

PROSECUTED FOR BLASPHEMY.

THE FREETHINKER.

EDITED BY G. W. FOOTE.

Sentenced to Twelve Months' Imprisonment for Blasphemy.

Interim Editor, EDWARD B. AVELING, D.Sc., Fellow of University College, London.

William James Ramsey, as Proprietor, sentenced to Nine Months' Imprisonment; and Henry Arthur Kemp, as Printer and Publisher, sentenced to Three Months' Imprisonment.

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[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

AN INTERVIEW WITH G. W. FOOTE AND W. J. RAMSEY.

ON the afternoon of July 11th, the day whose evening witnessed the magnificent meeting at St. James's Hall, by a special order of the Home Secretary Mrs. Foote and myself were admitted into Holloway Prison. Her order only gave access to Mr. Foote. Mine gave me the right to see both our friends. The officials of the prison were, as usual, as kindly as the rigid performance of their duties allowed them to be. One of them explained that if we went in separately George Foote would have two separate half-hours. As twice half an hour equals one whole hour, it was decided that we should each visit him alone. Naturally, Mrs. Foote dreaded passing by the heavy door and up the hard, cold prison stairs with only strangers near her, and shrank from entering by herself the horrible room with its gratings and its oppressive sense of imprisonment even to the free. But when she heard that by her doing thus he would have twice as long a respite as by any other arrangement, she at once bravely decided to go alone.

Half an hour later I was conducted by a warder to the room where prisoners see their friends. As on the former occasion, I stood at the broad end of one funnel-shaped box and my friend at the broad end of another. The two narrow ends, closed in by wires, were some distance apart; and we both knew that in the space between, a warder, hidden from us, was waiting to hear all that passed between us and across the intervening space. Just a word or two of hearty greeting, a strong, brave smile from the prisoner, a rapid answer to the inquiry as to his health, as if that were a matter of the least moment, and then to business talk. Half an hour is but a little time to tell a man of all that has been done on his behalf during many weeks, and to discuss plans for the coming weeks. I told him that his dear friend, J. M. Wheeler, was back and at the good work again, giving him a hearty message from his and my helper, full of business details and cheerful words. Then the meeting that was to be held four hours later, the resolutions, the speakers, the feelings in regard to it were swiftly discussed. I told him that it was certain to be a grand success. I only wish now that I had known how grand a one, and even the hopeful enthusiasm with which I spoke would have been increased. The books that I had brought to be his companions and comforters were named, and their names greeted as old friends. How the paper and magazine fared came next, and next to his interest in the living beings dearest to him, his interest in these was greatest. That they were thriving appeared to be a matter of greater moment than any affecting his release. At the mention of all who had been working for him and for a greater than he, that of Freethought, now so closely identified with that of free speech, his face lighted up gratefully; and the prison dress, the prison bars, the presence of captivity seemed forgotten. I forebore, of course, to speak of those who, calling themselves Freethinkers, had by sins alike of omission and commission done their worst to fasten

his fetters the more closely. The name of George Jacob Holyoake did not burden my lips. I could not have spoken it in the sight of his brave and patient face. But I told him of the sorrow and sympathy that I was able to bear to him within even the prison walls from England, from Scotland, from Ireland, and from America, New Zealand, Australia, over the seas. Prisoner as he was, he was anxious to know how the world wagged outside; asked how the Northampton business was furthering, and took a lively interest in the complications in France with a moribund Comte de Chambord, and in England, with Lords spiritual thwarting once again a nation's will. Intermingled with my talk and later in succession to it came his own phrases to me. They were clearly acute as usual, with no lessening of ready humor and wit, no lessening of the defiant spirit. It was his fixed resolve to defy the blasphemy laws on his release—an event no longer expected by him until the long year has rolled by. He dwelt forcibly, not harshly, on the fact that the victory in the Court of Queen's Bench in reality was a curse in disguise to them personally, though a great gain to the cause. Had they been found guilty, Lord Coleridge, he thought, would, whatever light sentence he passed, have made it concurrent with the present sentence and converted them into first-class misdemeanants—a conversion to which both of them would have readily submitted. The punishment at which Lord Coleridge was shocked, Sir William Harcourt allows to continue. All their present suffering was due to the Home Secretary. He complained most of the difficulty of reading; the light in his cell was not sufficient during the major part of the day for him to read with any comfort. The want of sleep was still a trouble, and a sore-throat plus a tooth-ache had rendered the past week more burdensome than its same-like predecessors.

Before we seemed to have said a tenth of all that we desired to say, the unlocking of a heavy door and the stern "Time" told us that for weeks to come we might see one another's face no more.

A few minutes later and our other friend was talking to me. My visit to him was a surprise. He had seen none of his relatives before me. Hence his half hour was largely spent in talking of books needed and messages to home. But his mind, like that of his co-sufferer, was active and more anxious about the Freethought party than about its martyrs. He had been mending shoes, with such application and dexterity that he did as much work as the rest of his fellow prisoners put together. But as they are criminals and he an honest man of the working class and the working-creed, this was to be expected. With the familiar twinkle in his eye he told me that on the very day then passing half his term was over, and that on the morrow he began to go down-hill. He was counting the days, the hours, the minutes, and said again, with a merry look, that as his time was up on a Sunday he should gain a day upon Justice North by being liberated on the preceding Saturday. Yet through all his cheerfulness and courage, the former not a little assumed, the latter not a whit, I could read how the long confinement was telling upon him. I am certain I do not exaggerate when I say that neither of the two men thus

brutally tortured will ever be quite as they were before. But the strength of body of which the cruelty and cowardice of the Christian bigots may have deprived them, will be more than compensated by the added strength of mind, the deepened intensity of hate for Christianity with which they will quit their dungeons to engage again in that fight against the wicked creed in which we also are strengthened as we think of their wrongs.

EDWARD B. AVELING.

MEMORIAL.

"To the Right Hon. the Secretary of State for the Home Department.

"The Humble Memorial of the undersigned
Sheweth

"That George William Foote and William James Ramsey were on Monday, March 5th, found guilty of blasphemy at common law and sentenced to imprisonment, respectively, G. W. Foote, 12 months; and W. J. Ramsey, 9 months.

"Your memorialists respectfully submit that such an enforcement of laws against Blasphemy is out of accord with the spirit of the age, and humbly pray the mercy of the Crown in remission of the sentences imposed."

Friends will do good work by copying this out and obtaining as many signatures as possible to each copy. The Memorial and the signatures should be sent to the Home Secretary as speedily as possible. It is particularly requested that no other form may be used than the one given above.

G. J. HOLYOAKE AND BLASPHEMY.

THAT the name of George Jacob Holyoake should have been greeted with a storm of hisses from an audience assembled in opposition to the Blasphemy Laws is one of those changes of position which suggests curious reflexions. Forty years ago Mr. Holyoake himself endured the malice of Christian persecution. When in 1857 the Blasphemy Laws were revived against Thomas Pooley, Mr. Holyoake was active in calling attention to the case and procuring Pooley's release. How comes it that now, when avowed Freethinkers are in question, Mr. Holyoake not only refuses to sign a memorial on their behalf, but throws cold water on those who do—suggesting, indeed, in the second number of his *Present Day*, that those who memorialise for the prisoners shall add in an appendix their reprobation of ribaldry? Is it simply the familiar phenomenon of the fervid Radical in youth becoming the timid Conservative in age; or, has the fact that one of the prisoners carried on a Free-thought journal after Mr. Holyoake had fallen out with him, and given up the joint editorship, anything to do with the matter?

The suggestion that the prisoners in Holloway are there on account of ribaldry is more worthy of those who imprisoned Mr. Holyoake himself for "indecent reviling" than of one who had felt the tender mercies of the bigots. There is, I venture to say, more ribaldry in Mr. Holyoake's characterisation of the picture in the Christmas Number to which he objects, than in the picture itself, or even in the words of "holy scripture" which are quoted underneath.

The position of Mr. Holyoake in the Freethought party has long been an ambiguous one. Thirty years ago he might have been its leader and have shaken the camp of its enemies. But he has always preferred ingratiating himself with his foes to fighting beside his friends. He has been all things to all men, and has carried his principle, or want thereof, to the extent of offering up prayers in chapel. This propensity to compromise he exhibited early in his career. In conducting the *Reasoner* he showed a partiality to kid-gloved heresy. In carrying on the Fleet Street House, he, while publishing spiritist productions, refused to issue "The Bible: what is it?" by Iconoclast, on the alleged ground of "obscurity." He has always had in view to keep himself well with the enemy, and he has had his reward.

The Freethought party would fain only remember Mr. Holyoake's services in the past, but when he goes out of his way to exhibit spiteful jealousy of those who now stand in the breach, they have (as the groans and hisses at the St. James's Hall meeting showed) too keen a perception of the situation to pass it over in silence. They know that Messrs. Foote, Ramsey and Kemp have endured far more

rigorous treatment than Mr. Holyoake, simply because they have stood in the forefront of the attack on Christian superstition. They know that revolutions are not made with rosewater, and that behind those whose bold and open speech has provoked the bigots there stands a large army who are unattacked because more guarded and less ready to attack. The prisoners in Holloway represent far more than their own selves or even than this paper with which they are connected. They are a visible sign that Christianity is still a persecuting system. They represent the culmination of that social intolerance from which everyone who boldly avows his unbelief in Christianity must more or less expect to suffer, and no Freethinker is worthy of the name who stands aloof now that their martyrdom may afford an opportunity of wiping from the laws of the country every penalty for the fullest and freest expression of opinion.

J. M. WHEELER.

JESUS v. THE PARSONS.

[Concluded from p. 228.]

II.—The orthodox rarely or never follow the example of Jesus, except in persecuting, nor do they perform the duties he is said to have imposed upon them.

1. "Swear not at all," says Jesus, and James follows up the command with the greatest emphasis: "But *above all things*, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by earth, neither by any other oath; but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation" (James v., 12). It is impossible to teach the duty of not swearing more plainly than the New Testament does; it is equally impossible to violate the injunction more systematically and openly than they do who pretend to be followers of Jesus. Here the rebellion is open, unblushing, and even gloried in.

2. Jesus forbade the laying up of treasures upon earth, and told his disciples to lay them up in heaven. The parsons never do the latter; they are as keen to lay up worldly riches as the most openly worldly can be.

3. "Take no thought for the morrow" is now universally explained to mean, "Get rich as fast as you can, by hook or by crook."

4. "Judge not that ye be not judged," is equally explained by the rule of contraries; for who are so censorious and malignantly slanderous as the professed followers of Jesus respecting those who disagree with them?

5. "Love your enemies," says Jesus. The parsons shut up their opponents (not enemies) in prison, because they are more honest than themselves.

6. "Enter ye in at the strait (that is, narrow) gate," says Jesus. The parsons love the wide gate and the broad way. This may lead to destruction; but it is a far more pleasant road to travel than the narrow one (see Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress"); and, besides, narrow roads are out of date and awfully unfashionable. No lady or gentleman is ever seen in the narrow path, now-a-days; they go to heaven now (or elsewhere) in Pullman cars—profane contrivances that would have called forth from Jesus more bitter denunciations than he even hurled at Pharisee or priest. It is not my business to say which is the best method of travelling to heaven. All I say is this. Parsons should not pretend to be on the narrow path when it is patent to all the world that the road they travel is exceedingly broad; they should not pretend to be trudging along the rough and thorny path of life on their own feet while smoothly spinning along in a travelling drawing-room.

6. When Jesus sent out the twelve he bade them "heal the sick." Parsons leave that for the doctors. "Cleanse the leper." It is never attempted by them; they shun him as a plague. "Raise the dead." The parsons know better than that. They get paid to bury them, postponing their resurrection to the last day. Evidently Jesus did not consider that undertakers and sextons would have no trade if the dead were raised, while parsons would lose important fees. Besides, one death is enough for most people, and it seems too bad to raise them the first time to give them the trouble of dying once more. "Cast out devils." Parsons have entirely lost the art. The weakest devil from Pandemonium might now, if rude enough, put his fingers and thumb to his nose and defy a whole bench of bishops! Though probably the noise of the Salvation Army would disgust and dislodge him. "Freely ye have received; freely give." What, live without tithes and salaries? No wonder

parsons fling Jesus overboard so unceremoniously! He never understood the art of getting good hard cash for spiritual work, that is, for nothing at all! But the parsons could teach their great teacher more than was ever dreamt of in his poor philosophy, if he would only pay them a visit. "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses." Well, that is enough to drive an average parson mad! Jesus, were he here amongst them to-day, would be infinitely more hated than the boldest atheist. The atheist does not try to rob them of anything more than their god and a few minor superstitions—a mere fleabite. But this Jesus would rob them of all that is worth having—gold, silver and brass. All the Churches of Christendom, though so bitterly hating each other for centuries, would instantly forget their mutual feuds to pounce upon Jesus, and either convert or roast him before a fortnight had passed. "Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves." Worse and worse! They were to go out as beggars—and awful beggars the parsons are; but they obey nothing more of the passage. Jesus might just as well have stayed with his father in heaven as come to earth to preach doctrines of the above sort. Whatever fanatics of olden times may have done, the fanatics of modern days afflict and impoverish not themselves, but *other people*, for their own aggrandisement and pleasure, and their sole endeavor seems to be to act as Jesus solemnly forbade them to act; their chief study seems to be to fly in the face of their teacher as often and as violently as possible.

7. The old disciples of Jesus forsook everything—wives and parents and children included—in the hope of a good substantial reward. It was a bargain between them and their master; their devotion was like that of hucksters or modern generals. But the parsons to-day give up nothing for the sake of receiving everything. Theology now is a profession, like the law, and about as remunerative. In this respect also the Christian leaders have vastly improved upon the original system of Jesus; and he, poor fellow, will have everything to learn when he returns to that earth he so kindly redeemed. His bewilderment, when he arrives and finds how the servants he left in charge of his establishment have revolutionised his affairs, will be so great, that he will conclude that he has lost his way and alighted upon the wrong planet; and then, amidst the derisive shouts of the parsons, he will quickly take his departure in quest of the identical world he is bound for. But, alas! for them when he finds out the deception and swindling! Then will he return and "cut them asunder, and appoint them their portion with the hypocrites" (Matt. xxiv., 42-51).

Without prolonging this paper, I may merely say, in conclusion, that honest men should either follow Jesus in reality and obey his commands, when they profess to do so, or else give up the profession and openly separate themselves from a system and a leader they cannot cordially adopt and follow.

JOS. SYMES.

A BYGONE FAITH.

They told me her earthly life alone
From the scene of the present for ever had flown;
And the soul that had beamed through those queenly eyes
O'er the circle of earthly woes would arise;
That the beauty which shone on that lovely face
Would be heightened and deepened by heavenly grace.
They told me her soul would be happy above,
And smile on the mortals who joyed in her love;
That she, gazing down from the far-off skies,
Would watch all her friends with those soft blue eyes;
And they said that a maker who reigns over all,
To the maiden in mercy would softly call,
And carry her into the bright, bright heaven,
Where rest the souls of the all-forgiven.

Bitter and sad were the tears I shed
When they told me her body alone was dead;
I did not mourn when they laid her prone
To slumber in silence for ever alone,
For I thought that rest might reach her now,
When the hand of death had touched her brow.
"Farewell," I murmured, "Oh lovely one!
From a world of woe thou art early gone;
I would not weep at this parting drear
Were it not that I live and you lie here."
And I murmured, as tears long longed-for fell,
'Spirit of beauty, fare thee well!'
But they shattered the hope of the saddened child
And told me a story strange and wild—

That my beloved would be living still
For pain or bliss at another's will.
I asked not who was the spirit great
Who thus could decide my loved one's fate;
But I wept to think that at his command
Her soul might pass to a darker land.

"Rather," I murmured, "would I have seen
Thy form re-bloom in the woodland green.
Rather thy voice should float in air,
And blend with the fragrant perfumes there;
Mingle again with the babbling rill,
And the sound of the stream from the verdant hill.
Rather, far rather, thy form should arise
As an Iris-bow in yonder skies,
Than that borne from earth as a slave of god,
Thy bliss should depend on his tyrant nod!
Fiendish indeed must the ruler be
Who could make but to doom to misery.
And pure as thou wert in this earthly sphere,
Yet, as nothing is free from evil here,
And the shadow of evil enshrouds the land,
Thy soul may suffer at god's command.

I weep no more, for the thought has passed,
And my mind looks out to the truth at last.
The faith in god that numbed me then,
Has turned to a nobler faith in men.
I smile as they speak in accents low
Of the fiendish doctrine of lasting woe.
The shade of the cross that darkened my sight
Has faded away from the path of light;
And free and untrammelled my mind looks out
To the living truth from the old dead doubt.

Sleep on! sleep on! in memory blest;
Spirit of beauty take thy rest!
Never to wake in thy queenly pride,
And stand again by my throbbing side;
But ever to sleep through the ages long,
While right shall struggle with fraud and wrong,
Till truth shall reign in its proper place,
And the world be turned to a home of grace.
Sleep on! sleep on! through the long, long years,
While knowledge grows and men shed less tears.
The birds shall sing on the leafy bough
That waves, wind-wafted, above thee now;
The streamlet that springs in the distant hill,
Makes its music beside thee still.
The beams of the sun shall glance on thy grave
Through the leaves and the boughs that above it wave;
But pleasure and goodness shall chase away
The sorrow that circled thy short, young day.
And truth shall come with his glorious light
To shatter the dogmas of bygone night;
And the joy which fancy has painted there,
In the heaven above, shall be reigning here;
And calmly and silently sleeping still,
Thou shalt own not the force of a tyrant's will;
But locked in the arms of a pitying grave,
Shalt share the fate of the good and brave
Who sleep unmoved when their task is done,
Dear heart, dear heart, sleep on! sleep on!

FRANK E. HIGGINS.

ACID DROPS.

THE Dean of Durham says that sceptics do not rightly apprehend the weight and profundity of the Christian evidences. This is a little mistake. Who can avoid attaching weight to the sentence of a judge, or apprehending solitary confinement in a cell as the profoundest of Christian arguments? The dean has a weighty argument to the tune of £2,000 a year.

A PRAYER-CURE fraud has recently come to light in America. Miss I've Vandyke, who last fall alleged she had been miraculously cured of a tumorous cyst, has returned to Erie from Chicago and submitted to the knife. A tumor weighing seventy pounds was removed. Seventy pounds was rather too heavy a lump for the power of prayer.

MR. HANCOCK, a popular scripture reader in St. John's parish, Cardiff, and formerly a local Nonconformist preacher, has caused some little sensation in South Wales by eloping with one of the young ladies of the choir. Mrs. Hancock is left in very destitute circumstances, and encumbered with debts contracted by her pious husband.

THE Salvationists have made themselves particularly obnoxious at Folkestone. The *Folkestone Express* speaks of their proceedings in the following strong language:—"The 'Salvation Army' is a profane fraud and an unmitigated nuisance, and its leaders deserve no forbearance. It is a

grotesque travesty of religion; and its indecent mummeries of the usages of devotion of really pious people, should be scouted and discountenanced in England as they have been in Hindostan and Switzerland. Its hymns are vile doggrel, its literature is ribald vulgarity, its cornet-playing and drum-beating are hideous discord. Those who direct its services are shallow, bumptious idiots, or cunning knaves who shrink from manual labor; those who attend them are fools, fanatics, or frolicsome pretenders. Wherever the 'army' have been they have worked nothing but moral and social ruin among people who were weak enough to be led astray by them."

The *City Press*, the organ of the Corporation, referring to the presence of several clergymen at the great meeting at St. James's Hall, says: "Apropos, I observe that Dr. Hillier, a well-known Baptist minister, has been preaching at Exeter on 'Infidelity,' taking for his text, 'Whether you eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of god,' and he pertinently remarked that he did not see how any Christian could support an atheist to the glory of god." How unconsciously sarcastic the writer is! The supporters of City corruption, whose god is their belly, have proved themselves fully capable of glorifying their deity by eating and drinking. Not content with this, however, they must needs bring about the incarceration of a couple of conscientious Freethinkers "to the glory of god," and yet they affect surprise when they find that honest men of all shades of opinion regard their cowardly persecution with loathing and contempt. The City of London was once the supporter of liberty; it now fosters bigotry and intolerance of the worst type.

INFANTICIDE appears to be the latest form in which a loving and merciful god has seen fit to reveal himself to us. While our human hearts sickened at the wholesale murder of helpless little ones at Sunderland, the divine heart of the "god of love" was thirsting for yet another child-sacrifice. A few days back three little children were playing. Their innocent childish voices attracted the fierce Moloch. He cast out his lightnings and transformed the happy voices into wails of pain and terror, as the eldest child fell senseless and the frantic mother rushed to rescue the second child from the enveloping flames. Truly "the ways of the lord are past finding out!" Why should he wreak his vengeance on these innocent children? "For their parents' sins," says the priest. But what right has he to punish the parents, directly or indirectly, for the sins he has caused them to commit? To deny that all things are foreordained of god is blasphemy. To assert that he causes aught but good to man is blasphemy. Yet few Christians will acknowledge the divine love displayed in the Sunderland massacre. They try to shift the blame from the shoulders of their god, for they have grown better than he and cannot think of the misery in Sunderland without pity and horror commingled.

AFTER some fifteen years of litigation the Rev. Mr. Machonochie has been sentenced to deprivation for contumacious Ritualism. The sentence of Lord Penzance will, probably, not settle the matter. Mr. Machonochie only needs some High Church patron to present him with a new living, and a High Church bishop to install him, and he will carry on the same old game.

"How Missionaries Work in Turkey," is the title of an article just published in a religious paper. Lucianus says, "the method is very simple. They may be observed working in as much turkey as other people at the time when they celebrate the birthday of their god with stuffing."

SIR R. TEMPLE is writing a series of papers on "Palestine in 1883." He covers up the fact that the holy land, the land promised to the chosen race as flowing with milk and honey, is one of the most sterile and insignificant of territories by saying that, "brilliant expectations must not be formed respecting the aspect of Palestine. This is emphatically not the land for him who is a lover of the picturesque without reference to other considerations."

SOME choice examples of religious mania are said to be just now offered to visitors at Jerusalem. A fanatical Englishman, armed with a paint pot, inscribes on every wall the "number of the beast;" a German lady believes herself to be of divine origin, and eats nothing but herbs; an English woman never stirs from a chamber looking towards the Mount of Olives; every Friday and Sunday a man passes through the streets bearing a heavy cross; and an American has established himself in a small house in the environs in the belief that he is immortal.

A PECULIARLY mean case of disputed cab fare was heard before the Mansion House last week. Miss Wade was summoned by a cabman whom she ordered to drive to the Mansion House, and kept waiting there for payment for six and a half hours and then tendered him two shillings. Alderman Gabriel made an order for the payment of the cabman's time; but this will insufficiently compensate him, as he has been out of employment ever since because unable

to pay his master for the cab. It is to be hoped that the father of this young lady, the Rev. Nugent Wade, rector of St. Ann's, Soho, and Canon of Bristol, with his stipends of £825 and £650 per annum, has so far exercised his Christian charity as to recompense this poor cabman for his loss of time and situation. Seeing that his curate, the Rev. J. H. Coghlan, has been sent to trial upon a charge of obtaining goods by false pretences, there can be no wonder that Free-thought increases in the district under the spiritual charge of the Canon of Bristol.

A DISGRACEFUL, yet exceedingly ludicrous, outbreak of sectarian fanaticism occurred the other day at Hartford, Connecticut. Mr. Parker, the minister of the local Congregationalists, finding that he could not convert the Baptists to his own views, recently made up his mind to take possession of their place of worship. He took council with certain militant members of his flock; and, having first collected a number of unbaptised babies, he led his followers, bearing the unconcious infants, in procession to the South Baptist Chapel. The building was occupied by the beadle, who promptly fled, and apprised his pastor, Mr. Everts, of the approach of the enemy. Mr. Parker and his friends at once entered, and set to work to fill the tank in the baptistry with water. While thus engaged Mr. Everts and his deacons appeared, and protested against the intrusion; but Mr. Parker coolly continued to superintend the filling of the tank, remarking that he intended to finish what he had begun. Meantime the Baptists, beaten up by the beadle, came from all parts, and began a lively exchange of hard words with the Congregationalists. In the midst of the tumult Mr. Parker began to baptise the children. This was the signal for the commencement of a pitched battle upon the floor of the church. Mr. Everts leaped upon Mr. Parker, and, seizing him by the hair, bore him to the ground. In their struggles the rival ministers fortunately fell into the tank, where, locked in each other's arms, they continued the fight to the great edification of the spectators, until they were fished out exhausted by their admiring supporters. No sooner had peace of some sort been restored than it was reported that several babies were lying drowned at the bottom of the tank; and it was not until all the water had been allowed to run off that the fears of those present were allayed.

A CORNET-PLAYER was recently employed to celebrate a baptism by accompanying the proceedings with sacred melodies. When the parties had got fair into the water he struck up the well-known revivalist air, "Pull for the Shore." His salary is still unpaid.

THE *Manchester Examiner* professes to be a Liberal paper. It has inserted some letters on the blasphemy persecutions. But many others it has suppressed, and even those printed have been emasculated. It inserted, as so many London papers did, the one-sided account of the proceedings at University College, giving all the speech of Mr. Justice Denman and none of Dr. Edward Aveling's. And what can be thought of the "liberality" of a paper which the other week told a correspondent that "écrasez l'infame" meant "crush the infamous thing," but that the application of it was not easy to state? As we go to press we hear that the *Examiner* has inserted a letter of Dr. Aveling's on this subject.

CIVILISATION breeds its own savages. There is not much of it, certainly, as the Archbishop of Canterbury said yesterday at Lambeth Palace, in those wretched homes in South London where whole families work all day long in making match-boxes at 2½d. a gross, and find their own paste. It is mournful, as the primate said, that such a state of things should exist in the diocese of the ninety-eighth Bishop of Rochester after so many centuries of the Church's work.

But the Church and the match-makers have not come in contact before. It is something new for archbishops and bishops to climb the garret stairs and descend to the miserable cellars of the South London poor, as Dr. Benson and Dr. Thorold seem to have been doing. The worst of it is that one does not see how episcopal visitation can affect the economic conditions that render match-making so miserable a trade.

THE above two paragraphs are from the *Globe*, a Christian newspaper. "Civilisation" in the first sentence should read "Christianity." Only then the second sentence would have to be re-written. For "there is much of" Christianity and of its failure in the hideous poverty that reigns under its rule. Even the *Globe* half sneers at the idea of visits from wealthy church dignitaries doing anything more than intensify the misery of the poor.

OUR readers will remember our comments when the Rev. Mr. Charlesworth wrote to the *Times* about the abduction of his daughter by the Salvationists. The reason for the young lady being kept in Paris is at least apparent. She is now 18, and is about to become the bride of a son of General Booth. She has £10,000 a year in her own right.

SPECIAL NOTICE.

Dr. Edward B. Aveling (interim editor of the *Freethinker*) will lecture on July 29th, in the Amphitheatre, Gunwharf Road, Portsmouth. Subjects:—3, "Freedom in England;" 7, "The Origin of Man's Mind and Morals."

CORRESPONDENTS.

ALL business communications to be addressed to the Manager, 28 Stonecutter Street, Farringdon Street, E.C. Literary communications to the Editor of the *Freethinker*, 13 Newman Street, Oxford Street, London, W.

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IN remitting stamps to the publishers halfpenny ones are preferred. RECEIVED WITH THANKS.—Arthur Stone, J. E. Woveacott, J. S. Bradford, W. James, E. C. B., G. T. H.

BLASPHEMY.—The marriage service as performed before a registrar is a secular ceremony.

J. BARNES.—Zachary Boyd wrote "the psalms in meeter" and other curious religious verses of not much worth to anyone now-a-days.

A. BROWN.—You cannot do better than put the minister's protestations of tolerance to the proof by asking him to sign a memorial.

II. TOMLINS.—Vannini was born near Otranto in 1585. After being hunted over Europe by the Inquisition he was arrested in 1619 at Toulouse, and, being tried for heresy, was condemned as an atheist to have his tongue cut out, his body burned, and his ashes scattered to the four winds. This Christian sentence was carried out Feb. 19th, 1619.

PHONO.—You are doing excellent work by distributing a hundred of our tracts each week. If only one-fourth of our readers would follow your good example we should be able to defy all bigots.

ACHILLES.—We suspect that the various mendacious statements which have appeared in the *Evening News* issue from the same source.

W. J. ADAMS.—The length of our columns will not permit us to publish in full the names of subscribers for Mr. Cattell's volume.

JOHN J. STANDRING, 2 Franchise Street, Roehdale, supplies the *Freethinker* and all Freethought literature.

T. P. HASTIE, in sending memorial, points out that good might be done by Freethinking working men taking petitions to their workshops for signature.

J. W. LEES.—Any French grammar should give what you require.

T. R. ALMOND (Rochford, Essex) offers some back numbers to the highest bidder, for the Prisoner's Aid Fund. They are: Vol. I., Nos. 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21; Vol. II., Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 14, 17, 30 and 32.

W. B. THOMPSON.—The letters are good, but the lines hardly strong enough.

D. SHEE.—We should be delighted to do all that you wish were it possible; but at present Freethinkers, though many, are not rich. The blasphemy laws are a hideous peculiarity of England.

F. JONES, 2 Southern Road, Plaistow, supplies the *Freethinker* and all Freethought literature.

V. L. (Isle of Man).—We cannot make out your signature, but we see that you are a hearty friend. Unitarianism is only a momentary resting-place on the way to atheism.

ALL orders for literature should be addressed to the publishers; thus ensuring more prompt and certain execution.

AGENTS wanted in town and country to sell this paper and other Freethought literature.

SUGAR PLUMS.

READERS of our advertising columns will notice a goodly list of contributions to the August number of *Progress*. Mr. Wheeler's paper on "Agnostic Morality" is a reply to Miss Cobbe's recent attack on the theory of inherited conscience. F. Engels, who is known as an advanced social reformer, gives the results of the best continental criticism of the Apocalypse. Captain Bingham, who has spent some time in Burmah, supplies an interesting account of the superstitions of the aborigines of that country. Norman Britton's criticism of the Gospel of St. Matthew Arnold is trenchant, thoughtful, and smartly written.

THE American Freethinkers' Convention this year will be held in Rochester, beginning August 29th and continuing a week. An invitation has been issued to the churches offering to pay the expenses of any representative man who will go to Rochester as a missionary, and promising to accord him two hours on the Freethought platform.

AN earnest word of sympathy for the "Freethought Martyrs" comes from Madras through the columns of the

Thinker. Christian persecution in England will serve to nerve the arms of our Hindu friends to crush the infamous superstition in their own country.

WE have received the following brave letter from our brave friend Hunter of Burnley:—

"Dear Dr. Aveling.—We still issue our sweet remembrancers. This is the first annual from our citadel. Just one year since our window dared the full force of bigotry. Our old window served to let a little light in. The new one is the antipodes and sends light out. At first it was too strong for the sincere Babes in the Wood. But time has done much. Their eyes can now look on the busts of Voltaire and Paine with composure. The fight has been severe and our little army has had deserters, but we have made it possible to keep a Freethought shop by simply fighting with face to the enemy. I trust you get on gloriously. Foote and Ramsey suffer. They are brave and will sustain.—Yours truly,
"50 Sandy Gate, Burnley.

C. HUNTER.

ANOTHER defeat of clerical intolerance took place at Heckmondwike, where at the quarterly meeting of the local Co-operative Society the Rev. St. George Kerr moved that the hall of the society be closed against the Secularists on Sunday. The motion was defeated by a majority of two to one, various members of the society pointing out that it would be more manly if the rev. gentleman and his supporters would attend and confute the arguments of their opponents than attempt to suppress them.

CHRISTIAN influence having been brought to bear upon the Peckham and Dulwich Branch of the National Secular Society, they have had to resign their place of meeting, and are founding a building society in order to insure having a hall of their own. To this the co-operation of all Freethinkers is invited. Full particulars and information can be obtained from Mr. W. H. Dawson, 19 Nigal Road, Peckham Rye; or from the hon. sec., Mr. B. Ellis, 5 Whately Road, East Dulwich, S.E. The lectures of the branch will for the present take place at the "Foresters' Arms," Lordship Lane, East Dulwich.

THE *Christian Globe* is responsible for the following "fact for Darwinism":—"An interesting discovery has been made in Paraguay of a tribe of Indians with tails. An Argentine resident in the Argentine Mission has a Yerba establishment in the Paraguap Mission, and while collecting the Yerba in the woods his mules were attacked by some Indians, who fled after killing several mules. The muleteers pursued, firing on the Indians, one of whom, a boy about eight years old, was captured. This boy was brought to Posedas, where Don Francisco Golcochoa, the Argentine referred to, lives, and excited much curiosity, owing to his having a tail six to eight inches long. The boy, who has been photographed by some German, is, it is stated, very ugly; but his body is not covered with hair. A brother of the boy, at present in the possession of Colonel Rudeciudo Roca, has also a tail; and all the tribe are said to be similarly adorned." Should not the Salvationist showman get one of these Indians? He might exhibit him as an offspring of Satan.

DR. PANKHURST, well known in the north of England as an advanced Radical, has issued an address to the citizens of Manchester in view of the general election that is to be. This is taking time by the fetlock, as the groom said, with a vengeance. On every point of general politics Dr. Pankhurst deserves the support of all Radicals and especially of all Freethinkers far more than the majority of candidates for a seat in Parliament.

MR. ARTHUR PEASE, M.P., has been holding a conference in regard to the non-attendance of the working-classes at religious worship. It was stated on the authority of Bishop Rhyle, that at Liverpool, out of 57,000 professing Church people only 3,500 were found at morning and evening service on a particular Sunday. Strange to say, none of the speakers suggested the power of prayer as the one thing needful.

CHICAGO has 500 churches and 5,242 liquor saloons. The proportionately large number of churches may be considered quite remarkable, unless it is accounted for by the saloon keepers being regular attendants on divine service.

THE *Inquirer* takes exception to the observation of Dr. Odgers on "The Law of Blasphemy" in the current number of the *Modern Review*. It points out that Messrs. Foote and Ramsey were not punished for alleged bad taste but for an offence against the established religion of the land, and this it characterises as "a dangerous thing to permit to pass unchallenged. If we must have any legislative provision on the subject at all, we prefer to go to the West and not to the East for a guide. Article Thirty-two of the Criminal Code of New York declares, that 'if it appears beyond reasonable doubt that the words complained of were used in the course of serious discussion, and with intent to make known or

recommend opinions entertained by the accused, such words are not blasphemy.' That is far better than making the wounded feelings of other persons the test of wrong-doing."

COMMENTING on the election of all the heterodox Liberal candidates for the new consistory of the Protestant Church in Geneva, the *Spectator* remarks that "it confirms the conclusion which has long been patent to local observers, that the Protestant Rome has become the most free-thinking of European cities, and the Church founded by Calvin the least Christian of churches." The *Church Review* says of Swiss Protestantism: "The older ministers still preserve some remnants of orthodoxy, but nearly every minister elected since 1874 is either an avowed agnostic or a determined opponent of Christianity."

BIBLE ARITHMETIC.

(Continued from page 230.)

PASSING over the fact that a man's sons are either six or seven, according as the writer of four consecutive verses may think, we come to something more worthy of attention. In Exodus xxxviii., 26, we have the census of the people taken; and we are told that there were 603,550 men from 20 years old upward. Making the usual allowance of five persons to each male over 20, we have roughly 3,000,000 people in all. Right. In the first chapter of Exodus we are told that 77 persons came into Egypt; and at the date of this census they must have gone 215 years from that time. It therefore reduces itself to this—is it possible for 77 people to increase to 3,000,000 in 215 years? As a test let us turn to America. At the time of the revolution there were 3,000,000 people, to-day there are about 48,000,000, or there are about four doublings of the population. Give the 77 the possibility of eight doubles and we only get the modest sum of about 40,000. After this let us make a united oath that Jonah *did* swallow the whale.

But we have not quite done with this census. We find it recorded that there were 22,273 first born males. Allow for the same number of first born females, and we get a total of about 44,500. Now it is almost a certainty that each first born child had a mother (really I am getting to believe such wonderful things that I am bound to throw in a slight dash of uncertainty), so that if you divide the 3,000,000 by the number of mothers, *i.e.*, 44,500, we get the respectable number of about 68 children for each mother.

Still they come. Among 3,000,000 people there would be about 300 births a day. According to Leviticus xii., 6, and Numbers xvii., 9, every mother had to make a *sin* offering of a lamb, or a couple of doves and two pigeons, and the priests had to eat these pigeons in the most holy places. How many pigeons?—600. How many priests?—3. How many per priest per day?—200. How big were the priests after they had eaten this small morsel of food per day? Give it up you say. I am inclined to say, "show it up."

Then we come to the question of food supplies for this wandering nation. There is no doubt about there being enough and to spare some times, for we read that they offered up 150,000 first born lambs at one time. One might be inclined to ask whether, as there is nothing new under sun, there was a person in authority who issued an edict against using these estimable eatables for food. Of course it was not our present Queen. But to return. It would take millions of acres of land to support these flocks they had with them; and the land would have to be of a good quality, and not so mean that it wouldn't raise a single onion on the whole face of it.

This sacrifice of 150,000 lambs took place in the short space of two hours. Really the time would not be a great consideration if there were only enough people to do the business; but we find that there were still only three priests to sprinkle the blood on the altar, so that each priest would have to sprinkle the blood of 1250 lambs per minute. Let us pray.

Again; at this sacrifice all the people gathered in front of the tabernacle in a column 18 feet deep. We have not got the length given us; but if you will sum it up you will find it comes out at about 6 miles. I wonder whether they were allowed to use their binoculars at the extremities. If so, who got the contract for the supplies?

"We make a big skip to Joshua xxi., 35-36. There we

find a list of the Levitical cities, and adding them up with extreme care we sum a total of 44. You have only to run on to the 41 and 42 verses, and you will discover that in those days 44 units sum a total of 48. We do not say this is impossible, only we have not seen it done yet.

You would naturally think that Judges would be without a flaw on the question of arithmetic; but, alas! all our hopes of skipping this book have been upset, and that by an ass. Chapter xv., 15, tells us of the valiant front-door thief, Samson, and how he slew 1000 men with the jawbone of an ass. Now we can easily imagine this story to be true, providing our long-haired friend was addicted to sporting; and, though "it is the worst death to die," we see no reason why it should not have happened that he was so stupid an ass, and had such a *jawbone*, that he could have talked ten times that number to death, provided only that they listened long enough to him. But suppose he actually did the slaying business, and the 1000 were positively slain, and we give him the short period of two seconds per corpse. Total—three quarters of an hour. Given 1000 men to slay by mighty Sampson, at the rate of one per two seconds, the whole body to stand in Trafalgar Square, and supposing they could run at the rate of 5 miles per hour, where was the last slain, and how many were slain in the square? We offer this as a matriculation question.

David was a man after god's own heart, and was very sorry for it. His history in 1 Sam. xviii., 27, records the fact that David killed 200 men; but in 2 Sam. iii., 14, we find only 100 were slain. 200 may equal 100, but we can't make it so, even with slate upside down.

MOSARK ZAZ.

(To be concluded.)

PRISONERS' AID FUND.

For the support of the families of the men now in gaol, for the protection of their interests, and for the aid of any others who may be in similar case; any balance to be used in the discretion of the Executive.

Per J. Collier, sale of *Freethinkers*, 1s. 9d.: — Couchman, 6d.; J. C. Hanham, 1s. 4½d.; Mrs. Davis, 2s.; L., 5s.; North West London Branch N. S. S., 18s.; T. Ford, 2s. 6d.; W. Pickett, 1s. South Shields: M. Blyth, 1s.; J. Lamb, 2s.; J. Chapman, 2s.; R. Taylor, 2s.; A. Price, 2s.; — Jackson, 1s.; J. Sanderson, 2s.; W. Hart, 6d.; E. Ellsmore, 9d. Rochdale: N. Hill, 1s.; J. Fitton, Betty Sutcliffe, R. Brierly, A. Butterworth, J. Standing, L. Hadfield, A. Priestly, 6d. each; a Friend who loves Fair Play, 15s.; S. Wareham, 5s.; — Flower (Frome), 6s.; T. Adams, 2s.; J. Whyte (Glasgow), 5s.; — Steenie (Penrith), 4s.; McL., 6d.; R. Hough, 1s.; J. Thackray, 2s.; E. Ellsmore, 9d.; A. Bromhead, 2s. 6d.; W. Le Treille, 6d.; J. Bull, 2s. 6d.; W. Willis (Zanzibar), 2s. 5d.; J. Hay (Louth), 5s.; H. Taylor, 1s.; Scarles and Claringbull, 1s.; G. Rought, 1s.; J. Cobby, 1s.; Emma Cobby, 6d. Per F. Stuttig: — Buzzard, 1s. 6d.; a Friend, 1s. 6d.; a Friend, 11d.; No Name, 10d.; G. R., 10s. Walworth Branch N. S. S.: R. Bulman (2nd donation), 2s.; — Macdonell, 6d.; H. J. G., 1s.; — Toness, 6d.; — Miller, 3d.; — Last, 6d.; Byott, 2d.; — Burgovitz, 6d.; — Meeck, 6d.; J. W., 6d.; Unite, 2d.; ditto, 2d.; — Perrin, 6d.; — Grarus, 1s.; — Clark, 6d.; J. S., 1s.; — Bennett, 2d.; — Harbert, 1s.; R. M., 6d.; R. S., 1s.; J. C., 6d.; S. E., 6d.; — Linton, 6d.; B. C., 3d.; A. Sewthwaite, 5s.; Wm. Shemmon, 2s.; John Kuen, 2s. 6d.; S., 10s.; N., 2s., T. Jonghen, 1s.; C., 1s.; Lucian, 1s.; — Preble, 1s.; — Bogu, 1s.; Miss Golby (last week) should have been Miss Cobby, N. S. W., 2s. 7d.; A. Humphreys, 2s. 6d.; H. Arundel, 2s. 6d. Per W. Bryon: Bristol Branch N. S. S., 14s. 6d. Hyde Electric Society (1st donation), £1.; R. Garbett (Northumberland), 3s. 6d.; S. Kaufmann (4 weeks), 2s.; A. Daltidorph, 1s.; J. Slaney (5th donation), 5s.; D. Mawdsley (5th donation), 5s.; J. Ireland, 6d.; E. Bulek, 6d.; — Chipperfield, 10d. Per — Callaghan: J. Newton, 4s.; A. Shiel, 4s. 6d.; G. Henderson, 3s.; W. Robinson, 1s. 6d.; M. Weatherburn, 1s.; D. Henderson, 6d.

Erratum.—Cardiff branch, omitted in June 29th, 10s. 6d., and 6s. 6d. in issue of July 15th, to Sutton in Ashfield branch, should have been Cardiff branch.

C. HERBERT, *Treasurer*, 60 Goswell Road, London, E.C., to whom all remittances should be sent. Collecting sheets will be sent to any *Freethinker* on application to 28 Stonecutter Street.

A WOMAN on being asked if her husband feared god, replied, "Well I guess he does, he never goes out on Sunday without his gun."

THE MASHER'S GOD.

ALL gods may be referred to man's unbridled imagination as the source whence they originated. Every man has an ideal in his mind, and most men (all Theists at least) when asked to give it a name call it "god." Matthew Arnold's ideal is a nameless something that is "making after righteousness;" and Herbert Spencer's is the "unknowable—the unconditioned absolute." An unknowable deity is no deity at all; and a nameless gentleman who is "making after righteousness" is a modern "will-o'-the-wisp."

All gods being man-made they invariably reflect the qualities of the person out of whose imagination they grow. The naked savage made his god and clothed him with a cloud, so that his nude appearance was sometimes discernible through a misty sky. The modern theologian gives his deity all the outward form and bearing of a gentleman. Educated theologians, for the most part, are stupidly æsthetical. They are mashers in the spiritual sense of the word, and their deity, as a matter of course, is fashioned after their pattern. Their god is a "god of love." They tell the ladies so; and the "love-sick maidens" of orthodoxy come wooing this deity through his æsthetical representatives. And if we may judge by appearances, they seem to like it. Indeed, the love seems to be mutual.

No mention of hell-fire seems to escape the theological masher. He whispers softly something in the ears of his congregation concerning a condemnation for somebody in the next world; but the dearly beloved brethren of his flock (and they are mostly ladies) hear nothing but "loving words" about the heavenly palace, the harps that will be played, the trumpets sounded, and the chorusses sung in the home of eternal bliss. It is quite like a dream to the fair creatures, and some of them venture to ask how such love could be realised on earth. The theological masher endeavors to show them—in a scriptural sense of course.

Their whole life is to be one of love (unmixed with lower feelings). They are to love everybody—even "their enemies." But among the enemies whom they are to love, the Rev. Mr. Dammall (the parson over the way) it is particularly noted is not included. Him they may hate—that is, "love less," as the divine language of Jesus implied when he said, "If any man come unto me and hate not his father," etc.

And these are the masher's beatitudes, taken verbatim from his first sermon:

1. Blessed are the lilies (of my flock) for they are indeed beautiful.
2. Blessed are they that weep, for they shall be consoled.
3. Blessed are the rich in purse: this earth is their kingdom of heaven.
4. Blessed are all good mashers, for they shall inherit the earth. Amen.

ARTHUR B. MOSS.

REVIEW.

Woodland and Shingle. Poems and Songs by JOHN ROWELL WALLER, author of "Unstrung Links," "Wayside Flowers," etc. Darlington: Wm. Dresser; 1883.

To readers of the *Freethinker* Mr. Waller's name is sufficiently familiar to assure them of the earnest manliness of all his utterances whether in verse or prose. One or two, and we confess by no means the best, of the lyrics in this little volume have appeared in our columns. Those who remember "Fidei Defensor," "Who Dare Defend Him?" and "The Story of a Stone," however, will only have their appetites whetted for more. An attractive personality shines through all Mr. Waller's work. We may particularise "O the Scent of the Hay," "When the wild Rose blooms again," and the poems on "Woodland" and "Shingle," which give title to the volume, as evincing his strong love of nature and keen delight in its beauties. Still higher appreciation of the subtle sympathies which bind man with nature appears in "The Sea's Message." Mr. Waller's verse is melodious yet always homely and simple. He evinces sentiment without sentimentality and ability without affectation. His aspirations for man are no less strong than his love of nature. "Democrats Awake!" and "Strike for the Right" are stirring songs of the people. We cordially recommend the volume as one which can both be read and often referred to with pleasure by lovers of unpretentious poetry. We give the following sample from the piece entitled "What is my Religion?" as being the most suitable to our pages:

"What is my religion? 'Tis a thing by priest untainted,
Pure and wholesome like the dewdrop on the newly-opened
rose,
Fairer than the fairest object ever sculptured, sung or painted,
And it brings a peace far sweeter than that older creed's
repose.
'Tis a thing that does not pander to the madness of fanatics,
But it grasps its life's realities and wrestles with the wrong.
And the heart that lives for truth alone can feel its mute
estatics,
And betray its joyous raptures in the most enchanting song."

PROFANE JOKES.

WHO was the straightest man mentioned in the Bible?—Joseph; because Pharoah made him a ruler.

WHEN do farmers work miracles?—When they turn their horses in to grass.

A SUNDAY-SCHOOL boy was asked by the superintendent if his father was a Christian. "Yes sir," he replied, "but he is not working at it much."

"PA," asked a little boy, "what is meant by 'paradise?'" "Paradise, my son," replied the father; "paradise is the latter part of next summer, when your mother goes on a visit to your grandfather."

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THE PRESENT DAY. Edited by G. J. Holyoake. Contents of July No.:—"Nonconformity to Truth;" "Convictions for Ridicule;" "New Views of Public Men;" "Gambetta," and other articles. Price 2d. R. H. Squire, 52 Fleet Street.

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"MILL ON BLASPHEMY."

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