

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.]

BIBLE INSPIRATION.*

THE question why men do not believe the bible is one very easily answered, and which, nevertheless, is likely to occupy the attention of the white-chokered gentlemen for some time to come. The fact is patent. Go amongst any class of society and you find that the tales and doctrines of "holy scripture" have at the most but a Sunday belief. Even regular church attendants will in private assure you that it must not be supposed they really believe the world was created in six days, or any nonsense of that kind, such as their fathers believed was taught by the word of god. New interpretations are given to old doctrines to accommodate them to increased knowledge, and, above all, a new theory of inspiration is put forward by which the believer can say, when any contradiction, incredulity, or immorality in the Jew-books is pointed out, "Oh we don't actually believe that. It was only suited to the undeveloped nature of the early Hebrews."

The tract committee of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge must be held—by the publication of the lectures which the Rev. J. M. Wilson, head master of Clifton College, delivered before audiences of working men in Bristol early this year—to have committed themselves to this modified view of the word of god, which indeed by this theory is either the word of god or the word of man, whichever happens to suit the theologian.

Of course Mr. Wilson endeavors to make out that his is not any new theory made just to escape the difficulties arising from a knowledge of modern science and the criticism which has shown no end of interpolations, mistranslations and various readings in every chapter of the holy book. He says that "no creed or formulary of any church has ever asserted that the bible is to be literally and prosaically interpreted, or that its accuracy and historical correctness are supernaturally guaranteed," and quotes with approbation the words of Canon Westcott, that "the purely organic theory of inspiration rests on no scriptural authority, and if we except a few ambiguous metaphors, is supported by no historical testimony." None the less is it a fact that the Protestant church has taught the verbal inspiration of the Jew-books for ages, and to deny any portion of them to be the word of god has been held a wicked offence, as heinous as manslaughter. Even at the present day there are two theories—the more liberal one, that of Canon Westcott, which is taught to the clergy, and the older one which they teach to others. From the pulpit they read that "the lord spoke unto Moses, saying," and inculcate, as far as possible, reverence for every word of their fetish. It is only in lectures and discussions that the broader theory is used. Dr. Wilson himself tells us that many of his friends discountenanced his giving these lectures to working men. They said, "Leave them alone, you will unsettle more than you will help. You will shake the not very intelligent faith of believers and not convert the sceptics."

We believe these friends were right. Once admit there are any inaccuracies in the bible and you have made a fatal surrender; for what part can be relied on as being infallible? If the mistakes of translators and the errors of copyists be

admitted, what portion can be said to be the word of man and what portion the word of god? If the words are not inspired, what is? If it is admitted there are little errors, how can it be asserted there are no large ones? If the account of the Fall is not literal, is the redemption through Christ's blood anything more than an allegory? Why should we believe the story of the Flood as told in Genesis rather than the more ancient Babylonian tradition? If we may disregard the tale of Balaam and his donkey, why should we believe in the trinity, when even the word is not in the bible, and the main text in support of this belief (1 John v., 7) is known by all scholars to be a fabrication? Let it be noted, moreover, that the discrepancies and difficulties of the book affect the doctrines derived from it. It is not of much consequence that the genealogy given to Christ by Matthew is at utter variance with that given by Luke, but the fact is one which proves the whole tale of the incarnation, given by the writers under those names, to be untrustworthy. It don't much matter whether Jesus is said to have risen from Bethany or from Galilee, but the discrepancy between the evangelists at once suggests doubts as to his having ever risen at all. It is often said that the 150,000 various readings are only slight in nature. This is not true, even if it could be allowed there was anything slight in the word of god, for many of them, as with the interpolated text already mentioned, affect the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.

Once admit that the bible is in the same category as other books, and has been no better preserved than other ancient so-called sacred literature, and the position of the rationalist is secured. There is nothing for it but to use our own reason and conscience as much in regard to it as to any other documents. We must be critics over the holy ghost and judge for ourselves what is his handiwork. The infallible book must be vouched for by our own fallible judgments. And here the disingenuousness of the clergy steps in. They say that when any passage in the bible coincides with our highest morality and comes home to our best feelings, that is a proof of its inspiration; but instead of taking the many passages which contradict our morality as a proof of the reverse, a system of interpretation is resorted to which would make a divine revelation of Jack the Giant-killer.

What better proof could there be that the bible is the product of men, and those but semi-civilised, than such stories as those of god commanding Abraham to murder his own son; of his killing the firstborn of Egypt because Pharaoh would not let the Jews go; of his sanguinary orders against the Canaanites and others. If Mr. Wilson found such a story as that of Joshua staying the sun in the legends of other people he would take it as conclusive evidence of their ignorance and barbarity. To quote from the Koran how Mahomet sanctioned the slaughter of Jewish male prisoners is considered by Christians sufficient evidence of his not having been sent of god, yet at the same time they are ready to credit that Jahveh ordered the extermination of the Midianites.

Mr. Wilson endeavors to place the Jewish records above all others, on the ground that they first taught the unity of god. This is simply untrue. The Aryan Hindoos had arrived at this conception and expressed it in the Rig-veda (x, i., 121) while the Jews were still polytheists. We challenge the theologians to state a single original doctrine first found in their so-called revelation.

* "The Theory of Inspiration; or, why Men do not Believe in the Bible." By the Rev. J. M. Wilson, M.A., F.R.A.S. London Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

Mr. Wilson puts the matter very euphemistically when he admits that god left a low morality uncorrected "because of the hardness of their hearts." He might also have quoted scripture in favor of the view that god gave them "statutes which were not good, and judgments whereby they should not live" (Ezekiel xx., 25). Mr. Wilson says this was the way of training, but we fail to see anything divine about it. If a missionary among people who believe in sorcery tells them in the words of scripture "thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," instead of saying at once there is no such thing as witchcraft, he will be acting on the plan Mr. Wilson attributes to his unchangeable god when he accommodated his revelation to the low morality of the Hebrews.

Inspiration Mr. Wilson defines as "an illumination in all that concerns religious truth." Yet we have a hundred different sects founded upon this supposed inspired book. This definition, be it noted, is made to exclude any questioning of the bible in regard to its history or its science. But it would exclude too much. The whole of the book of Esther, for instance, has no word of religion in it. Neither has the book of Ruth, and the books of Samuel, Kings and Chronicles very little. The most religious portion of the Old Testament is the Psalms, and here we have David invoking the curses of Jahveh on the head of his enemies in a worse spirit than anything that can be found in the Koran.

The truth is, ministers now-a-days are trying to found their livelihood upon a compromise between superstition and rationalism, and the compromise certainly gives plentiful exercise to their ingenuity. In regard to the bible it is of small avail. Either the book is the word of god, in which case its doctrines should be as clear as if written on the face of the sky, or it is simply the work of men, like other books. It has survived by a process of natural selection, and our reverence for it is due mainly to its antiquity, early teaching, and the associations which have gathered round it. Its pretended supernatural authority would long since have been discarded but for the interested teaching of the parasites who make their living by preaching from its pages.

We said at the outset that the question Mr. Wilson asks is very easily answered. Men do not believe in the Bible, just as they do not believe in astrology, because they have outgrown its teachings.

The time for compromises in regard to these undateable Jew documents is past. With their big serpent story, big giant story, big witch story, big fish story, big baby-god and big resurrected ghost stories, the old Jew-books, together with all theories of their inspiration, may safely be relegated to the limbo of discarded superstitions.

J. M. WHEELER.

WORK OF THE COMING YEAR.

1884 must be an active year for Freethinkers. The release of our prisoners should be made the occasion of a more open and effective demonstration against the enemy. Let every Freethinker induce his fellows to speak out boldly, and take every due occasion to proclaim his own unbelief, and it will soon be felt that we are among the most powerful of bodies. We shall lose, at any rate for the first part of the year, the services of Mr. Symes, but we know he will be doing good work in Australia and in India. The latter country he will probably also visit.

Mr. Foote will commence operations immediately upon his release, and there can be no doubt that larger and more enthusiastic audiences than ever will greet him as he journeys through the country. Although his main work must be in London, he will probably find time to visit all our large cities from Plymouth to Aberdeen, and Freethinkers will do well in each place to secure as large a hall as possible.

It is likely that the ensuing session may be the last of the present Parliament, and in every borough where prospective candidates for the people's house of representatives come forward they should be asked if they are prepared to support the rights of Northampton, and to vote for the repeal of the infamous blasphemy laws. By taking every opportunity of bringing these questions forward, Freethinkers may easily prove they are a power in the land.

MILTON HALL PROSPECTUS.

THE work of the coming year, as far as the Interim Editor of this journal is concerned, will be understood by a reference to the following.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY, NORTH WESTERN BRANCH.

Milton Hall, Hawley Crescent, Kentish Town Road.

President—Edward B. Aveling, D.Sc., Fellow of University College, London.

New Campaign.—With the new year this branch begins a new campaign. During all the months of 1884, except May, June, July and August, public meetings will be held every Sunday morning at 11.30, and every Sunday evening at 7.30. In the four summer months meetings will only take place in the evening. For the greater part of the year these meetings will be conducted by the president of the branch, Dr. Edward Aveling. Upon other Sundays lecturers of the highest order only will occupy the platform at Milton Hall. The branch alone are responsible for the making and carrying out of all lecture engagements.

Lecturers.—As a rule, therefore, Dr. Edward Aveling will be the speaker or director of the meeting. But due notice will always be given when other lecturers will be present, and as to the nature of the proceedings to be taken on any particular Sunday. Such notices will appear in the *Daily News* front page every Saturday, in the *National Reformer*, the *Freethinker*, and the local papers.

Sunday morning.—The morning meetings will commence at 11.30. Music, a short reading from a standard author, a lecture on a scientific, political or historical subject will make up the programme.

Sunday afternoon.—In the afternoon two classes for instruction in science will meet. The classes will be under the direction of Dr. E. Aveling. Their actual teachers will be Botany, 3—4 p.m.; Rosina Bumpus; Chemistry, 4—5 p.m.; Ernest Davis. These classes will be free to both sexes and to all ages. It is hoped that this attempt to found a Sunday-school in Science may meet with much support. The classes will open on the first Sunday in February. Intending students are earnestly asked to forward their names to Dr. Edward Aveling, 13 Newman Street, W.

Sunday evening.—The programme will vary with the time of the year. Music will always begin the evening. In the colder months the staple commodity will be a lecture. During the warmer weather the lecture will be considerably shortened, and with the solid fare that will, it is hoped, never be wholly wanting, will be provided music, readings and dialogues. The desire is to give rational men and women evenings that are at once instructive and artistic.

Music.—As music is so prominent a part of our work, friends who are willing to help in this matter are asked to communicate with the President of the North Western Branch.

Admission.—The prices of admission will be to each meeting—Reserved Seats, 1s.; Body of Hall, 6d.; Back Seats, 4d.; Gallery, 3d.

Season Tickets.—Season tickets (transferable) for the year are issued at the following rates:—Reserved seats (about 80 meetings), £3; Sixpenny seats, £1 10s.; Fourpenny seats, £1; Gallery, 10s. Friends anxious to aid in our campaign for 1884 will help greatly by taking these tickets, which date for twelve months from the date of purchase. Thus, one purchased on March 10, 1884, is available to March 10, 1885.

Lending Library.—A lending library of scientific and political books, with others of a lighter order, is in course of formation. Friends who can spare any works for the library will be heartily thanked. The books are only lent to members of the branch. For the rules apply to the librarian, E. Thomson, 18 King Street, Camden Town.

Accessibility.—Milton Hall is close to the following places.

Camden Town Station (North London Railway), first to right, Bonny Street, cross road at once, down through Moccuss Gardens, into Kentish Town Road, turn to left over the bridge, first to right.

Kentish Town Station (North London Railway), down Prince of Wales's Road, to the left, into Kentish Town Road, to the right, over the bridge as before.

Midland Railway (Camden Road Station), down Camden Road, to the right to North London Station (*see above*).

Euston Road, Holloway, King's Cross, Archway Tavern, by trams that all stop at the "Britannia." Down Kentish Town Road, second turning to the left.

Waterloo, Paddington, Victoria, Adelaide, Bull and Gate, Archway Tavern, Hampstead omnibuses pass the end of Hawley Crescent. King's Cross (green) omnibuses stop at Camden Town Station (N. L. R.)

Members.—All are urged to join the North-West Branch of the N. S. S. Admission, 6d. per month. Apply to A. Beadle, 62 Fortress Road, N.W.

Further information.—Further information can be obtained of E. Thomlinson, as above, or of Dr. Edward Aveling, 13 Newman Street, W., to whom all business communications are to be addressed.

EDWARD B. AVELING.

RANDOM COMMENTS ON THE BIBLE.

AND I preach saying: There come one mightier than I, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed will baptise you with water, but he has baptised you with the holy ghost. And when he shall come straightway up out of the water, the heavens will open, and the spirit, like a dove, will descend from on high; and a voice from heaven shall say, "Thou art my beloved son in whom I am well pleased."

It is with deep regret that the readers of the *Freethinker* will lose the excellent services of Mr. Symes to their sturdy little paper; for he has served from the first on its staff of contributors, and has supplied some of the most telling of its articles. Hence seems to lose him seems like losing a veritable piece of the original publication, and to leave a painful void in its contents. But as Mr. Symes must perforce seek fields and pastures new, I will claim your attention to my continuation of his excellent "Comments," hoping that I may succeed as well as he in the plain and useful object he had in view in their publication.

Mr. Symes' next comment will be on the Exodus, not of bible authority, but of himself and family from Christian England; but there is no reason to believe that this exodus will prevent him from bearing in mind the magnificent Exodus we are about to study. To my mind Mr. Symes will find no small amount of variety and amusement in studying this grand counterpart of his, during the long hours that will ensue before arriving at his destination; and we at any rate will do our level best to do likewise.

The first chapter of Exodus calls for a large amount of serious comment; and we will note in passing that "all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy" (Exodus i., 5). This number of individuals must be particularly borne in mind when we get a little further along with this book. It will then be seen to be of some importance.

"And Joseph died and all his brethren, and all that generation. And the children of Israel were fruitful and increased abundantly" (i., 67). Now, seeing that Joseph and his own generation had only just passed away, both according to the chronology and the text, what an alarming increase it must have been that called forth the remark we have noted above.

"Now there arose a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph" (i., 8). Joseph the great, the mighty, the clear-headed dream interpreter, the vanquisher of all other dream expounders, the good young man—forgotten. Alas! humanity thou art a fraud; one of thy great creations is dead but a verse previously, and now is—forgotten. Not by us 3,500 years from the time of his death. Oh dear no: but by the people who immediately succeeded him.

"The children of Israel are more and mightier than we. Come on, let us deal wisely with them; lest they multiply, and it come to pass that when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies and fight against us. Therefore they did set over them taskmasters to afflict them with their burdens" (verses 9, 10, 11).—These few extracts present such an absurdity, improbability and downright untruth, that I really do not know why they were not observed earlier. I will try to make my remarks as orderly as I can. Firstly,—If the children of Israel were more and mightier, was there not already a possibility of their fighting the Egyptians; and under those circumstances could they have set the taskmasters over the Israelites with the object mentioned? If they had done so the Israelites would have had no need to clear out with the help of god, they could have cleared the Egyptians out instead, without his help. Secondly,—"Come on." This looks like fighting to commence with. It was evidently only a brush, and it calmly died down. Thirdly,—"Let us deal wisely." Was it dealing wisely with a stronger people than themselves to set the taskmasters over them? Of course not. This wretched tale is a mere invention of some fanatic's brain, to give glory to the lord by making nonsense of his word. There is certainly no policy in any of these proceedings, and yet the Egyptians

of that time must have learnt a few good lessons in the arts of war and government before the date here mentioned, and therefore policy could not be unknown to them. This first chapter seems to me to be only thrown in as a lead up the events that are to follow; but it is so wretchedly constructed and adapted to that end, that it bears its own refutation on its face.

"Because the midwives feared god (that) he made them houses" (verse 21).—This is lastly, brethren, God the good, the honest, the loving, the just, actually so disgraces his attributes as to reward those who told a lie under the direction of his fear. Because they feared god they told the lie (say verses 17 and 19), and because they feared god, and consequently told the lie, god rewards them for their infamy.

MOZARK ZAZ.

DIVINE ATTRIBUTES.

PROTESTANTS assert that their belief is founded entirely upon scripture, and Catholics maintain that at least no article of their faith is contradicted by it. Christians of every sect, disagreeing with each other upon almost every other subject, are united in opinion concerning certain attributes of the imaginary being they call god. They are unanimous in endowing him with omnipotence, omnipresence, and omniscience, and declare him to be infinite in benevolence, holiness, truth, justice and mercy. They claim for him as a distinguishing characteristic, that he is perfectly unchangeable and eternally consistent in all his ways. And they tell us with unblushing impudence that the bible proves him to be possessed of all these admirable qualities. Yet it would be quite as easy to find texts proving him the very antipodes to what they proclaim. One bearing on each of the above mentioned attributes will suffice for the present.

Omnipotence.—"And the lord was with Judah, and he drove out the inhabitants of the mountain; but could not drive out the inhabitants of the valley, because they had chariots of iron" (Judges i., 19).

Omnipresence.—"Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the lord amongst the trees of the garden. And the lord god called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou?" (Genesis iii., 8-9).

Omniscience.—"And the lord said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous, I will go down now and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of which has come unto me; and if not, I will know" (Genesis xviii., 20-21).

Benevolence.—"Joshua smote all the country of the hills, and of the south, and of the vale, and of the springs, and all their kings; he left none remaining, but utterly destroyed all that breathed, as the lord god of Israel commanded" (Joshua x., 40).

Holiness.—"And the lord said to Hosea, Go, take unto thee a wife of whoredoms and children of whoredoms" (Hosea i., 2).

Truth.—"Of the tree of knowledge, of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Genesis ii., 17). "And all the days that Adam lived were 930 years" (v., 5).

Justice.—"They borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment. And the lord gave the people favor in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them, and they spoiled the Egyptians" (Exodus xii., 35-36).

Mercy.—"I will bring evil upon them which they shall not escape; and though they shall cry unto me, I will not hearken to them" (Jeremiah xi., 2).

Immutability.—"God came unto Balaam at night, and said unto him, If the men come to call thee, rise up and go with them, but yet the word that I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do. And Balaam rose up in the morning and saddled his ass, and went with the princes of Moab. And god's anger was kindled because he went" (Numbers xxii., 20-22).

I am weary of the folly, worse than folly, of it all; but one other passage so well expresses my own thought that I will quote it: "Who is the wise man that may understand this?" (Jeremiah ix., 12). Perhaps some historian of the future, when recording the death and burial of the Christian creed, may quote another: "Your own sword hath doomed your prophets like a destroying lion" (Jeremiah ii., 30).

E. J. BOWTELL.

JOHN THE APOSTLE.

Oh! there was an ancient party which his name was Zebedee,
And he pitched his humble quarters on the coast of Galilee.
Where, assisted by the loving, humble partner of his joys,
He spent his time in larruping his two unruly boys.

One night, as they were sailing on the blue and briny deep,
All the watch below were rather rudely waken'd from their
sleep.

And they started up in wonder, from the skipper to the boy,
As across the heaving waters came a roaring "Ship ahoy!"

This nocturnal salutation was a wonder in its way,
It was like a clap of thunder on a cheery summer's day.
But they knew it was a signal that the tide was on the ebb,
From the lungs of Boanerges, or the Thunderer, or Zeb.

So Shamus, Jack and Simon, with the others of the band,
Went and put the little ship about, and steered towards the
land.

And disgusted that their scaly prey had kept beyond their
reach,
Why they hauled the little hooker up, and sold her on the
beach.

So he packed his holy spirit up and started on a tour,
And he preached about contentment to the starving, needing
poor.

Showed the sinfulness of riches, and declared that when they
die,
Tis the beggars that will gather at the river by and bye.

As a surgeon or physician he was second, Sir, to none,
All disease before him vanished like the snow before the sun.
Whether cancer, or a fever, or dropsical attack,
They need only bring the sufferer to take a look at Jack.

Now, these wonders filled the citizens with very great sur-
prise,
So much that they imagined he was Satan in disguise.
And they had to pick their way along as though they trod on
eggs,
To avoid discarded crutches, and the cork, and wooden legs.

But in these degen'rate, doubting days we look around in
vain

For a leader in the churches who of faith has got a grain.
Could they lump it all together it were too minute to view,
And it wouldn't turn a "beaver" that was ancient to a new.

D. E.

ACID DROPS.

A COMIC scene was seen on Sunday last in the vicinity of Milton Hall, the headquarters of the North-West London Branch of the N. S. S. A pious but ill-behaved female, wending her weekly way to Coward Whitmore's chapel, assaulted certain unrelating notice-boards bearing the wicked names of Bradlaugh and Aveling. These in her wrath she—even as god flung Satan out of heaven, or Christ the unoffending swine down a steep place into the sea—flung hurtling into the road. And, alas! in "the very tempest and whirlwind of her passion" she dropped one of her books. A freethinking retriever promptly seized the book, and at once discovered he had forgotten an important engagement in Camden Town. This he made all speed to keep, and unfortunately he kept also the holy book. Nor was the precious volume rescued until long after its owner was within the soporific range of the Whitmorian eloquence. She can have the book on application to the president of the branch, Dr. Edward B. Aveling, at 13 Newman Street.

We shall be glad if her pastor will send for the future men to injure our property. They are more easily dealt with.

In a paper on "The Paris *Ouvrier*," in the December number of *Good Words*, R. Heath deplures the sterility of the marriages of the French workmen. Among the causes he mentions "loss of faith in divine providence." The Parisian *ouvrier* knows the falsity of the proverb "that god never sends mouths but he sends meat;" and has the sense to take care that the mouths do not come before the meat is ready

A COUNTRY clergyman once, preaching about the return of the prodigal son and the "fatted calf," said: "And, dear brethren, this was a favorite calf that had been in the family many years." No doubt it had been miraculously kept in that juvenile state on purpose that the prodigal might have *veal* instead of *beef*.

A CORRESPONDENT writes:—"While out last Sabbath forenoon, I heard a well-known dissenting minister make the following observations in connexion with the approaching

festivities at his own church:—"There will be a Christmas tree for the children; and, previous to picking, a supper will be given to poor people. . . . There you will see a sight which you will never see in any infidel hall." If Freethinkers were to imitate this example, and give a supper to the poor, would our Christian friends give us credit for being actuated by benevolent motives; or rather, would they not charitably surmise that we were hard up for converts, and so had taken to this form of proselytising? Do any of your readers think—taking into consideration the objects and the mode of the N. S. S. of attaining them—it is necessary for us to undertake the duty of administering 'outdoor relief' while so much money is wasted in the service of a being about whom we know next to nothing?"

MESSRS. ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA write to say that recent researches in Palestine have resulted in the discovery of the five lamps of the five foolish virgins spoken of by St. Matthew. At the same time was also found some of the oil the five virgins lacked. M. Shapira's attention is respectfully called to this. Although the name of the junior partner of the above-mentioned firm, and that of the "discoverer" of the famous manuscript are similar in sound, no relationship exists.

THE *Christian Herald*—that most comic of comic papers—had last week a most amusing article on "The Ominous Blood-red Fiery Sunsets." The comic *Herald* "reads in this hieroglyphical handwriting in crimson letters on the firmamental heavens" (by firmamental heavens is meant that solid, dome-like structure that was "made" some six thousand years ago, but which, somehow or other, seems to have vanished) "an augury and presage of coming bloodshed, sanguinary conflicts, red-republican revolutions, fiery conflagrations, and wide-spread effusion of the crimson tide of life." The writer goes on to assert that "sceptics who disbelieve in a superintending providence, will attribute these 'portentous' phenomena to natural causes." This is a capital joke. The idea of attributing phenomena of any kind to natural causes is intensely funny. No wonder the *Christian Herald* is merry. With such articles as these its circulation will undoubtedly so increase that it will be able shortly to announce "A larger circulation than all the other comic papers combined."

A SHORT time ago a Roman Catholic priest at Wallsend-on-Tyne made a religious census of the district, going from door to door, book in hand. In time the rev. gentleman came to No 55 South Terrace, when the following conversation ensued:—

Priest.—"I am taking a religious census of the neighborhood; I hope I am not troubling you."

Householder.—"Certainly not."

P.—"Will you—er—favor me with your full name?"

H.—"John Rowell Waller."

P.—"Thanks! To what denomination do you belong?"

H.—"None!"

P.—"But—er—I mean—er—what are you?"

H.—"An atheist."

P.—"Oh! well—er—it's—it's *all right*."

[Exit priest with a scared look, while the householder banquets on a hearty laugh].

REFERRING to Martin Luther, the *Catholic Mirror* says: "It is only the calm truth, it is not defamation to say that Luther was the most depraved sot, the most abandoned villain, the most superstitious driveller, the most utter sceptic that ever lived."

REUBEN MAY, the professional philanthropist, whose pious falsehoods in regard to the death beds of infidels were exposed in Mr. Foote's "Death's Test," has, according to *Truth*, come to the rescue of outcast London by requesting money for "rents, sick, Sunday free breakfasts, and gospel tract distribution." He is also "trying to raise an Anniversary Fund of £300." (*Truth* asks, Anniversary of what?—perhaps of a certain day at the Old Bailey). Reuben also claims the invention of a cheap blanket for the poor, made of a special paper and wadding. He offered to send samples—small size, 9d.; medium, 1s.; large size, 1s. 4d.; postage 4d. each. He declares "our old women are in ecstasies about them." Doubtless the old women are those who are foolish enough to send money to the professional philanthropist. It is such harpies as these who take upon themselves to defame the men who are honest enough to disavow the creed under cover of which so many rogues flourish.

A CHRISTIAN missionary in Fiji undertook the task of translating the bible into the native language. When the translation was produced, the first chapter of Genesis began: "And in the beginning the great green cow went mad. And the earth was in a state of chronic consumption. And darkness was upon the face of the black chimpanzee. And the essence of the great fat sow floated upon the surface of the waters." The translator had been abstractedly studying Fijian natural history. The Fijians did not read any further. They said they could make better books themselves.

SPECIAL NOTICES.

MR. FOOTE'S ENGAGEMENTS.

February 27, Hall of Science. March 2, Claremont Hall; 5, Hackney; 9, Milton Hall; 16, Manchester; 23, Plymouth; 30, Glasgow. April 3, 6, 10, 13, 17, 24, Hall of Science; 20, Bradford; 27, Oldham. May 4 and 11, Hall of Science; 19, Huddersfield; 26, Leicester. June, N. S. S. Conference. All Sundays for which Mr. Forder had authority to make arrangements for are now filled up.—All applications for lectures during March, April and May, to be made to Mr. Forder. Stamped envelope to be enclosed for reply. Mr. Foote can only lecture in the provinces on Saturday and Sunday during these months.

DR. E. B. AVELING'S LECTURES.

Dr. Edward B. Aveling (interim editor of the *Freethinker*) will lecture on Sunday Dec. 16, in the Lecture Hall, North Street, Leeds. At 11, "Evolution and the Bible;" 3, "Origin of Life;" 6.30, "Children and Freethought."

CORRESPONDENTS.

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

THE *Freethinker* will be forwarded, directly from the office, post-free to any part of Europe, America, Canada, and Egypt, at the following rates, prepaid:—One year, 6s. 6d.; Half Year, 3s. 3d.; Three Months, 1s. 7½d.

MR. W. J. RAMSEY'S ENGAGEMENTS.—December 23, Manchester. January 6, Leeds; 13, Walworth; 20, Bradford.—Applications to J. T. Ramsey, 18 Pearson Street, Kingsland Road, E.

RECEIVED.—C. J. H., E. Jackson, H. G. Swift, Himedamd, L. Pash Didymus, H. A. Hopkins, W. H. Morrish.

J. C. HUTTON.—We return your pieces as too long. Otherwise we should have been glad to insert them.

J. B.—We have sent your letter on to Mr. Cattell, the author of the pamphlet to which you refer.

F. A. N.—There will be no special Christmas Number this year. We only know of the "Flying Roll" as the name of a new sect in the south of London.

EVE.—Always glad to receive profane jokes.

J. BROTHERTON.—C. J. Whitmore's story of the hen and the egg is a very old one.

J. H. PORTER.—The poor little advertising sheet printed by Brabner only wants a puff from us. It is not worth notice.

H. BARRATT.—We agree with you as to the utility of the Freethought Gleanings. It may be some time, however, before there is another issue of them in pamphlet form, as they have hardly sold up to our expectations.

H. E.—The sketch you enclose is very good, but rather out of date. We shall be glad to hear from you again.

S. J. BELLCHAMBERS.—We are overwhelmed with verse. You must either wait or can have your lines back upon sending stamps.

J. LOGDEN.—You had better go to the Cancer Hospital.

A YOUNG FREETHINKER.—The *City Lantern* alluded to has not reached us.

EREBUS.—Latin Grammar, Smith's Student's; Latin Prose, ditto; Roman History, Schmitz; French Grammar, Brachet; German Grammar, Aue; Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, by Hamlin Smith; English Language, Adams; English History, Green's Shorter and Edith Thompson; Chemistry, Aveling (published by J. Hughes); Natural Philosophy, Aveling (published by W. Stewart).

IT is particularly requested that all orders for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter Street, London, to whom all Post-office Orders should be made payable. Considerable delay and annoyance are caused by the disregard of this rule. In remitting stamps halfpenny ones are preferred.

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

SUGAR PLUMS.

THE *Independent* (N.Y.) takes a rather discouraging view of the religious outlook. Of the "week of prayer" that eminent journal draws this dark picture: "In a few weeks the churches will be holding a 'week of prayer;' but it is saddening to know in advance how feeble and spasmodic these gatherings will for the most part be. But few will gather at most; and those who do will feel the chill of death upon them, and will scarcely hold together long enough to get a blessing; and then it will all be over for another twelve months."

THE managers of the East London Mission make earnest appeal to all benevolent and Christian friends for funds to

provide annual Christmas dinners for destitute children; also New Year's supper for the poorest adults in poverty-stricken districts of Ratcliffe, St. George's, and Shadwell. Funds, earnestly needed at once, may be sent to Mr. G. Hopkins, hon. superintendent, Hall of Free Meals, 263 Cable Street, St. George's, E. It is a pity that this kindness to the poor is mixed up with the injury to them that is implied in the word "mission." As, however, the missionaries clearly distinguish between benevolent and Christian friends, we hope benevolent Freethinkers may see their way to help.

A CURIOUS legal question is likely to be raised shortly in the High Court of Justice. An Oxford graduate, who is at the present time a candidate for a professional chair in that university, is a Freethinker of Mr. Bradlaugh's school. He has had occasion lately, in the course of some legal proceedings, to make several affidavits. We learn, on good authority, that it is the intention of "the other side" to object to the reception of these affidavits as evidence on the ground that they were sworn upon the New Testament by one who has no belief in its so-called divine inspiration. The issue will be watched with much interest.

A MEETING of avowed atheists has been held in the parish church of Nottingham, those present having been invited by the Rev. Canon Morse, the rector. An address on "God" was delivered by the Rev. Professor Symes, of the Church of England, and in the course of his remarks the learned professor alluded to the hardships and miseries the poor of the large cities endured, and said if the amount of attention and thought which had been given to theological controversy had been bestowed on the amelioration of the condition of the poor, they would not have now to face the mass of misery which at present appalled them. The address was followed by a discussion at which the town clerk presided.

THE Huddersfield Secular Sunday-school, which has been in existence for over twenty years, has recently come to a standstill, and it is thought desirable by some of its old friends and supporters that another school should be started (which would practically be a continuation of the old one), to be carried on in new premises, and under fresh auspices. The great importance of carrying on such an institution it is scarcely necessary to point out. The beneficial influence of the old school upon many of the scholars has been great, and far-reaching. The absence of any theological teaching will, as before, form a distinctive feature of the school. Lecturing to grown-up people against dogmas and superstitions which they have imbibed, will prove a work of supererogation if the youthful mind is only kept free from those dogmas, as would be the case in a Secular school. As that great benefactor, Robert Owen, taught the surest and easiest method of having a moral and intelligent people, is by careful attention to the training of the young. "As the twig is bent, so is the tree inclined." Two suitable rooms, capable of seating about 200 persons, have already been secured at 3 Brook Street, Huddersfield, and as early as practicable the school will be opened. As the expenses of rent, furniture, books, etc., will be very great, we hope our readers will give the matter their prompt and kind consideration. Subscriptions or donations will be thankfully received by the following members of the committee, Mr. O. Balmforth, 2 Commercial Place, Huddersfield; Mr. D. France, Freehold Street, Primrose Hill, Huddersfield; Treasurer, Mr. E. Denton, grocer, Woldgrun, Huddersfield; Secretary, William Simley, Moor Ford, Lockwood, Huddersfield.

ON Friday, December 14, at Exeter Hall, there is to be a public debate on the consistency of the sale of intoxicating liquors with Christian principles. Freethinkers please attend.

THE Symes' Testimonial Fund closes on Dec. 20. Intending subscribers should send their remittances at once to Mr. C. Bradlaugh, 20 Circus Road, St. John's Wood.

A LECTURE on the Blasphemy Laws, at Stalybridge, by our good friend, the Rev. W. Sharman of Plymouth, is fully reported in the *Evening Reporter*. The Rev. J. Freeston, another Unitarian clergyman, presided.

MR. SYMES will give his farewell lectures next Sunday at Claremont Hall, Penton Street. In the morning his subject will be "Sources of Christianity," and in the evening "Christianity and Poverty." We trust there will be a large attendance.

THE sub-committee appointed by the Executive of the National Secular Society have arranged the following programme for the Symes' presentation on Thursday, Dec. 20. Supper at 8 p.m.; songs, recitations and speeches from 9 till 10.30; to which the public will be admitted to the galleries on payment of 3d. each. At 11 o'clock there will be dancing for those who wish to stay. Tickets for supper and entertainment, 2s. 6d. each.

WOOLSTON ON THE MIRACLES.

(Continued from page 390.)

WOOLSTON'S fifth discourse was dedicated to Thomas Sherbock, Bishop of Bangor, who replied to him on the question of the resurrection of Jesus. Its subject is the three resurrections, that of the daughter of Jarius, the widow son, and Lazarus. The ruler's daughter was but an insignificant girl twelve years of age. There could be no end in raising her to life, except to wipe tears from her specially-favored parents. Why did he not restore John the Baptist or some considerable person? Again Woolston has resource to his supposed Jewish objector and puts into his mouth the following:—"Jesus, it is manifest, raised not the dead at all. The only person that Christians can reasonably pretend he did raise was Jarius's daughter, whom Matthew writes of; and she, according to the story, was only in a sleep or an ecstasy when Jesus revived her. But the Galileans, who were after a time called Christians, finding their account in a resurrection miracle, Luke devised another story of better circumstances in the widow of Nain's son. But this not being so great a miracle as the Church still wanted, John, when no one was alive to contradict and expostulate with him for it, trumps up a long story of a thumping miracle in Jesus's raising of Lazarus, who had been not only dead, but buried, so long that he stank. But to prove the story of this miracle to be false and fabulous we need say no more than that it was last recorded. If there had been any truth in it, the first evangelist would have remembered us of it."

Woolston's last discourse is directed against the alleged resurrection of Jesus, and here again he resorts to his old friend the Jewish Rabbi, who objects to Jesus not having stayed in the sepulchre until the seal was opened, and pretends that the body was clandestinely removed on the Sunday before the time predicted. It must be confessed that on this, the most important miracle of the gospels, Woolston's argument, not as strong as in dealing with the minor ones, and Bishops Sherlock and Smalbroke, and others, by concentrating their arguments on this head, were enabled to gain an apparent victory, until disturbed by the more critical objections to the gospel stories adduced by Peter Annett, some account of whom we shall give in our next number.

J. M. W.

THE TRIBES AND THE RHYMES.

"I WAS not born under a rhyming planet" or I might possibly have a more artistic ear for the poetically beautiful than I unfortunately possess. The confession is a pitiful one in an age of School-boards, but it is true. Yet there are men in existence who take that "pleasure in poetic pains which only poets know." The author of a pamphlet entitled "Our dear old England! the heir of the world and the mother of nations," is one of these. He is seemingly unable to do much in the way of originality, but in the ridiculous effusion he has given to the world he has at least realised Edmund Burke's definition of poetry by substantiating shadows and lending existence to nothing. The pamphlet referred to, though it furnishes a huge joke to any mind untrammelled by Christian superstition, is written in all sober earnestness, and its perusal will, besides inducing laughter, evoke a feeling of pity for the deluded writer. It is compiled for the purpose of adding still more nonsensical "identifications" to "the lost ten tribes" absurdity. In this instance old familiar nursery rhymes have been called upon to play their part in the controversy, and, it is needless to say, the result is farcical. The compiler of the nursery proofs has altogether mistaken his profession. He is a positive loss to the recreation of the weak intellects which most do congregate in the Gaiety stalls, and for a children's chorus in a Drury Lane pantomime his services would be invaluable. If his friends have any influence with him they should certainly advise him to leave Ezekiel, Jeremiah and Solomon to the enjoyment of their celestial glory and submit his talented assistance to Mr. Blanchard, by far a more entertaining writer than any of the trio mentioned.

The author of "Our dear old England!" has discovered that our nursery rhymes are part proof that the inhabitants of this country are literal descendants of the "good ould stock" included in the ten "lost" tribes. There are, it appears, some wonderful truths hidden in these rhymes, and these "truths hounded in themselves a principle of eternal life, from being founded on the word of the living god." Why living, Mr. Pamphleteer? You surely don't require the adjective to emphasise the fact that your god has not yet joined the

great majority. Only to think of poor Jack and Jill having within them a principle of eternal life, which will enable them hereafter to return to that hard-hearted hill and recover the remnants of their broken crowns. Mr. Pamphleteer, I thank thee for that hope! Jack, old man, I congratulate you! Jill, accept my heartfelt sympathy for your temporary tumble, and my best wishes for prosperity in your "eternal life!" After a manifestation of uneducated bunkum, anent the absolute supremacy of England, the writer begins his funny farce by showing "the truths in the rhyme dealing with our national emblems, the lion and the unicorn, which are the symbols of courage and strength."

"The lion and the unicorn were fighting for the crown." "Not," says he "for which should have it, but mutually in its defence. . . . And in this well-worn nursery rhyme we have an earnest of our royal inheritance,"—whatever that may mean. Surely there is some mistake here, for, if I rightly cross the haze of years which separates childhood from now, there was something about the advent of a little dog which knocked the lion and the unicorn into a cocked hat. The "royal inheritor," like other Christian writers, has a habit of eliminating whatever doesn't fit; so I suppose I must forgive his omission of the victorious but democratic doggy. The next illustration, it appears, "has a regal splendor about it," and is "an attempt to depict the glories of Solomon in all the wealth, abundance, and lavish luxury of his magnificent court"—

"Sing a song for sixpence, a bag full of rye,
Four-and-twenty blackbirds baked in a pie;
When the pie was opened the birds began to sing,
Was not that a dainty dish to set before a king?"

Oh, Solomon, Solomon! I knew you were fond of the ladies I might even acknowledge that in your green old age you saw the follies of your youth, and made up for misspent time by scribbling proverbs for the current court journal; but I never yet accused you of eating singing blackbirds. After that feat Max Adeler's little boy, who swallowed the musical instrument and ground out "Way down the Swanee River" at intervals, must necessarily take a big back seat. Another "royal pageant" is forthcoming, and this time it is the Queen of Sheba, "heralded by accompanying music and richly bedight with jewels," coming to hear the wisdom of Solomon—

"Ride a cock-horse to Banbury Cross,
To see a grand lady upon a white horse;
With rings on her fingers, and bells on her toes,
And she shall have music wherever she goes."

A few questions suggest themselves here which I commend to Sunday-school teachers for consideration. Did the Queen of Sheba ride a horse or a camel? (2 Chron. ix., 1). If a horse, was it a cock-horse? If a cock-horse, was it a white horse? Did she go to Jerusalem or Banbury Cross? Was her baptismal name Maude Forrester? Was her wedding-ring included when on a visit to a lascivious old monarch, or did she pass herself off as somebody else's sister à la Sarah? Did the length of the extremities of her foot permit the utilisation of campanological appendages? And, last of all, did the music incidental to her visit emanate from the unfortunate blackbirds?

The next illustration is, indeed, as the writer remarks, a very sad ditty, but we are thankful to be assured—"in all its sadness it is illumined by a gleam of hope"—

"Little Bo-peep had lost her sheep,
And did not know where to find 'em;
Let 'em alone and they'll come home,
And bring their tails behind 'em."

We are truly glad that the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" didn't arrive home minus their tails. Little wonder that the poor creatures went astray in "Halah and Habor by the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes" (2 Kings xvii., 6). Was there no friendly policeman about to guide their wandering footsteps across Queen Victoria Street, Habor? Surely a map of the locality might have been passed round. A flock which had for its descriptive poet a gentleman acquainted with the cockney "'em," ought certainly to have known its way about. A versifier on such intimate terms with the "good shepherd" as to be able to call him (or her) "little Bo-peep," might in all conscience have been able to suggest a straight course home, tails and all.

I have not space to go through the remaining balderdash. The "Old woman who lived in a shoe" and "Humpty Dumpty" are dear old friends whom I do not like to see Christianised—especially as poor Humpty is metamorphosed into Belshazzar—without a few words in their defence, and that is not possible now. Altogether the pamphlet evidences the necessity of additional asylums; and readers of it will have an opportunity of seeing to what depths of lunacy Christianity can drag its followers.

WHYTE TIGHE.

A HALF-WITTED creature having fallen into the river, was lustily bawling, "O, lord, save me! save me!" when, luckily laying hold of a tree, past which he was drifting, cried, "Ye need na' mind noo, I'll just save mysel'!"

HOW DID METHUSELAH ESCAPE THE FLOOD?

If those interested in this subject will examine Genesis v., beginning at verse 25, they will see that Methuselah was 187 years old at the birth of Lamech, and that Lamech was 182 years old at the birth of Noah. This will make Methuselah 369 years old at the birth of Noah. He now has to live 600 years longer to arrive at the age of 969 years. Now when we turn to Genesis vii., 11, we find that in the 600th year of Noah's life, in the second month and the seventeenth day of the month, "the fountains of the great deep were broken up, and the windows of heaven were open;" verse, 12—"And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights."

This being in the 600th year of Noah's life, in the second month of the year, we see that he was only 599 years, 1 month, and 17 days old. For example, from the birth of Methuselah to the birth of Lamech, 187 years; from the birth of Lamech to the birth of Noah, 182 years; from the birth of Noah to the Flood, 599 years, 1 month, 17 days—968 years, 1 month, 17 days.

So that Methuselah must have lived for the space of 10 months and a few days after the Flood; and as no account of his being in the Ark with Noah is given, we are led to ask bible believers to please point out the old man's location during the long spell of wet weather.—*Boston Investigator*.

REVIEWS.

Our Corner Christmas Number. Freethought Publishing Company, 63 Fleet Street.

This number, as befitting the season, is almost entirely light in character. The only exceptions are papers on "Noah's Ark," by D., and on "The Solar-myth of the Child Christ," by Mrs. Besant, both full of information and mythological lore. Equally pronounced in its Freethought are the verses entitled, "An American View of the Creation." The longest story is by L. Wood, entitled, "Against the Stream;" but we prefer the smart sketch of "The Model," by R. Mortimer. Dr. Edward B. Aveling contributes an imaginative sketch entitled, "The Dream of the Boy Jesus." Mr. Bradlaugh writes in praise of winter fishing, and Miss Hypatia Bradlaugh contributes a short story. Altogether Mrs. Besant is much to be congratulated on the varied contents of her Christmas Number. Price 6d.

Peoples Political Almanack, 1884. Published by Whittingham and Co., 91 Gracechurch Street, E.C.

This penny sheet gives, in addition to the calendar, a fine portrait of Mr. Gladstone, an account of the national income and expenditure, local taxation, etc., borough and county representation, a view of the inequalities of parliamentary representation, the number of owners of land and their acreage, statistics of education, trade, population, pauperism and thrift, also of the national debt, of the Liberal and Conservative expenditure paid out of taxation, and of the food imported under protection and under free trade. It is printed on good paper, and admirably suited to be hung up in the workshop.

Flight of the Shadows. A Discourse by COLONEL INGERSOLL. Price 2d. W. H. Morrish, 18 Narrow Wine Street, Bristol.

We understand that the first edition of this lecture by Col. Ingersoll was sold out immediately upon its issue. A few extracts will show that the gallant Colonel's latest brochure is as full of hard hits as its predecessors. He says:—

"I do not feel under any obligation to build something in the place of a detected falsehood. All I think I am under obligation to put in the place of a detected lie, is the detection."

"Did it ever strike you to estimate the enormous cost of what we are pleased to call 'the American system?' The church has to-day more than six hundred thousand millions of dollars worth of property in this country. It must cost two million dollars a week; or in other words, five hundred dollars every minute to run those churches! Just think what real benefits to suffering humanity could be conferred with this vast sum. You give me the money, and if I don't do more good with it than four times as many churches, I'll resign."

"But there is this to be said in favor of prayer, that whether successful or not, it is a sort of intellectual exercise. Like a man trying to lift himself, he may not succeed, but he gets a good deal of exercise."

In the following sentence Colonel Ingersoll refers to the prosecution of our little paper:—

"Everything that intolerance, malice and bigotry can devise, that shall have a tendency to place fetters on the tongues of men, is constantly resorted to by orthodox Christians; and in England the Blasphemy Laws, which had become almost obsolete, were revived solely to punish honest men for expressing their thoughts. Every citizen should see to it that these laws are repealed at once and for ever. They are the relics of barbarism, and any government would deserve a certificate for meanness that would endeavor to put them in force."

Popular Edition of Colonel Ingersoll's Lectures. Freethought Publishing Company, 63 Fleet Street.

THERE are so many editions of Ingersoll's popular lectures, that, in calling attention to the present cheap issue, we deem it necessary to mention the titles, that readers may know what to expect. The first series now before us contains the lecture on "Individuality and Mental Freedom," entitled, "Take a Road of Your Own." The discourse on "Hell," and that on "The Christian Religion." Two lectures on "Ghosts," and "The Apotheosis of Thomas Paine." 96 pp., 6d

PROFANE JOKES.

WHERE did Noah strike the first nail in the ark?—On the head.

BISHOP (reproving delinquent page): "Wretched boy! Who is it that sees and hears all we do, and before whom even I am but as a crushed worm?" Page: "The missus, my lord."

A POWERFUL PREACHER.—"Ah, sir!" exclaimed the elder in the tone of pathetic recollection, "our late minister was the man! He was a poorfu' preacher; for i' the short time he delivered the word amang us, he knock'd three poopits to pieces, and dang the guts out o' five bibles."

A FRENCHMAN, writing to a friend what was intended as an affectionate farewell, referred to a dictionary for the word "preserve." He found it meant "to pickle." So he wrote in conclusion—"Good bye, may god pickle you."

A COUNTRY parson was preaching a very dry sermon from the text, "We all, like sheep, have gone astray." He was going in strongly for monotonous repetitions. "We all like sheep—we all like sheep—" "Dang it, measter!" exclaimed an irreverent joker, "Ohi loikes a good bit o' baacon."

OPTIMIST AND PESSIMIST.

SCENE.—Paradise. Enter two actors, R. and L., meeting C. First: "Hallo, Mac, old fellow! never expected to see you here. Why you won't be comfortable, there's nothing to grumble at up here!" Second: "I don't know so much about that; they've put me well in the corner (with my back to the throne) on a damp cloud to play a harp that's flat, and this halo don't fit."

AT one of the battles with the Moors, a priest was heard urging the Christians to go vigorously into the fight, adding with pious zeal—"He who falls in battle will sup in paradise!" Presently this enthusiastic churchman was seen in trembling terror fleeing from the field. When upbraided by the soldiers for his cowardice, and reminded of the lively prospect he had of supping in paradise, he excused himself from indulging in this repast by remarking—"Ah! but I never take supper!"

A CLERGYMAN who owns a farm, found his ploughman sitting on his plough resting his horses. (Quoth the clergyman—"John, wou'dn't it be a good plan for you to have a scythe here, and be cutting a few bushes along the fences while the horses are resting a short time?" "Yes, sir," said John. "And wadn't it be weel for you tae hae a tub o' tatties in the poopit, and, when the folk were singin', peel them awhile to be ready for the pat?")

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