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Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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“The Lord is good to all; and his tender mercies are over all his works.”—Psalm cxlv. 9.

BISHOPS AND BURGLARS.

WE never heard of a burglary at Mr. Bradlaugh's house. The only time when it would have paid was after his visit to India. For the first time in his life he was the possessor of “plate.” His admirers in India (and they had cause to admire him) sent him home full-handed, and their handsome presents would have made very good “swag.” Happily the burglars kept aloof; perhaps they did not like the idea of meeting “Bradlaugh” in the passage. Twelve months ago, however, some enterprising but misguided house-breakers paid Mr. Foote's house a visit, and got away with precisely two shillings. A fortnight ago some other burglars (it could hardly be the same) broke into the *Freethinker* office, and cleared about three shillings in the shape of postage stamps. The game is really not worth the candle. Any jemmy-wielder who pays us a visit henceforth will have to be regarded as a lunatic. His proper residence is not Pentonville, but Colney Hatch.

It was a far more brilliant idea to visit Fulham Palace, the residence of the Bishop of London. The burglars who executed that “job” were enterprising and not misguided. They were wise in their generation, and they were also courageous. Fulham Palace

garden is protected by a moat, to keep off persons who take the gospel too literally; who expect the bishop to give to every one that asketh, to turn not away from him that would borrow, and to hand over his mackintosh to the gentleman who appropriates his coat. Crossing the ditch by means of a plank, the burglars were soon in the garden, and soon afterwards in the palace. The bishop's keys were discovered, but not the butler's, otherwise it would have been all up with the plate. But the visitors did not go away empty. They secured a silver ink-bottle; a watch and chain, with a gold seal attached bearing an amethyst jewel; two or three pounds' worth of current coin; some pencil cases and other unconsidered trifles. A clock was also requisitioned and wrapped in a footman's coat, but dropped with the garment when the burglars were surprised. Truly it was not a big bag for a bishop's palace. Had they found the butler's keys, and gained access to the chief valuables, Fulham Palace would have been in mourning; its walls would have echoed the sounds of lamentation and woe.

There seems to have been a good deal of human nature about those Fulham Palace burglars. It struck them that a bishop's larder would contain something better than loaves and small fishes. Accordingly they paid it a visit, and were highly gratified at what they

MACHIAVELLI AND CHRISTIANITY.

found there. It was magnificent after a long course of London fried fish and coffee-house beefsteaks. Bishop Temple's cold ham, pigeon, and pigeon pies were devoured with as much vehemence as Elijah displayed over that square meal or on the strength whereof he went for forty days. But eating—even the best of eating—is dry work, so the burglars looked about for something moist, and likewise palatable. Of course they found it. Most bishops love the creature as well as the Creator. There was port and sherry and claret. The last, as the butler said, was "very excellent," and we believe him without an affidavit. A man with £10,000 a year is not likely to drink *vin ordinaire*. But the taste for claret is acquired. It is the most wholesome of wines, and all right when you know it, but you've got to know it first. The burglars, however, had no time to educate themselves; they took what they fancied at the moment, and attacked the port and sherry. "Good stuff this!" one of them may have exclaimed, on recovering his breath after a deep potation. "Yes," his pal may have rejoined, "it's nice to be a bishop." "Ah," the other may have exclaimed, "I could preach a good sermon on a bottle of it." "Yes," sighs the pal, "his game's better than ours." All they wanted to complete their glory was a couple of his lordship's laranagas; then they might have reckoned it a golden day, to be marked as perfect in the calendar; a day to be dreamt of thereafter, when the policeman was too many for them, and the gaoler's key grated in the big door, and the *pièce de résistance* on the menu was skilful.

The well-victualled burglars got off, and we will leave them and turn to his lordship. Bishop Temple has frequently figured on Temperance platforms, preaching abstinence to the multitude. He never told them of his prime port and sherry and his "very excellent" claret. His lordship is of that ambiguous class of social reformers, whose precepts and practice can only be squared by a very subtle geometry. We can understand a teetotaler striving to abolish the liquor traffic, even by the strong arm of the law; but we are compelled to raise our eyebrows (not to speak more strongly) at "gentlemen" who keep well-stocked cellars and try to check "the drinking habits of the people."

Bishop Temple claims to be a priest of Christ by apostolic succession. He is as ready as that comfortable pluralist, Archdeacon Farrar, to talk about "the poor Carpenter of Nazareth." But does he think that any burglar in his senses would have broken into the house of Jesus Christ? No, he was too poor. And if we know that he said anything, we know that he told his disciples to be poor likewise. How then is Bishop Temple a disciple of Jesus Christ? If he is a follower of Jesus Christ, he follows him "afar off"—about as far as he can manage. Only one step farther off is possible—the step into the archbishopric of Canterbury, and £15,000 instead of £10,000 a year for preaching "Blessed be ye poor." On the whole, it is a fair point for discussion, whether the burglars are not a trifle more honest than the bishop. They do not add hypocrisy to thieving. They take the risks with the profits of their profession.

In connexion with this burglary at Fulham Palace, and the light it sheds on Bishop Temple, we may refer to the first sermon preached at the "Tabernacle" by the Rev. Thomas Spurgeon, inaugurating his twelve months' pastorate, which will probably lead to his permanent appointment as his father's successor. Spurgeon the Second said that Jesus knew what he was about when he went to the lake of Galilee for rough, illiterate disciples. "He knows the material," the preacher remarked, "out of which he can make fishers of men." Very likely, but his method is different now. His apostles are taken from "the classes" rather than "the masses," especially those who climb to Tabernacle platforms and Bishop's palaces. How ineffably ludicrous is young Mr. Spurgeon's observation that "the times are still hard to those who are faithful to the Lord." How very hard they are! Spurgeon the Second lives on bread and cheese and cold water, and the Bishop of London has not where to lay his head. Yes, it is sad to witness the hardships of the servants of the Lord. G. W. FOOTE.

AFTER the mythical Judas Iscariot, the best-abused name among men is probably that of the Florentine Republican, Niccolò Machiavelli. For three centuries it stood as a proverb for all that is odious. Samuel Butler even said "he gave his name to our Old Nick." Be that as it may, common people often show an instinctive dislike to men of brains. Schopenhauer has many who respect but few who like him. In the case of Machiavelli there is more than this. There is such a relentlessness of purpose, so complete a severance of statecraft from individual morality, that even some of his admirers have felt it necessary to defend his *Prince* as ironically portraying the actual practice of the despots of his day* (1467—1527).

But Judas has been whitewashed and Machiavelli has been vindicated. Nobody who has read Macaulay's Essay, J. A. Symonds' *History of the Renaissance in Italy*, and above all *The Life and Times of Machiavelli*, by Pasquale Villari, can longer regard Machiavelli as a sort of political Iago, a fiend incarnate, as he is depicted in Nat Lee's *Cæsar Borgia*. Every man must be judged by his age and his life purpose, and no one can go through the works I have mentioned without being forced to acknowledge with Villari that "Machiavelli had at least one great and heroic passion, redeeming, elevating, and raising him above all his contemporaries; an ardent and irresistible love for liberty, his country, and even for virtue."

I do not propose to discuss his character, but his attitude towards Christianity. Whether a great patriot or not, assuredly he was a great thinker, and one of the shrewdest men that ever trod this planet. What he thought of Christianity lies particularly patent in his *Discourses on Livy*. He looked back to Republican Rome as to a model. He was too astute to directly attack the prevailing superstition, but it is easy to see he regarded it as a mere tool in the hands of designing tyrants, and the real cause of Rome's fall and the hindrance to Italian independence and unity.

The Church was guided by a true instinct in placing his works on the *Index*. In pointing back, as he continually does, to the heroic Pagan days of Republican Rome, he was, in fact, giving the most vital blow to Christianity that could be given with impunity in Italy. In treating religion, as he always does, as the mere servant of politics, he was in truth preaching the subordination of the service of God to the service of man. With what gusto he tells the tale of the old Roman consul, who, when the soothsayers found the chickens did not peck—which was regarded as a bad omen and a sign they should not fight—declared his auspices were good, and if the prophets prophesied falsely so much the worse for them; whereupon he put these augurs in the forefront of the battle; and when it happened that the principal prophet was slain, observed it was a sign that all things went luckily, for now the army was purged from his lies. Probably that was the way in which Machiavelli would have liked to serve the priests who were leagued with foreign mercenaries to the ruin of Italy.

Mr. Paul Ferdinand Willert, in an able study of Machiavelli which appeared in the *Fortnightly Review* (March 1884), says: "It is clear that his was a thoroughly irreligious nature. Notwithstanding occasional and conventional expressions of respect, he was indifferent or hostile to Christianity. He was deeply imbued with the Pagan spirit of the Renaissance; he reserved his admiration for the republics of antiquity and for those civic and intellectual virtues which maintain them, and he naturally disliked a religion which cherished virtues of another life." Evidently Mr. Willert sees that hostility rather than indifference expresses Machiavelli's real attitude. "Ancient religion," he says, "exalted men of worldly glory such as great captains and founders of nations. Our religion glorifies humble and contemplative men rather than those of action. It places the chief good in humility

* Note an instance of satire directed against Ferdinand of Spain at the end of chap. 18: "There is a prince at this time, whose name I shall not mention, who preaches nothing but faith and peace. Had he kept either, they had taken from him both his power and reputation."

and contempt of the things of this world; Paganism sought it in loftiness of soul, in bodily strength, and all that renders man valiant. If our religion wishes men to show courage it is but in endurance, rather than in bold deeds. Hence the world has become feeble and has fallen a prey to scoundrels, who rule over it securely as they list, finding men rather anxious to gain paradise by suffering than of avenging their wrongs on their oppressors.* Such was the judgment of this great statesman, and herein he indicates his whole political philosophy of religion.

Christianity, he saw, had rooted out the old patriotic spirit. But for the Latin language, he says, it would have crushed out all memory of the Paganism which it supplanted. Again his words are of weight. "The first endeavor of a new religion," he says, "is to blot out the memory of the old, and when the founders speak another tongue this is easily effected. Consider the means the Christian religion employed against the Gentiles, demolishing and defacing their ancient religion. True, they did not entirely wipe out all knowledge of its most famous men, but this was because, retaining the Latin tongue, they were forced to write their new law therein.† For if they could have written it in a new tongue, considering their other persecutions, no record whatever would have survived from the past. And whoever reads what courses St. Gregory took, and the other heads of the Christian religion, will see with what animosity they persecuted all the ancient memorials, burning all the poets and historians' works, defacing their images, and destroying everything else that gave any light of that antiquity. So that if to this persecution they had added a new language, everything in a short time would have been forgotten."‡

I cannot avoid the suspicion that Machiavelli felt himself nearer to the days of Pagan and Republican Rome, than Christian chronology would allow. In his *Prince* (chap. xi.) he expressly says that the temporal power of the Papacy was not established until the time of Pope Alexander the sixth, that is, in his own age. Apparently he did not know or did not credit the legend of how Hildebrand had kept the Emperor Henry IV. barefooted and without food or shelter in the courtyard of his castle. How much he detested the Papal pretensions, breaks out in his contempt for the cowardice of the tyrant of Perugia, Giovanni Pagolus Baglioni, who, having Pope Julius II. and his cardinals in his power, yet dared not seize them; "an exploit," says Machiavelli, "that every one would have admired him for, as being the first to teach prelates how little worthy of esteem be those who live and reign as they, and so had done an act whose greatness had surpassed all infamy and danger attaching to it."§

What Italy owed to the establishment of the Christian Church, he declares, was division and disaster. He argues against those who hold that the welfare of Italy depends on the Church of Rome, that "the contrary might rather be proved," since, he continues, those in the Church observe not its precepts, but only adulterate and make them a pretence. "Moreover, the Church hath always held, and still holds, this country divided; though truly never was any province either united or happy unless it were reduced to the obedience of one commonwealth or prince, as in the case of France and Spain."|| The cause of Italian disunity, he proceeded to point out, lay solely in the Church. So true was this that it was not till over three hundred years after the death of Machiavelli that Italian unity was guaranteed by the abolition of the temporal power of the Papacy.

Mr. Symonds's view of Machiavelli is, I think, a very just one. He says: "Occupied with practical problems, smiling at the supra-mundane aspirations of the Middle Ages, scorning the aesthetical ideals of the Renaissance, he made the political action of man (*l'homme politique*) the object of exclusive study. His resolute elimination of what he considered irrelevant or distracting circumstances from this chosen field of

research, justifies our placing him among the founders or precursors of the modern scientific method. We may judge his premises insufficient, his conclusions false, but we cannot mistake the positive quality of his mind in the midst of a rhetorical and artistic generation." It is this, together with his proximity to the time of the publication of the Christian books and to the Reformation—which he clearly anticipated, though he would have carried it out in a totally different direction—that must ever make the writings of the great Florentine of interest to students of history.

J. M. WHEELER.

THE PROVINCE OF REASON.

THE world of thought is under the control of two forces—faith and reason. Each has its respective province, but the two are by no means of equal value in the great battle of life. Faith, when used in an orthodox sense, pertains to matters that refer to a future state of existence, and is destitute of those elements which experience has proved to be necessary in a monitor that regulates human actions. Reason, so far as we know, is confined to earth, and its province is to guide mankind in its various affairs of mundane requirements. By reason is meant man's highest intellectual power, the faculty of judgment, which enables him to distinguish truth from error. Morell, in his *Mental Philosophy*, says that reason gives unity and solidarity to intellectual processes, "aiding us at once in the pursuit of truth and in adapting our lives to the state of things in which they exist. It is the guide and director of human activity." The eminent Christian writer, Chillingworth, observes: "Reason gives us knowledge; while faith only gives us belief, which is a part of knowledge, and is therefore inferior to it. It is by reason alone that we can distinguish truth from falsehood." Secularists claim this faculty as being of the highest service to mankind, surpassing in utility all the faiths associated with the whole of the religions of the world. Theologians, denying this province of reason, have denounced it as a profane, carnal, and fallacious guide. The cultivated thought, however, of the present generation is rapidly correcting this old error, and now, instead of reason being subordinated to faith, this very faith has to yield to the supremacy of reason.

We allege that reason is the unequalled guide of life, and that its efficacy does not depend upon any religion, but rather upon purely secular agencies. It is true this faculty may sometimes be obscure or ineffective in its operations, but such a state may be accounted for in the same manner that we should explain the defect in any other faculty of the human mind. Force and barbarous ignorance may check its power, but no authority can deprive men, in their normal condition, of its legitimate function. It is the faculty that enables man to excel all other animals in intellectual ability. Comte, no doubt, was right in claiming that reason was the cause of the gradual march of man; that he left behind him all other creatures who possessed natures and functions much in common with his own. The relation between cause and effect; what tends to produce good or evil; what are likely to be the effects of certain actions upon society, and what are men's duties to each other, are questions that it is the province of reason to decide. It is this very faculty that enables us to determine the truth or otherwise of the many conflicting opinions, doctrines, and systems that are in the world. Without this "court of appeal" we should be at a loss to detect truth from fiction, the useful from the injurious, and superstition from philosophy. Bishop Butler admits that this is so, for he says: "Reason is indeed the only faculty we have wherewith to judge concerning anything, even revelation itself."

We do not contend that reason makes its own facts any more than science creates its own truths and principles. These are already in existence, and have become known to us only through investigation. There is one thing upon which reason is not allowed to exercise its legitimate province and that is theology. Now as science admits the unlimited freedom of reason, and

* Discorsi, bk. ii. c. 2.

† Did Machiavelli think the New Testament was written in Latin, I wonder?

‡ Discorsi, bk. ii. c. 5. § Ibid, bk. i., c. 27. || Ibid, bk. i., c. 12.

theology excludes it, the latter puts itself outside the realms of science as far as its method of inquiry is concerned. Hence for orthodoxy to attempt to place a limit to reason is unphilosophical, for its only limit is that of its own penetration. Moreover, its province is to deal with evidence, irrespective of the nature of the subject for which the evidence is adduced. Its fundamental rule in every department of study is to admit nothing as true but what is evidently so, and to reject nothing that has sufficient evidence to justify its reception. The cause of so many existing errors is through ignoring this very important rule. Many instances of the supposed "divine wisdom" in the adaptation of nature may be cited, but the province of reason is to determine if, in any one instance, there are sufficient grounds for inferring a supernatural or a divine intelligence or purpose. Of course, it does not follow that because this is the function of reason that therefore it is capable of settling all questions. The theory of evolution is now almost universally accepted by men of science, and the protracted controversy as to its claims has been caused by the vast multitude of facts that have required investigation. At the same time, as there is sufficient evidence which it is thought cannot be destroyed by any further discoveries, the theory of evolution is declared to be probably true.

Theologians have supposed that there are two sources of truth. Thomas Aquinas elaborated a theory of mystery and reason. The first was based upon miracle, revelation, the Church, and tradition, and was called faith. The second was based upon the various schools of philosophy, and was called reason. The first asserts without understanding, therefore to say, as Aquinas did, that it was only a twin brother to reason, appears to us absurd. It can never be the province of reason to deal with what is beyond comprehension. If theology be a subject of evidence, it must be submitted to the only faculty we possess of judging of its evidential value. The higher impulse to the development of dogma, literature, and social evolution can be traced back to the gradual and continual operations of reason. Man is an acting as well as a thinking being, so that when the affections and passions come into activity, it is the province of reason to exercise over them a regulating power. Human passions are not in themselves, as theologians contend, vile and corrupt, they are a part of our nature. It is only when the passions become our masters that they usurp the functions of reason and prove a source of torment to ourselves and frequently of trouble to those with whom we come in contact. When reason is not obscured, it has to decide whether the gratification of the passions may not with advantage be postponed in order to secure happiness in the future—happiness more intense and enduring than the present indulgence would afford.

In reference to the alleged supernatural and such questions as inspiration, the Trinity, the Atonement, and a number of other theories associated with religious thought, reason can only deal with the accumulated and diverged conceptions that have been formed of such subjects, and with the various interpretations put upon them. For instance, while reason may not be able to decide as to what is the essence of matter, it is not thereby excluded from determining its modes of affecting us; neither is it incompetent to judge of the nature of the statements made by spiritualists, although their meaning may not be apprehended by those who deny their pretensions. Many things are held to be "above reason," whereas in fact they are contrary to reason, a most important distinction. It appears to us to be quite clear that, with matters which transcend thought, and with subjects the belief in which cannot be formulated in intelligible language, reason is not concerned. It is the glory of this great faculty that it can wait patiently, having no fear of any consequences that may result from at present unknown causes. It has not the pride of ignorance, but the humility born of knowledge. In every new fact it welcomes a friend, and in this respect it is unlike many theologians who regard fresh truths as enemies to be resisted, if not to be extirpated.

Orthodox believers may declare that they are illuminated by some "divine power," but reason sanctions no such pretensions without verification. If this is

not forthcoming, all assumptions are either rejected or put aside until proof of their validity is furnished. The value of reason appears to the Secularist so supreme that as long as it does not forsake him he will faithfully adhere to it as his guiding star in life. We are not, however, unmindful of the fact that, notwithstanding its great power, the adaptability of this mighty faculty to perform its function depends upon its natural strength and its training. Of all the gifts with which nature has endowed the human race, thought is one of the least cultivated, but we are glad to know that each succeeding generation masters some new fact, and therefore we are justified in hoping that ultimately reason will triumph, for it is, as Dr. Reid observes, "the principle by which our belief and opinions ought to be regulated. The law of reason is founded on nature—universal, immutable, and eternal; place and time do not change it; it extends invariably to all ages and to all nations." CHARLES WATTS.

EUSEBIUS' CHURCH HISTORY.

THE thorough critical examination of the earliest *Ecclesiastical History*, ascribed to the authorship of "Eusebius Pamphili, Bishop of Cæsarea," has long been a great desideratum to the student of the Christian system of ideas. It is one of those books by the credit of which the whole fabric stands, or by the discredit of which it falls.

The editors of this book have been, from the first, clergymen, whose interest has been as a matter of course, in the defence of the substantial truth of its contents. Some of the more acute of these editors have not been able to blind themselves to the evidence of fallacy, fraud, and glaring imposture quite impudently manifested in this strange composition. With some independent men of letters, "Eusebius" is a bye-word and symbol of mendacity. Nevertheless, I have not yet met with any writer who has discerned the full import of the book as the Manifesto of the very founders of the Christian Church: which cannot be successfully impugned without destroying her title-deeds, and with them her claim to confidence among the educated of mankind.

I could wish to despatch this task with conciseness and brevity. But the experience of the last few years has taught me that Church History is a subject so little studied, so almost entirely misunderstood, that it is necessary to insist upon the very elements of the question. It was written, like the Creed which it illustrates, for the purpose of exercising the memory and the imagination, but not the judgment. Judgment, for several ages bribed to acquiesce in its teachings, and stupefied by alterations of the same baseless statements in multitudes of handbooks, is but now awaking to the consideration of the cardinal question: *When* were these statements first drawn up and published? Upon the answer to that question the verdict upon the truth or error of Church teaching absolutely depends.

I ask to be followed with the closest attention, well aware that there are many open-minded men in the ranks of the Freethinkers, who have had great difficulty in understanding and accepting my hitherto published conclusions, but confident that they will not allow any prejudice to interfere in the full discussion and probation of my at present novel arguments.

Now let me, to clear the way, request my readers to agree to certain terms in this discussion. It is undisputed, and it is indisputable, that if there was any Christian literature at all in Europe before the capture of Byzantium by the Turks (dated "1453"), it was to be found in the monasteries of the oldest Order of Christian Clergy; and if there was any Hebrew literature, it must have been in the hands of a few Jewish scholars of Spanish origin. But was there any Hebrew or Christian literature extant at all? Of course the question is startling when you are invited to face it for the first time; but it is startling questions which give impetus to fresh research, and in the end to great gains for Science.

After all, is the question nearly so startling as that which began to be whispered less than 400 years ago:

"Is the world, then, a Ball, and no flat surface resting on pillars, as we have been taught? Can it be surrounded by ships?" or the question, "Is the earth the centre of the universe, or the sun? Is it false that the great lights were fixed up yonder for the mere purpose of the illumination of the earth?" We have no record of any thrilling sensation produced by the discovery of the truths of cosmography and of astronomy. Murmured in the cell and private closet long, these truths gradually stole into public circulation, and became the property of all instructed men. This argument from surprise and paradox can count for nothing with really thoughtful men. And I shall be able to show, if I am followed in patience, that our inherited opinion of Church History is not one whit more tenable than the opinions of cosmography and astronomy which obtained before the discoveries of navigators and men of science during the "sixteenth century."

Will my readers, then, agree with me to shut out from thought for the time the whole of that dark period which preceded the Renaissance in Europe? If that is a false assumption, it will be easy to rectify it later on. The present advantage will be that we shall be able to fix our minds on the Renaissance as being what the name implies, a New Birth of Institutions, of science, of literature, under the dominant influence of the Orientals in the South of Europe.

I think the late J. A. Symonds defined the period as extending from "1453—1537," which of course is merely a rough computation, serving to give a rest to the memory and imagination. Since the name of Symonds has been sometimes thrown at my head as if his writings contradicted mine, I take leave to assert that there is no such contradiction. Symonds collected many valuable details respecting the knowledge and the arts of the period; and his later writings show that study had taught him to go far in resistance to the teachings of the Church. But I do not recall any passage which shows that he had grasped the *negative* evidence relating to Church institutions. Our knowledge of the Renaissance cannot be correct or complete unless we have distinctly before our minds the catalogue of its *ignorances* as well as of its *connaisances*.

It is a good saying of Confucius, "To know that we know what we know, and that we do not know what we know, is true knowledge." Applying it to the case before us, I would insist that we do not know what we have been taught to suppose we know about the Renaissance. And it is equally important to dislodge a false knowledge—that is a mere imagination—from our minds, as to acquire a new set of facts. In other words, to own our ignorance where we pretended to a science is to take a fresh step in the path of truth.

Now let me call attention to the time when this Church History is said, by the Printers, to have been first made known to the reading world: be it remembered, a very small world. We are told that we owe the first edition to the noted printer, *Robert Stephens*, under the patronage of Francis I., in the year 1544. With the "Church History" were bound up the "Life of Constantine," and other writers of Church History. If you look round the world at that epoch, you will find but a very small number of persons indeed who were reading Latin and Greek, and who were interesting themselves in History of any kind. Assuming the date to be near the truth, I cannot too strongly impress upon my readers the necessity of printing this date upon their memories; "*Eusebius was published to the world about 350 years ago!*"

You will understand that *Stephens* is a symbolic name. I mean that it stands for the activity of a number of writers, printers, and their patrons, who lurk in the darkness, and of whom we cannot now expect to have more than a vague and conjectural knowledge. There were secrets of the early Printers which it is idle to suppose can ever be recovered, but this much may be safely asserted, that the name, *Robert Stephens*, is one of the best Indices we possess to the Revival of Greek Letters in Paris and the West, and to the concoction of ecclesiastical Greek.

The next question is: What Texts did the Paris printers use for this edition, and how old were they?

Let us be very careful over this question: everything depends upon it. Let me strip from the statements as far as possible the learned Latin dress, and lay them nakedly before my readers. The Latin is a hindrance to a great number of plain, honest folk, who are awed by it without reason, and who would wish to call a spade by its proper name. Well! what is to be said of the *hand-written* copies of this work, as used by the Paris printers?

1. There is the Royal Paris Library MS., about the real age of which I entreat my readers to suspend their opinion. I may merely mention in passing, that when so-called Experts say "This chart seems to be of the 13th century," they admit a very late date; and I must add that they have no reason for even so early a date as this. There is not a solitary particle of proof that this chart was written before the introduction of Printing; no excuse for asserting it except the appearance of the characters. And I shall show, in the proper place, that the successive types of alleged "mediæval" handwriting, are nothing but systematic monkish frauds.

2. I name next the Medicean hand-written Book, which is alleged to have been carried from Florence to the Royal Library of Paris. Here the whole question of the Medici Library and its exact contents is raised. I fear no exact statistics can ever be given of this library which will satisfy the curiosity of men of science. Let me merely mention the striking fact that P. Vergil, writing about the time the *Eusebian* books had been brought to light, vaguely talks of libraries in Italy, but makes no definite mention of *any* of them except that at his native Urbino! I need not labor the point: this Medicean MS. is not alleged to be earlier than the sixteenth century, though scholars fondly imagine it to have been copied from an older MS.

3. Then there is the Mazarine book, the name of which reminds you of the famous Cardinal, who once owned it, and beyond whom it cannot be traced. True, the French editor, Valesius, says he never saw an older or better MS.; true, it is in the handwriting which is assumed to be "tenth century." But false and absurd is the statement that we have any such handwriting; and in this case the fraud is quite patent. This MS. has *all the emendations* of other copies, and *very many emendations* not to be found elsewhere at all! You may conclude in tolerable confidence that this is a very late copy, even as its relation, the Paketian MS., which you cannot trace certainly above the year 1667, and which is not alleged to be of earlier than sixteenth century writing; and also the Savilian MS. in the Bodleian, said to have been given by our countryman, Henry Savile. There is also the British Museum copy of about the same age.

Will any exacting critic require of me that I should go through the list of some 24 more or less complete extant MS. copies of the Church History? I am quite ready to do so; but would prefer to spare my readers any needless tedium of such examination. Here are the plain facts. The best MSS. are only three in number: the *Mazarine*, the *Vatican* (the only clue to the age of which is the probable mention of it by the late scholar Valesius, H. E., vii. 10), and the *Dresden*, which is allied to the *Mazarine*, but has been assigned, quite baselessly, by scholars who were not aware of the handwriting imposture, to the "twelfth century."

Were I to go more closely into this matter, it would only be to pile up evidence of miserable frauds, as in the case of the Venice and some other Italian copies. As a rule, the later the forgery is, the greater age is claimed for it; as our own recent experience of the stupid Mount Sinai inventions may remind us. I say on this head, that assuming the date of the Stephens publication (1544) to be true, or near the truth, we can only assume that the merest handful of readers began at that time to be acquainted with this wonderful Church History; and that there is no sparkle of evidence which should lead us to suppose it had been schemed in the monasteries very long before, or that more than one or two MSS. of it were extant.

So far on the Greek texts. I shall proceed to show the strong probability—or, to my mind, certainty—that this book was not first conceived and written in that

language; but, like the New Testament and the writing of the mythic "Jerome," in the Latin of the monasteries of the West.

EDWIN JOHNSON.

ODDS AND ENDS.

FROM A FREETHINKER'S NOTE-BOOK.

THE word God has many meanings, but it is usually only an expression to cover ignorance or knavery.

The multitude prefer a false explanation of the inexplicable to none at all.

Where knowledge ends wonder begins, and invents superstition.

Gods, ghosts, and devils are all of the same family.

If the process of evolution exhibits a personal director, it exhibits a malignant fiend, for what are the few who survive to the myriads who are crushed out?

The highest ingenuity of man is brought to bear on the problem how to destroy his fellows, and in this he only imitates the method of nature.

An infinite person is a contradiction in terms. The same may be said of a first cause.

Design does not originate, but only adapt pre-existing material.

Man makes his own god, and his own heaven and hell.

One's own self is the only being to bow down to.

Lamb's blood erases no sin, though it may cover it with a new stain.

The only redemption worth having is self-redemption.

The entire theory of the Church is opposed to secular amelioration.

The mass of the clergy are parasites on the commonwealth.

Egotism is a tap-root of the belief in immortality.

The rites of a religion go deeper and are more abiding than its dogmas.

The doctrine of eternal hell is absurd as well as atrocious.

The fellow who is only restrained from stealing by fear of hell is a thief at heart.

Morality founded on religion is a house built upon quicksand.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

ACID DROPS.

Archdeacon Sinclair is a flowery preacher, who knows how to tickle the Christian multitude. He has just been talking about the spirit which "taught the Eastern sages to watch for the dawn of that great Light which led them to the cradle of Bethlehem." *Great Light* is good, but it is not gospel. What the magi (not necessarily *sages*) are said to have seen was a "star," and they "followed" it, so that it could not have been very distant. Had it been a "great light" all the East would have seen it, whereas the East saw nothing; indeed, in all probability, both the magi and the star of the Nativity were pious inventions; and Archdeacon Sinclair's "great light" shows how ready the Christian imagination is to dress up any old fable to suit the popular taste.

During the Reformation days the Protestants contended for the Bible as an absolute guide in faith and morals. The Bible, they said, was written by "the penmen of the Holy Ghost," and to say it could err in the smallest particular was a damnable blasphemy. The Catholic champions, on the other hand, contended that the Church was the living voice of God, and that the written or printed Bible was no more than her assistant. They called the Bible by itself a dead and killing letter, a shell without a kernel, a Delphic sword, a leaden rule, a shoe for any foot, Sibylla's prophecies, Sphinx's riddles, a source of contention, a wood of thieves, a shop of heretics, full of imperfections and perplexities. Where Catholicism won this view of the Bible prevailed; where Protestantism won the Bible became a perfect fetish, at once divine and infallible.

Since then the Bible has been studied, and the Protestants are now divided over it. Some who stand in the old ways declare it to be absolutely free from error; others, more knowing and up to date, affirm it to be inspired, but not free

from error; and the two parties are at desperate loggerheads with each other. We actually see it announced that a public debate is arranged between Dr. Clifford (advanced) and the Rev. John Urquhart (stick-in-the-mud) on "The Absolute Inerrancy of Scripture." Here we have one Protestant minister defending the Bible and another attacking it. If this sort of thing continues, as appears likely, Freethinkers will scarcely need to criticise the "blessed book," as the advanced Protestants are ready to settle its hash themselves. What a change since the days of Thomas Paine!

"Women's Rights" have received another check. The British and Foreign Bible Society has decisively refused to put ladies on its committee. We are not sorry to hear it; on the contrary, we are glad to learn that the ladies have no share in the responsibility of circulating the Bible indiscriminately. There are many *blue* things in it, many *filthy* things; and if such stuff *must* be scattered broadcast, it is best to leave the ladies out of the wretched business.

We notice in a Christian journal published in England the editorial statement that "the Devil and the Pope are conspiring to capture America." Here is Christian charity for you! How glorious are the prospects of Christian reunion!

The Rev. A. J. Harrison, in his Boyle Lectures, says of the two conceptions of God, Unitarian and Trinitarian: "The only plea that can apparently be urged on behalf of the former is, that it represents God as less incomprehensible than the former. But as it is certain God must transcend the highest conceptions we are able to form, this plea is rather an argument against than an argument for Unitarianism." At this rate the more incomprehensibly the Deity is described, the more likely you are to be correct. Mr. Harrison could have given a tip to Athanasius.

"It is a notable fact," says the *Christian Commonwealth*, "that in many of the Established Churches of the land collections have been taken for the *Victoria* fund, but we do not recall a single instance where the Established Church gave its collections to the *Liberator* victims." Well now, we are no friend of the Established Church, but we are bound to say that our contemporary's observation is rather foolish and equally unfair. The *Liberator* victims owe nothing of their misfortunes to the Established Church. It was a Nonconformist set of swindlers that ruined them, and the Nonconformist Churches are the proper ones to come to their relief.

It is no wonder that the clericals are anxious on the school question. "A Perplexed Parson" who writes to the *Times*, explains the reason. He has recently been appointed to a parish where he finds the Church schools in such a state, that if a sanitary inspector called he would certainly close them. There are but two water-closets for 300 children, and the sewage is inefficient; £800 would be necessary to put the schools in proper order, and he cannot raise the cash. Facts like these indicate why the Church is so anxious to get more of the public money for denominational schools.

Reviewing Canon Cheyne's new book on *The Founders of Old Testament Criticism*, the *Daily Chronicle* refers to "the popular idea that the higher criticism, as it is called, came from the opponents of religion, who, pressing down one defence after another, would not desist from the attack till the whole citadel of religion were destroyed." "One result of Dr. Cheyne's book," the *Chronicle* says, "will be to help to extinguish this delusion, for the existence of which Secularist lecturers are to some extent responsible."

There is a confusion in these remarks. "Religion" is used as though it were synonymous with "Christianity." Spinoza, Voltaire, Paine, Drummond, and Strauss—not to give a long list of others—were not Christians, but all of them, with the exception of Strauss, were religious, in the sense that they were Theists or Pantheists. Non-Christian scholars have done their share of learned Biblical criticism; and so far as the scientific and moral, as distinguished from scholastic, criticism of the Bible is concerned, it is perfectly clear that the admissions now made by Christian divines have been *compelled* by the long and persistent attack of Freethinkers.

The *Chronicle* seems to think that the only "criticism" of the Bible is that which is based upon a profound knowledge of Hebrew and Greek. But this is a great mistake. Thomas Paine was ignorant of Greek and Hebrew. His chief equipment was a large supply of common sense. And what was the result? As a matter of fact, he anticipated, a hundred years ago, the principal conclusions now set forth by "higher critics" like Canon Driver.

What a good conceit of himself has the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes! A motion he supported was carried at the Wesleyan Conference, and he thinks that the vote was "due to divine interposition in answer to prayer." After this it should be easy to predict the voting at Wesleyan Conferences. All you have to do is to ask what Mr. Hughes has been praying for. Of course the opposite side may pray too, but it is ten to one on the favorite.

There is no cheek on earth like the cheek of the half-fledged Christian advocate. Divines have differed about the sin against the Holy Ghost, which is without forgiveness; and some of the best have said that, as Jesus did not specify it, no Christian had a right to do so. James Marchant, however, is quite ready to supplement Jesus Christ. In his recent debate with Mr. Watts he declared that the sin against the Holy Ghost was persistence in unbelief. Mr. Watts is therefore doomed to hell; a fate which has one compensation—he will not spend eternity with James Marchant.

Rochdale has been mildly agitated by the lectures of a Christian Evidence man called Powell. If he is the noisy, illiterate fellow we met at Bristol and Liverpool, we can only wonder at the Rochdale press taking the slightest notice of him. He appears to have charged the local *Star* with being a "rat" printing house, an accusation which it indignantly denies and easily confutes. According to the *Star*, Powell offered £5 to anyone who could prove that the moon wasn't made of green cheese. "Prove that it is," said an opponent, "and I'll give you £10." It was an excellent and sufficient answer—if such folly deserved it.

The Rev. Charles Fluhrer, a Universalist preacher, of Grand Rapids, Michigan, in a discourse on Edwin Booth, said he would sooner stand his chance of heaven with the great actor, who paid his debts in full, than with "that other actor," Talmage, who joined in the doxology after announcing that the debt of his church had been compromised at 23 cents on the dollar.

At St. John's Chapel, St. John's Wood-road, there is practically no congregation, although the parson gets £250 a-year out of the rates. The Bishop of London, in 1891, promised to look into the matter, but he has taken no further notice, and, though registered letters have been sent to him calling his attention to the matter, he has taken no notice of them. The vestry have now given him notice that unless he takes some prompt action the church will be closed.

The following advertisement, taken from the *Stage*, is the sort of thing we may expect to see more of if the poverty and scepticism of the clergy continue, as they are likely to do. "Wanted, partner, by clergyman, age 29, single, University B.A., now holding important curacy, leaving Church for stage. Considered at college, by critical and superior audiences, excellent comedian, comic singer, etc. Has made a complete study of histrionic art. Wishes to meet with leading lady (one with some capital preferred); or would accept temporary engagement with good touring company.—'Rev. Histrionicus,' care of the *Stage* Office, London." "Rev. Histrionicus" may be congratulated on trying for a more honest employment.

A woman calling herself Clair St. Clair has been before a London police court for pretending to tell fortunes by "palmistry." It is, however, only the poor charlatans who get run in. Other professors of the art, who require half a guinea for examination, advertise in the *Morning Post*, while the nation is compelled to support the great black army of impostors who live in clover by telling our fortunes in kingdom come.

Some Italian iconoclast has mutilated a statue of Our Lady of the Conception, at Castelbolognese, by knocking off her head and nose. The peasants have taken a solemn oath not

to enter the desecrated village again until the blessed beheaded virgin has been revenged.

Christianity has only learnt to be tolerant where it has been compelled thereto. Where it has the power it has the disposition to crush out opposition. In the Russian Baltic provinces persecution of the Lutheran clergy still continues, and one pastor has been sent to prison for eight months for some petty contravention of orthodox bye-laws, the sentence being confirmed on appeal to the Senate.

Miss E. Golding, the lady who escaped from a French convent by the aid of her solicitor, has named ten convents in France and Belgium in all of which she asserts immorality took place while she was there, and a draught was given as a penance to nuns, which consisted of a poisonous decoction leading to death. A mixed committee of Catholics and Protestants was formed at Bournemouth to investigate her charges. But it is very doubtful if they can get to the bottom of the matter unless the French government will make an investigation.

In the *Tablet* Mr. J. H. Spencer writes that the cross Constantine is said to have seen in the skies was "produced by the sun's rays at rising in conjunction with its rays at setting and the circle of the horizon"; and this, says Mr. Spencer, is what he put upon his banner. This is curious as coming from a Catholic, for it makes the Christian aspect of the legend quite unnecessary.

We often get a smile at the short-sightedness of the clerical party. Here is the *Church Times* asking for rate-aid for Church schools, without seeing that this, in the long run, may mean public control and the Church schools losing their special character. And then we have the Church papers and Churches mildly patronising the social problem, quite oblivious that the problem may swallow themselves up.

At Belfast, William Anderson, an elder of the Irish Reformed Presbyterian Church, one of the strictest of the Calvinistic sects, was found guilty of seducing the daughter of a neighboring farmer named M'Lelland, and ordered to pay £190 damages. The defendant was a man specially noted in the district for his piety, and what makes the affair more heartless is the fact that he was an intimate friend of the girl's parents.

The Rev. Thomas Pugh, styled perpetual curate of Gwynfe, East Carmarthenshire, has been deprived of his living for being drunk while administering the holy sacrament, in which state he dropped the body of his blessed Savior, in the shape of consecrated bread, on to the floor. For this terrible sin there is no forgiveness.

The seventh commandment has brought parson De Burgh Sidley to grief. He is—or rather *was*—vicar of Garway, Herefordshire, and although sixty years of age he had enough of the old Adam in him to commit adultery with a woman in his service. For this "peccadillo" the poor, persecuted man of God has been deprived of his living under the Clergy Discipline Act.

The Clergy Discipline Act, by the way, was passed by Parliament like other statutes. How, then, can the clergy continue to talk nonsense about the Church's independency? It is a creature of the State in every respect.

A pious gentleman named Maillard, residing at Adrian-terrace, West Brompton, cut his throat, and has been found by a coroner's jury to have been of unsound mind. He left behind him some verses entitled "Nearer Home," in which he stated that he was going off

To bear the palm and wear the crown,
And stand before the throne.

The poor man was evidently mad, and a good many other people share his dementia, only they are not so thorough.

Four Irishmen stole a yacht on Lake Michigan and went for a sail. Meeting with an accident of some kind, by which the yacht was reduced to a sinking condition, they put a note in a beer bottle, saying that the end was near, and they would meet their friends "in heaven." What a curious mixture! The stolen yacht, the empty beer bottle, and the thieves' and boozers' assurance of glory.

Samuel Fox, a Quaker, is born out of due season. He deems it a point of honor, and of religion, to go to church and keep his hat on. After being ejected from other churches, he went on Sunday last to Westminster Abbey, where he forcibly resisted the attendants, and was only put back into the street after a sharp tussle. Samuel Fox is only half a Quaker after all, otherwise he would not resist "violence." So far as his hat is concerned, we have not the least sympathy with him. We fail to see any principle in such a violation of common social decorum. Hats are removable in Secular halls as well as in churches.

Mr. Justice Hawkins tried a man called Dod at the Warwickshire assize on a charge of assaulting a little girl named Cribbon. The prosecutrix, a diminutive child, being put into the witness-box, was asked by Mr. H. Young whether she knew what an oath was. She answered "To speak the truth." Mr. Young inquired, "What do you think will happen to you if you don't tell the truth?" "Well," interposed the judge, "Does anybody know?" At this the court laughed. Mr. Young persisted in his question, and the child answered, "Go to hell." More laughter. "Is that good enough for you?" asked Sir Henry, and there was another explosion.

At an inquest on a baby who died of innutrition last week at Peckham, weighing only six pounds, it transpired that the grandmother would not allow a doctor to be called because she trusted in God and not in man. She stated in court that she trusted to God to look after it. She was severely censured by the jury, who probably assent to a similar doctrine on Sundays.

The Berlin *Tageblatt* has a Special Correspondent in Uganda. He says the missionaries are well paid and live in European luxury. Their work consists, to a great extent, in useless psalm-singing, the sale of biblical tracts, etc. For the rest, their activity is of a political character, to the great detriment of the interests of the country.

Harvest Thanksgiving, this year, should take the form of "thank you for nothing." The farmers are well-nigh ruined, but tithes must be paid, and thanks returned to the Almighty for his loving kindness.

Owing to the Oxford Evangelicals refusing to have the statue of Cardinal Newman set up there, it will be erected in front of the Oratory at Brompton. The Anglican High Churchmen, and others who subscribed on the grounds of the appeal, viz, that Newman was a great English writer, will hardly relish the statue being now merely used to adorn the Catholic Oratory.

The various bodies of the Labor Church have formed a Union, and put forward as their first object, "The development of the religion of the Labor movement." The wording is, intentionally or not, ambiguous, but in this perhaps it only the better represents the intentions of the leaders of the movement.

It is stated in the *Weekly Dispatch* that Professor St. George Mivart's article on "Happiness in Hell" has been placed on the *Index Expurgatorius*, and all good Catholics are henceforth forbidden to read it. If this be true, it is one of the funniest things we have heard of lately. Professor Mivart stated that he had consulted ecclesiastical authorities before publishing, and that he spoke almost "by permission." We expressed our opinion that he was only being made use of by the Jesuits, to act as a feeler of the public pulse, in order to find how much change in hell-fire it was prudent to effect. Scientific men are no match for the Jesuits on their own ground.

The *Dispatch* tells a pretty story of a keen, shrewd Scotchman, who made the best of this world by accumulating a huge fortune, and, to put matters square for the next, was a pillar of the Church in Scotland. But his weakness was dogs. He pitted his dog against any other in the world for fighting powers. A brother merchant and elder had an equally high opinion of a badger he owned. A match was made for a thousand pounds, the contest to take place in a month. In a fortnight's time the owner of the badger wanted to cry off. The dog owner refused at first, but eventually it was agreed he should do so for £500. The bargain was

settled over whisky, which made the badger's master communicative. "I am well out of this," he said at last; "my badger died a fortnight ago." "Oh, you needn't have troubled," answered the other; "my dog died three weeks back!"

Spurgeon, junr., gave his opening discourse at his father's tabernacle last Sunday. The only museum he wanted open on Sunday was the biblical museum, which, he said, contained Aaron's blooming rod, the dagger wherewith Ehud smote the recalcitrant king of Moab, also Shangar's ox-goad, and relics of Gideon's pitcher lamps. A further list he might have got from our Summer Number. Who should want to go to the British Museum when a walk to the tabernacle will show them the instrument wherewith Samson killed heaps upon heaps of the Philistines?

The Rev. B. J. Holmes, vicar of New Mill, near Huddersfield, died a few days ago in the parish church while inspecting the registers. Of course there is nothing miraculous in the occurrence; but what solemn articles and paragraphs would appear in the religious papers if a Free-thought lecturer were to die suddenly while looking over the N.S.S. books! It would be a clear "judgment."

Christianity is gradually but surely losing its hold upon men. Its chief power now lies with the women, and that will diminish as the fair sex becomes better educated and more thoughtful. We see it reported that the Congregational churches of the United States have taken a census, from which it appears that 33.5 per cent of the congregations are males, and 66.5 per cent are females. This is two women to one man, and the proportion is exceeded in many English churches.

Dirt and piety appear to go together at the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. It appears from statistics published in the *Bombay Gazette*, that of 91,000 pilgrims who left that city for Mecca during the last eight years, only 60,000 have returned. In other words, thirty pilgrims in every hundred perish. Fewer priests and more scavengers are needed.

Senor Castelar is retiring from public life, in which he has never been a brilliant success except as an orator, and it takes something more than oratory to make a statesman. Senor Castelar's republicanism has been rather platonic. The same must be said of his freethinking. He has never had logical resolution enough to be thorough. Magnificent as a speaker, he is not remarkable as a thinker. His tendencies were liberal, but he has not advanced with the times, and it must be confessed that he is something of a futility.

SHILLING MONTH.

RECEIVED.

[When no figures follow the name the amount is 1s.]

J. Umpleby 2s., Alpha (senr.), J. Edey, A. Haswell, F. Simonds, S. Humberley, D. C. 3s., G. Dixon, Ramo 2s., A. Corley, A. Lewis 2s. 6d., Rho 2s., J. Bovins 2s., W. J. Griffiths 2s., W. Guerrier, R. Bulman, J. H. £1, Two Lochfyne Herrings 2s., C. H. Brierley 2s., W. B., J. Pruett 2s. 6d., G. W. B., A. Beldham 2s., C. Bussie 5s., J. Lynch, W. Stuart 10s., G. Sumner 2s., W. H. Lawrence, G. Rose, A. Yetton 5s., J. T. Ives, J. Rowny 2s., J. Bater. Per A. Fincken: R. Miller, E. Miller, R. Fincken, A. Fincken, W. Fincken, Mr. Davis, Mr. Wilson, Two Friends 2s., W. McMullen. Mr. Cole, E. Birch 2s., E. Holland 1s. 9d., Redland 3s., G. Grove, J. Mill, R. Kitching, J. Thomson and Son 2s., Mr. and Mrs. Clarke 2s. 6d., J. Bland 1s. 4d., C. C. A. 2s. 6d., W. F. 2s., J. M., Hypatia 5s., F. Weeks 2s. 6d., W. H. Ashford 3s., Quiz 2s. 6d., H. Horrell, J. Walter, H. Thorp, J. W. Griffiths 2s., J. Hargreaves, J. Brocklebank 2s. 6d., T. Ollorrenshaw 2s., T. A. S. 2s. Battersea: E. Clements, Engine Driver, J. Wilkes, G. Foan, A. Arnaby, G. Sellwood. Per C. Watts: Collection at S. Shields £1 10s., H. J. Martin 5s., W. Hopper 2s. 6d., C. A. Richards, J. Whiteley, W. H. Spivey, J. G. Dobson, Mr. Wehrle 2s. 6d., T. Elwen, H. Nicholson, J. Morton, C. Grason, W. Bell 10s., Juno 2s. 6d., W. Balck, Sympathiser 3s., C. Deane, E. Barreyatt 2s., Mrs. and Mrs. Turnbull 6s., W. Turnbull 2s., J. Hayes, P. J. W., W. H. Putz, Mrs. McClelland, H. F. S. 10s. 6d. Per Miss Vance: John Stowart, Jas. McLeish, W. Palmer, E. Trevillion, R. J. Gill, A. Guest, Richardson, E. T. Brewster, junr., 10s., J. P. Richardson, J. Oram.

N.S.S. ONLY.—S. Hartmann £1, T. G.

Correction.—W. H. Wood (last week) should have been 2s. instead of 1s.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

Sunday, August 6, Hall of Science, 142 Old-Street, E.C.: at 7.30, "Spurgeon the Second on the Bible Museum."

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—August 13, Hall of Science, London.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent direct to him (with stamped envelope for reply) at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.

T. A. S.—We note your "pleasure" at the increase in the price of the *Freethinker*. You say "it ought to have been done long ago." Perhaps so. But we had to move cautiously. The circulation of a paper is more delicate than the circulation of the blood.—Glad to hear you intend to join the N.S.S., and hope your "first subscription will be the forerunner of many more."

C. SMITH wishes a copy of Mr. Foote's *Royal Paupers* were in every taxpayer's hands, and hopes he will expose other sets of national paupers in the same telling way.

RAMO.—Pleased to find you appreciate our "arduous work for humanity." It has its compensations. At the finish one can feel that one has done something.

F. GARDINER.—We have not seen the article you refer to in *Great Thoughts*. Pleased to hear you are "glad" that we are raising our price; also that, after a hard struggle, you have induced your newsagent to exhibit a contents-sheet. Send us his address, and we will forward one by post weekly.

J. UMPLEBY.—Glad to hear you are recovering, though slowly. "I am overwhelmed," you say, "with the kindness of friends and the general public, in a way I little anticipated." This is the only cheerful aspect of the case, but we wish the sympathy had been called forth by something less outrageous.

ALPHA SEN. is delighted with our Summer Number, in common with all his friends. "I commend you," he says, "for raising the price of the *Freethinker*. Our late leader would have lived longer but for his financial worries."

H. JONES.—Thanks for cuttings. How is it you never send us an article now?

W. GUERRIER.—If you have eight to keep on 23s. a week, we only wonder at your subscribing at all to Shilling Month. Certainly your example is enough to shame the indifferent.

R. BULMAN.—All right, as it happened.

J. THOMSON (Renfrew).—We hope your good wishes for the *Freethinker* will be realised. Mr. Foote hopes to see his Scottish friends again shortly.

HYPATIA.—You wish your five shillings for Shilling Month were five pounds. So do we. However, you give what we can; and, if all did the same, the result would be splendid.

F. WEEKS.—Pleased to hear you are "delighted" with our article on "Religion and Money." Your suggestions are all good, and we had already resolved to carry some of them out in our "new departure."

T. S. LAWRENCE.—(1) Mr. Stead's suit of prison clothes, which he wears on the anniversary of his imprisonment, was of real course made by his own tailor. He only wore the real prison suit for a few days, after which the Home Secretary made him a first-class misdemeanant, and then he had a jolly time, his family actually spending Christmas-day with him. (2) What you refer to is certainly regrettable. It requires "packers" to get people properly seated in a crowded meeting.

G. W. B. sends 2s. 2d., being his penny per week extra for the *Freethinker* during the past six months.

D. C., in sending subscription to Shilling Month, writes—"The *Freethinker*, with or without illustrations, is well worth twopence, and the Summer Number is excellent. I am highly pleased with your articles on Mrs. Besant and Theosophy."

F. S. SWATTS.—Thanks for cuttings.

G. DIXON.—It will be a grand thing if we can persuade Col. Ingersoll to "come over and help us."

WATTS.—You had better see if your heart is affected. If it is only platform nervousness, you may conquer it by practice.

A. G. BARRALET.—Noticed last week.

REDLAND.—Thanks for good wishes.

G. GROVE.—Pleased to have your high opinion of our Summer Number.—There are several liberal clergymen and ministers who are kept in check by strong circumstances. We pity them, and are glad that some of them do the best they can to liberalise their congregations.—Mr. Wheeler may throw more light on the Gospels by and bye. His articles merit your praise.

J. MUNTON.—Cuttings always welcome.

G. L. MACKENZIE.—Sorry for the misprint. Glad to hear you say that "Every one seems to think the Summer Number a great success."

C. H. BRIERLEY writes—"I quite agree with your new departure with regard to the *Freethinker*; very few working men who, like myself, have been rescued from the blight of superstition, will begrudge the extra penny!"

YOUNG RECRUIT.—Report from another hand previously received. Thanks all the same.

J. H. WHITEELL.—Ingersoll has never, to our knowledge, noticed Father Lambert. He has only discussed with men of high standing, such as Dr. Field, Judge Black, Cardinal Manning, and Mr. Gladstone.

J. SKINNER sends one shilling "towards the loss incurred in selling, to me and others, the *Freethinker* at a penny weekly."

ISAAC JACOBSON.—Shall appear. Many thanks for your encouraging letter. See "Sugar Plums."

A. SLADE says that "No man could think of grumbling at twopence for such a splendid paper as the *Freethinker*."

CHICAGO DELEGATION FUND (FOOTE AND WATTS).—G. Grove 2s., J. Umpleby £1, G. Dixon 1s., W. Walton 1s., W. Hopper (per C. Watts) £1, T. G. 1s., W. Lamb 2s. 6d., N. B. Billany 2s., C. Deane 9s., W. Johnson 16s., J. Oran, 1s., C. Marriott 2s.

W. H. P.—It was a cowardly act of bigotry; glad to know it has been frustrated.

W. HOLLAND.—Don't know what the book fetches now—perhaps a pound.

E. BARREYATT.—The *Freethinker* does not share in Shilling Month this time. We stand out for the sake of other necessities.

R. TURNBULL.—Put to Shilling Month. Thanks for good wishes.

P. J. W.—We missed you on our last visit to Grimsby.

W. LAMB thinks the *Freethinker* will have a better sale at twopence. "It will be more important," he says, "and I do not believe Freethinkers can give it up."

N. B. BILLANY.—Delighted to see your honest "fist" again.

J. DOWNING.—The suggestion shall be considered.

W. FOLLY.—See "Sugar Plums" and separate report.

W. BELL.—Mr. Foote means to "keep well." We read your initial as "W"; if it is "M" accept our apology.

E. SMEDLEY.—(1) If we were asked "Do you believe there is a God?" we should reply "Define what you mean by God." After that we should answer according to the definition. (2) Christianity is not, in our opinion, superior to Buddhism or Confucianism in its moral teaching; in some respects it is distinctly inferior. (3) Gibbon was not a Christian, in any honest sense of the term. (4) We may produce some fine copies of the Ingersoll portrait in the Summer Number by and bye.

D. H. (Sunderland).—Miss Vance has sent share application forms. Thanks for your good wishes. Glad you were "delighted" with Mr. Watts in the Jarrow debate.

JUNO (Hull) wishes us all success in our new departure.

J. R. ROBSON.—Thanks for papers; see paragraphs.

C. DEANE.—We scarcely think we deserve all your handsome compliments, but your kind letter has given us real pleasure, ERIN.—Too gloomy.

C. J. sends £1 for one paid-up share in Mr. Foote's name in the National Secular Hall Society (Ltd.).

H. M. RIDGWAY writes—"The new departure will, I think, be a great improvement. I always was in favor of illustrations, and Mr. Calvert's sketches are first-class." Mr. Ridgway thinks the London Secular Federation ought to have a big demonstration at Brighton on August 20, and that "all meetings in London ought to be stopped."

J. F.—We have never made the unqualified statement that Christianity abolished the gladiatorial shows. The number you refer to is not by us at the moment. We have more than once referred to the subject in these columns. Ask the C.E.S. gentleman to quote our exact words.

O. A. RICHARDS.—It is customary to take a fee for baptising in churches. Glad to hear from one whom our writings and lectures have helped to cast off superstition.

W. BRADBURN reports that the sale of the *Freethinker* has been increased by the energy of Mr. Smith, of the late Paddington Branch, who induced a newsagent (Mayhead, 46 Golborn-road, North Kensington) to display one in his window and take a dozen copies for sale, with guarantee against loss. This correspondent would sooner pay fourpence than go without the *Freethinker*.

T. W. READER.—C. Edwards' *Witness of Assyria* may supply you with the references you require. Most Assyriologists do not commit themselves to theories, but you can read G. Smith's Chaldean account of Genesis, or the Rev. A. Sayce's Hibbert Lectures, and draw your own conclusions.

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—Rochdale Star—Natural Food—Jarrow Guardian—Jarrow Express—Tyneside Advertiser—Engineering Review—New York Herald—Leeds Mercury—Brighton Times—Sirilaka Situmfina—South Shields Free Press—La Verité—Weekly Bulletin

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.

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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.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Our Summer Number is still selling fairly well, but there are some thousands of our weekly readers who have not yet bought a copy. If they mean to purchase (and of course they do) we hope they will order at once. There may be some difficulty later on, as the wholesale agents don't care to keep one publication too long in stock. Everybody speaks highly of this "extra special," and those who have not yet purchased are delaying a treat.

There was an improved audience at the London Hall of Science on Sunday evening, and Mr. Foote's lecture on "Christianity Not New and Not True" was very much applauded. Mr. J. Brumage took the chair, and made a strong appeal for a wider distribution of Freethought literature. Mr. Foote afterwards made a preliminary announcement of the change which is to be effected at the hall. It appeared to give great satisfaction. This evening (Aug. 6) the platform is to be again occupied by Mr. Foote.

Mr. Foote will resume his Presidential Notes next week, after which he hopes to continue them with regularity—say once a fortnight. Meanwhile it may be stated that his proposal as to the meetings at the London Hall of Science have been discussed by the Organisation Committee, and later by the Executive, and adopted unanimously. A part of the seating accommodation at the Hall will be thrown open free on Sunday evenings, and Mr. Foote has promised to give a month's lectures gratuitously, in order to let the experiment have the best possible chance of success. This is the first fruit of the new departure in the *Freethinker*, which, if well supported, will mean a much greater popularisation of our principles.

Mr. Foote's visit to the Isle of Man is fixed. He intends to attempt an open-air lecture at Douglas Head on Sunday, September 3, prior to which he will take a few days' holiday on the island. There may be difficulties, but they will be faced, and if possible surmounted. Freethought lectures have never yet sullied the pure orthodoxy of the Isle of Man, and the novelty of the enterprise will probably attract some Freethinkers from Lancashire. If the result is that the N.S.S. has to find a new President, it will be as well for some of the "saints" to see the last of the old one.

Mr. George Jacob Holyoake, the veteran Father of Secularism, is lecturing to-day (Aug. 6) in the Secular Hall, Manchester, morning and evening. Local Freethinkers should make a point of attending his meetings, and giving him a thrice hearty reception. It is so good to see a man of Mr. Holyoake's age taking such a vivid interest in all that concerns human progress, and still fighting for the cause of mental liberty and enlightenment.

Mr. Charles Watts writes us to the effect that his so-called debate with James Marchant last week in Jarrow was as complete a fiasco as could be conceived. The representative of the Christian Evidence Society is about as intellectually low as he could be. Not once during the two nights did he even attempt to discuss, but employed his time in repeating most glaring falsehoods and in indulging in the lowest style of vulgarity. This representative of Christianity is a good specimen of a wild youth, filled with egotism and destitute of intellectual balance. He lacks all sense of good taste, and he has yet to learn the first elements of the art of debate. It is a humiliation to Mr. Watts to have his name associated with such an indiscreet imitator of the street preacher and Salvation Army declaimer. Our colleague will in future posi-

tively decline, even to please his friends, to meet in public debate any person who is not decent in speech, truthful in his statements, and possessed of some intellectual ability.

A long report of the debate between Mr. Charles Watts and Mr. James Marchant appears in the *Jarrow Guardian*, and seems to be written with impartiality. Such a report will do good, if it only enables Christians to see there is another side of the question.

The South Shields *Free Press*, in an editorial paragraph on the Watts-Marchant debate, remarks that "In power of argument the combatants were far from well-matched." This is a polite way of saying that Marchant cut a poor figure.

"The combatants," on the present occasion, says the *Jarrow Express*, "can hardly be regarded as having been equally matched. With such a Rupert of debate as Mr. Watts, a better man than Mr. Marchant might have hesitated to meet him upon the platform."

One incident of the debate was at least amusing. "A party of young ladies, evidently members of some choir, struck up "All hail the power of Jesu's name." Fortunately it was after the vote of thanks to the chairman. It would be hard to debate with a choir.

Mr. Charles Watts had capital audiences last Sunday at South Shields; the large hall was filled in the evening. The enthusiasm, we are informed, was at its highest pitch, the applause being renewed again and again at the conclusion of the lecture. Friends were present from Newcastle, Jarrow, and other surrounding districts.

The North Eastern Secular Federation has its annual picnic to-day (Aug. 6) to Jesmond Dene. Members are requested to assemble in the Eldon Hall at 12 o'clock. Volunteer guides are wanted to show the visitors the various places of interest in and about the Dene. Those who can act in this capacity should kindly be at Eldon Hall before twelve. Freethinkers who do not belong to any of the Federation Branches will be very welcome, and if they join the excursion they will find some agreeable companions in a day's pleasure.

Eldon Hall will be open at 10 o'clock for early arrivals from the country. Visitors bringing lunch with them will find accommodation there. The departure for the Dene is at 1.30. Tea will be provided in the Armstrong Park refreshment rooms between 4 and 5 at reasonable prices. At 7 o'clock, on Newcastle Town Moor, under the auspices of the Sunday Music Society, a special program will be rendered by the Newcastle Military Band, under the accomplished leadership of Mr. R. Smith.

The Failsworth Secular Sunday School holds its annual services on Sunday next (Aug. 13). This is always an interesting function, and we dare say there will be a large attendance. Mr. Thomas Slater is to deliver the afternoon and evening addresses, and musical selections will be rendered by the well-trained choir.

The Islington Branch appeals to Freethinkers who can make it convenient to do so to attend their Sunday afternoon meetings at Newington Green. The ruffianism which has prevailed all through the open-air season culminated last Sunday in a scene of disorder, which only stopped short at fisticuffs. Mr. Alison, who was lecturing, was deliberately prevented from concluding his address by a gang who seem to be apt pupils of the arch-rowdy to whom we have often referred, and the chairman, in accordance with a warning he had given them, closed the meeting without allowing opposition speeches. An attack was then made on the platform, and the disciples of the meek and lowly one did all they could do short of dealing blows. The organisers of these meetings are determined to go on to the end of the season, in any case, but they ask for support around the platform to make the work easier.

We are informed that the reason why this particular station suffers so much from rowdyism is that in the locality there is a Young Men's Christian Mission or Society, where these sweet youths are trained—in religion, but not in conduct. This may, perhaps, account for the disturbances.

A correspondent of ours, who is also an active member of the N.S.S., sends us an encouraging letter from Delhi. He tells us that Secularism has obtained a good footing there. Twelve months ago he was the only Freethinker (so far as he knew) in the city; now they have a little club, open to all comers, and seven active members on the list. They have just added Mr. Foote's chief writings to their library and a batch of Mr. Bradlaugh's is expected by the next mail. These works are lent freely to the Christians, with excellent results.

Mr. G. W. Childs, a wealthy American, has purchased the ground where Richard Proctor, the Freethinking astronomer, lies buried, and will erect a monument to his memory.

The Wolverhampton Branch is going on excursion to Bridgnorth next Sunday (Aug. 13). Freethinkers in the district who would like to join should drop a postcard to L. N. Clifton, 41 Evans-street, Whitmore-reans, Wolverhampton.

London Freethinkers should be careful to reserve Sunday, August 20, for the Secular Federation's excursion by special train from London Bridge and Victoria. The day should be held "sacred" by all the metropolitan Branches. It is intended to hold a Freethought demonstration at Brighton, and no effort should be spared to make it imposing. A thousand demonstrators would produce a great effect. The return tickets are only three shillings, children half-price. They can be obtained at 28 Stonecutter-street, at the Hall of Science, or from any London Branch secretary. Mr. Foote will join the excursion, and speak at the demonstration.

Shilling Month expires a few days after this number of the *Freethinker* is in the hands of its readers. Those who have not yet subscribed should get a postal order, cross it, and send it to us *immediately*. Next week's issue will contain the final acknowledgment of subscriptions, after which no more will be solicited.

All who intend to subscribe to the Chicago Delegation Fund should do so within the next week. There is far from enough in hand at present. Our American brethren are expecting the delegation from the National Secular Society as a feature of their International Congress.

A SPECIMEN OF FARRAR.

II.

AND now for the talk which is certainly half, possibly wholly dishonest. But, as we wish to be as mild as possible, we have called it "half dishonest." Says Canon Farrar—and we quote the passage in full, first:—"It has been sometimes assumed that Charles Darwin was an unbeliever; yet he wrote in his book on the descent of man: 'The question whether there is a Creator and the Ruler of the Universe has been answered in the affirmative by the highest intellects that ever lived.' I do not like to mention our living contemporaries, but I may say that Professor Huxley has at least used words of memorable eloquence on the absolute and unapproachable supremacy of the Bible as an instrument of national education. And Mr. Herbert Spencer says, 'The atheistic theory is not only unthinkable, but even if it were thinkable, would not be a solution of the question.'"

Is this, then, the "impassioned love of truth" as it works out in the pulpit? We freely admit that it is the work of the partisan to belaud his own side, to exaggerate its power and its goodness, and to belittle his opponents. It is also, doubtless, the work of the partisan to claim as many adherents as possible for his own side, and, by slurring over some facts, and magnifying others, produce a favorable impression for his own party. That is what you get across the floor of the House of Commons, as a rule. But when you find a person setting up to be very truthful and judicial-minded, telling would-be preachers that if they have not "an impassioned love of truth," they might as well abandon their profession, you expect at least a fair presentation of the case. Of Huxley and Spencer we will say nothing at present—everybody knows their views. In the passage Dr. Farrar quoted from Darwin,

he omitted to mention that Darwin afterwards modified it. The facts as to Darwin are admirably set out in Mr. Foote's little brochure entitled *Darwin on God*, and it is unnecessary, therefore, to go over the same ground here. But we may say that Mr. Foote conclusively shows by the facts, by copious extracts from Darwin's writings, by statements of his biographer, and by reference to his general mode of life, that Darwin progressed from orthodoxy through Theism into Agnosticism; and that, in the latter part of his life, he was completely emancipated from the god-superstition. Now what, then, we want to know, did Dr. Farrar mean by dragging in Darwin, Huxley and Spencer? Did he mean to insinuate that they were Christians? And if he knew they were not Christians, as he must have, how did dragging them in help his case at all? What point can be made, on broad grounds, by quoting some stray opinion of Huxley that the Bible is a good school-book, or another stray opinion of Spencer that the atheistic theory doesn't explain everything, though, by the way, we never heard it did? Is it not a fact that Dr. Farrar, by mentioning some things, and suppressing others, conveyed, or tried to convey, the impression that these men, if not actually Christians, were at least very favorably inclined towards orthodoxy? Perhaps Dr. Farrar can reconcile his own conduct, however, with his highly-developed sense of "righteousness." But the fact remains, to put it in as calm language as possible, that he distinctly insinuated what was not accurate in order to strengthen his own case.

Towards the end Dr. Farrar strikes the old, old note, that the destruction of religion means the destruction of morality. And he continues thus: "Once persuade man that he is no better than the beasts that perish, and he will live like the beasts that perish; he will cease to recognise the intangible grandeur of the moral law, and will abandon himself to the struggles of mad selfishness. In a godless society there would certainly be an end, as amongst the lowest savages, to man's honor and woman's virtue, and human beings, reduced by loss of faith in God and immortality to lowest animalism and brutal vice, would become no better than toads in a poisoned tank, or wild cats in a red-hot iron cage." Now, surely, one would think that a man—even of Canon Farrar's literary pretensions—would have sufficient thought for his own reputation amongst refined people, to leave vulgar nonsense of that kind to the gutter journals of Christian Evidences. One really associates Westminster Abbey with something higher than the wild shrieks and personal abuse that form the stock-in-trade of the street-corner missionary. It may be a dream. But Canon Farrar, if he persists in that strain, will not be long in proving it so.

We have never, we confess, been witnesses of such interesting sights as toads in poisoned tanks or wild cats in red-hot iron cages. It would seem that Dr. Farrar has. But how man—even "godless" man—would imitate that sort of thing, we don't clearly see. It is curious what things the terrible Atheist will do—in the imagination of pulpiteers. His fancied feats surpass those of any fabled monster of old. In fact, he may be backed against "creation" for bloody deeds and vile intent. Nothing is beyond him. Now he is wrecking the British Constitution—an article, by the way, which has been on the point of collapsing at almost every moment during the past century: anon he is burning the "sacred scriptures"; here he amuses himself by overturning morality; there he damages holy paintings, by way of physical exercise. Altogether it is a vivid picture—and interesting to boot, to one who is desirous of studying the "imaginative faculty" as displayed in the pulpit. There are always "stage" types. Thus there is the stage Irishman, a person with knee-breeches, a vile face, and a blunderbuss. There is also, of course, the stage Atheist. The stage Irishman, however, is dead, and the stage Atheist is nearly so. But of course the pulpit is the last home of burlesque in all things, and so it will play the stage Atheist long after the other theatres have dismissed the character from their service.

One thing, however, in the last passage we quoted strikes us as curious. Dr. Farrar says that "in a godless society there would certainly be an end, as amongst the

lowest savages, to man's honor and women's virtue' (italics ours). Do, then, the "lowest savages" form "godless societies"? And does Canon Farrar throw overboard his Christian friends who are always maintaining that the god-idea is innate and universal, and that, nowhere in the world, not even amongst the "lowest savages," will you find a "godless society"? Besides, if God allows savages to drop into a "godless" state of "lowest animalism and brutal vice," what can be said of God's care for his children? In other words Dr. Farrar says we can only save morality by worshipping a being who, on his own admission, allows some of our human brothers—*i.e.*, the "lowest savages," to wallow in immorality. Verily these religionists bungle their case dreadfully. At the same time we should like to see Canon Farrar's complimentary remarks on savages dealt with—from the savages' point of view.

Dr. Farrar's style, too, may be taken as illustrating the mental status of orthodox church-goers. He uses a big brush, and his admirers applaud; they think color is art, and the gaudier the color the more skilful the artist. Probably "red-hot iron cage" struck them as a clever phrase, whereas, of course, to any rational person the thing is a colossal piece of absurdity at which one knows not whether to laugh or weep.

The archdeacon has a great deal of denunciation for the "priests who cursed the early scientists and geologists, who made Galileo recant upon his knees, who would hardly let Columbus discover the New World," and he compares them to the Chinese who heaped masses of crockery before the first steam-engine introduced into China, thinking to stay its course, whereas, naturally, it was the crockery and not the steam-engine that came to grief. But it never strikes the great pulpiteer that when he, in turn, denounces the Atheists of to-day as toads and wild cats, he is just imitating the methods of the Chinese he ridicules. For, as Galileo was in advance of the priests of his time, so are the Freethinkers of to-day in advance of Dr. Farrar. He, however, righteously denounces the old priests for their persecution, and then blandly turns round and heaps odium on the advanced men of the present. In short, he has just moved a little—the little that Free-thought work in the past has forced him. Such always is the attitude of the Church. And we can well imagine Canon Farrar's professional descendant of the closing twentieth century—if they are foolish enough to have canons then—condemning Canon Farrar for his sneers at scientific Freethinkers now, while denouncing the men who lead the army of Progress in that far-off time.

In conclusion Dr. Farrar said that "we have but to turn our eyes to the abiding majesty of the infinite azure above our heads or to the midnight with its million stars to reduce Atheism to fatuity." Well now, if that be so, what was the necessity for Dr. Farrar making such an onslaught on the "fatuity." Surely, if Atheism can be dispelled by a judiciously-administered dose of star-gazing, all that would be necessary to convert the whole N.S.S. would be an excursion to, say, Hyde Park on a good clear night—and the affair might be managed on a large scale at a couple of pence per head. Mr. Stead, in fact, might incorporate it in his pilgrimage scheme. Surely the extinction of the toads and wild cats would be worth a little expenditure. Only there is a hitch in the machinery somewhere; the moonshine, unfortunately, doesn't cure the Atheists, and we may rest assured that what moonshine cannot do Dr. Farrar is not likely to accomplish.

FREDERICK RYAN.

CAUSES OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION.

It was the Court, the Church, the Parliaments, and above all the Jesuits, acting in the interests of the despotism of the Papacy, who, in the first half of the eighteenth century, effectually undermined all respect for authority, whether civil or religious, and justified the worst that was or could be said by the philosophers later on.—*Prof. Huxley, Introduction to "The Revolutionary Spirit," by Felix Rocquain.*

New Missionary—"Did my predecessor make much of an impression here?" Savage Chief—"Oh, yes; there's a hole in the ground at the back of my palace where he fell off his horse one day. Come out here and I'll show it to you."

DEBATE AT JARROW.

THE long-anticipated and somewhat deferred debate between Mr. Charles Watts and Mr. James Marchant came off, as advertised, on Tuesday and Wednesday, 25th and 26th ult., at the Co-operative Hall, Jarrow, and on both occasions to crowded audiences, making the handsome hall oppressively warm. Mr. Wallace occupied the chair throughout the debate, and with creditable results as to his control of the audience.

Mr. Marchant opened the debate on Tuesday night, with the proposition that "Christianity is Sufficient to Satisfy the Needs of Mankind." To say that, in any respect, he supported his thesis by argument, would be a gross misstatement. We were treated to a rambling piece of gush, much in the style of what is heard at chapel meetings. The subject was skipped over or evaded throughout his half-hour's speech. There was a short quotation given from Herbert Spencer, which had been garbled from the context of the passage to do duty on this occasion; but as to any logical statement of the needs of mankind, or any application of Christianity to those needs, it was entirely wanting.

Mr. Watts followed with an eloquent statement of his position, pointing out also Mr. Marchant's evasion of, or failure to support, his thesis with anything like logical argument, and showing that reason, and not emotion, should guide our beliefs and actions, more especially in our ascertainment of truth. The word "truth" had been frequently and loosely made use of by Mr. Marchant, and consequently Mr. Watts asked him to define truth, when he got the following remarkably absurd definition of the term—"Truth is that which is," eliciting the retort from Mr. Watts—"Secularism is, *ergo* Secularism is truth."

I was struck with the entire absence of any clergyman or dissenting minister from the audience, and with the preponderance of the Bethel Chapel element, and want of adequate representation of the Christian portion of the audience, and observed that Spiritualists were in strong evidence, and that their opinion was that a more miserable presentment of the Christian case had not been seen in this district before.

On Wednesday night Mr. Watts opened the debate by affirming that "Secularism as a philosophy was sufficient for the needs of mankind." He gave a clear statement of its principles, following much on the lines advocated by Mr. G. J. Holyoake, and showing its sufficiency for all human needs. He courteously asked Mr. Marchant to answer certain statements which he made, and if incorrect to prove them to be so; but Mr. Marchant never attempted to touch any of his arguments or give them answer, unless insolent vituperation can be considered argument or answer. He stigmatised Secularists as "persons who were outside the pale, or had no right to discuss Christianity," were "deserving of damnation," and who "could not do a good act if they tried"; and afterwards, with the sublimity of illogicality, asserted that if a Secularist did any good act, it was Christianity that caused him so to act. The audience were also informed, with the most unblushing effrontery, that "lunatic asylums and various other institutions, such as gaols, etc., were built for and occupied only by Secularists." It never seemed to dawn on this pious and veracious Christian that these institutions existed centuries before Secularism as an organisation had any place in society, and the appreciative Christian portion of his audience, who seemed to think that this attempt at witicism had made a "palpable hit," had not even a glimmering of the absurdity of its untruth. Secularists were next described as putting their hands into Christian pockets and abstracting their contents; were described as "liars," "thieves," "insane devils," with other abuse *ad nauseam*. To see Mr. Marchant while delivering this nonsensical and scurrilous tirade, was to see the nearest approach to insanity in the hall in the person of the speaker. I suppose this is the common method of Christian Evidence Society representatives. It can only have one effect here, *viz.*, to disgust thinking folks with their tactics and practice, whether they be Christians or Secularists. The subject that cannot be discussed dispassionately, and without invective and scurrilous abuse, must be in a sorry plight, and the mentality of those attracted by such methods is a state for deep commiseration.

It goes without saying that Mr. Marchant's abuse drew down on him from Mr. Watts a well merited rebuke. It also goes without saying that while giving some incontrovertible figures in disproof of Mr. Marchant's statements, he did not, in any way, condescend to follow his tactics, but treated him with much more courtesy than he deserved. I may also state that much credit is due to the Secular party, who were present in strong force from all parts of Tyneside for their laudable exhibition of philosophical self-control, under what, in many another meeting, would have caused the speaker to be roughly handled. In conclusion, let me say, I heard Mrs. Besant, while occupying the Secular platform a few weeks ago at South Shields, refuse to hold any controversy with Mr. Marchant, because, on a former occasion, he had used foul language towards herself and the late Mr. Bradlaugh. I can now, having heard him myself, fully endorse her opinion of him, and have no hesitation in saying that Secularists should quietly ignore him. He is not dangerous to our party, and is even beneath contempt.

BOOK CHAT.

L'Apologie pour Herodote is a curious old book by Henry Stephens, the second of that name in the dynasty of sixteenth century printers and scholars named Stephens. It is full of instances of the crimes and vices of the priests and monks of that period, for publishing which Stephens was condemned to be burnt, and was burnt in effigy. Henry Stephens II. was the most learned man of his day (1528-1598). His *Thesaurus* of the Greek language is a monument to his erudition. In his *Apology* (chap. 25), he relates how Pope Leo X. said to Cardinal Bembo, "What riches we have acquired by this fable of Jesus Christ." Another good story found in Stephens, is that of an Italian priest who preached so passionately on the Passion and death of Jesus Christ, that he moved the ladies to tears, which seeing, he was touched another way, and exclaimed, "Do not cry; perhaps it is not true." The phrase so took the common fancy, that it became a saying in Italy.

Robert, the father of Henry Stephens (1503-1559), it is said, first divided the Bible into verses; though there are still people who fancy this was part of the work of the Holy Ghost. His father, again, Henry Stephens the first (d. 1520), was a printer of such learning, that he is strongly suspected of having not only printed, but written various so-called ancient works, for which there was a demand in his day. If Mr. Stead, instead of jotting down Julia's rubbish, would kindly call up the spirits of these old printers and scholars, they could tell him some curious yarns.

How rare it is for books to have such a good title as the *Age of Reason*. Some of the titles of old religious works are very amusing, as, for instance, *Crumbs of Comfort for Zion's Chickens*. The Puritan period brought forth a curious brood of pamphlets. *Salvation Vantage Ground; or a Leaping Stand for Heavy Believers*, led to the famous *Pious Shove for a Heavy-Christian*, and *A Shot Aimed at the Devil's Hindquarters through the Tube of a Cannon of the Covenant*. Another was the *Spiritual Mustard Pot to Make the Soul Sneeze with Devotion*.

Sometimes alliteration's artful aid was called in, as it still is, as in *Social Salvation, Rome and Reason*, etc. One of the Puritan books was entitled, *A Sigh of Sorrow for the Sinners of Zion*. Another was *Seven Sobs of a Sorrowful Soul for Sin; or Seven Penitential Psalms of the Princely Prophet David; whereunto are annexed William Humms's Handful of Honeysuckles*. Sometimes the title was a reckless pile of allegories, as in *A Reaping Hook, well Tempered for the Stubborn Ears of the Coming Crop; or Biscuits Baked in the Oven of Charity, carefully conserved for the Chickens of the Church, the Sparrows of the Spirit, and the Sweet Swallows of Salvation*.

One old Freethinker of the same period, Col. John Fry, a member of the Long Parliament who was accused of blasphemy, published *The Accused Shamed; a Pair of Bellows to Blow off the Dust cast upon John Fry*. He also wrote *The Clergy in their Colors*.

Lester F. Ward, the author of *Dynamic Sociology*, has written a book on *The Psychic Factors of Civilisation*, which will shortly be published in New York.

Lady Shelley has presented to the Bodleian Library an extensive collection of MSS. relating to Percy Bysshe Shelley and Mary Godwin, consisting of letters written by them or addressed to them, as well as of original MSS. of Shelley's poems, and the original diary kept by Mrs. Shelley, together with a number of copies of the impression privately executed by the late Sir Percy Shelley. The principal conditions which Lady Shelley desires to be observed are that all these documents, except MSS. of poems and such letters as have already been printed by Mrs. Shelley in her edition of her husband's prose works or in Prof. Dowden's *Life of Shelley*, should until the centenary of Shelley's death in the year 1922, be kept apart, and not be seen by any person except the curators and the librarian of the Bodleian Library, and that no copy of any portion of them should be taken by anyone.—*Athenæum*.

There is a neat story in the *Life and Letters of C. S. Keene*, the great *Punch* artist. It is about a "well-brought up child, who was seen to secretly purloin and pocket an orange from the laid-out dinner table, but was afterwards seen to enter the empty room, and secretly again return it to the dish and triumphantly exclaim, 'Sold again, Satan!'"

OBITUARY.

We regret to announce the death of "Dolly" Wootton, youngest child of Horace Wootton, late secretary of the Wolverhampton Branch. She was interred in the public cemetery on Sunday last, no ceremony or flummery, but simply a silent funeral.—L. N. CLIFTON, 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.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 7, musical selections; 7.30, G. W. Foote, "Spurgeon the Second on the Bible Museum" (3d., 8d., and 1s.)

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday at 8.15, social gatherings (free).

Camberwell — 61 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, C. Cohen, "Evidences of Theism."

Islington—Milner Lodge, 18 Waterloo-terrace, Upper-street: 8, quarterly meeting of members.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, A. Guest, "Faith Made Easy"; 7.15, W. J. Ramsey, "Christ's Foolish Sermon."

Bethnal Green (opposite St. John's Church): 11.15, C. J. Hunt, "Salvation."

Camberwell—Station-road: 11.30, C. Cohen, "Missionaries." Clerkenwell Green: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey will lecture.

Edmonton (corner of Angel-road): 7, C. James will lecture; Thursday at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.

Finsbury Park (near the band stand): 11.30, J. Rowney, "The Mythical Jesus"; 3.30, C. Cohen, "The Fate of Religion."

Hammersmith (corner of The Grove): Thursday, Aug. 10, at 8.30, Mr. St. John, "Mind in Animals."

Hammersmith Bridge: 6.30, W. Heaford, "The Conflict between Science and Religion."

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Exodus from Egypt"; 3.30, Stanley Jones will lecture. Wednesday at 8, C. Cohen will lecture.

Kilburn (corner of Victoria-road, High-road): 6.30, Mr. St. John, "The God Idea."

Lambeth—Kennington Green (near the Vestry Hall): 6.30, S. H. Alison, "New Testament Morality."

Leyton — High-road (near Vicarage-road): 11.30, R. Rosetti, "Bible Blunders."

Midland Arches (corner of Battle Bridge-road): 11.30, a lecture. Mile End Waste: 11.30, W. Heaford, "A Gloomy Creed."

Newington Green: 3.15, A. Guest, "The Bible and Women."

Old Picnic Pier: 11.30, A. Johnson, "Mahomet and his Time."

Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 3.30, W. Heaford, "Posers of the Pious."

Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15, Mr. St. John will lecture; 3.16, C. J. Hunt, "The Book of Common Prayer."

Walthamstow — Markhouse-road: 6.30, C. J. Hunt, "Gods, Ancient and Modern."

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers'-hill: 11.30, Stanley Jones, "The Cooling of Hell."

COUNTRY.

Blackburn—Spinners' Institute, St. Peter-street: 3, members' monthly meeting.

Hull—St. George's Hall, 8 Albion-street: 7, S. Ackroyd, "A Remedy for the Evils from which Working Men Suffer."

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 7, Mr. Doeg, "Can Christianity Meet the Requirements of the Intellect?"

Manchester N.B.S., Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': 11, G. J. Holyoake, "Where Freethought Ends and Secularism Begins"; 6.30, "Christianity Declined with Thanks."

Tuesday at 8, debating circle, Mr. Stockton, "Socialism."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 7, a meeting.

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 7, T. Garbutt, a reading.

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street: 7.30, business meeting.

Sunderland—Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street: 7, R. Mitchell, "Evolution v. Special Creation."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Brighton (on the Level): 3, H. Courtney, "Who will ye serve this day?"

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

STEPHEN H. ALISON, Democratic Club, Essex-street, Strand, W.C. — Aug. 6, e., Lambeth; 13, a., Finsbury Park; 20, m., Midland Arches; 27, Mile End Waste.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, E.—Aug. 6, m., Camberwell; a., Finsbury Park; e., Camberwell; 9, Hyde Park; 13, m., Mile End; a., Victoria Park; e., Edmonton; 16, Hyde Park; 17, Hammersmith; 20, m., Leyton; a., Victoria Park; e., Hammersmith.

JAMES HOOPER, 11 Upper Eldon-street, Sneinton, Nottingham.—Aug. 6, Manchester.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—Aug. 6, m., Wood Green; a., Hyde Park; 7, Hyde Park; 13, m., Regent's Park; a., Hyde Park; e., Kilburn; 20, m., Victoria Park; a., Hyde Park; 27, Chatham.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Aug. 20, m., Hyde Park; 27, m., Wood Green.

H. SNELL, 6 Monk-street, Woolwich.—Aug. 13, m., Battersea; e., Camberwell.

ST. JOHN, 8 Norland-road North, Notting Hill, W.—Aug. 6, m., Victoria Park; e., Kilburn; 13, m., Hyde Park; 20, m., Bethnal Green.

AN IMPORTANT ROLE.

It is the smartest boy that gets the hero-part everywhere; he is head guide in Switzerland, head miner in Nevada, head bull-fighter in Spain, etc., but I knew a preacher's son, seven years old, who once selected a part for himself compared to which those just mentioned are tame and unimpressive. Jimmy's father stopped him from driving imaginary horse-cars one Sunday—stopped him from playing captain of an imaginary steamboat next Sunday—stopped him from leading an imaginary army to battle the following Sunday—and so on. Finally the little fellow said—

"I've tried everything, and they won't any of them do. What can I play?"

"I hardly know, Jimmy; but you *must* play only things that are suitable to the Sabbath day."

Next Sunday the preacher stepped softly to a back room door to see if the children were rightly employed. He peeped in. A chair occupied the middle of the room, and on the back of it hung Jimmy's cap; one of the little sisters took the cap down, nibbled at it, then passed it to another small sister and said, "Eat of this fruit, for it is good." The Reverend took in the situation—alas, they were playing the Expulsion from Eden! Yet he found one little crumb of comfort. He said to himself, "For once Jemmy has yielded the chief rôle—I have been wronging him, I did not believe there was so much modesty in him; I should have expected him to be either Adam or Eve." This crumb of comfort lasted but a very little while; he glanced around and discovered Jimmy standing in an imposing attitude in a corner, with a dark and deadly frown on his face. What that meant was very plain. *He was personating the Deity.* Think of the guileless sublimity of that idea.—*Mark Twain.*

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CHRISTIAN ASCETICISM.

Whenever the ascetic rule prevails, and men are taught to seek perfection in practices which run counter to the essential needs of our organisation, it is always found that outraged Nature contrives to avenge herself. The few may be able to maintain themselves permanently above their bodily needs, but the many will habitually fall below the ordinary level of morality, and will indemnify themselves for their enforced abstinence by lapses into vices which we must be satisfied to leave undescribed. And if it be said that believers are cheered and strengthened by the certain hope of immortality, that is the case equally with the believers in Mary, or Mahomet, or Confucius, or Buddha, or Brahma.—*Sir R. D. Hanson, "The Apostle Paul and the Primitive Church,"* p. 360.

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A SLIGHT ERROR.

The ancient church, dedicated to the pious memory of S. Helena, who, tradition saith, went to "Jerusalem, my happy home," and found the true cross, at Helland, is a comfortable hour's walk from Bodmin town. The rector, a good sort of fellow, had a touch of the screw-matics awhile since, and was recommended the waters at Bath. So there he went. But Saturday came around, and no "supply" for Sunday's pulpit could be found. At the last moment, however, and after the rector had been wired to return, a worthy cleric named Smith, who had come to Bodmin as a witness in an assize case, volunteered his services as a *locum tenens*. So another telegram was despatched in haste to Bath to stay the invalid from coming back. It was handed in at the Bodmin office, and read thus— "Smith has gone to Helland. You stop where you are."

When the messenger boy handed the orange-enveloped epistle to his reverence at the other end, the latter tore it open and read with astonishment— "Smith has gone to Hell, and you stop where you are."

But, after all, it was only an error in postal punctuation!—*Western Figaro*.

Francis (four years old)—"Mamma." Mamma—"What is it, dear?" "You never saw me before I was born, did you?" "No, love." "Then how did you know it was me?"

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The organist of a certain Unitarian chapel in the Midlands was asked to give his services at a Wesleyan concert. He did so. The night was cold and the room was without any warming apparatus. All sat shivering, until the Unitarian rose to make a suggestion. "By all means," said the wielder of the baton. "Well," said the unorthodox one, glancing at his cold-blue companions, "as you Wesleyans believe in hell-fire hereafter, my suggestion is that we have a little on account, else this concert is going to be a failure." Our reporter left just then.

.....
 First Masher—"I say, Chawlie, can you tell why a man's bald head resembles heaven?"

Chawlie—"Give it up, dear boy."
 First Masher—"Because it is a shiny place where there is no parting. Ha, ha!"

.....
 "Be of good cheer, Sister Jones," said the pastor to a dying member of his congregation. "You will soon be in heaven playing on a golden harp, and rejoicing with the angel throng." "Ah, no," faintly uttered Sister Jones. "I could never play on a musical instrument—not even an accordion—and I'll never be able to play on a harp unless it has a handle to it like an organette."

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Awake and think on Christe's passion,
 I crouche thee from elves and from wights.
 Therewith the night-spell said he anon
 rights
 On the four halves of the house about,
 And on the threshold of the door without.

Lord Jesus Christ and Sainte Benedicte
 Blessè this house from every wicked
 wight,
 From the nightman, the white Pater-
 noster;
 When wonest thou now, Sainte Peter's
 sister?

—*Rise of Christendom*, p. 374.

.....
 A paralytic young woman, who had been unable to walk for years, was conveyed to a revival-meeting one night recently, and during prayer she suddenly arose, gave an ear-piercing shout, climbed over three pews, gained the aisle, and made a dash for the pulpit. It was not another faith cure, as many persons in the congregation supposed. She had simply seen a mouse in her pew near her feet.

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