

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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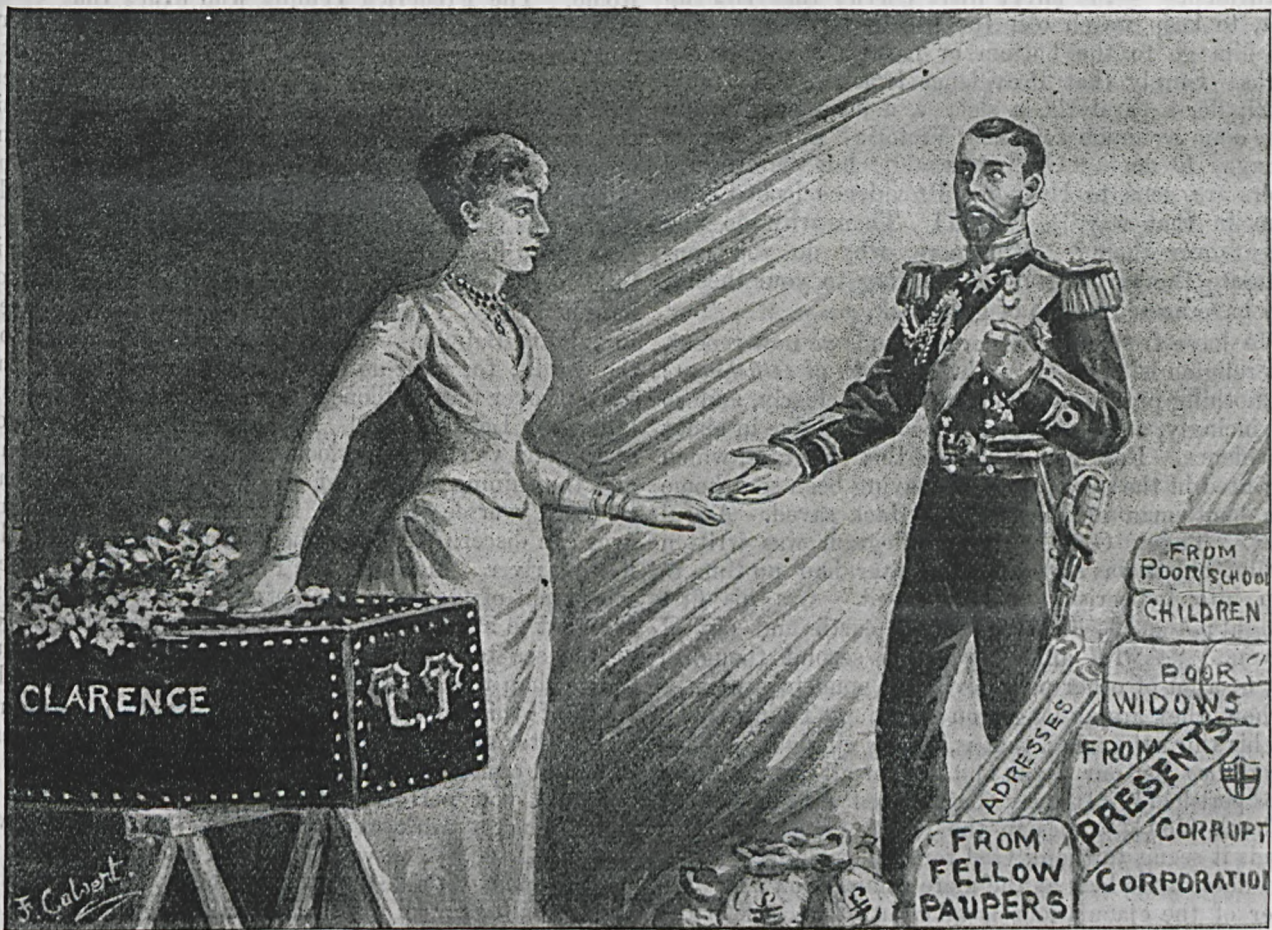
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THE PROMISE OF MAY.

“Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York.”

DOWN AMONG THE DEAD MEN.

THE ramming and sinking of the “Victoria” is the great event of the day. It is said to show the uselessness of big ironclads in naval warfare. But as the “Camperdown,” which sent the “Victoria” to the bottom in a few minutes, has herself sustained very little damage, it looks as though “rams” were anything but inefficient. There has never yet been an engagement between two fleets of ironclads, and no one knows how they would behave in an actual battle. Our own impression is that both fleets would go to the bottom, and this opinion is shared by a good many practical persons at Portsmouth and Devonport. However that may be, it is a great pity that “civilised” nations are still so uncivilised as to spend their time and money on these costly engines of destruction. We are well aware that the newspapers go into hysterics over our soldiers and sailors, and no doubt many of them are very gallant fellows. But in this, we venture to think, they do not

represent the masses of the people. Never have we witnessed such deep and sincere enthusiasm as was displayed by the crowd of spectators at the Agricultural Hall, while the American, Portuguese, and English fireman were going through their evolutions. The business of these fine fellows was to *save* life. They incurred the deadliest danger for human preservation, and not for human destruction. And how the people cheered them as they rode upon their engines, drawn by galloping horses! With what breathless interest they watched them climbing up ladders, sliding down ropes, and bearing men on their backs out of third-floor windows! It did one good to watch the proceedings, which showed that a new spirit was taking possession of the people, that they were beginning to be more interested in the savers than in the slayers of men.

But all this is a digression. Let us return to the “Victoria.” She is now in eighty fathoms of water with her hundreds of dead. Poor fellows! theirs was a sad fate; though not more so than the fate of miners

blasted or suffocated in explosive pits. We pity their dear ones—mothers, sisters, wives, and children. Hundreds, perhaps thousands, of hearts are aching on their account; mourning for the dead who will never be buried under the sweet churchyard grass, though they have the whole ocean for their tomb and the stars for its nightlamps.

On Sunday, of course, the sky-pilots, all over England, were busy at "improving the occasion." They always make profit out of death and disaster. "Prepare to meet thy God!" was the lesson which most of them derived from this catastrophe. Of course the preachers are ready *themselves*. Who can doubt it? But they are in no hurry to have it tested. They do not want to meet their God until they are obliged to. It is so much better to be a commercial traveller in God's service than to take a situation in the house.

Some of the preachers dared to talk about "Providence"—the sweet little cherub that sits up aloft, to keep watch o'er the life of poor Jack, and lets him go to the bottom or furnish a dinner for sharks. Surely that Providence is a rare old fraud. A cripple, a paralytic, a sleeper, a dead man, could have done as much for the "Victoria" as Providence managed to do. "Oh," it is said, "but the drowned sailors are gone to Heaven; Providence looked after them in that way." Indeed! Then why do you lament over them? Still more, why do you congratulate the survivors? According to your theory, they have missed a slice of good luck.

We have frequently remarked, and we now repeat, that religion is based upon the bed-rock of *selfishness*; and nothing proves the truth of this so clearly, and so convincingly, as the talk that people indulge in about Providence. For instance, take this telegram, which is printed in the newspapers, as having been sent home to a gentleman in England:—"Jack saved. Awful affair. Thank God!" This telegram was written hastily, but it was sincere; the writer had no time to drop into hypocrisy. "Jack saved" was his first thought; that is, Jack is still on earth and out of heaven. "Awful affair" was his second thought; that is, a lot of other poor devils are gone to heaven—anyhow, they are no longer on earth. "Thank God" was his third thought; that is, *Jack's* all right. Thus it was *two* for our Jack, and *one* for all the hundreds who perished! It may be pointed out, too, that "Thank God!" comes in the wrong place; where it stands it seems to thank God for the calamity. Yes, so it does, if we look at the mere composition; but the order of the ejaculations is all right, if we look at the sentiment, the *pious* sentiment, of the person who wrote the telegram. He followed the logic of his personal feelings, like everyone else who "thanks God" and talks of Providence.

Reason and personal feeling often do not coincide. In this case, for instance, it requires a very slight exercise of the intellect to see that, if Providence saved "Jack," Providence drowned the rest. "No," some will reply, "Providence did not *drown* them, but only *let* them drown." Well, that is exactly the same thing. Superficially, it is the same thing; for Providence, like men, is responsible for *omissions* as well as *commissions*. If you let a blind man walk over a precipice without warning him, you are his murderer, you are guilty of his blood. Resolving *not* to do a thing is as much an act of will as resolving *to do it*. "Thou shalt" is a law as imperative as "Thou shalt not," though it does not figure in the decalogue. *Profoundly* also, as well as *superficially*, Providence, if it saved Jack, killed those who perished; for, as Jack was not visibly fished out of the water by Providence, it can only be held that Providence saved him on the ground that Providence *does everything*, which covers the whole of our contention. "I the Lord do all these things." So says the Bible, and so you must believe, if you have a God at all.

G. W. FOOTE.

AN OPEN LETTER
TO THE
RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD,
THE
LORD BISHOP OF LONDON.

MY LORD BISHOP,—

I once admired you. It is a long while ago, I was but a boy at the time. Taking up a volume of *Essays and Reviews*, there was one on "The Education of the World" which specially attracted me by rising above the region of jarring sects. It seemed to me to breathe the very spirit of humanity. With youthful aspirations for progress, I dreamt for a while that the Church even might contribute to that education and elevation of humanity, which that essay showed had been so powerfully assisted by pagan Greece and Rome. The Frederick Temple who wrote that essay evoked my special homage and esteem. I think there must be some good in him yet. But that was thirty years ago, and the years have brought many changes. You gained fame and preferment. Despite the opposition of good Bishop Trower and the orthodox churchmen from Rugby, you were installed at Exeter. The bigots denounced you and prophesied calamity would follow this triumph of the Broad Church. They forgot that the stifling atmosphere of the House of Lords is fatal to all heresy. Rationalism and Radicalism cannot long live there. From little Exeter you were translated to mighty Babylon—Bishop of London. I pause on the words; for what do they imply? Overseer of the souls of over four millions of people. What a responsibility, my Lord Bishop! From your beautiful palace at Fulham you may overlook fair lawns, gay gardens, and the shining surface of the Thames; but you can no more oversee the souls in your charge than your eyes can discern what is embedded in the mud of the flowing river. Maliface the Pope, who styled himself vicegerent of God and King of Kings, was hardly more arrogant in assumption. Canute commanding the waves of the sea to roll back is scarcely a more ridiculous image than the pompous pretence of overlooking the souls of this city of cities, where want, misery and vice welter and wallow under the very eyes and nose of sordid opulence and heartless splendor.

Could you perform your task, my Lord, what a sight, what a work were yours. I should not envy you, my Lord. You would be God, and God I hold to be the most pitiable creation of man. To have the responsibility for all the sin and suffering in the world, and not to stay it—what a position is that! And you, standing in the place of God among men, have that responsibility. What have you done, my Lord, since receiving the Holy Ghost by the Inposition of the Archbishop? You have called for and got more money for the building of churches. You have hindered the demolition of the unused churches of the City. You have patronised the Christian Evidence Society, the Church Missionary Society, and other organisations for the defence and spread of superstition. You have presided at meetings called to sustain the imposition of the Church on the tithe-payers of Wales that want none of it. But what good, honest stroke of work for humanity have you done since writing *The Education of the World*? What measure for the welfare of mankind have you introduced from your place in the House of Peers? What have you done to provide the poor with better houses and better food; to make their one day of leisure a day of gladness instead of gloom? Have you sought to open the museums and art galleries to the working man on his day of leisure? You made your name as an educationist. Yet at this end of the nineteenth century you would cramp the minds of little children in Church creeds and catechisms—a less excusable sin, in the eyes of humanity, than the Chinese cramping of their children's feet. You mix with the wealthy and great in your palace at Fulham,

or your chateau on the Riviera. You have made friends of the mammon of unrighteousness. But what have you done for the poor?

The hungry sheep look up and are not fed. Should the "stranger, destitute and in need," whom in your ordination vow you swore to succor, call at your palace gates, your liveried servants would turn him away. When you were but an inspector of schools you earned your living honestly. Now you take £10,000 a year from your country and live in luxury on the wages of overseeing souls, a work you do not and cannot perform. By taking money you do not earn, you are a fountain-head of corruption in the Church. Your position and pay encourage

such as for their bellies sake
Creep and intrude and climb into the fold.

Every fat rector who takes his stipend and lets his poorly-paid curate do the work, every idler in the land who batters on the labor of others, can find his example in you. Your life gives the lie to the teachings of Jesus. When you read the gospel precepts, "Blessed be ye poor; woe to ye rich," "Sell all you have and give to the poor," "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven," do you, my lord, like the rich young man turn away very sorrowful, or do you quietly, as I do openly, disbelieve it all? Archbishop Magee had the honesty to say that the teachings of Jesus would not work in society, but you are too sleek and cautious to confess it. When, my lord, I think of your career from the bold, broad Master of Rugby, to the narrow opportunist Bishop of London; when I see how you have sunk in soul with every rise in station, so that should you ever reach the Primacy, I fear that once rich article, your soul, will be gone at the poor figure of £15,000 a year; and when I contrast that career with the myriads of poor creatures in your diocese who are driven by want to shame and suicide, methinks the Atheist needs no further illustration that there is no God, and that you know it.

Yours without reverence,

J. M. WHEELER.

PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.

THE lifetime of the human race is spent in studying the history of the past, in considering the requirements of the present, and in anticipating the events of the future. With the past we have done, except to profit by its lessons, and we can only judge of the future by what an American orator termed "the lamp of experience." It is with the present that we are principally concerned, for it is here that our energies are in force, and to which our chief duties are confined. Yet the three conditions have their connections, inasmuch as in correctly understanding the past we are the better enabled to make a wise use of the present, and thereby to provide for a happier future on earth. Orthodox believers, as a rule, devote too much time in either dwelling upon the memories of what is gone from their gaze or in speculating upon an imaginary state of things that they think is to be, while the surroundings that now environ them remain comparatively unheeded. Secularists deem it wise to concentrate their attention and labors on the position in which they find themselves, recognising that as the present is the result of the past, so the future will be the outcome of the time that now is. Herein we see that Secularism is in the truest sense the philosophy of existence. It enunciates the distinctive principle that men can only safely trust to material means for the attainment of their ends in life; and it places work above worship and regards sincerity as being of more importance than faith.

In times past, when theology held uncontrolled sway, the most absurd and humiliating notions were held in reference to the universe and man. It was then a

general belief that the globe came into existence at the special fiat of a Supreme Being, who regulated human affairs according to his arbitrary will and pleasure. Fortunately, under the influence of scientific knowledge and modern thought, such erroneous notions are rapidly disappearing, and the fact is being acknowledged that the idea of creation is inconceivable, and that man and the universe are governed by natural laws that are immutable. From their inexorable decrees there is no escape; to their behests we must all yield. Believing that whatever happens, occurs in accordance with some law, we deem it our business to endeavor to ascertain what that law is, that we may turn it to some practical account. Remind the devout orthodox Christian that people die of starvation and cold; that infants are destroyed by hundreds; that suicide is preferred to the pangs of poverty; that vice rides in carriages with coronets emblazoned on their panels; that virtue pines neglected and uncared for; that the innocent suffer and the guilty escape. He will reply there is *another* world where all this will be set right. We, on the contrary, regard these misfortunes as terrible evils, to be remedied as much as possible in *this* world. Thus, so far as human actions can affect our destinies we become important factors in the direction of our various courses in life, the makers and writers of our own history. As J. S. Mill observes, the good nature brings to human beings "is mostly the result of their own exertions." It is in this great truth that we find the assurance that progress is a manifest characteristic of our being, and therefore we need not trouble ourselves concerning either the past or the future except in so far as they have a bearing on the present. When society fully realises this fact it will be seen that it is the highest wisdom to devote ourselves to the living present. All our energies will then be concentrated on a settled purpose in life, and we shall seek to obtain for each and for all, that happiness of which poets have sung and philosophers have written.

The only reasonable resolve which we should entertain for the future is to aim so to act that our successors will be the better for the actions we perform. It is the belief that goodness among mankind will increase that stimulates and sustains us in our efforts, and that inspires within us hope for the superior future of humanity. Those who undertake enterprises which promise realisation in this world experience an ardor and an enthusiasm excelling in value anything felt by those who rely on castles in the air or on mansions in the skies. Persons influenced by these mundane considerations will strive to secure what a great French philosopher termed "a condition of society in which men shall be neither depraved nor poor." This is the social problem epitomised, and to discover its solution is one of the most important objects of the true modern reformer. We do not expect to see an instantaneous remedy for the evils of the past, for nature's processes are slow in their operations. If we stand by the seashore and watch the advancing or receding tides, we observe that the movement is so gradual that it takes the unpractised eye some time to determine in which direction the tide is flowing. It is not surprising, therefore, that great reforms have been slow in their achievement. Still, we have no cause to despair, for man's nature urges him forward, and improvement must be the result of an ever-increasing experience. Those who take a scientific view of human events will see that the progress of the collective body is as much dependent on settled causes as is the development of the intellect of the individual. In both cases there is a chain of events that cannot be broken. Thus there is a marked difference between the present view of human life and that which existed in former times. The one is based upon the method of science and the other upon the speculations of theology.

It is curious to observe the good or ill fortunes that overtake men and nations, and the apparently strange

and intricate combinations of the circumstances that affect their destinies. The discovery of a great truth or of a mine of mineral wealth, may affect the history of a country, or modify the conditions of human existence all over the globe. Epictetus profoundly remarked that some persons attributed all their ills to others and some attributed them to themselves, and "people of much wisdom to no one." Shakespeare also says, "that evils that in ourselves do lie we oft ascribe to heaven." Of course it is a fact that many of the evils that surround us are capable of being remedied; if it were not so, knowledge and science would be vain and deceptive. Moreover, it is clear that however pleasantly the future may be portrayed, or however the past may be extolled as "the good old times," it is in the present that the remedies are to be found. But the fact must not be ignored that whatever value we may attach to the present and its importance over either past or future, our duty is to strive to hand it down to posterity, not only unimpaired, but also improved. He who recalls what mankind has said and done, may be regarded as a counsellor and an instructor and as connecting the past with the present. The achievements, labors, knowledge, and wisdom of bygone ages are the property of all succeeding generations, and it behoves all to add their individual contribution to the commonwealth in order that the general stock may not become exhausted.

In an age of freedom and of justice every man will count as one among the units of our race, and will be regarded for what he is worth. It is inconceivable that amidst intelligence and virtue men will submit to be treated as slaves by those who impertinently assume an air of superiority. In the future, as the legitimate outcome of the mental activities of the present, intelligence will rule supreme, and the constant endeavor will be to gain a conquest of right over might. Dark and inscrutable as are many of the forces of nature now in operation, we recognise indications of the advance of "the grey-eyed morn" with "his burning eye the day to cheer and night's dank dew to dry." We have faith that ere long, under the combined influence of cultivated wisdom and scientific application, suffering may be modified and the standard of human happiness will be raised. Our hope is that man will cease to ignore the fact that his salvation can only be secured by personal effort. We desire to see genius transformed into a practical power and made the lever to elevate the human race to a higher level of moral, intellectual, and physical eminence than it has hitherto attained in the history of the world. The iron-age of despotism is, we trust, gone for ever, and ere long the theological supremacy and priestly domination will be known only as evils of the past, and a new era of secular truth, mental freedom, and personal dignity will be ushered in. Taking a retrospect of the marvellous changes that have occurred, and the vast improvements that have been achieved during the present century—the most sceptical period in the record of time—we may agree with the sentiments of the poet when he wrote:

I see the dawn of that golden age,
Which bards have sung with deep regret;
It stands as past on history's page,
But I perceive it is coming yet:
The iron age, fallow, is done,
But the golden age is yet to come.

CHARLES WATTS.

HOW TO HELP US.

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

THE LAWS OF NATURE.

ERRONEOUS terms and phrases create erroneous opinions, and these erroneous systems. Thus "laws of nature," though it may be tolerated for the sake of convenience, is an expression fallacious in itself, and the source of endless and mischievous fallacies. For a law implies a law giver, who, as he makes the law, can also unmake, *i.e.*, alter or abrogate it. There is nothing of this kind in nature: there are principles, but no laws. These latter depend on someone's will, the former are self-existent, uncreated, and not subject to any will, however powerful; they are, in fact, superior to it, for they alone are the real omnipotence. Assuming for argument's sake the existence of an Almighty God, is there anyone so foolish as to maintain that he could alter the principles of mathematics? Could he make twice two to be anything else but four, or the cube root of 216 other than 6! Could he alter the principle of polarity, or any of the results due to it? Could he cause two parallel lines to meet? None but a madman would maintain that he could do anything of the kind. If the conditions named were the consequences of laws, a superior will could alter them by altering the laws, but being the outcome of principles (*principes*), they cannot be thus dealt with. They were before the assumed omnipotent God; he, on coming into existence, could only adopt them, just as the property of sweetness, for instance, existed before there was any saccharine matter in which it could display itself, and would continue to exist if all such matter were utterly annihilated.

Was omnipotence needed to create the syllogism of logic? Is it not self-evidently the spontaneous form and product of a certain mode of ratiocination, which is totally independent of any external power? In Genesis we read that God, having formed man out of the dust of the ground, breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. If God thought he could make a man of dust, and, by breathing into his nostrils, endow him with a living soul, he showed a lamentable ignorance of the laws of nature, which he is supposed to have evolved out of his inner consciousness, for it is as much as saying that he fancied he could make a circle and put the roundness into it afterwards. And the propagators of such childish nonsense, which they call divine wisdom, insist on having a voice in scientific inquiry! Throughout the book, dictated by the Holy Ghost for God's special glorification, this God is shown to know nothing of laws he is supposed to have originated. In one place, to give another instance in addition to the above, the Holy Ghost, through one of the apostles, says that a seed put into the ground is not quickened unless it die, and politely calls those who differ from him "fools." What notions of nature's laws must God—for he and the Holy Ghost are one—possess, to utter such folly, such a twofold blunder? If the seed is not quickened—*i.e.*, full of life—before it is sown, it cannot grow; nor can it do so if you destroy its life after it is sown. What dies is the husk only, but your God don't seem to know that.

Again, those who will have it that the laws of nature are the production of an omnipotent, and also, according to their belief, benevolent God, do not seem to perceive into what a quagmire of difficulties, moral and physical, they are plunging themselves. It is expected of a human legislator that his laws should be just, rational, and practicable; how much more have we a right to expect this in the ordinances of an omnipotent God? It is, of course, chiefly in their relation to and influence on man that we examine and criticise them. And our inquiry and experience show us that the laws by which he, as is asserted, rules their nature, of which we are the irredeemable captives, are often absurd and cruel to sentient beings, and mutually destructive to themselves, which latter fact would to some extent be compensatory, did the warfare not take place, not only in the lower creation, but in man himself, and we know that the country which is the theatre of war between hostile powers suffers more than the combatants themselves.

Considered as emanating from an omnipotent and benevolent deity, the laws, I say, are often absurd.

Were we not told that the sun and moon and stars had been hung out in the sky "to give light upon the earth, and be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years," we should have no right to find fault with their arrangement; but as we are asked to acknowledge and be thankful for a benefit conferred on us—for the expression "light upon the earth" of course means "light for man"—we are justified in examining it. If the sun so sharply defined the day for us that there could be no doubt as to its precise limits, then it would fulfil the condition of its creation. But we know that the sun does not do so, and that as a sign for years even it is impracticable, so that it has been found necessary to recalculate a day once in every four years, in order to reconcile chronology with the earth's course round the sun, whence we have an astronomical and a civil year. And even this remedy is not perfect, but requires correcting once in 4,000 years. All this was discovered only after years of observation and study, and requires for practical purposes intricate, and therefore most difficult, computations. What human mechanician would dare to come before the world with so imperfect a machine? Where is there in the astronomical arrangement any sign of a law which guided the omnipotent Creator in its contrivance, or any intention to benefit man thereby?

No wise legislator makes cruel laws, but the laws of nature (I use the term conventionally) are cruel. Therefore either the legislator, from whom they emanated, is not wise, or they did not emanate from him; and if so, from whom? Or they are not laws but inevitable principles, inherent in the matter in which they act, which indeed is the real fact, and hence all the cruelty manifest in nature. Goremity may well cry out, "Save me from my friends!" who, by making him the author of laws which render the habitation of man a scene of universal and endless horror, endow him with every diabolical attribute. Disregarding for a moment the moral evils of which the world is full, could this omnipotent and beneficent creator—"whose kindness is over all his works," not produce physical life without the germs of suffering and destruction it swarms with? Why, for instance, should the human body be the residence of countless parasites? Why should one insect thrust its sting into the back of another, to lay its eggs and hatch its young therein? Well, simply because he could not help it; because the power of life is stronger than he, and being a power must be active, regardless of consequences.

I am aware it is said that all the evils referred to above work towards a beneficial end, which our ignorance of nature's working prevents us from perceiving, and that our censure, therefore, is unjust and presumptuous. I know, and everybody knows, that boiling a lobster alive is done with the benevolent object of feeding a human stomach. We all know the kind purpose; yet will one of us dare to assert that the process by which it is attained is not a cruel one? But we are only poor mortals, who do the best we can to fill our ever-clamoring bellies; still, we do not defend the merciless means we adopt for the purpose—we apologise for it. Though we are not ignorant of the final benefit, we cannot honestly attempt to justify the cruel torture inflicted on a sentient being to compass it. It is no doubt a very desirable thing to get a forsaken orphan boy into some charitable institution, where he will be taken care of, but what would be said of a legislator who attempted to pass a law rendering it incumbent on every such forsaken orphan boy to commit some crime, by which he might fall into the hands of the police, who would then be afforded an opportunity of bringing him under the notice of the police court missionary, by whom the boy would then be placed in a charitable home? Yet it is, according to the theistic view, by such round-about proceedings that an Almighty God arrives at the good; he cannot apparently perform in a direct manner. According to his champions this God is either an imbecile or a devil.

Either, he is not aware of his own omnipotence, and consequently the former; he seems not to know that he has but to utter his fiat! and the good he intends is done. But this can hardly be, for does not his

chronicler, the Holy Ghost, who cannot err, tell us that God, when he created this universe, on various occasions declared what he had made to be good? So he must know from long experience that he can produce good immediately; then why does he not continue to do so? We must adopt the other alternative, that he is a devil, who cannot bestow a good gift graciously, but, knowing it must eventually come to man, throws every obstacle in the way of his obtaining it. This is the logical conclusion to which Christian assertions drive thinkers. Are we therefore not much more generous to this Christian God when we, assuming for argument's sake his existence, say that he is helpless in the management of the universe; that, as the Greek gods were subject to fate, he is subject to the powers and properties of nature, which he neither created nor can alter or control?

If we further examine these so-called laws of nature, we find that they are in many instances reciprocally hostile to and destructive of one another. The same law by whose fostering influence the tree grows, destroys it by the parasitic plants springing up around it. The law of calorics has opposite effects on different substances—it hardens clay and softens lead; would such playing fast and loose be tolerated in human legislation? But in nature elective affinity is paramount, acting as a blind force, regardless of results, producing here a rose, there a thistle; here a diamond, there a worthless pebble; here displaying its boundless power in the luxuriant vegetation of the tropic forest, there in the cyclone, sweeping whole towns off the face of the earth. All these effects, good and bad, are by the believers in a creator attributed to his laws; well, supposing we give him credit for the good ones, we are justified in asking why there are so many bad ones, and as no satisfactory reply can ever be expected to this question, it follows *a priori* and *a posteriori* that he had nothing to do with either, and that *his* laws are as much a myth as he is one himself.

C. W. HECKETHORNE.

THE BENEVOLENT BISHOP.

[FROM THE GERMAN.]

A Pious old bishop went out for stroll;
Fat, rosy, content, from his feet to his poll.
No hope of the future earth's comfort denied,
The goods of the present him quite satisfied.

With beneficent smile he passed down the street,
When a poor luckless beggar he happened to meet.
"My lord," cried the beggar, "I'm down in my luck,
And e'en for a dinner I really am stuck;

"If, out of your plenty, a dollar you'll spare,
My days that are dark will appear clear and fair."
"A dollar! Why, man, you must surely be mad!
Pray, why didn't you ask me for all that I had?"

"Then give me a half, it will help my need sore,
I'll gladly take half if I cannot get more."
"You're crazy!" the bishop cried out in his wrath;
"I'd as soon give the whole as give you a half."

"Then please give a quarter—that's little enough;
Have tender regard for my lot that is tough."
"No, no!" cried the bishop; "nothing such will I do;
Do I look like a man to give quarter to you?"

"Then give me a cent—that much you'll not miss—
And the hem of your coat I humbly will kiss."
Without any "hem," and without any "ha,"
The bishop cried out, "Now get you gone far!
Or else, by my faith, my design shall not fail
To have you arrested and taken to gaol."

"My lord! Be not harsh, some compassion pray feel;
For, see at your feet I most anxiously kneel.
My Lord. Let your blessing my sorrows enfold,
It may bring me luck somewhere else to get gold."

Oh! broad was the smile on the bishop's broad face,
As the beggar he saw in that lowly place!
"My son! that I'll give," and his hands he stretched out,
When up sprang the beggar, and said, with a shout,
"If your blessing to you had been worth a penny,
You'd not give it. No! Thanks, I'll go without any.
I think in my heart that you couldn't be worse;
I'm sure that your blessing is not worth a curse!"

N. CHILDS.

ACID DROPS.

Skyology seems a paying business in Chicago during the World's Fair. Hugh Price Hughes has been offered 1,000 dollars to preach there once. That sum would have saved the first Salvation Army from bankruptcy. Judas, the cashier, would not have sold his Master for thirty half-crowns if there had been 1,000 dollars in the office cash-box; in that case there would have been no Crucifixion, and in that case no Hugh Price Hughes; which is a calamity too dreadful to contemplate.

Hugh Price Hughes's friend, the Rev. Dr. Lunn, has resigned from the Wesleyan ministry, and there is a very pretty quarrel going on over it. The Rev. G. W. Olver, secretary of the Missionary Society, charges Dr. Lunn with stabbing in the back in the dark, and with outraging "every sense of Christian decency and charity." Yes, they love one another still.

A pious contemporary prints a glowing discourse by a reverend gentleman on Hannah, the mother of Samuel, who made her boy a coat. Colonel Ingersoll says he has known a mother make her boy a whole suit, without thinking it anything wonderful.

Sir Arthur Grant, a magnate of Aberdeen, took the occasion of a Church bazaar to denounce Alexander Johnstone, a lecturer on geology, as a blasphemer who was endeavoring to upset the Bible. Mr. Johnstone brought an action for slander, and a deal of theological prejudice was brought into the trial. The jury found that the words complained of did not impute dishonesty to the pursuer, or exceed the limits of fair criticism.

The trial of Dr. Briggs, the Presbyterian heretic, has cost 50,000 dollars. People have also died in New York of absolute want. Put the two things together, and you see the beauty of the gospel of kingdom-come.

What are we coming to? Cheap trips to Jerusalem and Bethlehem are responsible for much. A traveller who has recently returned from the Holy Land, says "part of the way to the Mount of Olives is disfigured by advertisements of Guinness's stout." He saw it recorded in a local paper that a band would play on Sunday from three till five p.m. in the Garden of Gethsemane. The music program included several waltzes. We expect to hear in due course that the Holy Sepulchre has been converted into a refreshment saloon.

"Gregson Wright, the Converted Atheist at Carnforth," is the caption of a report in the *Dalton News*. We never heard of Gregson Wright before, but his knowledge of Atheists and Freethinkers appears to be more profound than our own, judging by the report. "The reason why so many people are Atheists and do not believe the Bible to-day," said Mr. Gregson Wright, "is because they have never read the Bible." Mr. Gregson Wright must have come across a different set of Atheists and non-Bible believers from those we have met. The *News* announces that "Mr. Wright intends holding two open-air meetings in Carnforth next Sunday, if not called away in the meantime." As the report says "In the afternoon only about forty people were present, and in the evening about twice that number," he may possibly receive a call.

The Rev. J. Stockwell Watts sends us one of his circulars on behalf of the "'Liberator' Relief Fund." His appeal is "irrespective of creed or party." At least £100,000 is required to make "some sort of permanent provision" for the oldest and most necessitous of Balfour's victims. Now it appears to us that the relief of these unfortunates should not be irrespective of creed. They were bamboozled, plundered, and ruined by religious scoundrels, fellows who "thanked God" and ministers who acted as their business agents. The churches and chapels, therefore, should find the £100,000 as a sort of conscience money; and they could do it easily, for the sum only represents about £1 for each church and chapel in Great Britain.

Jacques Massis, pastor of the French Protestant Chapel, Soho-square, London, has been found guilty at the Old Bailey of forging a promissory note for £210.

William Foster, a Nottingham Sunday-school teacher and for six years choir-master at St. George's Church, was convicted of stealing a watch-chain and money, which some football players left in a bag. He was let off with a fine of £5 or a month. Satan is always tempting the godly, and, alas! they succumb quite as readily as the ungodly do.

Charles Colclough, superintendent of Booth's S.A. Shelter in the Blackfriars-road, was summoned for a breach of the provision of the Public Health Act. There was a case of small-pox, and though warned by the medical officer, the shelter was opened on the following night, the place not having been disinfected in the interval. On that night 629 persons slept in the shelter. Superintendent Colclough seems to have been resolved to deal with the problem of the homeless and unemployed after his own fashion.

"Compel them to come in" is the Christian motto used by Holy Russia against the Stundists. These poor persecuted heretics are so tormented that life is unbearable, and many have gone to the Orthodox faith. The Odessa correspondent of the *Daily News* declares that not one in a hundred of these cruelly harassed people renounces his Nonconformist principles from conscientious motives and convictions.

It's a beautiful thing religion. In Rangoon, Mohammedans and Hindus are fighting over the sacrifice of a cow. At Angora, the Armenians are cruelly treated on account of their religion. The other world, indeed, has an influence over this, and a very disastrous one.

Hasland School Board has left the Creed out of its religious syllabus, and the vicar's opinion is that the parish, ay, and the Board too, will soon be full of infidels and Atheists. We hope the vicar is a true prophet.

The *Christian Commonwealth* protests against the popular taste for fiction; but, if that dies out, what will become of Christianity?

Denying the possibility of miracles, says the Rev. Allen Rees, is the presumptuousness of little minds; it is "what you get at the Hall of Science." Perhaps it is, but not when Mr. Foote is there. He has repeatedly stated that anything is possible, even an honest, fair-minded preacher; only a sensible man wants proof of it before he admits its actuality. Discussing the possibility of miracles is a waste of time. As well discuss whether a planet could be made of green cheese. The only practical question is the probability of miracles, and the clergy fight shy of that still, as they have done ever since the days of Hume.

Destructive thunderstorms, deaths from sunstroke and lightning, loss and deterioration of cattle and crops, with haymakers and other laborers out of employment, have followed the great drought. If all this comes from our bishops praying for fine weather that they may enjoy their holidays, they would do better to shut up.

Owing to the scarcity of water in some northern towns, the water is not turned on on Sundays. Those who propose to go to church have to wash the day before if they desire to be decent.

Fresh earthquakes in Greece resulted in throwing Thebes in ruin. Pictures of saints were taken in solemn procession to ward off danger, but for several days slight shocks continued, several churches being unsafe. The state engineer estimates the damage at more than two million drachmas.

Providence interferred signally in a church dispute at Brownsville, Paulding Co., U.S.A. Two rival negro factions quarreled about their preacher, the Rev. Mr. White, whom some sought to supplant. White mounted the pulpit and implored the vengeance of heaven on the building if he were deprived of his rights. A tornado then came and swept off the roof of the building. The question between the rival preachers was considered decided, and White remained triumphant among the blacks.

"It will never do," said Blitser "to put that cowardly skunk Peter, as the patron saint of Englishmen. Why I can't get my tongue round his name. You can swear by George or by Jove, but I defy you to swear by Peter, and

what else do Englishmen want a saint for except to swear by?"

Probably the nearest approach to the primitive Christians are the Shakers of Mount Lebanon, Albany, N.Y. Judging from an advertisement for recruits, in the *Boston Investigator*, they find that, like other celibate communities, they are threatened with extinction, unless they acquire fresh blood from the outside, and, like the Theosophists, they think they can recruit among Freethinkers.

The Shakers, indeed, are very heterodox. They scout the notions of a Trinity, direct communication with God, an atonement, resurrection of the body, and one heaven and one hell; believing in the duality of deity, communication with spirits, and seven heavens and hells, probation continuing through each. They resemble the primitive Christians in their doctrines of non-resistance, in strict celibacy, and in holding all things in common. Work and strict chastity is all they demand of candidates, but they offer no wages, save food and shelter, while these undergo a novitiate.

Like other celibate communities in America, the Shakers are reported to be very wealthy. Messiah Teed, who calls himself Koresh, the founder of the Koreshans, has made various overtures to them as to the New Harmonists for the amalgamation of the various celibate communities, but they have a shrewd suspicion that Koresh wants to boss the show. Both the Shakers and Koreshans agree that God is as much feminine as masculine.

Shakerism was started in England by Mother Ann Lee, who got run into gaol at Manchester in 1770 for creating disorder and disturbance on the Sabbath. While in prison she had a vision of Christ, who took up his abode in her. In the language of the sect, she became the Bride as he is the Bridegroom. With some half-dozen followers she emigrated to America, and since her death she has been regarded with as much reverence as Christ himself.

Dr. Ryle, the Bishop of Liverpool, has been portraying the awful consequences of disestablishment. He said that if such a measure was passed the Sovereign might be a Papist, the Prime Minister a Mohammedan, and the Lord Chancellor a Jew. A truly dreadful prospect for the Church.

The Catholic Church always denounces "mixed" marriages among the poor. But the Pope always gives "a dispensation" to the well-to-do, as in the case of the Princess of Braganza and the Grand Duke of Luxembourg. He even permits uncles to marry their nieces "for a consideration," as in the case of the Duke of Aosta and the Princess Letitia.

The *Tablet*, Cardinal Vaughan's organ, says Thursday's function at the Oratory will be a grand and impressive one, but "the inner meanings of this great ceremony are still more impressively significant." What the inner meanings are, is not set forth, but we gather that they relate to the conversion of England.

Hoffmann's *Catholic Directory* for 1893 gives the number of Catholics in the United States as 8,806,095. It is, we suspect, largely for the benefit of these that England is dedicated to Peter.

We should like to know the inner meanings of a circular sent out by the Duke of Norfolk and other leading Catholics for an archaeological committee to obtain information as to the "chartularies" and charters under which abbeys and monasteries were established in England. Possibly the idea is to put in a claim to the old estates when the time comes for the disestablishment of the Church of England. We should like to see a few antiquarian sceptics on such a committee, and then perhaps we might learn something of the frauds by which in old days foreign priests and monks contrived to grasp all the best estates in England.

The lawyers have a prayer-meeting all to themselves at the Mission Hall, St. George's, Bloomsbury. How the Devil must grin at seeing his own on their marrow-bones.

God's lightning visited a crowded circus tent at River Falls, Wisconsin. Eight persons were killed and twenty injured. Jehovah was always violently opposed to amusements. His

anger against Mohammedan pilgrims is manifested in three hundred and seventeen deaths from cholera at Mecca and an outbreak of the same disorder amongst the Egyptian pilgrims at Jeddah.

At a Russian church on the Volga, at an annual celebration during which a picture of J. C., held in veneration for reputed miracles was carried in procession, a cry of "Fire" produced a panic, in which one hundred and twenty-six women and ten men were crushed to death. The cry was a false one, but J. C. did not interfere to save his worshippers.

Much has been said against the opening of the World's Fair on Sunday, but the only thing done, except preaching a boycott, is for the Bible Society to cover up its exhibit on Saturday night. Sunday visitors do not miss much, and escape being pestered to purchase Bibles.

The Birmingham *Daily Post* has a strong leading article on the little advertising tricks of the modern pulpit. It notes that the invitation "to men only" is becoming very common, and asks Why? "Are there," it inquires, "so many sermons which are too indelicate for women to listen to, are preachers so extremely prone to the treatment of moral or perhaps physical pathology, or is the special form of invitation a mere catch to attract an audience?" The *Post* suggests that "refreshments in the vestry," would bring a crowded house, and "pipes allowed" would fetch the multitude. Of course, and especially if the pipes and refreshments were provided gratis.

Dr. Lunn's Conference to bring about the Re-union of Christendom looks like a neat device for securing men of God a cheap holiday in Switzerland. Already the first batch of 157 have arrived at Lucerne, and it is said 5,000 will visit the Conference in the course of the summer. Well, they will have a nice outing, but as for re-uniting Christendom they might as well discuss flying to the moon.

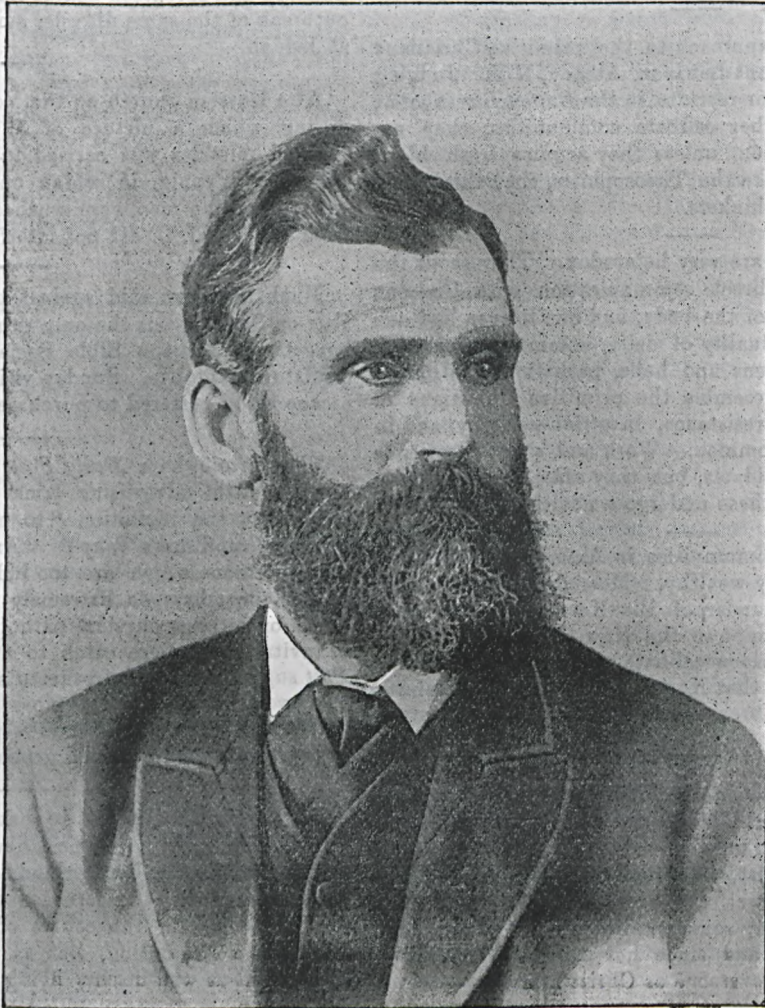
Samuel Fox, a Quaker, of Charlbury, Oxfordshire, went to church and kept his hat on, and a warden seized it. Two other Quakers tried the same game, and were forcibly prevented from entering the church. God Almighty, it appears, doesn't like to see hats; he would rather see bald heads. Of course it is a matter of taste.

Lady Southampton had a son and heir, who, it was found, could not live. Clergymen were sent for far and wide to baptise it, but none came, so the doctor performed the operation himself. Evidently this was quite efficacious, as the little corpse has since been buried with full religious rites. But, supposing the doctor did not sprinkle the baby in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, would it have gone to hell? And, if not, what use is baptism at all? Perhaps some sky-pilot will enlighten us on this important subject.

The Rev. J. S. Pratt, vicar of St. Stephen's, South Lambeth, wants to enlarge his schools, and sends out a begging letter to all and sundry who "value religious education." As one of these letters has been addressed to Dr. T. R. Allinson, it is evident that they are sent out indiscriminately. Dr. Allinson has not forwarded "a small sum."

In Australia the Custom House takes upon itself the censorship of the press. It has often impounded Freethought books and pamphlets. According to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, it has just laid hands on the whole edition of an elaborate and costly work on Greek Cups and Vases, published by the Royal Saxony Society of Science, on the ground that some of the pictures are not so prim as a Custom House officer's wife or daughter would like them to be. Really the farce of letting a common, half-educated, perhaps uneducated, and very likely vulgar-minded searcher for smuggled goods, decide what books a civilised society shall be allowed to read, is a trifle too screaming.

"Sunday Suicide of a Curate" is rather a funny headline. It appeared in Monday's *Star*, and referred to the Rev. Jacob Prince, curate of St. Mary's Church, Keighley, who hung himself last Sunday in his bedroom. The poor man leaves a widow and a daughter. He was not an Atheist.



JAMES ROWNEY.

JAMES ROWNEY.

Mr. JAMES ROWNEY has for some time been very active in the outdoor propaganda of Freethought in London. During the present season he has addressed large Sunday morning audiences in Regent's-park. Mr. Rowney was born fifty-three years ago in the north of Ireland. Very early in his lifetime his parents removed to Scotland, where he attended a village school, and was well dosed with the Shorter Catechism. At ten years of age he was obliged to go to work. For many hours per day he drudged at a paper mill for a poor wage, helping to swell the fortune of a rich employer, who was a liberal supporter of the kirk. Obtaining a situation at Edinburgh, young Rowney joined the Baptists, and went through the regulation ducking. It was a cold winter's night when he mustered up courage to take the holy plunge, and he says he shall never forget it if he lives to the age of Methuselah. The result was a severe cold, and a plous lecture from his father, who thought the way to hell was through the Baptists' water-tank. For some years Mr. Rowney taught in a Sunday-school, and believed the Bible through and through as the Word of God. Like all the godly folk around him, he thought unbelief a worse sin than theft, adultery or murder. Thirteen years ago his mind underwent a change. Hearing doubts expressed as to the "Blessed Book," he determined to read it through very carefully; he did so, and that was his first step on the Freethought path. Mr. Rowney believes that if Christians would only read the Bible they would soon become sceptics. When he first stood upon the Secular platform, at open-air meetings, he experienced the force of Christian charity; marks of it were carried about for months on his shins. But he has conquered that sort of opposition, and his audiences are now both large and attentive.

A poor vicar had occasion to go and see his bishop. He arrived at the palace of the Right Rev. Father in God, weary, footsore, and hungry. The bishop transacted the necessary business with the vicar, and dismissed him without offering the slightest refreshment. The vicar, on coming out of the palace gates, wrote the following on the gate-post:—

Here's a large castle and no cheer,
A large park and no deer,
Large cellars and no beer;
The Bishop of ——— lives here.

THE NEGRO MINISTER DENOUNCES A BACKSLIDER.

A TEXAS correspondent of the *Galveston News* writes that the Oyster Creek neighborhood has a negro preacher whose reputation for curious ways of denouncing iniquity bids fair to rival those of Brother Gardner himself. Recently, while hauling his congregation over the coals, he said:

"Stan' up dar, Brudder Albert Young; I want ter see yer. No wonder you is sleepy dis mornin' an' has to squat way back dar behine de door. You know whar you's at las' nite? I heerd you jess befo' da' over whar de fiddle was gwine, close to the coal yard in town, an' you was howling out—

'Great big fat man down in de corner,
Dance to de gall wid de blue dress on her.
You little bitter feller widout any vest,
Dance to de gall in the calico dress.'

In imitation of the offending member the pastor sang these lines at the top of his powerful voice, keeping time by patting himself vigorously and knocking a sounding backstep. Ceasing he glared at Brother Young, and said:

"Now, ef you gwine to show yo' 'pentance, you walk rito up befo' dis congr'gation an' han' ober de six bits what de fiddler paid you fer calling dat dance."

Amid awed silence Brother Young handed over several dimes and nickels, explaining in a low voice that he had lost the rest. The pastor pocketed the fine and proceeded with his sermon—a vivid description of eternal fire and the personal appearance of the devil.

An Irishman went the priest's house to confess, and had to wait in the kitchen until his reverence was at liberty. Pat spied a piece of bacon hung up, and the temptation of such a beautiful piece of squeal was too great to be withstood, so it was forthwith transferred to Pat's capacious pocket. His conscience, however, smote him, and he was on the point of restoring the bacon when the maid appeared to usher him into the presence of the priest. After the usual confession, Pat said "Your riverence, I stole a little matter from a gintleman's house, but I have it here and I'll give it you." "Oh no," said the priest, "don't give it me, restore it to the gentleman from whom you stole it." "Ah," said Pat, "I've offered it to him and he wouldn't have it." "Oh then," said the priest, "keep it yourself." Exit Pat highly delighted.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, July 2, Hall of Science, 142 Old-Street, E.C.:—7.30, "Mrs. Besant on Death and After."

July 9, Birmingham.

TO CORRESPONDENTS

MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—July 2, Huddersfield; 9, Hall of Science, London; 16, Birmingham; 25 and 26, debate at Jarrow-on-Tyne; 29, Blyth; 30, South Shields. —All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent direct to him (with stamped envelope for reply) at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

C. E. CLIBURN.—The poor fellow seems to be mad; better leave his case alone.

W. B. THOMPSON.—See paragraph. We wish you fine weather and a good party.

THOMAS MAY, 40 Spondon-road, High-cross, Tottenham, has undertaken the duties of secretary to the Tottenham Branch. Mr. Johnson, late secretary, has removed from the neighborhood.

J. W. ATKIN.—Always glad to receive cuttings.

W. HEAFORD.—Sorry to hear your lecture at Newington Green was delivered "amidst a running fire of interruptions of a disgraceful and almost heartrending description," and that "filthy noises, foul expressions, and noisy rowdiness and horseplay were the marks of civilisation displayed by the Christians present." As you say, the matter requires serious attention. There appears to be an organised attempt to break up Freethought meetings all over London.

R. F. F.—Glad to hear the Queensberry R. and A. Club's first boating excursion was a success.

J. H. SUMMERFIELD.—Thanks for paper and cutting.

QUIZ.—Judge Waite's book is a good one. We think the price is 2½ dollars. Mr. Forder could probably get it for you.

A. HEMINGWAY, having received notice to quit, on account of the publications he has been selling, at 106 Oxford-road, Manchester, will henceforth supply his customers with the *Freethinker*, etc., at 28 Higher Chatham-street.

H. COURTNEY.—Let us leave the Christians to trumpet their charities, if they choose; but do not let us follow their bad example. If the young man has been helped, and is grateful, there is really no more to be said.

G. GILES.—You can get the lady's address, we daresay, by applying to Mr. W. H. Reynolds, Camplin House, New Cross, S.E. Mr. Foote did not take notes of the many speeches, and declines to act as a reporter in this instance.

G. FAULKNER.—We cannot insert such personal appeals. The Glasgow Committee should be invited to deal with the case, and if they want assistance they should apply to the Benevolent Fund Committee in London.

DANIELS, 13 Hackney-road, opposite Shoreditch Church, supplies the *Freethinker* and other Secular publications.

J. BRAY.—Mr. A. Orr has been dead for a dozen years or more. Many of the books sold by him can be had of Mr. Forder.

T. BARNETT.—Thanks for cuttings. Orders for literature should be sent direct to Mr. Forder, at 28 Stonecutter-street.

G. CROOKSON (Barnsley).—No time to answer you by post. Shelley was a poet, not a lawyer; you mustn't take him as speaking on affidavit. He addresses the Cloud as if it were a living thing. The "genii" and the "spirit" are equally fictitious; but you will find that the whole poem is a beautiful and exact symbolism of natural processes. The poet's fancies are noble and allowable; we do not become their victims, as we do to the fancies of theologians.

H. F. S.—Duly acknowledged. Thanks for your good wishes.

E. G. TAYLOR.—We had already written a paragraph on the subject. Mr. Hemingway's landlord has got him out of the place like a true Christian. Did not Paul say, "Hold no fellowship with unbelievers"? The opinion of the Christian paper you refer to is as trivial to our mind as a speck of dust in the London air.

JAMES NEATE.—Mr. Foote will give your Branch a date if possible.

J. R.—The subject requires fuller treatment.

MRS. PATCHING (68 High-street, Putney).—Mr. Forder, our publisher, supplies the trade now, as he always has done, on sale or return. Your wholesale agent should supply you on the same terms. We quite understand that his not doing so cramps your sale of the paper. You should insist on being supplied like other newsvendors, or give your order to another agent.

E. NAUMANN.—We are used to receiving letters from Christians pretending to be Freethinkers. You must be very ignorant, or very knavish, to say that Mr. Foote "only debates for money." His two recent discussions with the Rev. Fleming Williams did not bring him a farthing. His debate in the early part of last year, with the Rev. J. M. Logan, at Bristol, brought him no profit either; the net proceeds, amounting to more than £43, being paid over to the Children's Hospital, and acknowledged in its yearly balance sheet. You should join a Veracity Class—with your black friend.

CHICAGO DELEGATION FUND (Foote and Watts).—G. R., £1; C. Bowman, £1; W. Forrest, 2s. 6d.; J. Ferguson, 2s. 6d.; J. McGlashan, £1; H. F. S., £1 1s.; W. Hunt, £1 1s.; G. A. Meadows, 7s. 6d.; A. Stanley, 10s.; D. Davies, £1 1s.; W. C. Johnson, 10s. 6d.; W. Paul, 10s.

J. T. J.—We fancy we have seen the verses before. Do you mean that they are your own?

J. COLLINSON.—The excerpt shows a "fine derangement of epitaphs," but it is not in our special line.

V. PAGE.—Thanks. See "Sugar Plums."

YORKSHIRE LASS.—The verses have for many years been printed as one of our Tracts.

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.

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—Western Figaro—Liberator—Liberty—Clarion—Flaming Sword—Echo—Truthseeker—Fritankaren—La Raison—Lucifer—Secular Thought—Independent Pulpit—Tablet—Progressive Thinker—Twentieth Century—De Dageraad—Modern Thought—La Verité Philosophique—Fur Unsere Jugend—Ironclad Age—Watts's Literary Guide—Weekly Bulletin—Glasgow Weekly Herald—Sunday Notes—Yorkshire Post—Leeds Daily News—Nottingham Daily Express—Huddersfield Examiner—Freedom.

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.

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.

The *Freethinker* (including the twopenny special number for the first week in each month) will be forwarded, direct from the office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 7s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 9d.; Three Months, 1s. 10½d.

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.

CHARLES BRADLAUGH'S GRAVE.

TO THE LONDON MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL
SECULAR SOCIETY.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,—

This morning (July 2) a Special Train leaves Waterloo Station, at 11.30, for Brookwood Cemetery, which contains the grave of Charles Bradlaugh. I invite you to meet me there, and to join in this Demonstration in honor of our great lost Leader.

G. W. FOOTE

(President).

SPECIAL.

MR. GEORGE ANDERSON has handed me his cheque for £300. It only wants his signature, which he will add with the greatest of pleasure if the number of shares in the Hall of Science scheme is made up to 3,000 by the end of July. Applications for shares are coming in daily, and I am far from complaining; but they will have to come in faster, if we are to secure Mr. Anderson's £300. I appeal to all Freethinkers who read this journal to do their level best during July. Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation. Readers should apply at once to Miss Vance, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C., for share application forms.

G. W. FOOTE.

SUGAR PLUMS.

One of the leading features of our Summer Number will be a magnificent full-page portrait of Colonel Ingersoll. We have had it reproduced from the copy in possession of Mr. Charles Watts, at Birmingham. It beats everything hitherto published in England. The great orator stands with hands on hips, his head thrown back, and the face full of power and eloquence. We have spent several pounds on the reproduction, which is in the very best style.

Colonel Ingersoll, says the *Pall Mall Gazette*, is going to Chicago to "tonic" himself, after which he will spend six weeks in a cottage he has leased not far from Ben Harbor. Like the late Charles Bradlaugh, Colonel Ingersoll is a great fisherman, and is a member of several fishing clubs around New York.

London members of the N.S.S., and others who respect the memory of the late Charles Bradlaugh, should ALL endeavor to join the Demonstration at Brookwood to-day (July 2). The South Western Company is running a special train for us, starting from Waterloo Station at 11.30, and returning from Brookwood at 4. The tickets are only *two shillings* each. They can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter-street, or at Waterloo Station before the train starts. Three hundred tickets are guaranteed, but there should be a much larger number of demonstrators.

It is not intended to deliver any speeches over Charles Bradlaugh's grave. The monument over it can be inspected by the demonstrators in groups, and a general reunion will take place at a more convenient spot, which will be duly indicated.

By the way, we should state that *children's* tickets for Brookwood are only *one shilling*. Many parents might like to bring a child or two on this important occasion. We may also state that tickets can be obtained at the Hall of Science, from Mr. James Anderson, the club manager.

Mr. Foote lectures at the London Hall of Science this evening (July 2) on "Mrs. Besant on Death and After." Any Theosophists who wish to offer opposition will be given the first opportunity after the lecture.

We are pleased to hear of the success of Mr. Charles Watts' lectures at Sheffield last Sunday. He had the largest morning audience of the season that had assembled in the Hall of Science, while in the evening the hall was crowded, including the gallery. Every copy of the *Freethinker* was sold before the evening lecture. To-day, Sunday July 1, Mr. Watts lectures three times in Huddersfield.

The New York *Truthseeker* announces the probable visit of Messrs. Foote and Watts to America, for the purpose of attending the International Freethought Congress at Chicago. Our American contemporary, with reference to Mr. Foote, writes—"It is his first visit to this country, and he should receive a fraternal greeting that will make his hand ache. Let us give him the heartiest of welcomes." Mr. J. R. Charlesworth, secretary of the Committee of Arrangements, indulges in some unrepeatable compliments, and adds that if Mr. Foote should cross the Atlantic "he may be assured of a royal welcome" in America.

Messrs. Foote and Watts, it must be understood, are not in a position to pay their own expenses to Chicago. It will be an expensive time, owing to the Exhibition, and their joint expenses can hardly be less than £150. They intend to deliver a few lectures while in America (they will be there about three weeks), and whatever they may earn in this way will be devoted to maintaining their homes during their absence. Whether they go to Chicago, to represent the N.S.S. at the International Congress, will of course depend on whether the £150 is made up by special subscription.

The North Eastern Secular Federation held its annual meeting last Sunday. Mr. S. M. Peacock was re-elected President, and Mr. Joseph Brown continues to act as Secretary—which is all right. Mr. D. Bow, of South Shields, was added to the list of vice-presidents, and Mr. Bertram, of Newcastle, to the managing committee.

The Federation's annual excursion is fixed for the first Sunday in August. It will be to Jesmond Dene. A full announcement will be made in due course.

The Newcastle Branch held its annual meeting on Sunday. Mr. T. Elliott is president, Mr. J. G. Bartram treasurer, and Mr. Forrest secretary, his address being 12 Lefroy-street. We hope the Newcastle Branch has a prosperous new year before it.

The *Hull Critic* inserts a good letter from Ixion on rational Sunday observance *i.e.*, open-air recreation, instead of "listening to ancient fables and out of date yarns propagated in Sunday schools, etc." The *Scarborough Mercury* has also been speaking out on the matter of having brighter musical Sundays at the Queen of Watering Places, and its attitude is appreciated by correspondents.

Mr. E. Johnson, the Secular and Socialist member of the Nelson School Board, delivered two lectures on Sunday in the Albert Hall to good audiences. His evening discourse on Charles Bradlaugh was heartily applauded. Mr. Johnson made a special appeal to Freethinkers to assist the President of the National Secular Society in his attempt to erect a Memorial to Charles Bradlaugh. We understand that Mr. Johnson would not mind lecturing for other Branches of the N.S.S. in the neighborhood.

The Chatham Branch goes on excursion to Kew Gardens next Sunday (July 9), their route being from New Brompton to Victoria by L. C. and D. R., and from Chelsea Pier to Kew by boat. The tickets for return journey are 3s. 3d. The Chatham friends will be glad to meet any London Secularists who care to accompany them from Chelsea.

Penge Free Library was opened last Sunday from three to six o'clock, and a good number of readers attended. Nearly sixty gentlemen sent in their names as volunteer librarians, and they will officiate, two at a time, each Sunday.

The Newcastle Sunday Music Society has resumed the issue of *Sunday Notes*. It is brightly edited, and contains advertisements which should pay for the expenses of production.

Apsethus longed to be a god, but found no way to win the adoration of his countrymen. At length he trained a lot of parrots to say "Apsethus is a god"; and when they had learnt the lesson well, he let them fly. The result was that here and there people were astonished to hear voices "from heaven," crying "Apsethus is a god!" The Africans, who knew him, at once began to pay him the worship he so longed to obtain. This continued till someone equally clever reversed and exposed the trick by teaching the parrots another cry. We wonder who taught that parrot (the gospels say pigeon) to say, when Jesus was baptised, "This is my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." Did Jesus spend the eighteen years, or part of them, of which we have no record, in devising this trick?—*Symes's "Liberator."*

If all mankind, minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing one person than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind. Were an opinion a personal possession, of no value except to owner; if to be obstructed in the enjoyment of it were simply a private injury, it would make some difference whether the injury were inflicted on a few or on many. But the peculiar evil of silencing the expression of an opinion is that it is robbing the human race, posterity as well as the existing generation, those who dissent from the opinion still more than those who hold it. If the opinion is right they are deprived of the opportunity of exchanging error for truth; if wrong, they lose, what is almost as great a benefit, the clearer perception and livelier impression of truth, produced by collision with error.—*John Stuart Mill.*

A CONDEMNATION OF POPULAR RELIGION.—If we think of religion only as a means of escaping what we call the wrath to come, we shall not escape it; we are already under it; we are under the burden of death, for we care only for ourselves.—*James Anthony Froude.*

DEBATE BETWEEN THE
REV. FLEMING WILLIAMS AND G. W. FOOTE.

THE Hall of Science was again crowded on Thursday, June 22, to hear the finish of the friendly discussion on Christian Views of Man and Methods of Progress, began on March 10. The audience certainly had an oratorical treat as compensation for the heat of the hall. Although doubtless there was a majority of Freethinkers in the audience, yet the supporters of the popular Radical alderman minister were numerous, and the Freethinkers combined with them in according him a hearty reception. At the doors certain outdoor advocates were busy in giving away back numbers of a journal Freethinkers would hardly be likely to buy. Both speakers were in good form, and it was, I think, the general opinion that the Rev. Fleming Williams was in better fighting form than on the previous occasion. Having been previously furnished by Mr. Foote with a synopsis of what would be advanced, he had been enabled to select his ground of difference, and study his reply.

Mr. Branch, of the London County Council, as before, made a most efficient chairman. In a brief, pithy speech, he referred to the courtesy and intelligence with which the former debate had been conducted. "Christian Methods of Progress" was now the subject, and he asked for the same spirit of forbearance to be exhibited as before.

Mr. Foote said he had been allowed, by the courtesy of Mr. Williams and the chairman, to announce that, after much delay, tickets had been procured from the railway company for the excursion to Mr. Bradlaugh's grave.

Adverting to the topic of friendly discussion, Mr. Foote remarked that man was a complex being. Christianity has laid little stress on his physical or intellectual nature, and sought to touch the moral by the hope of heaven, the fear of hell, and the love and discipleship of Jesus. Secularists did not believe in any other heaven than that which might be made on earth, or in any other hell than that of ignorance and vice around and within us. These motives, he proceeded to argue, were not truly moral, for they dwarfed instead of stimulated our sympathies. The love and discipleship of Jesus Christ, he admitted, was superior as a motive, but the Freethinker does not believe the four gospels are history. Jesus is but an ideal, an arbitrary construction of the early Christian imagination. He could be no example to our diverse life and climate, and the best proof is that not one professed Christian in a million ever attempts to follow him. Mr. Foote then proceeded to criticise certain of the teachings ascribed to Jesus, and contrasted in glowing language the spirit of revolt typified in Prometheus with the Christian spirit of passive subjection. He then contrasted the preventive methods of science with the palliative methods of Christianity, gave a caustic criticism of Christian Socialism, which, he said, was either not fit for society or society for it; and of the Christian teachers who, seeing power slip from their grasp, seek to ally themselves with Democracy and Socialism. Modern hopes for man's improvement had come not from Christ, but from the principles of the French Revolution.

The Rev. Fleming Williams began by complimenting Mr. Foote on his splendid oration. He did from his soul believe in the honesty of Mr. Foote, and it was no reflection on his sincerity to suggest that he might be mistaken. He had been courteously supplied with a synopsis of what Mr. Foote would advance, and looking over it he saw how deeply his mistakes lay. The most cautious student has personal equations and conditions which gravely imperil the infallibility of our conclusions. We advance by leaving behind us crude opinions, and the real hinderers of progress were those who refused to accept the newer light. He contested his friends' view that Christ as an exemplar was unsuited to Western ideas, and out of place in the robust earnestness of modern life. His favorite way of describing himself was as the Son of Man. Nothing was more striking than his total freedom from Jewish prejudices and Oriental peculiarities. He thought Mr. Foote had too swiftly generalised from an insufficient acquaintance with the details. No man ever spoke of the value of strenuous effort with greater conviction than Jesus Christ. He said it could achieve anything. No mountain could stand against it. He said "Ask, knock, and seek in faith, and what you seek shall be achieved." He certainly taught passivity, but it was the

passivity of the selfish, brutish, vindictive and avaricious instincts, that needed restraint. We are coming to see that the existence of an army is a provocation to its use. Christianity teaches that instead of attempting to provoke others, we should attempt to repress ourselves. It taught the creation of a new man and a new society. It went to the root of things with its powerful demand, "You must be born again." There was such a thing as Christian economics. Christianity anticipated the modern revolt against economic science and the economic man with a heart as cold as a millstone, and a cupidity as deep as hell; and Henry George had said the first thing that shook his faith in that doctrine was the impossibility of reconciling it with the ideal of Jesus. It is the meek, as the New Testament says, that must come at last to inherit the earth, but meekness does not mean meanness but self-reverence, love of right carried to the depth of your soul, justice, love, and brotherhood. There was much applause at the conclusion of Mr. Williams' earnest and energetic speech.

Mr. Foote, in reply, said the picture Mr. Williams had drawn of Christ was a selected and fancy picture. It bears out the remark of Huxley that in the New Testament there are many Christs. By a process of selection and interpretation you can make anything. Meekness did not mean self-reverence. If self-respect was meant, it was a pity the New Testament did not say so. He then took up the case of Mr. Henry George and of the large standing armies as showing how little Christianity had done in 1800 years. Three-fourths of Mr. Williams' new doctrine would have been impossible without men like Darwin, Mill and Owen. He urged that, so far as Christianity was unchecked by secular opinion, it was retrograde, and a hindrance to progress; so far as it is checked it is altered, reinterpreted, and the Bible made a nose of wax.

Mr. Williams, in concluding the debate, contended that greater sympathy gave him greater insight into the real meaning of Jesus. The nobler and worthier interpretation was likelier to be the truer. But Jesus Christ held his position, not by his preference, but by the intrinsic worth of his own personality. He extolled Henry George as a Christian scientist. Science and religion were not antagonistic. In the whole army of scientists there were now a large number of devoted Christians. The doctrine of evolution was no longer opposed, but now put forward as a Christian doctrine. In concluding Mr. Williams made an energetic appeal to Freethinkers not to pelt Christians, but to help them in working for all that was good.

This exhortation, which had very much the tone of an appeal *ad misericordiam*, ended the encounter, which throughout deserved its title of a friendly discussion. As I left I found a number who were reviewing and continuing the discussion in the street.

J. M. W.

An interesting article on an ancient industry in the new quarterly, the *Illustrated Archaeologist*, gives illustrations of the most ancient manufacture of stone implements, and flinty flake done by a springy blow. There is still a market for tinder-box flints in the rural districts of Spain and Italy, where unsecularised religion keeps the peasantry in a state of backwardness, and "lucifers" are regarded as an invention of the Devil.

The Rev. J. G. White, a Presbyterian minister at Macomb, Illinois, lectured on the "Iniquities of the Roman Confessional." Romanists attended and threatened to mob him. There was a free fight, the Catholics and Protestants drawing knives, and the police having to draw their revolvers to protect the preacher. He was tried on a charge of using indecent language, but the jury returned a verdict to the effect that as he had simply made use of translations from books used by the Catholic clergy, he was not guilty of the charge.

Christian missionaries have been teaching the Koreans underhand Christian ways of breaking the law, and the Koreans have been teaching the Christians a little native justice. In Corea they have a law that no alien shall hold land. Of course the Christians got hold of some cheaply from native converts, putting up one of the natives as a dummy to hold the title. Corean courts decide that the title is void, and refuse to order the purchase money returned to the missionaries, on the precept that "He who seeks relief must come into court with clean hands." Selah!

HELL A LA JAPAN.

AT Rolandi's, 13 Pall Mall, there is now on view a large cartoon called "A Japanese Idea of Hell." We should say that "An Old Japanese View of Religion" would be a more correct description, since although hell occupies the prominent position in the foreground, or rather bottom, of the picture, heaven is also represented at the top, with a figure with a nimbus round his head, representing either Buddha or some Buddhist saint, but which might do for the much-haloed J. C. or a Christian saint.

On the left of the picture, entry into life is depicted with a finger-post, signifying one may travel up or down. On the opposite side is the Needle Mountain, a series of pointed and rugged ridges over which the upward travellers have to climb in order to reach Heaven, or Nirvana. Like Jordan, it is a hard road to travel, and from the mountain representative sinners—Japanese sky-pilots, I presume—are depicted tumbling off into the inferno beneath. From the mountain a rope is stretched, over which those who would enter heaven must go. The artist would seem to have had some such text before him as that comfortable verse of scripture which assures us that narrow is the path that leads to eternal life and few there be that find it. Heaven, which seems to be a Japanese palace, is apparently uninhabited, save by the before-mentioned individual with a halo.

On one side, a sort of Rhadamanthus gentleman, with a cap of authority—who may be, as the exhibitor suggests, the Devil, but who may only be an embodiment of justice, or Karma, or God—sits in council with assessors and attendants, or good and bad spirits, who witness for or against every prisoner. Before him are calculi with which he reckons up their accounts.

There is a scale handy, too, in which one poor devil is being weighed and found wanting. The majority appear to be on the down grade, and there they get what the artist thought their deserts. Those who have tortured animals have to be tortured by them in turn. One with a human head and a horse's body has to draw a heavy chariot through flames. The slanderer has his tongue pulled out. The glutton has beautiful dishes placed before him which only turn to fire in his hands. Those who have placed burdens on others are put under weights. The picture, indeed, suggests how far the Japanese and the Christian ideas also of hell may have been derived from the torture chambers of princes. It suggests also how much religion is the offspring of life's miseries, and consequently how much easier it is to depict the horrors of hell than the bliss of heaven. At the same time, the picture, which being perhaps 400 years old, has not the artistic merit of modern Japanese drawings, is rather grotesque than repulsive, and is well worth a visit by anyone interested in Japanese ideas of religion.

REMARKS BY A FASHIONABLE CLERGYMAN.

I AM the pastor of an uptown church—in fact, the church of the Investigation. What do we investigate? Oh, dear me, nothing whatever, of course—the idea's quite absurd, you know. We are very exclusive, as you are probably aware. We have some of the best people, the very best, don't you know, among us, and it would be exceedingly impolitic to admit the riff-raff—quite out of the question, don't you see? My salary is seven thousand a year only, and free house rent, and I think you will admit that I earn it when I tell you that it sometimes takes me all Saturday afternoon to prepare my sermons for the following day. Yes, really. Then I have the Wednesday evening prayer meeting to attend, and I make it a point of duty to visit all my parishioners—that is, all who have any social position to speak of, don't you know—regularly, so you see I am a very hard worked man. I am so exhausted Mondays—oh, you can't think! quite prostrated, I assure you. We have frequent services of song on Sabbath evenings, and on these occasions I preach only a ten-minute sermon. This is quite a relief to me.

We used to have an expensive choir—indeed my people paid at one time four thousand a year for music. I did not approve of this extravagance—I could not see my way clear to do so. I reasoned with my dear people. I pointed out to them that far more would be accomplished toward the healing of the nations if a two thousand dollar choir were engaged, and the remainder of the appropriation added to

my salary. This was done, of course. Madame Squalki, the soprano, sang for us a few weeks. It was at the time that I was delivering my famous series of discourses on "Lessons from the Life of the Whale that Swallowed Jonah"; you no doubt remember the sermons, they created a great deal of attention then, don't you know, and have since been published in neat pamphlet form at forty cents a copy. The church was crowded, of course, and Madame Squalki—I know you'll laugh when I tell you, the idea's so exquisitely absurd—that woman was actually overheard to express the opinion that *she* drew the immense congregations. Ridiculous, was it not? Of course, I was annoyed, frightfully annoyed, when I hear this, and I insisted that she be discharged at once, which was done.

The next Sabbath the church was nearly empty; a most remarkable coincidence, was it not? But it vexed me, for I knew what that malicious woman would say. Last June my nerves were in such a state that I was really alarmed—all from over-work, you know. I decided to go to Europe. My people gave me a purse containing a thousand dollars, five dressing cases, nine smoking jackets, and twenty-six pairs of slippers. So nice in them, was it not? I arrived home only a fortnight ago, and last week I received a call from a church in Chicago which offers me ten thousand a year. I have considered the matter long and prayerfully, and have been driven to the irresistible conclusion that the claims of this new field of labor cannot be ignored, so I shall notify my people here that I am going.

LATER.—I have just received another letter from Chicago, and find that the good brother who wrote me last week put down one cipher too many in specifying the salary. It is only one thousand. Upon second thoughts I have concluded to remain here.—*Tid-Bits.*

"MARY'S LAMB" ON A NEW PRINCIPLE.

MOLLIE had a little ram as black as a rubber shoe,
And everywhere that Mollie went, he emigrated too;
He went with her to church one day—the folks hilarious grew,
To see him walk demurely into Deacon Linney's pew.

The Deacon quickly let his angry passion rise,
And gave it an unchristian kick between the sad brown eyes.
This landed rammy in the aisle; the Deacon followed fast,
And raised his foot again; alas! that first kick was his last.

For Mr. Sheep walked slowly back, about a rod 'tis said,
And ere the Deacon could retreat, he stood him on his head.
The congregation then arose and went for that there sheep,
But several well-directed BUTTS just piled them in a heap.

Then rushed they straightway for the door, with curses long
and loud,

While rammy struck the hindmost man and shoved him
through the crowd.

The minister had often heard that kindness would subdue
The fiercest beast. "Aha!" he said, "I'll try that little game
on you."

And so he gently, kindly called, "Come, rammy, rammy, ram,
To see the folks abuse you so I grieved and sorry am."
With kind and gentle words, he came from that tall pulpit
down,
Saying, "Rammy, rammy, ram—best sheep in all the town."

The ram quite dropped its humble air, and rose from off its
feet,

And when the parson landed he was behind the hindmost seat,
And as he shot without the door, and closed it with a slam,
He named a California town—I think 'twas "YUBA DAM."

—*Boston Investigator.*

ELMINA D. SLENKER.

FREDDIE'S BICYCLE.

AN ANSWER (?) TO PRAYER.

Little Freddie wanted a bicycle, but his papa as well as his mamma said no; so Freddie was disconsolate and teased a great deal for a bicycle. Finally, one night, as Freddie was getting ready for bed, his mamma said that perhaps he might get the bicycle if he asked God, in prayer, for it. So Freddie prayed very earnestly and long. After he had gone to sleep, mamma told papa "it would be a shame, after Freddie had prayed so fervently, to have him disappointed, and his faith in God might be shaken." So papa said they would go down town to the bicycle store and see if an answer to Freddie's prayer could be found. After looking over the bicycles, they came to the conclusion that, as Freddie was such a little fellow, it would be safer to get a tricycle; so a tricycle was bought and taken home, where it was placed beside Freddie's bed where he might see it when he awoke in the morning.

Freddie awoke next morning at the usual time.

The first sight of the tricycle beside the bed filled his face with wonder and delight. Freddie sat up in bed to get a better view. His face changed to a look of disgust as he exclaimed—"Great Scott! God, don't you know the difference between a tricycle and a bicycle?"

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 of 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
Address
Occupation
Active or Passive
Dated this.....day of.....18

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.

The minimum subscription for individual members is one shilling per year; all beyond that amount is optional, every member being left to fix his subscription according to his means and interest in the cause.

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.

LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 8, A. Johnson, "Atheism and the French Uprising" (free); 9.15, members' quarterly meeting. Tuesday at 8.30, social gathering. Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, A. B. Moss, "Deceptions of Theology." Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 7, musical selections; 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Mrs. Besant on Death and After" (3d., 6d., and 1s.) Notting Hill Gate—"Duke of York," Kensington-place, Silver-street: Monday at 8.30, adjourned general meeting of the West London Branch.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, W. J. Ramsey, "What think ye of Christ?" Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, C. J. Hunt, "Is the Bible Inspired?" Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, A. B. Moss, "Inspired Nonsense." Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, H. Snell will lecture.

Edmonton (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. James, "The Gospel of Secularism." Finsbury Park (near the band stand): 11.30, C. James, "Does the New Testament Teach Eternal Torments?"; 3.30, F. Haslam, "Mahomet and his Koran." Hammersmith (corner of The Grove): Thursday, July 6, at 8.30, C. J. Hunt, "Life and Death." Hammersmith Bridge: 6.30, Mr. St. John, "The God Idea." Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, W. Heaford will lecture; 3.30, Mr. St. John, "The God Idea." Wednesday at 8, Mr. St. John, "Mind in Animals." Kilburn (corner of Victoria-road, High-road): 6.30, W. Heaford, "An Hour with the Devil." Lambeth—Kennington Green (near the Vestry Hall): 6.30, Victor Roger, "A Week's Work by God." Leyton—High-road (near Vicarage-road): 11.30, J. Marshall, "Who will be the Saved?" Midland Arches (corner of Battle Bridge-road): 11.30, J. Fagan will lecture. Mile End Waste: 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Christian Religion." Newington Green: 3.15, S. H. Alison, "The Romance of Jesus." Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, F. Haslam, "What we have Gained by Freethought." Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 11.30, J. Rowney, will lecture; 3.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Behold, I bring you glad tidings." Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15, Mr. St. John will lecture; 3.15, C. J. Hunt, "Gods, Ancient and Modern." Walthamstow—Markhouse-road: 6.30, R. Rosetti, "Is Easter a Christian Festival?" Wood Green—Jolly Butchers'-hill: 11.30, S. H. Alison, "Design, Darwinism, and Evolution."

The "Queensberry" R. and A. Club: Saturday, July 1, at 6 and Sunday at 10, at Reader's Boat-house, Lea-bridge-road, rowing. Monday and Friday at 8, at the "Central" Baths, Olerkenwell, swimming. Wednesday at 8, at the hall, members' meeting.

COUNTRY.

Chatham—Secular Hall, Queen's-road, New Brompton: 7, J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "What is Life?" Derby—Mission Hall, top of Sacheverel-street, Normanton-road: Monday at 7.30, monthly business meeting. Hanley—Secular Hall, John-street: 7, members' quarterly meeting. Hull—St. George's Hall, 8 Albion-street: 7, Mr. Munroe, "Did Christ Prophecy the Fall of Jerusalem?" Ipswich—Co-operative Hall (small room), Cox-lane: 7, business meeting. Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 11.30, Tontine Society; 3, logic class; 7, L. Small, B.Sc., "Latter-day Christianity." Manchester N.S.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': C. Cohen, 11, "Charles Darwin"; 6.30, "Freethought and Religion." Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 7, a Recent Local Preacher's "Reasons for Giving Up Christianity." South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street; 7, business meeting. Sunderland—Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street: 7, G. Selkirk, "Divine Inspiration." OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA. Chatham—New-road (near Waghorn Memorial): 11, J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "Shall we Live Again?" Manchester—Stevenson-square: 3, C. Cohen, "The Fate of Religion." Sunderland—Wheat Sheaf, Monkwearmouth: 6, G. Selkirk, "Secularism: Constructive and Destructive."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

STEPHEN H. ALISON, 52 Vassall-road, Brixton, S.W. — July 2, m., Wood Green; a., Islington; 9, e., Lambeth; 16, m., Battersea; 23, m., Victoria Park; a., Finsbury Park; 30, m., Camberwell

C. COHEN, 154 Cannon-street-road, Commercial-road, E.—July 2, Manchester; 5, Hyde Park; 9, m., Mile End; a., Victoria Park; e., Battersea; 16, m., Leyton; a., Victoria Park; e., Kilburn; 19, Hyde Park; 20, Hammersmith; 23, m., Clerkenwell; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton; 26, Hyde Park; 30, m. and a., Victoria Park; e., Battersea.

JAMES HOOPER, 11 Upper Eldon-street, Sneinton, Nottingham.— July 9, Barnsley.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.— July 2, m., Mile End; e., Tottenham; 9, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Hammersmith; 16, m., Victoria Park; 23, m., Battersea; e., Kilburn; 27, Hammersmith; 30, m., Midland Arches; e., Hammersmith.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Botherhithe, London, S.E.—July 2, m. and e., Camberwell; 9, m., Midland Arches; e., Enfield; 16, m., Westminster; a., Finsbury; 23, e., Hammersmith.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—July 2, m., Clerkenwell Green; 9, m., Battersea; 16, m. and e., Camberwell; July 23 to Aug. 7, holidays. Aug. 13, m., Battersea; e., Camberwell.

ST. JOHN, 8 Norland-road North, Notting Hill, W.—July 2, m., Victoria Park; e., Hammersmith; 16, m., Bethnal Green; 23, Brighton; 30, Chatham.

COMPTON AS A CLERGYMAN.

Compton, the popular Haymarket comedian, making his way home from a friend's house in the country, stopped at a village inn and ordered dinner. He wore a long black coat and a white necktie, and taking him for a clergyman, the landlord said: "There is a meeting of clergy here to-day, sir, and they are about to dine. Let me take your card to the dean; I am sure he would like you to join them." The actor was too hungry to be scrupulous. "I have no card," said he. "You can say 'the Rev. Mr. Payne.'" The dean said they would be glad if he would take a seat at the table, and courteously placed the comedian at his right hand, and asked him to say grace. Compton felt a cold thrill run through him, but recalling to mind his Church service, gave out the appropriate words, "Lord open Thou our lips, and our mouths shall show forth Thy praise."

CHEAP PROPAGANDIST PAMPHLETS.

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