spectator*.

Of the great Jewess, Süssmund Potoski, whom we know as Ernestine L. Rose, mention has already been made in this journal. The daughter of a Polish rabbi, she renounced her father's religion and declined that of the Christians; and was persecuted, like Spinoza, by the followers of Moses and of Christ. In her first lawsuit she pleaded her own cause and won it. She went to the King of Prussia and obtained new liberty for Polish Jews. She obtained personally, from the King of Holland, the liberation of a poor Dutch sailor's wife, unjustly imprisoned, whom no one else would save. She saw the French Revolution of July, 1830. In London she knew Lord Grosvenor and many of our nobility. She went with Elizabeth Fry on her famous visits to Newgate. For

fifty years she was the first of women orators. She was a speaker of influence in twenty-three States of America, ranking in repute with Lucretia Mott, Francis Wright, Harriet Martineau, and Lydia Child. Like Paine, she was ignored in the journals of the anti-slavery party she served—such as the *Standard*—because of her heresy. She sent the first petition for the rights of women to the American Congress. The friends of the slave, the friends of reason and of the equality of women, were assured of the defence of their cause while Mrs. Rose had the platform. Her wit, eloquence, and dignity of sentiment, held the field against all assailants. She said to me proudly a few days before her death, "I have lived."

H. G. Lien, of Liverpool, uncle of H. Lien Brækstad, secretary of the Liberty of Bequest Committee, the Norwegian merchant and philosopher, the helper of heretical Liberalism, died lately at good age. He was a vegetarian by choice, placid by nature, but firm in materialism, having unusual knowledge of its literature.

James Robertson, of Paisley, recently deceased, was a remarkable man. He was a designer of patterns of no mean skill. Though living in a Scotch town where heresy is not popular, he was a Freethinker, ardent, well-informed and brave. A Secularist who understood what it meant, he maintained it on the platform and in the press, and spoke at the graves of nearly all of that way of thinking who died in Paisley in his time. From the days of James Motherwell and David Glassford, he was a supporter of heretical publications, and every lecturer on the side of social, religious, or political liberty, had in him a friend who never varied and was never wanting.

Now only a few days ago John Brown, of York, died. He was my friend for forty years. He and Mr. Ernest were foremost whenever progress was in question. Oft he sang for me Hood's "Lost Child," and no one sang it as he did; he had such vehement spirits. Chartist, Secularist, anti-theologian, were alike welcome to him. His workshop in Colliergate was a house of call for all wandering speakers, and all works politically or spiritually forbidden, had a place of honor on his counter. A vigorous speaker, he was to York what Moses Clayton has been to Bradford—in the front of every platform to repeal mischief or advance good objects.

G. J. HOLYOAKE.

ERNEST RENAN.

At first of Mother Church the darling child,
At last her rebel son, disowned, reviled.
Perchance, had he to her less faithful proved
She might have shrined him with her best beloved,
But he disdained his conscience to deceive,
And hush "I doubt" with parrot "I believe."
Hungry for faith, he scorned the faithless horde
Whose steadfast faith is faith in faith's reward.
Believing his Creator gave him eyes,
He dared to see; yet dared not to be wise
In knowledge of the things beyond his ken;
But left the Infinite to smaller men.—*Fun.*

The Chinese at home often have three religions, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. When in Christian countries they add Christianity. They do so on commercial principles, as shown in the following dialogue:

Evangelist—"Are you a Christian, Sing Yeh?"

Sing Yeh (late of Hong Kong)—"Ess; heapee clistian. Go Sunday-school, singee, playee, leadee biblee; allee same heapee much clistian."

"But I understand you worship Joss too?"

"Ess; play to Joss allee same evly dayee; bulnee Joss stickee; heapee stan' in wiv Joss allee while."

"But you cannot be both Christian and pagan, and worship God and Joss at the same time."

"Wattee mattee clan't? Swingee on bot' side fence allee same likee politician. Don't clal dlam which beatee. Me safee eithel way."

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.

II.

It would puzzle any impartial reader of the proceedings at the late Church Congress to discover any practical good that was likely to result to the world from the Folkestone gathering of bishops, other members of the clergy, etc. With one or two exceptions, the speakers indulged in worn-out platitudes about the "Divine influence," "the spirit of Christ," and the "efficacy of Incarnation," without even attempting to explain the meaning of such phrases, or to justify their alleged potency. It was truly a case of the "blind leading the blind." What could be more absurd than the Archbishop of Canterbury urging the laity to emulate the life of Christ, while the wealthy Prelate himself sets an example of a very opposite character? It is the quintessence of hypocrisy for these divines who "toil not, neither do they spin," to prate about the dignity of labor, and to counsel humility while they maintain a haughty pride and amass wealth as rapidly as possible. Would it not be more commendable on their part to heed the following advice of their Master? "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye: and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." The fact is, these Congresses are only attempts to revive a dying faith and to prolong the influence of a Church that has ceased to be in touch with the thought of the nineteenth century.

At the Church Congress the Bishop of Peterborough, in speaking of what had been done to improve the material condition of the people, said "efforts for the good of all men were a testimony to the power of Incarnation." If this latter term is used, as we presume it is, in a theological sense, then the bishop's statement is as untrue as it is insulting to the memory of the philanthropists of all ages and in all countries. No nobler efforts were ever made for the "good of all men" than those associated with the lives of the reformers in Greece and Rome, centuries before the power of Christian "Incarnation" was ever heard of; and to-day the most practical work is being done by men who have no faith in this Church-mystery, but whose power is stimulated by a love of humanity and by a desire to raise it from the degraded position to which Church rule has reduced it. We know that the XIIIth Article of the Church of England teaches that "works done before the grace of Christ . . . have the nature of sin," but we are also aware that such teaching is a libel on human nature. It would, if true, destroy that self-reliance which is the great sustaining principle in all reformation, and limit the inspiration to virtue to a mere handful of the race of mankind.

The same worthy divine remarked, "No nation had ever continued great when it lost the sense of acting under divine protection. The Church was the guardian of the true motive power of national life." Now what is the meaning of this twofold allegation? Is "divine protection" shown in the great calamities that have so frequently befallen professed Christian nations? Is it visible to-day in England, where crime, pauperism and prostitution are so extensive, that Secular means have to be employed to combat their fearful consequences? As to the Church being "the guardian" etc., what does it guard? Not "the true motive power of national life." That motive power has always operated in those material elements that fostered science, advanced the social elevation of the masses, encouraged Secular education, and aided the struggle for the political equality of men. To all these advantages the Church has manifested a persistent opposition, and moreover where it has had the power, it has not failed to retard their development. The guardianship of the Church has been confined to vested interests,

old creeds and to a decrepit faith. We were glad to read "the attitude of the Church toward science is not now timorous or averse," which implies that it was so formerly. And it would continue to be averse still, but that it has learnt if such were the case in this sceptical age, it would mean the sounding its death-knell.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, in his opening address, acknowledges the indebtedness and gratitude of the Church to reason, reason which it once despised, and with which even now it is not on too familiar terms. He said: "Certainly, if secular thought and knowledge have grown by the science and criticism of half a century, the discussions here will show that the Church is no less thankful for the wider, calmer, more human, and more divine view vouchsafed her of the manner of God's word and work." It is some consolation to have the testimony of an Archbishop to the fact long known to others, that reason can improve upon the Bible and the prayer-book; and if we accept the assurance that human agencies are sufficiently powerful to give churchmen "a more divine view," it is only to express our regret that the recognition of the fact by theologians, has been so long delayed.

The Rev. J. L. Davies told the Congress that the first step in considering the authority of the Bible and of the Church and their relationship to each other was "to have done with the assumption of any infallibility being inherent in either. . . These were not substitutes for God, but instruments through which we believed the agencies of the one infallible Instructor." The rev. gentleman here sanctions the abolition of two supposed infallibles and replaces them by another. But what is logically involved in this change of masters? The purest fountain on the mountain side is affected by the color and nature of the formation through which it travels into and along the valley. No stream can rise higher than its source. The same principle is clearly applicable to the Bible and the Church, for these "agencies" are subject to the mutability of existing things. Hence, if "the one infallible Instructor" is heard at all, it must be only through human and therefore fallible mediums, which would necessarily disqualify the attribute of infallibility in the alleged divine instruction. That this is so the different notions entertained of God, the varied opinions held as to what the Bible teaches, amply prove. The existence of an infallible teacher is no guarantee that we shall receive infallible instruction, so long as the channel through which it comes is fallible.

The discussion of the position of capital and labor caused considerable perplexity to many of the rev. gentlemen present. No doubt they foresaw that to side with Lazarus would induce Dives to withhold all pecuniary support, for it was too much to expect capital to supply funds for its own destruction. The talk indulged in by the rev. speaker about the interests of capital and labor being "one" if "sacrificed by the church," was nothing more than unmeaning platitudes. They can only be "one interest" when the laborer and the capitalist are one and the same person. It would have been wiser upon the part of the Congress to have given more time to the consideration of co-operation, as that may be made of some practical service to the sons of toil. The solution of this important problem lies principally in the question, who shall be masters? To be self-governing, working men must be their own employers whatever percentage of their earnings they may be compelled, for the time being to hand over to capital. Without imputing to churchmen an entire want of sympathy with the artisan class, it appears evident that the mainspring of their present dabbling with the question of capital and labor is the fear that unless the supporters of the church embrace the working-men's movement someone else will.

The Bishop of Manchester is delighted that the Victorian Parliament has resolved to "restore the name of our dear Lord to the reading books of that colony." If we believed what is urged by the bishop, it would appear that, in order to establish virtue in Melbourne, it is necessary to abolish secular schools, for "most serious crimes" have been committed by the "best educated criminals." Has the worthy bishop never read the histories of criminals who were taught in the churches and chapels of Great Britain, including clergymen, ministers, Sunday-school teachers, and superintendents. It is a misnomer to call instruction in mere reading and writing secular education; these are but the instruments for obtaining that knowledge which, when properly applied, proves a sufficient guide in all social life. Moreover, experience has shown that the practice of simple veracity and of due consideration for the interests of others and the welfare of general society will make better men and women than all the mysteries of revealed religion. The theology of the Church does not teach the highest social duties, or what would be most conducive to the loftiest development of human character. The bishop's idea of adding "the name of our Lord to the reading books" of schools as a panacea for moral wrongs is grotesque in the extreme. His name has been in the books read by the majority of criminals that have filled our gaols for centuries, so this at least has had a fair trial, and may confidently be pronounced a failure.

Unfortunately the world stands sorely in need of reform, but the true source of reformation is not to be found in the Church nor discovered in the vaporings and impracticable talk at orthodox congresses. What is required to rid society of its present evils is a more keen sense of justice between man and man, a judicious cultivation of intellect, a fostering of an exalted ethical standard, and an abiding confidence—not in priestcraft, creeds and dogmas, but in self-reliance and in well-determined efforts to enhance the happiness and welfare of one and all.

CHARLES WATTS.

MENTAL MUMMIES.

THERE are mental mummies who cannot be revived by removing their grave-shrouds and clothing them in modern drapery; the principle of conservatism has penetrated their very veins and the marrow of their bones. It is by no means unconceivable that a popular leader like Garibaldi or Porfirio Diaz should succeed in persuading a million of his countrymen to renounce the yoke of Rome and build Protestant chapels, but the result would be largely limited to a change of nomenclature. Before long the dissenters would march in procession with a wonder-working tooth of John Wesley or kiss a shred from the petticoat of the Holy Maid of Kent. They would groan at the mention of Rome, but exorcise spooks with the initials of Ulric Zwingli, and abstain from work on the anniversary of every Protestant martyr. They would try to redeem drunkards by sprinkling them with consecrated water from the holy rivers of Kansas, and celebrate Arbor Day only by invoking the spirit of Prof. G. P. Marsh, as a patron saint of climate-improving forests. Under the stimulus of industrial influences, they might transfer the cross from wayside shrines to telegraph-poles, but they would persist in the worship of sorrow.

The creed which has turned the happiest countries of our globe into a grave of their former prosperity, is a medley of miraculism and anti-naturalism, and the experience of the last century has proved that both can survive the repudiation of Rome and even of Galilee. The mania of renunciation, after the abolishment of monasteries and nunneries, continued its dismal rites in Quaker garb and Shaker temples of celibacy. The miracle-hunger of millions who have learned to scorn the clumsy tricks of the cowed exorcist, gratifies its appetite in the mystic gloom of the dark cabinet. Rustic supernaturalists, deprived of such luxuries,

indemnify themselves by retailing the marvels of the serpent-charm and joint-snake superstition.

A curious psychological problem suggests itself in the question how far the charm of the "sour-grape philosophy" may contribute to the persistence of certain forms of moral nihilism. Condemned criminals almost invariably "renounce the vanities" of a life which the Court of Appeals has refused to save, and in a scaffold-speech, quoted in Galignani's Messenger of May 6, 1837, the English murderer Joseph Greenacre expressed his conviction that his crime had been the means of saving his soul, because "death on the gibbet was one of the surest passports to heaven."

For similar reasons degenerate nations, after realising the doom of their national welfare, are apt to renounce the glory of a forfeited world, and to consider misery, poverty, and shame so many stepping-stones to the bliss of a better life beyond the grave. After habitual sins against the health-laws of nature have avenged themselves in cureless diseases, decrepit bigots may find solace even in that most insane tenet of their dualistic creed which teaches them to despise the body as the enemy of the soul.

A natural effect of pessimism may thus, in course of time, become one of its perpetuating causes.

—The Monist.

FELIX L. OSWALD.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

President, G. W. FOOTE.

PRINCIPLES AND OBJECTS.

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

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

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

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

MEMBERSHIP.

Any person is eligible as a member on signing the following declaration:—

"I desire to join the National Secular Society, and I pledge myself, if admitted as a member, to co-operate in promoting its objects."

Name

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This Declaration should be transmitted to the Secretary with a subscription; and, on admission of the member, a certificate will be issued by the Executive.

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Members are classed as active or passive. Passive members are those who cannot allow their names to be published. Active members are those who do not object to the publication of their names, and are ready to co-operate openly in the Society's work.

Fill up the above form and forward it, with subscription (as much, or as little, as you think just to yourself and the cause), to Mr. Robert Forder, sec., 28 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.; or to a local Branch Secretary.

YE CHANT OF YE BEDLAMITE.

On the Bishop of Exeter's confirmation of idiots the "Sydney Bulletin" has the following.

You may be cracked and crazy (said the Bishop t'other day), You may believe yourself a goat and try to feed on hay, You may believe yourself a hen and do your best to lay, And yet your brain may comprehend the whole the Prophets say.

You may in fitful frenzy's fire have kissed your ma-in-law, You may believe a woman's tongue can sleep within her jaw, You may believe an M L.A. could pass the whisky by, And still your mind may drink the Trewth that comforts when you die.

You may believe yourself a hog and start to raise a sty, Or, like Bavaria's Ludwig, build yourself a nest on high; You may believe the modern dude has brains within his head, Yet see the mystic drift of all the ancient Hebrews said.

You may believe yourself a sage and think you often saw An honest man in wig and gown and practising the law; You may believe the cablegrammer never tells a lie, Yet you may grasp Salvation's scheme—and see the reason why.

You may be the veriest essence of a sublimated ass, Believe yourself a toy-balloon and fill yourself with gas, Believe no parson eyes the screw—whene'er he gets "a call," Yet you may weigh the Scriptures well and understand them all.

You may believe you're made of lard and fear the summer sun, Believe yourself the princely heir of a certain Gracious One; You may believe the good old press is straight and staunch and true, And yet peruse the Blessed Book—and comprehend it, too.

You oft may need a padded cell and eke a jacket straight, You oft may need a little ice to cool your heated pate, You oft may rend the midnight air with many a maniac yell, And yet imbibe the precious news the Bishop has to tell.

So, hear the gladsome tidings now—Ye Bedlamites—with joy; Let holy hymns and saintly psalms your lucid hours employ. The Bishop says—the dogmas dark that puzzle all the sane May yet be comprehended—when there's water on the brain. P. LURRIO.

ACID DROPS.

We have been looking at the report of a sermon on Tennyson by the Rev. J. B. Meharry, of Crouch Hill Presbyterian Church. The reverend gentleman makes the poet out to have been a very good Christian, but he does this by judiciously choosing his facts. His quotations in support of Tennyson's Christianity are all from his earlier poems. Mr. Meharry discreetly passes by the passages from later poems given in our leader on Tennyson in last week's Freethinker.

"Alas, that we must speak of him as dead!" exclaims Mr. Meharry. But why alas! Tennyson did a long life's work and died at the ripe age of eighty-three. How long, for goodness sake, does Mr. Meharry expect men to live? We almost feel like Frederic the Great when some of his soldiers turned tail in battle. The king rode up to them, crying, "Wretches, would you live for ever?" It seems to us that Mr. Meharry is guilty of a gross piece of sentimentalism.

Thomas Hardy's Tess of the D'Urbervillers is censured in the Christian Commonwealth as "audaciously anti-conventional." This would be a curious judgment, if it were not that Christian journals are conventional or nothing. Our pious contemporary forgets that Jesus was very unconventional in the story of the woman taken in adultery; and still more unconventional in consorting with Mary Magdalen.

Mr. J. Morrison Davidson hated Mr. Bradlaugh when alive, but why does he go out of his way to vilify him now? He treats Mr. Bradlaugh as a renegade because he was a Republican, who impeached the House of Brunswick, and went to the House of Commons and swore allegiance to the House of Brunswick. But surely this is a very shallow accusation. Mr. Davidson ought to know that Mr. Bradlaugh held the Queen's title to the throne to be parliamentary. What he swore,

therefore, was merely to *uphold the law*. He did not renounce his right to agitate for an alteration of the law. As a matter of fact, Oath or Affirmation of allegiance, according to law, is unavoidable. Mr. Bradlaugh did a great stroke of work in regard to the Oath. It is easier to criticise it than to improve it. As for Mr. Davidson, we suggest that he should give Mr. Bradlaugh a rest, and turn his attention to Mr. John Burns and Mr. Keir Hardie. It would certainly be more courageous.

Charles Bradlaugh was the subject of many legendary stories. We used to wonder how they arose, and still more how they got circulated. Some very silly yarns were afloat as to his "wealth." How were they generated? Well, the following anecdote may help to explain.

The present writer (I, myself, as the great Dumas used to say) was in the train. The apartment had three other occupants. Each sat comfortably in a corner. When the British reticence had worn off the conversation grew animated and not uninteresting. Presently, by some caprice of talk, the subject of Trade Unions came up, and that led to Labor Leaders. At this point one of the travellers said, "Ah, I see that John Burns offered to give £10,000 to some public gardens or other. That's a lot of money. I should like to know how he got it. Trade Unions seem to pay very well." Thereupon he shook his head, sadly and virtuously; and two of the other three travellers shook theirs as well.

These three travellers were not exactly fools. On the contrary, they were intelligent looking men. They were simply victims of social prejudice. Nor was the story-teller a liar. He evidently spoke with sincerity. This was shown when the present writer, who had been listening and watching with amusement, explained that John Burns had offered £5,000 on behalf of a rich man who did not want to be known, and that John himself lived on a very small income. "How do you know that?" asked the story-teller. "I know John Burns personally," said the present writer. "Do you now?" was the reply: "Well, that settles it." And he added, "How we may be deceived!"

Price Hughes is sanguine as to Christian reunion, only people must not expect it in a hurry. "The Church of God," said he, at the Reunion Conference at Prince's Hall, Piccadilly, "had been divided for centuries, and there would be nothing surprising in the fact that it might take a century to arrange their differences." The surprising thing is that, with a God-given revelation, the differences increase every century.

Judging by the composition of the meeting, Mr. Hughes should have given ten centuries as the period for witnessing Christian reunion. With one solitary exception, all the speakers belonged to Mr. Hughes' own school of "Forward Methodists." The Bishop of Worcester, Archdeacon Farrar, Canon Freemantle, Mr. Guinness Rogers, Dr. Berry, and Mr. R. F. Horton had been invited, but all excused themselves.

The split at the Tabernacle has become more embittered. Dr. Pierson is said to have described the memorialists for Dr. James Spurgeon as "a seditious faction actuated by the Devil." What a useful fellow the Devil is to religionists.

Everybody has heard how when Spurgeon died a placard was put up at the Metropolitan Tabernacle announcing that "Our beloved pastor entered heaven 11.5 Sunday night." But all have not heard that a wag passing by added in pencil: "Heaven, Tuesday, 1 a.m. C. H. Spurgeon not arrived. Getting anxious." That is the latest news on the subject.

The third National Protestant Congress has been held with some eclat at Portsmouth. Miss Golding, the lady who escaped from a French convent; Edith O'Gorman, another escaped nun who declared there were 700 convent prison houses in England; Jacob Primmer from Caledonia, and Sir A. Blackwood, the pious Protestant of the Post Office; and others, were there to cause the apathetic British public to the insidious progress of Romanism and Ritualism throughout the land. Popery, the Congress declared, was nothing but baptised Paganism; but since the testimony of our Lord Jesus Christ to the Old Testament Scriptures was a principal

subject of their deliberations, we should say their Protestantism is, after all, nothing but mitigated Catholicism.

We are still without any official information as to the stoppage by the Spanish government of the International Freethought Congress at Madrid. According to a Dalziel telegram from Rome, the Pope appears to be highly gratified, and it is rumored in Vatican circles that he has decided to confer the Order of the Grand Cross of Pius IX. on Senor Canovas del Castillo. Much good may it do him when he gets it! It is as easy for a government with plenty of policemen and soldiers to stop a Freethought Congress as for a company of bandits to rob a single traveller. The one act is as brave as the other—and just as distinguished.

Catholics who cry out "Persecution" because the French Republic will not let priests enter hospitals unless they are sent for, should say what they think of this Madrid incident. We invite them to declare their real sentiments. Do they mean that Catholics are entitled, when they have the power, to persecute Freethinkers; and also, on the other hand, that Freethinkers, when they have the power, are wicked in merely giving Catholics fair play? This, at any rate, seems to be their opinion.

It is well to remember that Granier de Cassagnac, the father of Paul de Cassagnac, who was a Roman Catholic and an Imperialist, on one occasion shamelessly avowed this Janus policy. He cried out to the Republicans, "We demand liberty from you on your own principles; when we are in power, on our own principles, we shall not give you liberty." This is no reason, of course, why Republicans and Freethinkers should treat their opponents with injustice. It is a very good reason, however, for preventing them, if possible, from getting into power.

The Pope is trying to make terms with the French Republic. Why? Because every reactionary effort has failed to shake it. In Spain he obtains the aid of the government in oppressing Protestants and Freethinkers. Does not this show that there is no honesty in the Pope's talk about "liberty of conscience" in France. He is ready to suppress it in every other country where he has the power to do so.

Father Martin, the new General of the Jesuits, has been exchanging compliments with the prisoner at the Vatican. Both the black and white Popes see they must work harmoniously in these heretical days, and have agreed to forget that Pope Clement XIV. suppressed the Jesuit order and is suspected of having died of poison in consequence.

Mr. Kembell, of the Imperial British, East Africa, says, the hatred between the Protestants and Catholics at Uganda is intense, and this is confirmed by the narrative of Mr. Collins, a Protestant missionary, who has just returned from that country. He says: "When the Protestants heard the sharp rattle of the big guns, they burst into rounds of cheering." Christianity, in Central Africa, is just about as pacific as anywhere else.

A Berlin newspaper affirms that British missionaries in Africa carry the Bible in one hand and a rifle in the other. This is right enough as far as it goes, and just what the *Bulletin* has stated repeatedly. But the German paper has imperfect information. It omits to mention a rum-bottle in the other hand. That makes three hands, certainly, but the average missionary to the heathen always seems to have about as many hands as the graven images of the Hindoos, and as many eyes as Argus. He uses his hands for Bibles, rum, and rifles, while still having a lot to grab land with; and he keeps several of his eyes on heaven and the balance on the look-out for copra and concessions.—*Sydney Bulletin*.

A Liverpool merchant, Mr. George Fowler, has left General Booth £5,000, and £25,000 to other religious organisations. He also leaves £20,000 to found in Liverpool a hospital for incurables. There is something very suggestive about this. It reminds us of the Greek altar "to the unknown gods." This altar was an extra one, for all the gods overlooked in the supply of special altars. Similarly, Mr. Fowler gives money to a long list of Christian bodies, and winds up with an extra £20,000 for general incurables.

Christ's Resurrection is declared by the *Isle of Man Times* to be the most certain fact in the history of the world; more certain, we presume, than the death of Lord Tennyson. Our contemporary gives this opinion at the end of a review of a book on the subject by the Rev. T. P. Ring. Both the writer and the reviewer believed the story of the Resurrection before they studied its evidences. Their judgment, in consequence, is not very valuable.

The following prayer is being circulated on a leaflet in the provinces: "Additional Mission Prayer for the Mission.—Almighty God, heavenly father, we beseech thee pardon all thy ministers (as they call themselves) for turning thy houses of prayer into begging houses, and grant that they may hunger and thirst after righteousness instead of collections and offertories. It seems that all they want is money. Our tithes are demanded, and if not given, are taken by force. O Lord, let our cry come unto thee. They take rent for seats in thy house, and twice every Sabbath the bag is held up to us for more money. When we come to thy table the bag is held up for money; when we come to be married, to ask thee to bless our union, we have to pay money; and above all, O Lord, when we come to bury our dead in thy acre, they rob the poor brethren in distress of a sum of money called burial fees." It concludes with a wish that the parsons would follow in the footsteps of their Lord.

The *Two Worlds* issues a missionary number which opens with an article on Biblical Spiritualism. We never could see how Bible believers could get away from the belief in angels and other spirits which appears on nearly every page of the old book; but neither can we see that the old book is any authority in the matter; and we are glad to think the majority of the readers even of the *Two Worlds* do not acknowledge it as such.

Eastbourne has a population of 35,000, and there is not a Board school in the town. When one is proposed, the Church people give bogus figures to show there is no occasion for such a dreadful increase of the rates. So "Silly Sussex" is kept silly.

The German Emperor's baby daughter—baby princess, some would call her—was baptised on Sunday. The water used in the ceremony was brought from the river Jordan. A bottle of this miraculous fluid is fetched for every Hohenzollern baby. Whether it has any peculiar efficacy is open to question. If it has, we don't see why *all* babies shouldn't be christened with it. Hohenzollern babies are no more entitled than common babies to the best chance of going to heaven.

A certain Syrian captain—but it was a long time ago—took seven dips in the Jordan, and it cured his leprosy. It did not cure the late Emperor Frederic's cancered throat, and it appears to have had no effect on Emperor William's arm or ear. Its miraculous properties seem to have weakened with age. Holy rivers are not what they were.

Principal Rainy backs out of the discussion on the theatre which was raised by his remarks on the "vice" which stuck to it. Mr. Beerbohm Tree, on the other hand, has given further expression to his feelings in an interview with a representative of the *Scottish Leader*. One of his observations is as pointed as it is practical. "It would be sheer hypocrisy," Mr. Tree remarked, "to say that actors are exempt from the weaknesses which are common to humanity, but I say unhesitatingly that in the catalogue of national crime the stage will be found to compare not unfavorably with the profession to which Principal Rainy belongs. Mr. Tree paused, and added significantly, "An interesting problem for the psychologists that."

Canon Baynes seems to be a foul gun of the Church. His career is stopped for eighteen months for an indecent assault upon a child of ten.

Father O'Connor, head of the Catholic mission at Luton, is also in durance vile for six months for indecent assault upon a girl of thirteen. The matter would have been hushed up but for a local vigilance society.

John Manley, a missionary and Sunday-school teacher at Derby, has been sentenced to six months' hard labor for indecently assaulting a child of seven.

A correspondent in the *St. James's Gazette* says that Neill the poisoner "had fits of religious fervor, for he taught the Bible in Chalmer's Sunday School, Quebec, and went to church and insisted on having a Bible in his room when visiting Miss Sabbatini at Berkhamstead."

Condemned Murderer—"I'm all right. I've repented an' received religious consolation. Friend—"Ain't you afraid of meetin' th' woman you killed in th' other world?"
Condemned Murderer—"Not much I ain't. She'll never get to heaven, where I'm going'. I killed her so quick she didn't have much chance to repent. See?"

Joseph Mellor, of Oldham, who is arrested on a charge of imitating Deeming, may turn out to be another curious problem for orthodox investigators. We see by the newspapers that "a quantity of literature, principally of a religious character, has been found at Mellor's house."

There have been so many scandals among the Roman Catholic clergy of Canada that all the Canadian papers have taken up the subject. *La Patrie* says "the corruption into which certain members of the clergy plunge themselves is worse than those of Zola's heroes."

Some make the Egyptian oppressor of Egypt to have been Ramases II., others Thothmes I. or Thothmes III. A writer in the *Freeman* is reluctantly compelled to admit that no satisfactory monumental evidence of the Pentateuch story has been discovered in Egypt.

Deep borings have been made at Muckleton Manor, Gloucestershire. They have gone down 1,342 feet—over a quarter of a mile—and haven't got to hell yet.

The deaths from cholera at Hamburg amounted to no fewer than 7,571 or about a thousand deaths per week while the cholera was at its height.

Cholera still lingers in Hungary, and the Lord has been devastating Sardinia with floods, causing immense loss of life. What do Theists say of this handiwork?

Three hundred and sixty-one persons were killed in the Punjab alone by wild beasts and snakes last year. And yet man thinks the world was made for his special benefit.

Last Sunday harvest thanksgiving services were held at the Wesleyan church, Barwell, when smoke was seen to issue from under the floor of the chapel. The preacher asked the choir to sing while a collection was taken: but the people were too anxious to rush out, and the service closed in confusion.

The latest American Salvation hymn:

There's flies on you and there's flies on me;
There's flies on thou and flies on thee;
There's flies on him and flies on he;
But there's no flies on the Lord.

At the Portsmouth meeting of the Congregational Union the Rev. A. C. Tarbolton, of Basingstoke, read a paper on "Stumbling Blocks Before Children." He pleaded for pleasant services, and discountenanced tedious sermons and the doctrine of a vengeful God and terrible Day of Judgment. In fact, he would give the children all treacle and no brimstone. The Rev. P. A. Atkinson said, with some truth, that Mr. Tarbolton had really introduced the question of the truth of the Bible.

A gentleman who had spent Sunday in Birmingham recently gave me a most satisfactory account of the results of opening the municipal art galleries there on Sunday afternoons. On the day in question the galleries, which are only open from two till five o'clock, had been visited by 2,734 persons, and, to show that these were not mere unintelligent loafers, 504 of them had bought penny catalogues. These catalogues themselves are, I am told, a marvel of cheapness and good editing, and it is a thousand pities that the masses in other large towns—London amongst them—are not allowed to enjoy similar advantages.—*Truth*.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Friday, Oct. 28, Co-operative Hall, Low Westwood, Ebbeschester; "Is the Bible a Safe Guide?"

Saturday, Oct. 29, Bolden Colliery, Tyne Dock, "Science and Miracles."

Sunday, October 30, Thornton's Varieties, South Shields:—11, "Holy Absurdities"; 3, "Men, Women and Children—the Real Trinity"; 7, "Why I Cannot be a Christian."

Nov. 6, Camberwell; 13 and 20, Hall of Science; 27, Manchester.

Dec. 4, Grimsby; 11 and 18, Hall of Science, London.

January 1, Birmingham; 8, Leicester; 15 and 22, Hall of Science; 29, Bristol.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHAS. WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—Oct. 30, Edinburgh. Nov. 8, Chester; 6 and 13, Birmingham; 20, Sheffield; 27, Hall of Science, London. Dec. 4, Hall of Science; 11, Manchester; 18, Birmingham.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent direct to him at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

S. DAVIES.—Thanks for cheque for N.S.S., which will be acknowledged with other subscriptions on Mr. Foote's return to London. We are obliged to you for your good wishes for "the splendid work" we have in hand.

P. W. BALDWIN.—The list will be acknowledged next week.

C. WRIGHT.—We believe that Thomas Hardy, like George Meredith and Grant Allen, is a Freethinker. Indeed you may discern as much in his novels.

J. R.—The lectures at Milton Hall would be announced if intimation were sent to us.

J. B.—The Book of Mormon was founded on a romance written by Rev. S. Spaulding; so his daughter declared on oath. It was entitled "The Manuscript Found,"—written in biblical language, and pretended to give the history of the peopling of America by the lost tribes of Israel, among the settlers being Mormon, Moroni and others.

W. STURMANS.—Hereditary diseases do not all die out at the fourth generation, whatever may be thought to be the teaching of the second commandment.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.—R. O. Smith, hon. treasurer, acknowledges:—Miss Robins (2nd collection), £1.

T. BULLOCK.—Mr. Foote is in excellent health at present.

J. W. GOTT.—Pleased to hear that your distribution of the *Freethinker* has increased the weekly sale in Bradford. Mr. Foote, as you will see, is engaged for all Sundays till the end of January. He will see what he can do later on. We are sorry the battle at Bradford is so uphill.

F. W. HALL.—Always pleased to make announcements for the Branches.

MR. J. C., of the Bethnal Green Branch, will in future lecture under the name of Mr. C. James. His address is 18 William's-rents, Commercial-road, E.

P. HUNTER, 113 Copperas-hill, Liverpool, informs us he ordered a copy of the *Freethinker* for a customer about a month ago. At the customer's desire he placed a copy in the window and exhibited a content's sheet. He now sells a dozen copies weekly, and believes he will be able to sell a good many more. He also receives orders for Freethought books and pamphlets. This should stimulate our friends all over the country to get newagents to display the *Freethinker* like other journals. There is a sale for it whenever it has a chance.

"FREETHINKER" SUSTENTATION FUND:—Mrs. M. Hancock (2nd sub.), 2s. 6d.; J. Mosenthal, 17s.; J. W. Fitch, 10s.; T. Trollope, 1s. 4d.; G. Harlow, 5s.; J. Maitland, 5s.

G. B.—D'Aubigne's *History of the Reformation* is good in its way; perhaps the best you can get in English within the compass of a single work.

T. CRISFIELD has removed from Brighton to 34 Southwick-street, Cambridge-terrace, Hyde-park, London, W.

E. TOLEMAN-GARNER, Glendale, Alexandra-road, Selhurst, S.E.—Glad to know you are still lecturing.

ANSWERS to many correspondents stand over until next week, in consequence of Mr. Foote's absence from London.

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—Liberator—Progressive Thinker—Flaming Sword—Secular Thought—Modern Thought—Twentieth Century—Fur Unsere Jugend—Freethinker's Magazine—Truthseeker—Western Figaro—Clarion—Church Reformer—Ironclad Age—Independent Pulpit—La Vérité Philosophique—Echo—Watts's Literary Guide—Freedom—Cosmopolitan—Star—Bristol Mercury—Hull Critic—Bradford Harporth—North Eastern Daily Gazette—Dundee Advertiser—Kansas Lucifer—Natal Advertiser—Manchester Guardian—Normanton Free Press—Western Times—Newcastle Daily Leader—Newcastle Weekly Chronicle.

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.

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.

It 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.

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.

TO THE MEMBERS AND FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

You are hereby appealed to on behalf of the Society's funds. During the past year or two they have been heavily drained by the expenses of fresh propaganda and increased organisation. The old income of the Society is not equal to the new scale of work; and we must either diminish our expenditure, and with it our successful activity, or obtain a larger measure of financial support. Being naturally loth to let the work suffer, the Executive has desired me to issue this appeal, which it is hoped will elicit a generous response. We wish to raise £200 immediately, so that we may enter upon the winter campaign with energy and assurance. Any subscription you may kindly forward will be acknowledged, according to your directions, in the Freethought journals; and also, if requested, by post.

Yours very truly,

G. W. FOOTE,

President.

October, 1892.

P.S.—Subscriptions can be forwarded to me, at 14 Clerkenwell-green, London, E.C.; to Mr. W. H. Reynolds, the treasurer, Camplin House, New Cross, S.E.; to Mr. R. Forder, hon. secretary; or to Miss E. M. Vance, assistant secretary, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote had capital meetings at Newcastle on Sunday better, in fact, than on the occasion of his previous visit although there were counter attractions in the afternoon, in the railway servants' demonstration, and in the evening, in the opening lecture of the Sunday Society. The evening audience was a really fine one. All copies of the *Freethinker* were sold at the bookstall and more could have been disposed of. During the day the chair was occupied by Mr. Joseph Brown (morning and evening) and Mr. F. Creswell (afternoon). Mr. Brown made an earnest appeal to the local Freethinkers to join the Newcastle Branch and give financial aid to its propaganda in the colliery districts.

The afternoon lecture was on "John Morley: Statesman, Writer, and Freethinker." A correspondent in the *Tory Journal* had expressed a hope that "the Nonconformist ministers, local preachers, class leaders, etc.," who had assisted to place Mr. Morley in power, would "flock to the theatre and hear Mr. Foote," and afterwards repair to the Central Hall and "hold another meeting to pray that God-fearing men may govern this nation." Unfortunately the ministers and class leaders did not seem to have taken this advice. A large audience assembled, however, and the lecture was listened to with great attention and interest. A long and excellent report of it appeared in the next morning's *Leader*, and another not quite so long in the *Chronicle*, which (of course) gave special prominence to the part of the lecture dealing with Mr. Morley's views on theology and ethics.

We are happy to know that the circulation of the *Freethinker* steadily improves in Newcastle. This should lead to the strengthening of the local Branch. There is a great deal of Freethought, open or latent, in the Tyneside capital, and the officers and committee of the Branch are able and willing to organise it if adequately supported.

Members of the Chester-le-Street Branch drove over to Newcastle in brakes, there being no railway accommodation on Sundays. Mr. Birtley, the secretary, gave an encouraging report of progress in the neighborhood. It appears that a hall, capable of holding a thousand people, can now be obtained, and it is intended to hire it during the winter for a course of Sunday lectures, which could be attended by the large population within an easy distance. Of the progress of Freethought in other parts of the district covered by the North Eastern Secular Federation we hope to give an account in our next issue.

Next Sunday, Mr. Foote concludes his present lectures in the North, delivering three lectures at Thornton's Varieties, South Shields, at eleven, three, and seven o'clock.

Mr. Jesse Herbert, who lectured for the Sunday Lecture Society at Newcastle last Sunday evening, having been Professor of Law at the University of Canton, was able to speak from personal knowledge on the Government and Religions of China. On the latter topic he remarked that the Chinese would not hear of going anywhere after death except where their ancestors had gone. They held it unjust and impolitic to support any form of religion out of the State funds. They did not believe in interfering with any man's beliefs, and they had "a peculiarly lofty scorn of the offer of individual eternal happiness in a land of rest." Mr. Herbert's statements were received with applause. When he said that the Chinese mistrust all religions the audience laughed sympathetically.

Mr. Asquith has made a very sensible settlement of the Trafalgar-square question. We have held all along that the Square is not a fit place for public meetings at all hours of the day and night. Mr. Asquith has decided to let it be used for demonstrations on Sundays, Saturday afternoons, and Bank Holidays; with the judicious proviso that proper notice of all such meetings shall be given to the authorities. Thus ends—we hope for ever—a wretched chapter of London History. Mr. Matthews and Sir Charles Warren acted foolishly and brutally. They are now among the things that were, and the Trafalgar-square question has been settled to the satisfaction of all reasonable men—as it might easily have been settled at first—by the exercise of a little common-sense.

The *Athenæum* states that Mr. Swinburne would not accept the Poet Laureateship if it were offered to him. We should think not indeed. Fancy the author of *Songs Before Sunrise* undertaking to grind out an ode when the next scion of royalty takes to himself a wife, or when the next lady of the royal family produces a baby—the only form of production these people affect! It is really too ridiculous to contemplate.

A Freethought Bible Class is being started in connection with the Manchester Branch, under the conduct of Mr. Sam Standing. Its meetings are to be held weekly during the winter. The first takes place on November 2, the special subject being "How we got the Bible."

Mr. Charles Watts had a capital audience last week in Dundee. The *Dundee Courier* gave a fair report, and said, "Mr. Watts discoursed with much power and eloquence." At Aberdeen friends travelled thirty miles on purpose to hear our colleague, and at the close of the meetings three cheers were given for Mr. Watts.

On Sunday last Mr. Watts had three large audiences at Glasgow. The enthusiasm was exceedingly hearty, and the applause was renewed again and again at the conclusion of each lecture.

Mrs. Samson takes the platform at the Hall of Science on Sunday morning, her subject being "Three needed Reforms." The admission is free, and we hope there will be a good attendance. In the evening, Mr. G. J.

Holyoake lectures on "John Bunyan, prince of controversialists."

The adjourned meeting of the members of the West Ham Branch took place on Saturday evening last, when the resolution by which it had been decided to sever their connection with the N.S.S. was rescinded.

A special meeting of the Grimsby Branch will be held on Sunday at 7, in the Hall of Science, to arrange for a tea on Mr. Foote's visit and to transact other important business. All members and their wives are requested to be present.

SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTIONS TO N.S.S.—E. Crutterdean, 2s.; G. Wenborn, £1; John Samson, £1 11s. 6d.; J. Plummer, 2s. 6d.; T. R. Almond, 2s.; A. W. Marks, 10s.; Mrs. B. E. Marks, 10s.; S. M. A., 5s.; C. M. M. Jacobs, 16s.

The South Essex Secular Society has canvassed the candidates for the West Ham municipal election respecting Sunday opening of the Free Library and the use of Stratford Town Hall for the "Sunday evenings for the people." Definite promises of support have been received from Richard Athey, J. Cavanagh, Percy Alden, M.A., E. Fulcher, and C. Foden. Full list of adopted candidates will appear in the local papers.

The London Freethinkers' Ball at the Hall of Science, has been fixed for Wednesday, November 30. Tickets (1s. each) will shortly be in the hands of Branch secretaries. As any profit will be devoted to the work of the London Secular Federation, it is hoped that Freethinkers will make a point of supporting this gathering. Further particulars will be announced in subsequent issue.

Trouble being again expected from rowdyism at the lectures at Finsbury Park, morning and afternoon, the Branch will be glad if as many friends as possible will attend in order to maintain the peace on Sunday next.

The Battersea Branch continues its outdoor lectures at the Park Gates right through the winter. Only in the event of very severe weather will any morning lecture be given in the Secular Hall close by. Last Sunday morning Mr. O. James lectured for the first time at Battersea, and, we are informed, gave every satisfaction. The large and attentive audience that assembled were delighted with his argumentative style, and frequently applauded his eloquent and powerful address.

Any persons willing to deliver lectures on behalf of the principles of the N.S.S. may send in their names and addresses to the editors of the N.S.S. *Almanack*. They thereby incur no responsibility, neither does the N.S.S.

A late number of the *Liberator* to hand, in its Sydney notes, reports that a sub-committee of the Executive Council was appointed to confer with Mr. Collins for the purpose of drawing up a scheme for the formation of a National Secular Society for the whole of Australasia. The advisableness of forming a National Society to embrace country districts and the whole of Australasia generally having been unanimously affirmed, it was decided to adhere as closely as practicable to the rules of the N.S.S. of Great Britain. The following provisional officers were appointed—Mr. Collins, President; Mr. E. F. Tyo, Treasurer; and Mr. A. D. Maclaren, Secretary. We wish the Society all success, and hope our friend Joseph Symes will be able to share in its work.

We are pleased to notice from the *Liberator* that the project of a Secular Association for Australia, "framed on the lines of the National Secular Society of Great Britain," is advocated in a circular bearing the signatures of Joseph Symes, W. W. Collins, and Wallace Nelson.

Freethought is making good progress in New Zealand, where Mr. Wallace Nelson has recently gone. Mr. Ballance, the head of the government, is a Freethinker.

In the *Boston Investigator* Professor J. H. Cook pays a fine tribute to the late Ernestine L. Rose, concluding with the following epitaph:

Fragrant and lovely in sweet repose
Rest, godless, noble, human Rose.

The Chicago University has shown its liberality by appointing a Jew (Rabbi Hirsch) Professor of Talmudic Literature.

Aunt Elmina Slenker, of Snowville, Pulaski Co., Virginia, has started a Freethought paper for the young, entitled the *Little Freethinker*.

Twelve out of thirteen of the board of women managers of the exhibit of the State of New York for the World's Fair have protested against the action of Congress in closing the exhibition on Sunday. The N. Y. *World* opens its columns to a discussion of the subject by women.

Secularism appears at Berlin in the guise of an Ethical Society which has been started under good auspices. Privy Councillor Förster, the well-known man of science and director of the Berlin Observatory, who presided at the inaugural meeting, declared they must cease to let only the ordained priests manage their highest and most important affairs. Dr. Stanton Coit attended and spoke of the Ethical Societies in England and the United States.

The *Cosmopolitan*, a monthly Freethought journal, edited by K. Kavyabisharad, still comes to us from Calcutta. It takes several items from our columns, the September number having two articles from the pen of Mr. Wheeler.

Now the severe weather is on, parcels of cast-off clothing and boots will be of service to the Benevolent Fund Committee. Parcels, carriage paid, may be sent to Miss Vance, 28 Stonecutter-street.

South London Freethinkers will notice that on Sunday next (November 5) Mr. Foote lectures at the Camberwell Secular Hall, which he has not been able to visit for a considerable time. The lecture he will deliver is his new one, "The Doom of the Gods."

CHRISTIANITY NOT FOUNDED ON ARGUMENT.

IN 1741 an anonymous little book appeared with the above title, which perhaps was the most noticeable outcome of the disputes between Christians and Deists of that period. The eighteenth century may be said to have ushered in the Age of Reason. Toland with his *Christianity Not Mysterious*, and Locke with his *Reasonableness of Christianity*, set the ball rolling which has come on with impetus to our own day, when unwary Christians are casting overboard one by one their irrational Jonahs, quite oblivious that the process will finally leave their ship entirely empty. The work in question was written by Henry Dodwell, the eldest son and namesake of the learned Dodwell who wrote on the natural mortality of the soul. Of the son in question little is known beyond his having been brought up for the law, and being also a foremost promoter of the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce. He is usually classed as a Deist and an enemy of Christianity; for it was felt that his insidious pamphlet undermined every pretence to rationality in the established religion. It is written, however, in such a tone of implicit faith or grave irony, that those who have claimed Gibbon as a very good Christian might, with far more appearance of reason, claim Henry Dodwell, whose booklet evidently gave hints both to Gibbon and to Hume. For the author of *Christianity Not Founded on Argument, and the True Principle of Gospel Evidence assigned in a Letter to a Young Gentleman at Oxford*, escaped all danger of prosecution and imprisonment by writing as a friend endeavoring to establish Christianity on its true basis. That basis not the pretence of reason put forward by moderns, but supernatural God-given faith, upon which the Church had insisted for ages as its necessary foundation, and which is the foundation appealed to in the Bible. He puts as the motto on his title-page, "Psalm cxvi. 10: *I believed, and therefore spake.*" With great gravity and seeming seriousness the author sets himself to show that religion is not to be judged by reason. "Your boasted rational faith is what I would fain show you to be a false, unwarranted notion of your own, and without the least ground to support it either in nature or revelation." He undertakes to affirm—"First: That reason, or the intellectual faculty, could not possibly, both from its own nature and that of religion, be the principle intended by God to lead

us into a true faith. *Secondly*: That neither is it so in fact from the plain account given us of it in Holy Scripture. In the first place he asks, "Can it be by the exercise of their reason that men can be required to *think all alike*? The different light in which things appear to different men, must create a variety of faiths. He asks further, "Can a man be baptised into a rational religion?" Where is reason concerned when babes accept the terms of salvation by deputy, and are entitled to all the privileges of the most extensive faith by another's act? We are told to pray for increase of faith, but how absurd it would be to pray "Give us O Lord from Heaven, by thy particular assistance, a larger degree of that faith which we have already attained in part from the natural and ordinary means of conviction, and the consideration of the evidence." He considers it most absurd to require a belief if previous examination be requisite. "To leave mankind a disputable subject to exercise their judgments upon, and at the same time to require us all at the peril of our souls, to be in the right, demonstration itself is not ground sufficient to exact such an assent, unless it be self-evident too, and if there be the least of induction or inference in the case." This, as Mr. Leslie Stephen in his *History of Thought in England in the Eighteenth Century* points out, was but putting in another form the demand often suggested by the Deists, that a religion which insists upon universal obedience should rest upon evidence as clear as the sun in heaven. But it was part of Dodwell's scheme to decry reason as inadequate for the foundation of faith.

All attempts to found Christianity upon reason, he says, are unsettling, and really a capitulation to the enemy. For if one conclusion is defensible because founded on reason, why not all and every conclusion so founded. Examination implies doubt—a possibility that truth may be on the other side. It is one thing whether a proposition be indeed true in itself, and another whether a man be bound to apprehend and believe it. Arguments only obscure faith, "even upon the plainest question in nature, the existence of a Deity, the labored productions of Dr. Clarke himself have rather contributed to make for the other side of the question, and raised a thousand new doubts in the reader's mind." No religion, he says, can be rational that is not founded on a free and impartial examination. And such examination supposes a perfect neutrality to the principles which are to be examined; a neutrality prohibited by the threat of damnation on the unbeliever. Now few are capable of this impartial examination. Christianity itself prevents them by taking care that the tender minds of infants are suborned in its favor. He urges the absurdity of imposing on all, ignorant and infants, "a faith built upon syllogisms." To assure our intelligence of the truth needs deep studies. This may be good news for the learned and those with ample time for investigation, but not to those who have neither time nor capacity for acquiring knowledge. But the command to believe is absolute and peremptory on all. It is not made on condition of our having ability and opportunity to make inquiries and weigh probability: it is, He that believeth not shall be damned. He that is not with me is against me; and What is not of faith is sin. A rational faith is precarious, subject to change, and awakens no zeal. Can this be the faith whose promised influence was to supersede the powers of second causes and triumph over the whole course of nature in its operations? The rational believer "will never be solicitous enough about the success of his inference, or resent with a becoming ardor the contradiction of his doctrines and hypothesis." In other words, the Rationalist will not persecute unbelievers as Christians have ever done. And then it is evident that what reason first established, the same reason must ever have the power to repeal, whereas "it is the religious man's resolution as it is his duty to persist in the faith he has once espoused to his life's end." Rationalism will never induce martyrdom. J. M. W.

(To be concluded.)

The old Jews always went in for round numbers, and never spoil a whacking lie for want of a figure or two. They make Abijah slay five hundred thousand chosen men (2 Chron. xiii. 17), while the Lord killed fifty thousand and seventy of the little village of Bethshemesh for looking into his travelling trunk (1 Sam. vi. 19).

TENNYSON'S PILOT.

It appears, after all, that "C.," who wrote in the *Athenæum*, was in error as to Tennyson's "Pilot" in one of his last poems.

I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar.

Mr. G. L. Craik, who was supposed to be "C.," writes as follows to the *Times* :

"The present Lord Tennyson writes to me: 'My father was much pained to learn that anyone could misinterpret the 'Pilot' in 'Crossing the Bar,' and imagine that it referred to Arthur Hallam or to my brother Lionel. He had thought there could be only one possible interpretation. Repeatedly and emphatically, at his dictation, I have had to say this. Moreover, I have had to explain, also at his dictation, that in the line 'And after that the dark,' the 'dark' merely means 'The valley of the shadow of death.' Let me add, as my name has been unfoundedly connected with the mistaken interpretation, that I have heard the Laureate say the same thing as his son does, and express his astonishment that there could be any misunderstanding, as he had written 'Pilot' with a capital P."

This is sufficiently decisive. Tennyson expected to meet Christ as his pilot to Port Felicity over the Black Sea of Death. But the expectation does not prove his belief in the deity of Christ. The sentiment of "Crossing the Bar" is one that might be shared, we imagine, by most Unitarians.

That Tennyson turned to Shakespeare at the last is now established beyond contradiction. His son confirms the newspaper report in the following letter to Sir Arthur Hodgson, Chairman of the Shakespeare's Birthplace Trustees:

"I beg you to convey from my mother and myself our grateful acknowledgment to the Executive Committee of Shakespeare's Birthplace for their most kind expression of sympathy and for their beautiful wreath. My father was reading 'King Lear,' 'Troilus and Cressida,' and 'Cymbeline' through the last days of his life. On Wednesday he asked for Shakespeare. I gave him the book, but said, 'You must not try to read.' He answered, 'I have opened the book.' I looked at the book at midnight when I was sitting by him, lying dead on the Thursday, and found he had opened on one of the passages which he had called the tenderest in Shakespeare. We could not part with this volume, but buried a Shakespeare with him. We had the book enclosed in a metal box and laid by his side.—Yours faithfully, HALLAM TENNYSON."

We commend this to the consideration of all good Christians. Tennyson did not ask for the Bible or the New Testament, but for Shakespeare; and he turned to the Pagan plays, which are full of wisdom and humanity, but are without a tincture of Christian sentiment.

G. W. FOOTE.

"WILD FLOWERS OF FREETHOUGHT."

I WAS rather surprised in reading over the short article by Ron Mahon in the *Freethinker* to find myself referred to as a "Freethought Wildflower." It struck me as a rather appropriate cognomen, seeing that I live in the village of H—, away up in the wilds of the North Riding, where there is very little to see but grouse and thistles. However, on ruminating for a moment, I could not brook the thought that by the local "sky-pilots" we were regarded more in the light of a poisonous fungus than a "wild flower."

I presume that "R. L." came to the district on a botanical excursion, and in his explorations he found two specimens; but I can assure him that we number more than twice two, and that we have sometimes thought of bringing a lecturer over to what he dubs "this village swamped with religion," to expose the prevalent superstition.

A few weeks ago I was invited to a Y.M.C.A. Bible class, when the subject for consideration was prophecy. I listened to the stale platitudes one after another—how that the fulfilment of the prediction of the fall of Jerusalem was a proof of the authenticity of the Bible, etc.; and when it came to my turn, I suggested that if the fulfilment of

certain prophecies, which might never have been predicted until after they were fulfilled, was proof of its authenticity, what was the *non-fulfilment* of J. C.'s prophecy that his second coming would be in the lifetime of the generation then living a proof of? This query rather puzzled the young sparks; and after a two hours' debate they found they had floundered into a quagmire. The class-leader ultimately blurted out that at any rate her Majesty was satisfied with the Grand Old Book when she showed it to that black prince as the foundation of England's greatness. I cited Sir Henry Ponsonby's letter of denial. The result of my attendance was that the fortnightly Bible class debate was supplanted with a fortnightly entertainment; and it certainly struck me that a variety entertainment is much more soothing to the bigots than a set debate with sceptics. One of the defenders of the only true faith went so far as to say that the Secularists had just recently adopted a creed which began as follows: "I believe in G. W. Foote, maker of heaven and earth," etc. On being challenged for the source of his information, however, he could not tell me.

Some little time ago I was spending my holidays at a picturesque seaside watering-place on the Lancashire coast, and on taking a stroll one fine Sunday afternoon along the promenade my attention was arrested by a little thick-set fellow who was haranguing a crowd by belaboring the sceptics and denouncing them as a set of the most contemptible and unprincipled scamps in creation. Recognising myself as one of the class he sought to incriminate, I of course stopped, and somewhat unwillingly submitted to listen to the castigation. After the orator had exhausted his exuberant verbosity on the sceptics, he turned his attention to the "Great I Am," which in this case was *himself*, for he evidently considered himself an important personage. He related how that years ago he was an inmate of Wakefield gaol, and during his forced stay there he had been converted by the chaplain. I thought to myself, now is the time for a bit of banter, and I instantly ejaculated, "Did you meet any infidels there?" This elicited a pious howl from the multitude, accompanied with angry cries of "Take him away." The orator, not affecting to hear me, nothing daunted I again shouted, "Did you find any sceptics in gaol?" This sent the follower of the meek and lowly Jesus into a tornado of passion, and he related a confab he had once had with one of those sceptics—but not in gaol, oh no! Of course not. You do not often find sceptics gaol-birds, although Mr. Foote has been one; and, to use an expression of Dr. Johnson's, one day last February "we (meaning myself) perambulated that portion of the protuberant asperities which nature had obtruded between us and the stranger"—going seventy miles each way to hear Mr. Foote speak at Leeds. Stranger, however, is hardly the word, for we were perfectly familiar with him through his works years previously.

But I must return to the orator and his victim, the sceptic he boasted having "sat upon." He asked the poor deluded infidel if he believed in God; to which he replied, "No, he believed in nature." The orator's rejoinder was, "Well, but this blessed book tells me that God made the sun; why did not nature make another sun to be equal with God?" "This settled the infidel," boasted the orator. The Anglican clergyman who presided over the meeting could not cover his shame, so he covered his face with his hands. Just as I said I didn't believe there is a Freethinker between Johnny Groats and Land's End but knows that there are hundreds of suns in the universe, and that it was only reserved for Christian windbags to spout such rubbish as that. The farce was screaming. The clergyman came and gave me a tract and kindly asked me to decamp; but I said it was my turn now. The speakers removed a hundred yards away, but in controversy with another white choker who stood near me I kept fully two-thirds of the crowd listening while I dilated upon Christian bigotry and biblical inconsistency for another hour.

J. ROUTH.

HOW TO HELP US.

- (1) Got your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.
- (2) Got 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.

BOOK CHAT.

Mr. H. S. Salt, secretary of the Humanitarian League, and well known as a writer on Shelley, publishes through George Bell and Sons (2s.), a pretty little volume on *Animals' Rights*. It is a careful and thorough piece of work, marred by no hysterics, for Mr. Salt always keeps his enthusiasm well in hand. From every point of view, the book does him great credit. Without the least fanaticism, Mr. Salt has a sentiment of humanity which extends to every form of existence that is capable of feeling pain. We heartily recommend his volume to all who are interested in diminishing the misery of this world. Those who are not thus interested, at least in relation to the lower animals, should also read Mr. Salt's plea for reform in this direction. It will be well for them to get enlightenment on the subject; for "evil is wrought by want of thought as well as by want of heart."

Mr. Salt points out that ancient philosophers and opponents of Christianity like Porphyry, held humaner notions in regard to animals than Christian divines have done. He does not quote St. Paul's brutal query "Doth God care for oxen?", but he cites a strong passage from Schopenhauer about the Judaic virus in Christianity, which made it, generally speaking, insensible of the claims of animals. To an English Freethinker—the great Jeremy Bentham—belongs "the high honor of first asserting the rights of animals with authority and persistence." "Why should the law," asked Bentham, "refuse its protection to any sensitive being? The time will come when humanity will extend its mantle over everything which breathes. We have begun by attending to the condition of slaves; we shall finish by softening that of all the animals which assist our labors or supply our wants."

Slaughtering animals for food is a thorny subject. Meat-eating is the general practice amongst us, and it will not do to argue the question on vegetarian grounds. Nor, indeed, does Mr. Salt do so in relation to immediate reforms. He does hope, however, that in the course of time the civilised races will cease to eat dead animals. But he overlooks a problem beyond that. If fowls are kept for eggs, and cows for milk, they would have to be despatched ultimately. We should like to hear what Mr. Salt has to say upon this point.

As for the brutalities of sport, vivisection, and what Mr. Salt calls "murderous millinery," there is little, if anything, to find fault with in this volume. The final chapter on "Lines of Reform" is written with wisdom and moderation. We should like to see Mr. Salt's plea for *Animals' Rights* circulate by the hundred thousand.

Voltaire, the greatest literary figure of last century, still continues to excite interest. Messrs. Walter Scott and Co. have put forward a new Life by F. Lespinasse, a writer who many years ago published a volume on *The Youth of Voltaire*. Mr. Lespinasse rightly says the noted phrase, *Ecrasez L'infame*, did not refer to any personal founder of Christianity, but to the system of superstition which took shelter under his name.

Mr. G. J. Holyoake's *Sixty Years of an Agitator's Life*, will be published by Mr. T. Fisher Unwin, in two volumes with portraits, at the price of one guinea.

George Meredith's new volume of poetry entitled *The Empty Purse*, is now published by Macmillan.

Messrs. G. P. Putnam's Sons will publish the English edition of the reissue of Herman Melville's fine novels, beginning with *Omoo* and *Typee*. *Whitejacket* and *Moby Dick* are also announced. We trust *Mardi* will be included.

Upon the authority of 1 Kings x. 28 and 2 Chron. i. 16, it has been supposed that mighty old Solomon, with his thousand wives and concubines and one-horse temple, imported quantities of "linen yarn" from Egypt. A reference to the Revised Version fails, however, to discover any trace of yarn, flax, or other material. So the story proves to be a "yarn" pure and simple.

CHRISTIAN GUILE.

In illustration of the prevalence of "venal voting" in the United States, Professor McCook relates two stories, the first of which was confided to him by an actor in it. It was Sunday, and the eve of an election. Word came to the management that a certain gang could be had for five hundred dollars. The candidate was rich, and he was at prayer meeting. He was called out, and the situation explained. He looked uncomfortable, faltered, and finally replied: "Well, gentleman, I don't know about such things; but if you say it's all right, I suppose it is." So he gave his cheque—and was elected. Again: A well-known and most exemplary man was governor. A local magnate visited him with the usual story. He coldly replied, "I am sorry, sir, but I never have anything to do with such methods of procedure." The visitor grew red, arose, and was leaving in a high state of surprise and indignation, for he had understood that his visit would be appreciated. But just as his hand was on the door-knob, he heard a placid voice remark, "Perhaps you had better call on Col. —, a member of my staff, before you go." He called (says Mr. McCook) and was satisfied. Meanwhile the governor turned to his secretary and remarked with a gentle smile, "You know one must exercise Christian guile sometimes."—*Daily News*.

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): 7.45, dramatic sketches, concert, and dancing (free). Tuesday at 8, social gathering. Thursday at 8, R. N. McDougall, "Free Land v. Nationalised Land" (free). Friday at 8, C. Cohen, "Astronomy" (2d. and 4d.)

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 7.30, C. Cohen, "Secularism and Science." Monday at 9, C. Cohen's science class (astronomy). Wednesday at 9, C. Cohen's class on "Spencer's Ethics." Saturday at 8.30, free concert and dance.

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, H. Snell, "The French Revolution and Freethought—II."

Edmonton—Angel Hotel Assembly Room (corner of Silver-street): 8.30, music; 7, C. J. Hunt, "Evolution and Design."

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, Mrs. Louisa Samson, "Three Needed Reforms (Political)" (free); 6.30, musical selections; 7, G. J. Holyoake, John Bunyan: Prince of Controversialists" (3d., 6d., and 1s.)

Hammersmith—Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove: Thursday at 8, A. Goodrich, "The Authorship of the Four Gospels."

Woolwich—"Sussex Arms," Assembly Room, 60 Plumstead-road (entrance, Maxey-road): Thursday at 8, A. B. Moss will lecture.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, G. Easton, "Is the Bible Man's Highest Guide to Morality?"

Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, C. James will lecture.

Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, C. Cohen, "Christianity and Morality."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand): 11.30, G. Standring, "Secularism, the Only Hope for Humanity"; 3.30, C. J. Hunt "After Death—What?"

Hammersmith-bridge (Middlesex side): 6.30, W. J. Ramsey "The Prince of Whales."

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, J. Fagan will lecture.

Kilburn—High-road (corner of High-road and Victoria-road): 7, Mr. St. John, "The God Idea."

Mile End Waste: 11.30, C. J. Hunt, "Prayer."

Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Freethought, the Only Salvation."

Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15, C. J. Steinberg will lecture; 3.15, C. Cohen, "The Past Year's Work."

COUNTRY.

Aberdeen—Oddfellows' Hall Buildings (Hall No. 4, upstairs): 6.30, Charles Addie, "Epochs of Religious and Freethought Activity."

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: 11, a Paper by G. Bayliffe; 7, R. S. Bransby, "Brotherly Love; or the Church Congress."

Blackburn—Spinners' Institute, Peter-street: James Hooper, 3, "Is the Bible True?" 6.30, "Miracles."

Bradford—Unity Lodge Rooms, 65 Sunbridge-road: J. G. Fisher, 3, "The Universe: a Republic or an Empire?" 6.30, "Freethought and Politics."

Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: 7, a meeting.

Cardiff—Public Hall, Queen-street Arcade (entrance from Woking-street): Stanley Jones, 11, "Was Christ the Son of God?" 3, "Creation and the Fall of Man"; 6.30, "Is there Evidence of the Existence of God?"

Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 11, A. G. Read, "Immortality"; 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, A. E. Rowcroft, "Marriage as it is, as it was, and as it should be."

Dudley—Workmen's Lecture Hall, Flood-street: 3, Dr. T. R. Allinson, "Our Health, and how to keep it."

Glasgow — Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: 12, discussion class, D. G. Lindsay, "The Evolution of the Bible"; 6.30, J. B. Glasier, "What is Freedom?"

Glasgow—St. Rolox Eclectic Society, Toynbee Hall, Parson-street: Tuesday at 8, D. Lindsay, "The Evolution of the Bible."

Grimsby—Hall of Science, Freeman-street: 7, special business meeting.

Leeds—Crampton's Temperance Hotel, Briggate: 7, J. Badley, "Christian Peace."

Liverpool — Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 11, Tontine Society; 3, philosophy class; 7, Mr. Andrews, "The Humanity of God."

Manchester N.B.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': Mrs. Annie Besant, 11, "Theosophy and Labor"; 3, "The Criminal Brain"; 6.30, "Hell: does anybody Believe in it?" Tuesday at 8, debating society, Mr. Butterworth, "Nature: Known and Unknown."

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 3, monthly meeting of members; 7, T. Pearson, "Christianity and Socialism."

Nottingham—Secular Hall, Beck-street: 3, children's meeting; 7, Mr. Lord will lecture. Tuesday at 8, debating class. Wednesday at 8, committee meeting.

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

Portsmouth — Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 3, mutual improvement class; 6, committee meeting; 7, Mr. Pinhorn "A Cycle Ride through Hampshire."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: Touzeau Parris, 11, "Rights of Labor"; 3, "The Value of the Bible"; 7, "The Mystery of Evil Unveiled"; tea at 5.

South Shields—Thornton's Varieties: G. W. Foote, 11, "Holy Absurdities"; 3, "Men, Women, and Children: the Real Trinity"; 7, "Why I Cannot be a Christian."

Wolverhampton—Exchange Assembly Room: Dr. T. R. Allinson, 11, "Temperance, from a Doctor's Standpoint"; 7, "Beef, Beer, and 'Bacca Delusions."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, Clare Lodge, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—Oct. 30, Sheffield. Nov. 6, Hall of Science.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—Oct. 30, e, Camberwell. Nov. 13, e, Camberwell; 20, e, Lambeth; 27, e, Libra Hall. Dec. 11, Camberwell; 18 Libra Hall.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Nov. 3, Woolwich. Dec. 6, Bermondsey Institute; 18, New Brompton.

C. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—Oct. 3, m., Mile End Waste; a., Finsbury Park; e., Edmonton. Nov. 13, e, Edmonton; 20, Manchester; 27, Lambeth.

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—Oct. 27, Walthamstow; 23, Battersea; 30, m., Camberwell; e., Libra Hall.

S. H. ALISON, 52 Vassall-road, Brixton, S.W.—Oct. 30, m., Bethnal Green.

STANLEY JONES, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.—Oct. 30, Cardiff. Nov. 3, Swansea; 6, Liverpool; 13, Manchester; 14, Pendlebury; 20, Blackburn; 27, Milton Hall. Dec 4, Sunderland; 18, South Shields; 25, Edinburgh. Jan. 1, Aberdeen; 8, Glasgow.

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