

The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

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CHARLES BRADLAUGH.

BORN SEPT. 26, 1833.

DIED JAN. 30, 1891.

CHARLES BRADLAUGH.

CHARLES BRADLAUGH'S name will live in English history. He was the hero of a hundred fights and the victor in nearly all of them. His greatest battle affected the British constitution. The House of Commons affirmed that it had a right to exclude a duly elected member of Parliament. Charles Bradlaugh denied that right. He allowed that he might be expelled after he had taken his seat, but the House could not legally prevent him from taking it. The House thought otherwise. It took a base advantage of its privileges. It relied on its irresponsible power. It resorted to brute force. Charles Bradlaugh was warned off the premises. At last he was thrown out by policemen. But he said he would come again, and he did. He returned again and again with a fresh mandate from his faithful constituency. Eventually

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he took his seat, which he filled with more dignity and usefulness than was ever displayed by those who barred his entrance. After carrying a Bill which made it impossible for any other person to be the victim of a similar outrage, he succumbed to the only foe that was too strong for him. But even in death he achieved another triumph. It was what Oliver Cromwell would have called "a crowning mercy." The House of Commons, by a unanimous vote, decided to erase from its books the unconstitutional resolution by which he had been excluded. His victory was thus complete. He had beaten the House in a long, obstinate, and passionate struggle; he had also lived down misrepresentation and calumny; his very enemies had learnt to respect him, and even to become his friends; and when he breathed his last it was universally acknowledged that the world had lost what is very precious in these days of timidity and compromise—A MAN.

A great life was Charles Bradlaugh's, and the story of it should be written. His devoted daughter has collected materials, and the "authoritative" biography is to appear. But when Mrs. Bonner has completed her task, there will still be room for another life of Charles Bradlaugh by a literary artist. For that, however, we can afford to wait for five, ten, or even twenty years.

Charles Bradlaugh was a born fighter. He was in his element in great contests. This it was that made him such a magnificent leader of Freethought. He often led it to victory, he never led it to defeat. Take him for all in all, we shall not look upon his like again. Men of his stamp are not born frequently. This century has had one Bradlaugh, and is not likely to have another.

Freethinkers cherish the memory of Charles Bradlaugh as an inspiration. He was always ready to do and dare. Hope shone in him when it has almost gone out in others. Such an example forbids us to despair. In our darkest hours we have only to think of him to gather fresh strength and courage for the war with falsehood and evil.

So general was the grief, or at least the regret, when Charles Bradlaugh died, that bigotry was frightened or shamed into silence. In the course of time, however, it looked around and thought its opportunity had come. At first it indulged in vague hints, then the hints were made more definite, and finally they developed into circumstantial stories, every word of which is a lie. Orthodoxy cannot admit that a sceptic can die fearlessly. To do so would be to discount its own pretensions. It therefore concocts idle tales about the death-beds of Freethinkers. It lied about Voltaire, it lied about Paine, it is now lying about Charles Bradlaugh. And it is worthy of note that these lies originate in professional brains. They are devised by the hirelings of faith to throw discredit on reason. They are the last resort of superstition, the last weapon of imposture.

It is pretended that Charles Bradlaugh wavered in the presence of Death, that the convictions of his life failed him in his last extremity. The contemptible bigots who say this have not a single scrap of evidence. The whole statement is an effort of imagination. Charles Bradlaugh's daughter, who tended him in his last illness, has the sworn testimony of the nurses that he never spoke a word to them on the subject of religion. She herself says that the only remark he made to her was that his own case was a poor illustration of the Design Argument. No other persons were allowed in his sick chamber. We have therefore the witness of all who were in a position to know; and every honest man with a grain of sense will despise the statements of persons who must, from the very nature of the case, speak from a plentiful lack of information.

After all the bigots only lie about the men they fear. They calumniate those they dread. They are thus paying Charles Bradlaugh an indirect compliment. They know that he was a terrible opponent of their foolish creed, and they know that his spirit still lives beyond the dust of death—not in heaven, hell, purgatory, or any other province of superstition, but in the hearts of those whom he filled with a passionate determination to "Crush the Infamous."

G. W. F.

PERSECUTION AND CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE.

To a sincere believer in the doctrine of exclusive salvation, governments had it in their power to save men from perdition; and whenever the clergy were at the elbow of the civil arm, no matter whether they were Catholic or Protestant, persecution was the result. "Compel them to come in" was a rule that seemed sanctioned by mercy, and the horrible sufferings it led men to inflict seemed small to minds accustomed to contemplate, as a perpetual source of motive, the eternal unmitigated miseries of a hell that was the inevitable destination of a majority amongst mankind."—*George Eliot, Essays: "The Influence of Rationalism,"* p. 222.

INDEPENDENT THINKING A MODE OF SELF-DEFENCE.

A MAN is not a man unless he is a thinker—he is a fool having no ideas of his own. If he happens to live among men who do think, he browses like an animal on their ideas. He is a sort of kept man, being supported by the thoughts of others. He is what in England we call a pauper, who subsists upon outdoor relief allowed him by men of intellect. When, however, a man becomes a thinker, it does not follow that he will excel as such. He may have small capacity that way. He may be timid and terrified at new ideas. There are persons who say that thinking is a sin if it leads you to disbelieve what they believe. There are priests who teach that if you do not come to certain conclusions, the thinker will be punished after death for it. One consequence of this is that many persons are frightened, and think it better not to think at all, than run this risk. If a man is bold enough to despise this fear, he may be intimidated by the conduct of his neighbors towards him, who resent any new ideas, partly because they do not like them, and partly because it is a sort of reflection upon their pusillanimous contentment with the ideas of the day, or of the party to which they belong. There are others who, after beginning to think, give it up, not from cowardice, but because they find it troublesome. Just as the meaner sort of men are willing to live upon charity, rather than work for themselves, so there are mean pauper-minded men who are content to live upon secondhand, unverified ideas, rather than acquire any of their own.

A true thinker is, therefore, both industrious and intrepid. He who is a thinker on principle, is liable to continual enlargement of view. This compels great carefulness and scrutiny; the principle involves a perfect discipline in toleration, in fairness of speech, and in implicit respect for the critical liberty of others. When I first began to understand that independent thinking was a means of self-defence against error and a sort of duty towards truth, I was far from seeing all its scope. Christians with whom I came to debate would tell me that thought was really in every man's power and beyond prohibition. It was the expression of it which they felt bound to control. Yet even without expression it is useful to think, for he who does it is a wiser and a better protected man than the intimidated and ignorant creature who dares not think on his own account. But as soon as such a thinker discerns that new thought needs the verification of criticism before it can be trusted, he necessarily insists upon the publicity of his opinion. Then his difficulties commence. He finds that nobody wants him to express his opinion, and probably finds many who become very angry if he attempts it. He finds a number of parties who have made a good stand—as the Puritans did—for the liberty of expressing their opinion, who see no utility in anybody else expressing theirs. They are satisfied that the world would go very wrong if they could not be heard; but when the world has the advantage of hearing what they have to say, they do not see what more it can want. Besides, they are so sure that they have exactly the truth, that they regard any expression of an opposite opinion as of the nature of personal hostility to them; endangering their authority and their influence, and retarding the accepted settlement of questions as they have decided them. At this stage the independent thinker finds himself assailed by Church priests, Nonconformist priests, scientific priests, and even Freethinking priests—were such conceivable—who do not see that the liberty of self-thinking is the right of all persons.

Independent thinking, as a principle, implies that others may act upon it also. It implies an intelligent toleration towards others, since they must be accorded equal liberty of announcing new opinions and of contesting what another announces. The thinker understands that his favorite view may be exploded by any other thinker who conceives him to be in error. When this result of the principle occurs, many turn back, the pride of opinion being stronger in most persons than the pride of truth.

When any person lays down, or selects and pursues, any plan of public policy, it is equally the right of any other person to indicate, or advise and reason in favor of any other public policy that may seem more useful. To prevent this would be mere controversial despotism—an insolent sort of intellectual imperialism, under which only one person can speak or act, and only one policy be accepted, and that without discussion or question. Freethought holds by the Homeric precept:

To speak his mind is every free man's right;
In war and peace, in counsel or in fight.

The only conditions being that what he speaks shall be well weighed, and what he says shall be said fairly. The thinker who does not think for himself, or does not say what he does think, or does not stand up for the right of all others to say it, is no true thinker, but a new priest in a new guise.

Independent opinion, therefore, has to confront many difficulties, as a universal principle means the right of thought for all men. It means resisting alike clerical, political, and social dictation. It implies carefulness in forming opinion and patience in reasoning new opinion out before announcing it, that men may not be set against it as a source of crudity. It demands for its exercise a disciplined toleration towards all others using the same right. It has to employ the utmost consideration and fairness of speech, as all imputation to others of dishonoring motives for their opinions breaks up concord in the pursuit of truth and shuts the mouth of criticism, which alone verifies the steps of progress.

As I have been a partisan of individual and independent thinking, it is incumbent on me to show what its tendency is—whether to advance or endanger society. My belief is that we have not had much experience as yet of the nature of independent thinking on principle; by which I mean the conviction that thinking individually and independently of spiritual or social penalties, is necessarily good in itself and of the nature of a duty. Thinking increases in the world, but there is not much of this duteous and tolerant kind as yet. The Catholic thinks in his peculiar way, but he is not in favor of others thinking in any other way. Other religionists and sceptics have, however, taken the same liberty, but have often shown a disposition to think that the end of truth has been reached by them, and that men in general, if they knew their own interest, would settle down at the point the nonconformists or sceptics have reached. This implies the absence of any idea that thinking is a permanent duty of men. The universe is an old and very large place, and we do not know yet exactly what it contains. Thought is the exploration of it in the search of truth, and when we have found any that is new, it is an addition to the treasures of mankind. Thinking therefore has to go on until some well-informed person comes and tells that Nature is "played out."

If we are to look things "square in the face" as an American phrase goes, we must own that the thinker is a disturber. He is a Truth-hunter, and there is no telling what he will find. Truth is an exile which has been kept out of her kingdom, and Error is a usurper in possession of it; and the moment Truth comes into her sight Error has to give up its occupancy of her kingdom; and as everybody consciously or unconsciously harbors some of the emissaries of the usurper, they do not like owning the fact, and they dispute the warrant of Truth to search their premises—though to be relieved of such malignant and costly inmates would be an advantage.

Had the "herald angels" brought "glad tidings" of Freethought at Christmas time, mankind had had happier New Years than have befallen them. Let us hope that strong thinking will make the coming year braver and brighter yet.

G. J. HOLYOAKE.

Solomon Isaacs—"Vell, doctor, if I've got to die, I die contented. My life was insured for three thousand pounds."

Doctor—"I think, with the aid of tonics, I can keep you live for a week longer."

Solomon Isaacs—"Dond't do it, doctor. Der breminum nes due der day after to-morrow."

IS PETER IN HELL?

THE idea that the chief apostle may be in hell, will seem an extremely extravagant one to Christians. Yet if Jesus spoke literal truth, such a contingency ought, at least, to be regarded as possible. Jesus said distinctly to Peter and the rest of the disciples, "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. x. 33; 2 Tim. ii. 12). Yet in spite of this, Peter soon after denied his master, and strengthened his emphatic and repeated denials with an oath, and with cursing and swearing. As Peter denied Jesus before men, why should not Jesus carry out his solemn threat and deny Peter when he seeks admittance to the mansions above? Perhaps the denial may be temporary, as were Peter's recorded denials of Christ; and Peter may merely depart for a time on a brief visit to the infernal regions, just as Jesus is alleged to have descended into hell; though why the second person of the Trinity, who are always everywhere, should be supposed to be out of hell at any time, is a mystery which only priests can pretend to solve.

There is clearly some uncertainty concerning Peter's fate. We know nothing of his death, nor of his fidelity during the closing years of his life. That Christ promised his twelve apostles that they should sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel, proves nothing, unless Christians grant that the traitor, Judas, is also to be one of these heavenly judges; for the promise included the apostle who betrayed him, equally with the apostle who denied him. As Judas fell and forfeited the infallible promise of the infallible deity, why might not Peter forfeit the promise by his denials, and by falling from grace at any subsequent period in his life? That he was extremely liable to fall, we know. Jesus himself on one occasion had to say to him, "Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men."

The popular idea of Peter as door-keeper to the celestial regions, is strongly opposed to the supposition that he may be in warmer quarters. But popular tradition, of course, is worthless as an argument, unless supported by scripture; and scripture, while giving Peter the metaphorical keys of the kingdom of heaven "while on earth," does not justify the popular assumption that Peter will always retain those keys, unless we also conclude that the statement that Christ has the keys of hell (Rev. i. 18), means that Christ will always be door-keeper of the infernal regions. As Peter had the power given to him to send people to hell as well as to heaven, those metaphorical keys bestowed on him by Jesus must equally have been keys of hell as well as of heaven, and we might expect Peter to exercise control over the entrances to both regions. The statements of Jesus, moreover, were founded on the pun that "Peter" (signifying rock), was the rock upon which he would build his church, and we know how far a pun will lead a man. While we might admit that Jesus sanctioned the present-day plague of punning, we cannot grant that his favorite pun gave Peter either the permanent control or the *entrée* of the New Jerusalem. The subsequent facts of history, indeed, show that Paul, rather than Peter, became the rock on which Christ's church was built. Half the books of the New Testament are written by this great propagandist apostle, while only two short and insignificant epistles are attributed to Peter, whose authority in Christian doctrine is quite overshadowed by the abundant teachings and conclusions of the energetic and much more widely successful apostle to the Gentiles.

We must conclude that Christians cannot claim, as a certainty, that Peter is in heaven even on their own documents, and they must admit, at least, the possibility of a literal fulfilment of Christ's threat to deny in heaven those who should deny him on earth.

W. P. BALL.

Inquiring Child—"Will papa be bald when he gets to heaven?" Mother—"No, dear; of course not." I. C. (reflectively)—"Then I suppose his hair has gone to heaven to wait for him."

GEORGE ELIOT.

"GEORGE ELIOT," as nearly everyone knows, was the pen-name assumed by Mary Ann Evans, one of the greatest novelists of the century. She was born at Arbury Farm, near Griff, Warwickshire, 22 Nov., 1819. Her parents were pious Evangelical Dissenters. In 1841, his wife having died in 1836, Mr. Evans and his daughter removed to Foleshill, near Coventry. Here she made the friendship of the household of Charles Bray, including Charles Christian Hennell, his brother-in-law. This connection led her to Freethought. It is not true that, as Lord Acton said, "from Jonathan Edwards to Spinoza she went over at a step." That Catholic nobleman saw only the result, but knew not the process, for George Eliot never took the public into her confidence in this matter. She wrote: "I do not attach much value to a disclosure of religious feelings." Ever eager after knowledge, and with a large power of acquirement and assimilation, she early showed the philosophical trend of her mind. She cared not merely for learning, but its results, and she was prepared to follow truth wherever it led. Lyell's *Principles of Geology* led her to see the discrepancies

between the Bible and science, and Isaac Taylor's *Ancient Christianity* showed how corrupt an institution her divine religion soon became. Hennell's able *Inquiry into the Origin of Christianity* thus fell as seed into prepared ground. She made an analysis of the work, which she found to be a sober, thoughtful attempt to explain Christianity naturally by patient inductive inquiry, rejecting the short and easy method of supernaturalism. It was the scientific method of Lyell applied to the exploration and explanation of stratified religion. By the spring of 1842 she entirely renounced Christianity, whereby she much offended her father. Like most Freethinkers, she always felt rid of a burden, not deprived of a support by the change. She wrote to Miss Hennell: "When the soul is just liberated from the wretched giant's bed of dogmas on which it has been wracked and stretched ever since it began to think, there is a feeling of exultation and strong hope." A Baptist minister said of her: "That young lady must have had the Devil at her elbow to suggest her doubts, for there is not a book that I recommended to her in support of Christian Evidences that she had not read." Christianity she considered a religion based on pure selfishness.



GEORGE ELIOT

Strauss translated the work of Hennell into German, and, at the suggestion of Hennell, Miss Evans did a like service by translating Strauss's *Leben Jesu* into English. In 1846 this was published by Dr. Chapman. A previous translation, by Hollick and Edmonds, had been issued in parts by Hetherington, but of this she probably knew nothing. It was followed by a yet more daring performance, the translation of Ludwig Feuerbach's *Wesen des Christenthums*, in which he shows that every article of Christian belief is the outcome of some human wish, hope, or apprehension. This appeared in 1854, and about the same period she translated Spinoza's *De Deo* for the benefit of an inquiring friend, which she followed by an English version of Spinoza's *Ethics*. For a while she made her home with Dr. Chapman in the Strand, and here she met the leading contributors to the *Westminster Review*, among them George Henry Lewes, John Oxenford, and Harriet Martineau. Some of her contributions to the *Westminster* are republished in

Essays and Leaves from a Notebook. One (1855) is a severe criticism of evangelical teaching and Dr. Cumming and his "unscrupulosity of statement." It was this review which led Lewes to tell her she had true genius. Another (1857), on Worldliness and other Worldliness, dealing with the poet Young and the God of the *Night Thoughts*, who "is simply Young himself writ large." A review of Lecky on "Rationalism" in the same volume is perhaps the most pronounced of all her writings.

It was Herbert Spencer who introduced Miss Evans to Lewes. Mutual interest ripened into esteem, and esteem into love. In defiance of the conventional, they determined to live together. Mr. Oscar Browning call it "a true marriage," which it was in all save the legal sense. Both were poor. One sitting-room had to serve as study to both writers. Both worked to maintain his children and their mother as well as themselves. By his advice she took to fiction, producing *Scenes of Clerical Life*, which at once gave her

a place, and following it with *Adam Bede*, which raised her to the front rank of contemporary writers. *The Mill on the Floss*, in which something of her own life appears, followed in 1860, and *Silas Marner* in the following year. A visit to Italy produced *Romola*, in which she depicts Florentine life in the time of Savonarola the reformer, a genius with whom she had much in common. *Felix Holt the Radical* was published in 1866, *Middlemarch* in 1871-2, *Daniel Deronda* in 1876.

As a poet George Eliot does not rank so high, but her little piece, "Oh, may I join the choir invisible," well expresses the emotion of the Religion of Humanity. She accepted Dr. Congreve's statement that the *Spanish Gipsy* was "a mass of Positivism." For all Comte's writings she had a feeling of high admiration. "I do not think," says Mr. Cross, "I ever heard her speak of

any writer with a more grateful sense of obligation for enlightenment." At Lewes's death in 1878 she was for a while inconsolable. It is hinted in her letters that she survived it only because she found the world "so intensely interesting." In the *Impressions of Theophrastus Such* (1879) she published essays in which Lewes had taken interest. In 1880 she married an old friend, Mr. J. W. Cross. But her new happiness was short-lived. She died 22 Dec., 1880, and was buried with Lewes at Highgate. As a novelist, George Eliot is distinguished for her humor, pathos, delineation of character, and philosophical reflection. She is above all a teacher of sympathy. To many she has been, in her own words—

As the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense.

J. M. WHEELER.



GEORGE HENRY LEWES.

GEORGE HENRY LEWES, whose name is indissolubly linked with that of George Eliot, was one of the most accomplished men of letters of the century, and was born in London on April 18, 1817. He was the grandson of Charles Lee Lewes, a famous actor. He was educated in London, Jersey, and Brittany. For a time he walked the hospitals, but gave up the profession from his dislike to witnessing physical pain. He afterwards turned to the stage, but finally chose literature as his profession, and continued for some years a journalist and dramatic critic of exceptional acuteness and vivacity. His early struggles are in part depicted in his first novel, *Ran-thorpe*. At the age of nineteen he belonged to a club chiefly composed of tradesmen, who discussed philosophy, and in particular Spinoza.* He became a

* See his interesting account of this club in the *Fortnightly Review*, 1866.

complete Freethinker, and by 1836 had planned his *Problems of Life and Mind*, upon which subject he lectured in W. J. Fox's chapel, South Place, in 1837. After visiting Germany, he married in 1840, but the union did not prove happy. He then worked at his *Biographical History of Philosophy*, the two first volumes appearing in 1845, and the last two in the following year. This work did much to show the vanity of metaphysical speculation and to indicate Positivism as the goal of philosophy. The work was afterwards amplified and published as *The History of Philosophy from Thales to Comte*. Lewes was one of the first to introduce English readers to August Comte, in his account of *Comte's Philosophy of the Sciences* (1847). As relaxation he wrote two novels, *Ran-thorpe* and *Rose Blanche* and *Violet*, neither of which became popular; but his gifts in this direction were placed at the service of "George Eliot." In 1849 he became one

of the founders of the *Leader*, for which he wrote till 1854. Among his colleagues were Thornton Hunt and G. J. Holyoake. A *Life of Robespierre* fell rather flat, but was followed by a standard *Life of Goethe* (1855), one of the best biographies of the poet either in English or in German. By this time he had linked his life with Mary Ann Evans, whom he assisted in all her subsequent works. As a contributor to the leading magazines and reviews, he was well acquainted with Carlyle, Thackeray, Mill, Charlotte Brontë, and other of the leading writers. His scientific predilections seen in the *Life of Goethe* was further shown in *Seaside Studies* in 1858, the *Physiology of Common Life* in the following year, *Animal Life* in 1862, and an essay on *Aristotle as a Biologist* in 1864. Much of his best work is scattered among magazines. I may instance a paper on "Shelley" in the *Westminster Review* (1841), on "Leopardi" in *Fraser* (1848), on "Darwin" in the *Fortnightly*, and on the "Mental Condition of Babies" in *Cornhill* (1883). On the founding of the *Fortnightly Review* in 1865 he became editor, and was the first to introduce signed articles. He resigned the post into the hands of his friend, John Morley, at the end of 1866, contributing occasionally to the *Cornhill* and *Pall Mall Gazette*.

Lewes's principal work is *Problems of Life and Mind*, in five volumes. The first series is entitled "Foundations of a Creed," which is rested only on the known and the knowable. The *Physical Basis of Mind*, in which the problems of biology, evolution, and psychology are dealt with, follows, and this is succeeded by *Problems on "The Study of Psychology," "Mind as a Function of the Organism,"* and "The Sphere of Sense and Logic of Feeling." Each section is complete in itself, but the entire work, owing to feeble health, was never completed. This was a great pity, as literary experience enabled him to present scientific problems in new and striking aspects. Lewes showed the necessity of physiological study as a preparation for the study of mind, and gave prominence to the view that the mind, like the body, is a unit, whose aspects can be logically separated, but which are not really distinct. He died at the Priory, St. John's Wood, Nov. 28, 1878, bequeathing his fine collection of philosophical books to Dr. Williams's Library. Miss Evans, when first introduced to Lewes, called him a sort of miniature Mirabeau. Douglas Jerrold called him "the ugliest man in London." Our readers can judge this for themselves. Those who knew him declare that he was bright-eyed, and brimful of buoyant spirits. When in conversation, all present thought not of his looks, but knew themselves in the presence of a most accomplished man, a brilliant wit, as well as a deep thinker.

J. M. W.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.

EXECUTIVE MEETING, held at the Hall of Science, Dec. 21, 1893. The President in the chair. Present: Messrs. S. Hartmann, G. Standing, J. M. Wheeler, J. Samson, J. E. Brumage, A. B. Moss, E. Bate, J. Saint, J. Potter, T. Gorniot, G. Ward, C. W. Martin, G. Steel, G. H. Baker, Mrs. Thornton Smith, and E. M. Vance, Asst. Sec.

Minutes of previous meeting were read and confirmed. Cash statement received.

The forthcoming Conference, called by the London Trades Council, on the unemployed question was discussed, and it was resolved to ask Mr. G. W. Foote to represent the N.S.S. Mr. Foote consented, and Messrs. G. Standing and Gorniot were also elected.

The leaflet upon Secular Education, about to be issued by the Society, was referred to, and the President promised to lay a draft before the next meeting.

The resolutions concerning financial matters, passed at the last meeting, were also referred to, and it was moved by Mr. Hartmann, and seconded by Mr. Gorniot—"That it be entered on the minutes, that the signatories of the cheques are under no responsibility whatever for the money in the Society's banking account, apart from the financial minutes of Nov. 23"; carried.

A resolution from the Battersea Branch was ruled to be one which could only be decided by the Conference.

Various small matters of business were disposed of. Cheques were ordered to be drawn for affiliation fee to the Metropolitan Radical Federation, printing, etc., and the meeting adjourned until Thursday, Jan. 25.

E. M. VANCE, Asst. Sec.

ACID DROPS.

Mrs. Besant is converting India, and Mr. W. T. Stead is doing the same favor for America. We don't know how the lady is getting on, but the gentleman is making a mess of it. The Woman's Club, at Chicago, arranged to give him a hearing, and Mr. Stead told them he was glad of the opportunity. They lived entirely for themselves (which was more than he knew), and were therefore the most disreputable women in the city, worse than the most abandoned creatures on the streets. Of course the ladies rose at this and demanded an apology. Mr. Stead has never to our knowledge done anything for the world except it was to his own advantage. We are unable to see, therefore, by what right he assumes the part of a Jesus Christ. Let us hope he will leave America without getting crucified.

Mr. Stead scores one in his defence, however. He has been taken to task for using the word "harlot," which the "squeamish" Chicago folk call "the language of the slums." Mr. Stead says he doesn't know anything about that; what he does know is that it was the language of Jesus Christ. This is true enough, and it shows the hollowness of the common cant about J. C., a good deal of whose language, as Professor Newman pointed out long ago, is violent and shocking.

Mrs. Chalmers, the President of the Woman's Club, declares that Mr. Stead's language is "fit only for the gutters." The charitable supposition, she says, is that he is insane, but she rather thinks that he "wanted to create a sensation at no matter what cost"—which is probably near the truth. Mrs. Chalmers says he ought to be compelled to leave the city. Altogether it is a very pretty quarrel, which Freethinkers at any rate can regard with a good deal of amusement.

At every place where W. T. Stead stopped in America he asked the same question and delivered the same lecture, "What would Christ do if he was in (Chicago, Toronto, or wherever it might be) now?" The answers suggested by the press were very numerous, though there was a consensus of opinion that he would steer clear of the author of *The Maiden Tribute* and his Mattei cures. If Mr. Stead would put the question in another form, "What would they do to Christ if he were in New York now?" the answer would be practically unanimous—"Run him in," though there might be a difference of opinion as to whether his destination would be the gaol or the lunatic asylum.

A meeting of a special committee of the London Diocesan Conference was held at London House recently, the Bishop of London being in the chair. The only business done was the passing of a resolution to "strengthen the committee" by inviting the co-operation of some laymen—of course with cheque-books. Another meeting was fixed for January 8. Meanwhile the highly-paid clergy stick to their incomes. They do not propose to share their "mammon" with their poor brethren. It is the "public" that must be bled to find the poor clergy in black puddings.

The clerical labor market seems to be dreadfully overstocked. As a rule the parsons have no fear of Malthus. They think the world can't have too many of their sort, though it has too many already.

Mr. Raymond Blathwayt, the interviewer, stands up for the Catholic Church in a letter to the *Daily Chronicle*. "Those who have studied the question with an open generous mind"; he writes, "have but little doubt that the future welfare of the American Republic lies in the hands of the Italian Mission which has established itself and which is now flourishing so brilliantly in its midst." Mr. Blathwayt's grammar is as shaky as his prophecy is gratuitous. It is amusing, also, to observe the egotism with which he assumes that all persons of "open and generous mind" necessarily think as he does. In America, as elsewhere, we shall see what we do see; but at present, although the Catholic Church is giving itself great airs, it is very far from having the Republic at its feet. There are plenty of men over there who would shed their blood sooner than yield to its dictation.

There is a National Reform Association in the United States. Its objects are a parody on its name. At its annual Convention, held at Alleghany in November, it resolved—"That the Sunday newspaper is one of the most insidious and dangerous of all the enemies of the Sabbath; and that the publication and sale of this article of merchandise has no more right to legal exemption from prosecution than other worldly business." This is pretty strong, but we guess the Sunday newspaper will outlive the National Reform Association.

A Methodist local preacher (we see by one of the Christian journals), asked the Lord to "annihilate the Queen and all the Royal Family." He didn't know the meaning of "annihilate," and explained that he loved the Queen and thought she deserved the longest word he could get hold of.

A young man, in the *Christian Commonwealth*, wants to know how to keep awake in church. Our prescription is simple. Put a Freethought lecturer in the pulpit.

It is an open secret that with the Salvation Army on the one side, and the Established Church on the other, the Wesleyans find themselves between the Devil and the deep sea, and can only progress like Hamlet's crab. Hence the cry for reorganisation, bishops, and forward movement. The Congregationalists show similar symptoms, the Year Book just published showing that six churches have been closed to three new ones opened, and not one of these latter either in London or the Home Counties.

The transactions between the Hely Ghost, the angel Gabriel, and Mary of Bethlehem, are scarcely suitable to histrionic treatment. They were, however, produced in something like the form of a play at an Incarnation Service held at St. George's in the East. A prologue was read by a superbly dressed Anglican priest, and twelve young ladies formed the chorus. We do not know whether the performance most merits the attention of the Bishop of London, or that of the Lord Chamberlain.

Mr. Labouchere now runs the sword of *Truth* through the Protestant Truth Society, and Mr. J. Kensit, the secretary and publisher, in whose interest that Society is run.

Lady novelists are fond of "fine English"—which of course means bad English, diffuse English, inflated English. It means a style that would suit a penny-a-liner, who spins out what he has to say for commercial reasons. "Fire" becomes "the devouring element" or at least "the conflagration," and everything else is similarly amplified. Perhaps it would be difficult to find a worse sinner than Miss Marie Corelli, whose novel *Barabbas* contains a lot of sentimental word-spinning about poor Jesus Christ, who, with all his faults, scarcely deserved such treatment. According to the New Testament, Pilate "took water and washed his hands." This is simple enough, perhaps; though even the "water" might be regarded as superfluous, for what else would Pilate wash his hands in? It is too simple, however, for Miss Corelli. "Slowly lowering his hands," the lady writes, "he dipped them in the shining bowl, rinsing them over and over again in the clear, cold element, which sparkled in its polished receptacle like an opal against fire." This sort of thing is called "style," and nobody does it so well as a Christian. It is as easy as lying. One calls to mind the criticism of Touchstone on Orlando's verses—"I'll rhyme you so eight years together, dinners and suppers and sleeping-hours excepted."

Miss Eve Blantyre Simpson, daughter of Sir James Young Simpson, has been writing an account of his introduction of chloroform in 1847. It provoked much prejudice among the theologians. Its use in midwifery was especially condemned as unscriptural, being in express opposition to the diction in Gen. iii. 16 that "in sorrow shall she bring forth children." A clergyman called the new anæsthetic "a decoy of Satan, apparently offering itself to bless women, but in the end it will harden secretly, and rob God of the deepest cries which arise in the time of trouble for help."

Dr. Parker fares badly at the hands of the *Academy* reviewer. The oracle of the City Temple has written a book called *Well Begun*, or "Notes for those who have Made their Way in the World"—as Parker himself has. The

reviewer calls it a "volume of platitudes," which we have no doubt it is. "The author's short autobiography at the beginning of the book," he says, "smacks of the pride that apes humility." Finally, with a nasty touch, the reviewer observes that the only "satisfactory" part of the book is the sixteen pages of quotation from William Law. Parker will no doubt go for the *Academy* as an organ of "the evil one." Fancy criticising in this free and easy way a minister who receives messages direct from the Holy Ghost.

The Rev. H. C. Hancock, curate in charge of Mitley-lane Church, Reigate, committed suicide by shooting himself with a revolver.

It is recorded that at a certain school examination, when the question was put whether the sun went round the earth or the earth went round the sun, the answer given by a scholar, emulous of being safe rather than trenchant, was—"Sometimes one and sometimes the other." A very similar trimming compromise is made by Professor Sanday in dealing with the question of the Inspiration of the Bible. Sometimes it is inspired and sometimes it isn't. We may criticise the record, even find it contradictory and unhistorical, but must still hold it to be the word of God.

So brotherly is Christianity, that in the Southern States of America, black and white will not meet in the same church. It matters not what denomination, whether of the Catholic Church or Methodists, the colored congregation has to be separate from the white one.

A Christian Church, in Tokio, has been reduced to a wreck by Japanese rioters. The evidence of Sir Lepel Griffin, before the Opium Commissioners, that "missionaries draw upon themselves ill-will wherever they go," seems confirmed from all quarters.

There seem to be convenient winds blowing about Brompton cemetery. The Westminster Branch of the N.S.S. placed a wreath and tablet there over the grave of its greatly respected member, R. Bell. When the grave was recently visited, the tablet and the shade over the wreath were gone, and the lower part of the wreath was denuded as if by blows. The superintendent suggests "the wind" as the cause of the mischief, but the missing articles have not been found in the cemetery. Perhaps "bigotry" is a better suggestion.

The Manchester *City News* is of opinion, at least it says so, that "the Socialist and Secularist parties will have to take definite steps to dissociate themselves from and denounce the practices of the homicidal Anarchists." We are not in a position to speak for Socialists, but, speaking for Secularists, we tell the *City News* it is writing nonsense. Secularism has never had any connexion with murder, outrage, or any kind of violence. It is not called upon, therefore, to dissociate itself from them. This view of the matter is ably stated in a letter from Mr. H. Jones, the secretary of our Manchester Branch.

Lord Coleridge has always shown himself to be a high-minded gentleman. At the trial of the editor of the *Freethinker* for "blasphemy" in the Court of Queen's Bench, his lordship's attitude was the very opposite to that of Mr. Justice North, who previously tried Mr. Foote for the same "crime" at the Old Bailey. "I should be unworthy of my position," Lord Coleridge said, "if I insulted a man in his [Mr. Foote's]." We are not surprised to learn, therefore, that the Lord Chief Justice of England has separated himself from the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. That Society, according to his lordship's letter, has ranged itself "in the number of those favoring the practice of vivisection and advocating its horrors." Lord Coleridge is one of the few men in his position who keep an active conscience. As for the Committee of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, we don't happen to know them, but we dare say the whole lot are not worth the pain of a single dumb animal in the hands of the vivisector.

We have to apologise for a blunder in one of our last week's "Acid Drops." The Duchess of Sutherland who presided at a meeting of the Church of England Temperance Society was not the lady who sojourned in Holloway Gaol. It was the Dowager Duchess of Sutherland who spent several weeks there for destroying a document not her own.

The East London Church Fund, not finding the shekels roll in as of yore, has characteristically decided to reduce the wages of its female workers, who will have a maximum of £36 per year. The East End workers in the Lord's vineyard can't expect such good billets as they have at Westminster, but no doubt it will be all made up to them in Kingdom-Come. *Amos 8:11*;

The clericals have been pretty well fanning the fire of sectarian strife over the education question. The result is likely to be that the compromise of 1870 will be burnt up. For a long while their policy was to get on the School Board and cripple the schools under the plea of keeping down the rates. Now they are bent on claiming for voluntary schools a share of the public rates without any more public control. Surely the ratepayer will see that his clerical friends are distinguished for their cheek.

1894 reminds us of the vexed question of dates. Some people seem to fancy that some 1893 years ago, people began to call the year, Year No. 1. They are unaware that nobody knows when Christ was born; that the differences in the account between Matthew and Luke, the former of which made it in the days of Herod, who died B.C. 4, and

the latter at the time of Cyrenius, which was not before A.D. 6, make a discrepancy of at least nine years. They do not know that there is no trace of a Christian era that can be dated before the sixth century, and that the earliest dated Christian coin is as late as 1551—the last fact of itself sufficing to show how uncertain was previous Christian chronology. There is something to be said for the adoption recommended at the Chicago International Congress of Freethinkers, of a new chronology started from the Christian year 1600, in which Bruno was executed, making the year 294.

The Archbishop of Canterbury is invited by Mr. J. Hunter Watts, of the Social Democratic Federation, to view some of the house property owned by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. Much of it is in a very scandalous condition, and Mr. Watts begs the Archbishop to prevent the exploitation of poor workers who are obliged to "pig together in the slums and alleys of this metropolis." We presume that Mr. Hunter Watts has written this letter for the purpose of publishing it and ventilating the grievance. He can hardly expect the Archbishop of Canterbury, who is the loftiest and best paid gentleman in the Kingdom-Come business, to put his holy nose into the dirtiest ramshackle dwellings of the London poor.



CHURCH AND STAGE.

BISHOP: I'm so concerned about your soul!
MISS LIGHTHEELS: My soul, sir! How funny! To tell the truth, I'm a little concerned about yours.

How amusing it is to watch the Christians slowly creeping up to the old positions of Freethought! While the orthodox were glorying over the parable of Dives and Lazarus, the Freethinkers declared that it was profoundly immoral. This view is now spreading in Christian circles. Last week's *Christian World* contained a letter from the Rev. S. Fletcher Williams, in which he gives the following report of a conversation he overheard between a thoughtful lad and a teacher in a Liverpool Board school:—

Boy—"May I ask a question, sir?"
Master—"Certainly; what is it?"
Boy—"The rich man didn't care anything about Lazarus, or his own folk, when he was living."
Master—"Not about Lazarus. I don't know about his own folk. They lived well, at any rate. Yes?"
Boy—"When he went to hell, he thought about his own folk, and didn't want them to go to the place of the torment where he was."
Master—"It seems so."
Boy—"Don't you think, teacher, that he was a kinder and better man in hell than he was on earth?"
Master—"I am afraid that I can't talk to you about that."

By the way, how characteristic is that last sentence! "I can't talk to you about that" has been the common put-off

to young inquirers. But it won't do nowadays. It is seen to be only a proof of the incapacity or dishonesty of the teacher.

The Thirteen Club dine on Jan. 13, thirteen each at thirteen tables, with knives crossed and salt spilled on the table. This daring onslaught on superstition is a good deal like breaking a butterfly on a wheel. There are far worse ones the Thirteen Club will take no notice of. They have not tackled the Friday superstition, and that is a fleabite to the Sunday superstition, which is bound up with the most dangerous superstition of all—that of Christian supernaturalism.

The *Medical Times* says that the editor of an American medical journal made an inquiry as to which of the professions, Medicine or the Church, furnished the larger number of wrong-doers. That editor gave the palm to the Church, and the *Medical Times* thinks it would work out the same way in England. Two or three bad instances are mentioned, but an awful number might be gathered in twelve months from the pages of the *Freethinker*, and we only note the cases that happen to meet our own eyes in the newspapers.



NICK ON THE SPREE.

AN HOUR WITH OLD FATHER TIME.

ON December 31, 1892, I determined to sit up until midnight to "see the Old Year out and the New Year in." Perhaps there was a leaven of the old superstition in this regard for a purely sentimental and imaginary division of time; and the partner of my sorrows certainly did not encourage it, for she retired to rest at a reasonable hour, blandly remarking that if I was fool enough to sit up all night, she *wasn't*. Thus it came about that at 10 o'clock I was left alone with some admirable cigars and a bottle of "Special Scotch" (which is kept in the house for medicinal purposes). For an hour I sat smoking and reading and sipping the whisky whenever I felt an attack of my old complaint (chronic dryness of the throat). The first hour passed with leaden feet; and as the clock struck eleven I ruefully reflected that sixty weary minutes still had to elapse before the mystic frontier between the expiring and the coming year would be reached.

But as the last stroke of the clock resounded through the room, the door was softly opened, and an unexpected visitor entered with as little ceremony as would be observed by an intimate friend. It was Old Father Time himself, with bald shining pate and scanty forelock straggling over his forehead. His long white beard hung down over the airy robe with which a thousand artists have made us familiar. The old man stood his scythe against the wall in a corner of the room, and, after carefully placing his hour-glass upon the table, sank with a grunt of satisfaction into the comfortable armchair which I vacated for him. He accepted a cigar, lighted and smoked it with evident approval, and stuck his nose into a steaming glass of grog that I prepared for him.

All this was done without a word being uttered; but as soon as my visitor had made himself comfortable I opened the conversation by remarking that he appeared to be as hale and active as ever.

"Yes," he replied, "I do a great deal of walking, and that keeps me in good condition, despite my nearly 6,000 years."

The reference to exercise reminded me of a question which had frequently puzzled me. The artists always represent Father Time as walking at the rate of about five miles an hour, and I could never understand what particular destination he had in view. Always trudging merrily along; but whither? and why? So I put the question to my visitor, delicately, as concerning his affairs rather than mine.

"Oh," answered the old chap, "I have no objection whatever to telling you my line of business. As a matter of fact, I make periodical inspections of the clocks at the astronomical observatories in the principal cities of the world, in order to ensure their correctness; and I travel on foot to evade observation. It is a pretty hard life, but one gets used to it in a few thousand years."

Unfortunately I forgot to ask him how he crossed the oceans. Perhaps he swims.

I hospitably assured him of the delight which his visit gave me, and asked him how it was that I had been thus honored.

"Well," he replied, "I read the *Freethinker* pretty regularly. Of course I can't get it in Asia Minor and outlandish places of that kind; but in most of the civilised countries of the world I manage to procure it by hook or crook. Now, I have read a lot of rubbish of yours in that paper from time to time"—(I rose, as well as I could, and bowed with the grace of a dancing-master)—"and as your foolery has beguiled many an hour of weary tramping I thought I would call, being in the neighborhood (I have just been attending to the clock at Greenwich Observatory) and pass an hour with you."

This sympathetic reference to the *Freethinker* of course at once put us upon a most friendly footing, and the conversation assumed a more intimate tone. I suggested that he must have seen many wonderful sights during his existence—coeval with that of the globe itself.

"Why, certainly," he said; "and, what is more, I have a marvellous memory. I can remember Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Ah me! I *was* a gay young masher then; barely twenty years of age—for old Usher's chronology is all to pieces about dates and facts—when that fool of an Eve tempted her bigger fool of a husband to eat the apple. I suppose they got tired of their lazy, uneventful life in the Garden in twenty years. Well, *they* had to work after they were turned out; but alas! *I* have had to go on working ever since!"

"How did you contrive to dodge the Flood?" I asked.

"Well, that *was* a close shave. The Bible account of the affair is pretty accurate as far as it goes; but it omits all reference to *me*. (The writer of that portion had a grudge against me on account of some chickens of mine which he found before I knew they were lost; but we won't go into that now). When Noah had built the ark and stocked it with live goods, he simply checked them to see that they corresponded with the invoice; then he shut all the doors and windows and pushed off, leaving me behind. I swam after the ark and shouted like a madman, and at last Noah heard me and took me on board. But after the first day I couldn't stand the stench inside the boat—bless you, Noah didn't mind; some of those old Jews could stand anything!—so I climbed outside and roosted on the tiles. There I stopped for thirty-nine days, in the pouring rain—and it was a shower, too—without so much as an umbrella to protect my head. All my hair was washed off with the exception of this tuft in the front, which was miraculously preserved in order to give proverb-mongers a chance to talk about 'taking Time by the forelock.'"

Fain would I have drawn the old man out concerning many other episodes of Bible "history" of which he had been an eye-witness; but I remembered his reference to the "hour" which he intended to pass with me, and refrained.

"I gather from a previous remark," I continued, "that you have some sympathy with the Freethought movement. Is that the case?"

"It certainly is," he answered, with conviction. "You must bear in mind that I have been personally acquainted with nearly everybody mentioned in the Bible, from the great I Am himself down to Judas Iscariot. Ah! if the Christians only knew as much as I know about their prophets and holy men, the parsons would soon be begging their bread from door to door. I knew David and Solomon well; and of all the—well,—there"—the old man stopped, blushing like a maiden of forty-five summers at the memories which those names conjured up. After a pause he continued:

"Well, I won't go into details; but, I ask you, how can a man like myself, who knew all the 'Bible Heroes,' how can I be anything but a Freethinker of the most advanced kind?"

I leaned forward and shook the dear old fellow's hand with rapture; then we filled up our glasses and lighted fresh cigars.

"And what do you think," I asked, "of the progress of the movement: is it satisfactory to you? Sometimes I am inclined to think that the world moves slowly, after all."

"Satisfactory, my boy? why, it is marvellous, it is inspiring, it is stupendous! Of course I can understand *you* losing heart when you are 'run down,' and your dry throat is unusually troublesome; but if you had had *my* experience you would always be ringing bells, and blowing trumpets, and letting off fireworks." I began to suspect that the whisky was getting into the aged gentleman's head; but he was quite rational, albeit somewhat excited. He proceeded:

"In *your* brief span of life you do not get the true perspective of any great movement. Ten or twenty years may be everything to you, but in the progress of a principle it is nothing—absolutely nothing. Why, I stood behind a tree on the Campo dei Fiori when the priests and monks burnt Giordano Bruno at the stake. That noble fellow stood there, calm and undaunted, whilst they heaped the faggots around him; and in all that vast crowd there was not an eye that glistened with a tear of pity. Every breast was filled with savage bigotry; every face bore signs of bitter hatred for the heretic, and poor Bruno met his dreadful fate sustained only by his own conviction of truth, and sense of human dignity. That must have been nearly three hundred years ago; and last July, when passing through Rome, I stood before the statue that had been erected in his honor on the very spot where his dauntless heart had ceased to beat. Don't you call *that* progress? And what are three centuries in the history of the world? Nothing, my boy, nothing!"

Of course, I was bound to admit that my gloomy view (*pro tem.*) was not warranted by the facts; and the old gentleman, who now appeared to be thoroughly wound up, continued with much animation:

"Why, take your own little thread of time and your own tinpot sphere of action! Haven't you witnessed an astounding progress, even in England, and even during your twenty years of activity? Have you not seen, again and again, the engine of the law set in motion to crush Freethought, either openly or under some specious pretext? Didn't the Government try to kill the *National Reformer* by legal process in 1868? (That was before your time; but no doubt you are acquainted with the facts.) Would Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant have been prosecuted in 1877 if they had not been leaders of the Freethought movement? How long is it since Mr. Foote was in Holloway Gaol? All this and much more is concerned only with the last twenty-five years; to say nothing of the glorious martyrs of an earlier stage in your history. And what happens to-day? Are not the parsons tumbling over one another in their eagerness to outbid you for the countenance and goodwill of the people? Are not many of the clergy qualified to become Vice-Presidents of the National Secular Society? Have you gone back, or have your opponents been dragged forward?"

The merited rebuke which these sentences implied fell heavily upon me; and I became so deeply immersed in penitential reflections that I failed to observe that my distinguished visitor had risen from his chair, taken up his hour-glass and scythe, and was quietly leaving the room. Just then the clock struck the hour of midnight; and I jumped up hastily in my chair to stay the parting guest. But when I turned round he had already closed the door.

The New Year indeed had come; but old Father Time had gone, perchance for ever.

GEORGE STANDRING.

A lawyer tells a story of how he got even with a preacher. It was on the occasion of his second marriage. After concluding the ceremony the minister took advantage of the privilege accorded him by custom of kissing the bride. While so engaged the groom suddenly imprinted a resounding kiss on the cheek of the minister's wife, who was standing immediately behind the wedding party. The lady was indignant, and the minister asked for an explanation. Coolly enough, and in a few words, the groom expressed the opinion that it was a poor rule that would not work both ways, and that he has as much right to kiss the preacher's wife as the former had to kiss the bride.

FRENCH GEMS.

(From Chamfort and Vauvenargues.)

It is unfortunate for mankind, but fortunate perhaps for tyrants, that the poor and the wretched have not the instinct or the pride of the elephant, who will not reproduce his species in servitude.

Nobility, the nobles say, is an intermediary between the monarch and the people. Yes, as the hound is an intermediary between the sportsman and the hare.

Most social institutions appear to have the object of maintaining men in a mediocrity of ideas and sentiments, which renders them easy to be governed.

I would willingly say of the metaphysicians what Scaliger said of the Basques—"It is said that they understand each other, but I don't believe it."

Women are married before they are anything, in order that they may never be anything.

Marriage, as it obtains in the "highest circles," is a conventional indecency.

Divorce is so natural that, in many houses, it couches every night between husband and wife.

In the matter of sentiments, that which can be valued has no value.

I conserve for M. de la B—— the sentiment which a good man feels in passing before the tomb of a friend.

Obscurity is the kingdom of error.

It is a great sign of mediocrity, to be always moderate in praise.

Slavery degrades men to the point of making them love it.

Before attacking an abuse, we should see if we can ruin its foundations.

Fools do not understand sensible people.

Great thoughts come from the heart.

We cannot judge a man's life by a false rule than his death.

To execute great things it is necessary to live as though one would never die.

The thought of death deludes us, for it makes us forget to live.

SENSE AND SALVATION.

Theologians, always faithful to the project of blinding men—governing classes, always faithful to whoever oppresses the people—make the gratuitous supposition that the great majority of men are condemned to the stupidity which follows from labors that are purely mechanical or manual; they assume that the workers could never attain to the knowledge which is necessary to appreciate the rights of men and of citizens. But suppose there had been employed, for the enlightenment of the lower classes, a quarter of the time and care that has been devoted to brutalising them; suppose that, instead of putting into their hands an absurd and unintelligible catechism of metaphysics, one had been drawn up containing the first principles of the rights of men and of their duties founded upon their rights—it would be astonishing, the progress they have made in pursuing that route, sketched out in a good elementary book. Suppose that, instead of preaching to them the doctrine of patience, of suffering, of self-abnegation and abasement, so convenient to usurpers, you had taught them the knowledge of their rights and the duty of defending them, you would have found that nature, which has formed men for society, had given them all the intelligence necessary to make society rational.—Chamfort.

PAUL PREFERABLE TO CHRIST.

FRANCIS WILLIAM NEWMAN, in his admirable little work on *Christianity in its Cradle*, says of Paul, that "weak as he is in logic and in literary interpretation, yet as a practical moralist he is generally admirable." In these words Newman does Paul more than justice. For, in the first place, Paul's dominant idea is that "the fashion of this world passeth away," and that, in these circumstances, it is foolish to "mind earthly things." In 1 Corinthians vii. 29-31, he says: "The time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as they that have none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away." Then, again, Paul insists that it is faith, and not works, that is of greater importance. In Romans iii. 28, he says: "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the laws." It is, moreover, on Paul's teaching that Calvinism is founded. "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that made it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay of the same lump to make one vessel unto honor, and another unto dishonor? What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured, with much long-suffering, the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: and that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory."

To say, then, that as a practical moralist Paul is generally admirable, is to praise the apostle to the Gentiles beyond his deserts. Newman, indeed, admits that in teaching that Christ was speedily to overturn all existing rule and govern the world justly himself, Paul annihilated zeal for earthly improvement. But this is only another way of saying that Paul is *not* a practical moralist.

It must, however, be admitted, that however impracticable Paul's ethic may be, as a teacher he is preferable to Christ. Jesus has all Paul's faults—besides many peculiarly his own—without the virtues of the whilom tent-maker. Whilst sharing all the ignorance and superstitions of his time, Christ's arrogance is prodigious. He says of himself, "Behold a greater than Solomon is here" (Matt. xii. 42), and "All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers" (John x. 8). Newman's remarks on this point well deserve to be repeated. He says*: "If honor were claimed for Jesus as for Socrates, for Seneca, for Hillel, for Epictetus, we might apologise for his weak points as either incident to his age and country, or to human nature itself. But the unremitting assumption of superhuman wisdom, not only made for him by the moderns, but breathing through every utterance attributed to him, changes the whole scene, and ought to change our treatment of it. Unless his prodigious claim to Divine Superiority is made good in fact, it betrays an arrogance difficult to excuse, eminently mischievous, and eminently ignominious."

Christ's aggressive self-assertion stands in marked contrast to Paul's modesty. The latter frequently calls himself a fool (2 Corinthians xi. 23, and xii. 2).

Inordinate self-conceit is unmistakable evidence of a small mind. And Christ is exceedingly narrow. He says: "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. xv. 24). And he tells his disciples, in Matt. x. 5, "Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not." There are, of course, passages in the gospels in which Christ is represented as saying, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." These, however, may be disregarded as being interpolations. For the fact that after Christ's mission had come to an end, a special revelation was needed to let Peter know that the Gentiles might share in the privileges of the gospels, show conclusively that Jesus never uttered the words ascribed to him in Mark xvi. 15 †

The Synoptics agree in representing Christ as one who labored under the delusion that the world was speedily to come to an end, and who regarded himself as sent to prepare only "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" for this catastrophe (Matt. x. 7 and 23, xvi. 27, 28, xxvi. 3—35; Mark i. 15, xiii. 24—31; Luke ix. 26, 27, xxii. 29, 30). In John xviii. Jesus is represented as saying, "My kingdom is not of this world."

Paul is broader than Christ. Compare Christ's reply to the woman of Canaan with Paul's statement; "Even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles" (Romans ix. 24). Paul says: "There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek" (Romans x. 12), and he insists that all may share in the privileges of the gospel.

After my last lecture at Camberwell, an otherwise friendly critic stoutly opposed the view I had expressed that Paul is preferable to Christ, the burthen of his contention being that "Paul was a Tory, while Christ was all for the poor." But, as I showed, Christ teaches that poverty is a virtue, and that the possession of wealth is a crime. In Luke vi. 20, 24, he says: "Blessed be ye poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. But woe unto you that are rich! for ye have received your consolation." In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke xvi. 19, 31), no fault, except that he was well off in this world, is found with the former, while poverty is the only virtue ascribed to the latter. The rich man, indeed, is represented as humane and thoughtful for his fellows. But he is told, "Remember that thou in thy lifetime receivest thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." This is silly teaching, with which Paul shows no sympathy. He says, "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing" (1 Corinthians xiii. 3). There is wisdom and sound humanity in Paul's teaching, but none in Christ's.

Much of Christ's teaching is that of a crazy fanatic. Who but one beside himself would preach self-mutilation, for the kingdom-of-heaven's sake? This Jesus frequently does; see, for instance, (Matt. v. 29, 30, xix. 12; Mark ix. 43, 47). And what is to be said of the teaching ascribed to Christ in (Luke ix. 26; Matt. v. 39, 40; Luke xii. 22.—31)? Paul has his faults. Like Jesus, he endorses slavery (1 Corinthians vii. 18, 24; Luke xvii. 7.—10), and he makes woman man's chattel (Ephesians v. 22, 24); but he nowhere teaches such mad doctrines as Jesus does in the passages just quoted.

No question is here raised as to the historic actuality of either Christ or Paul, the sole object of these remarks being to show that the teaching ascribed to Paul is preferable to that attributed to the Christ of the gospels.

A. LIDDLE.

G O D I N '94.

God of humbugs, priests, and knavos,
Cause of ev'ry fell disaster!
God of kings, but *not* of slaves,
Help of ev'ry captive's master

May we see in "Ninety-four"—
Teeming year that's just beginning—
Proofs that thou hast given o'er
All thy diabolic sinning!

We thy laws can ne'er infract:
Thou'rt Creator, we're thy creatures;
Creature's acts Creator's act;
All thy works reflect thy features.

Earth and us thy might entwines;
Axled, thou hast sent us spinning,
Girt with "laws"—as "globes" with lines—
Trussed and spitted! thine the sinning!

Cease! Infernal Jester! Cease
Blessing, blasting, smiling, frowning!
Help us *all!* or send release—
Death itself!—but cease thy clowning!

G. L. MACKENZIE

* Newman's phonetic "spelling" I re-form.

† They do not occur in the earlier versions of Mark, from which the Synoptics have been compiled.

HUMANITY'S GOD.

You ask me to portray my idea of God.
Well, my friend, for your sake I will try,
Though the picture, I fear me, I draw, will ill suit
The Christianised critical eye.

The God of the orthodox sects sits enthroned
In a palace of jasper and gold,
Dealing out in his infinite justice, so called,
Maledictions and ruin untold.

Such a God has been feared through the ages
From Adam's dire fall to the flood.
Sodom's destruction and Babylon's doom
Were necessities to make men good.

As time e'er rolled on and nations grew strong,
Passions waxed fiercer and high—
In the midst of the battle-field's thunder and roar
"God wills it!" resounded the cry.

Look through the Dark Ages, when free speech was dumb
And the masses were forced to obey
The mandates of tyrants in clerical form—
Just picture the God of that day!

Do you think such a God, having infinite power
To wield it whenever he wills,
Appeals to my soul as the "God of all love"
When I gaze on humanity's ills?

A thousand times No! re-echoes the cry.
No blood-atonement tyrant for me.
The God I adore is Humanity's need;
'Tis knowledge that makes all men free.

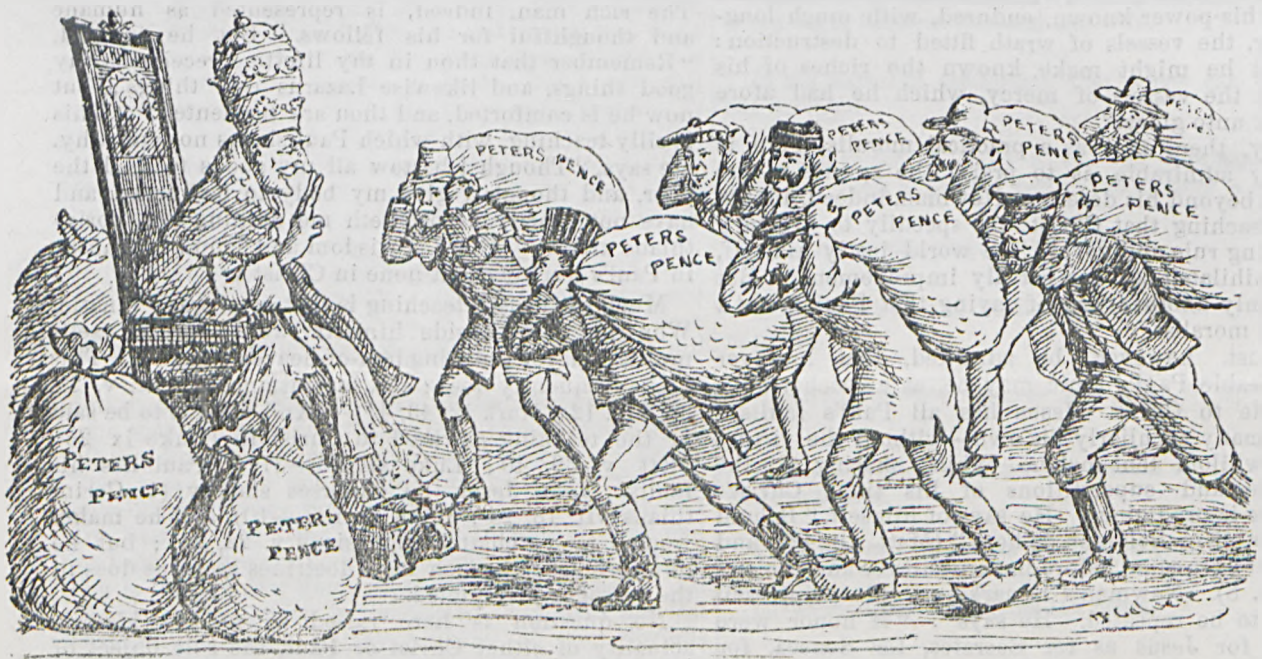
There is not a slave so manacled, bound,
At the oars of the galleys to-day
As sectarian bigot, whose fanatic zeal
Leads him blindly and bids him obey.

But the day is at hand, for lo, through the dawn
Has arisen a bright beaming star,
Whose gleam is now shedding o'er desolate homes
The refulgence of peace from afar.

'Tis the bright star of Reason that lights up our path;
We call it "the Light of To-day;"
Throwing round us a halo of gladness and joy
Erstwhile groping darkly our way.

Then onward, Progression! all hail to the day
When mankind shall throw off the chain
Of Religion's oppression—from serfdom set free,
Assert manhood, Freethinkers remain

ELIZABETH LENAGHAN.



A FISHER OF MEN.

"Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

EVANGELISATION OF THE "COSTER."

THE London Patent Bible Distributing Society state, in their last report, they have had the Holy Bible translated into nearly all the tongues of nearly all the missionary-masticating blacks on this earth, and point with pride to their latest adaptation for the evangelisation of the London Coster, who now seems to be the highest study of the dramatist, and is simply idolised at our Music Halls by the professional singers.

And unless the Word of God is arranged in the Coster's own terse London slang, he may never read it to understand it in all its beautiful simplicity, and so be lost to the Churches as a communicant. I append a sample from Matthew of this latest effort to bring the holy book up to date, and to show your readers what difficulties the adapter has had to contend with.

CHAPTER XXI.

33. "There was a nobby bloke once dug up his garding, and shoved in some trees ter make booze of, and then went on the ran-tau in the country at the Welsh 'Arp, down 'Ending way.

34. And when the fakement of scrumping the grapes was about ter start, he sent 'is slavesys for his share of the nickers when they slung th' fruit up ter market.

35. But th' downy country joskins copped the lot, punching one on the boko, laid another out, and chucked paving stones at another.

36. Again the old juggins sent more slavesys, and th' fly old joskins gave 'em a second dose o' corf drops.

37. But at larst 'e sent the nipper, saying, p'raps they'll part when they see th' bloke's son.

38. But no bloomin' fear, for when the tater-eaters saw young juggins prancing along, they said, let's 'it 'im a clump side the head and go snacks.

39. So they caught 'im on the bloomin' cokernut and made a stiff 'un of 'im.

F. A.

TO BE SOLD.

THE entire stock in trade of the Christian Church, which, after having brought immense fortunes to the owners, will shortly be disposed of, entirely without reserve, for ready cash. The lots will comprise:—Nos. 1, 2, and 3: A very ancient god, with hair like wool, a rare antique; a middle aged demi-god, hair parted in the middle and much admired by the ladies; a pigeon god. These lots, which are not to be found in M. Guimet's Musée des Religions, will go together to the highest bidder. No. 4 consists of their habitation, containing many mansions in Skye. Fine outlook on No. 5 Pandemonium, which will be sold at an alarming sacrifice. The tropical temperature being now quite subdued, the warmer parts will be suitable to a baker, and the colder for an ice merchant. The other lots comprise three billion tons of salvation soap made from pure lamb's blood (to be carted at the buyer's expense); a large quantity of halos, harps, and other properties suitable either to a pantomime manager or the founder of a new religion. To anyone bidding for the entire stock, a number of mitres, robes, and other properties will be thrown into the bargain. Such an opportunity may never occur again.

'FARMER FARBACK'S FAITH.

Now, parson, I trust that you'll excuse
My straight for'ard way of saying
There ain't any airthly sort of use
In prating to me or praying.

Religion to me is just to live
By honest and useful labor;
Be kind to my cattle and to give
A helpful hand to my neighbor.

I try to treat my fam'ly well,
To do right each day in seven;
And I don't fidget about a hell,
Nor need any guide to heaven.

Beliefs, as breezes, rise and blow—
Creeds change as the wind which whistles;
But this I know: we reap as we sow,
And don't get grapes from thistles.

I find that some that pretend to feel
Such an inter'at in their Savior,
Are terribly tricky in their deal,
And very bad in behavior.

Why, there's that old deacon Slade,
So oily, sly, and pious,
He'll skin a man's eye teeth in trade,
And outlie Ananias.

He once shoved off a horse with heaves
On poor old Charley Corey,
And yet the hippercrit believes
He's going right to glory.

And, parson, I'm not a bit afraid—
Don't think me snarlish or spitey—
To take my chance with such as Slade,
At the bar of God Almighty.

S. H. PRESTON.



THE GOSPEL BOYTON

(See Matthew xiv. 25-30.)

SACRED BEETLES.

A WRITER in the *Cornhill Magazine* for January gives an interesting account of the different animals worshipped by the ancient Egyptians. He remarks: "Most gods, when you trace them to their source, have the humblest origins. Half of them appear to have been savage chiefs, and the other half big stones or dangerous wild animals. Truth must out; the holy scarab is in real life nothing more exalted than a common dung beetle. It is the habit of the race to lay its eggs in a ball of manure, which it rolls about to gather more, on the principle of the big snowball, and finally buries. Its grubs hatch out undergrown in the middle of the ball, and live, during their larval stage, on the unsavory food-stuff thus provided for them. Poor raw material, this, you would say, for a deity. As a rule, moreover, unscientific man doesn't much concern himself about the ways of insects; he merely kills them. But the sacred scarab is an insect with a difference. He is so very conspicuous an animal in the lands he inhabits, that even the unobservant southern cultivator is compelled, against his will, as it were, to notice him. On hot and sunny days, when the warmth excites them, the

beetles develop a most extraordinary energy, and work in squadrons with superhuman activity. I have seen them as busy as ants or bees at swarming-time. They choose, as a rule, some sloping bank of earth to bury their ball in. In Europe they frequent the blown sand-dunes of the coast, or dry sea-beaches; in Egypt, where sand is provided wholesale, they have the entire expanse of the desert in the neighborhood of the inundated soil to choose from. Here they dig the hole in which the eggs are to be buried with their broad forefeet, which are specialised into ready-made spades or hoes, while their heads are flattened and provided with prongs like a garden fork, so that they may use them as scoops or animated shovels to remove the rubbish loosened by digging." The holy scarab is thus one of the earliest types of the worker, and became a symbol of creation.

One of my little chatterboxes was driving full speed across the floor one Sunday with a chair for a cab. I reminded him it was Sunday. "Ah, but I am the minister, and I am driving to the church," he said.

RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT.

HISTORY, as we understand it, is chiefly concerned with man, who himself erects the monuments that perpetuate the memory of his genius. It is to man that we have to look for indications of progress, and for promise of continual advancement. No doubt the lower animals are busy in providing for themselves and their progeny, but they make comparatively no improvement in their mode of provision. Perhaps, in their case, it is not necessary that they should possess the same reasoning powers as man does; for as Pope puts it—

When unerring instinct is the guide,
What pope or council need they else beside?

Looking at the progress of the human race, it sometimes appears to us like the advancing and receding waves of the sea. "There is a tide in the affairs of men," which leaves its impress on the laws and institutions of each succeeding age, by which we can learn the current of human thought. While the same ideas present themselves to our minds that occupied the attention of the thinkers of ancient Greece and Rome, our mental activity prompts us to persist in the inquiry, not only as to the what, but also as to the whence and the whither of existing things. Thus the past and the future afford us themes for profitable reflection, which should be the precursor of useful action in the present. In glancing at the past we recognise that to the principles of Freethought are we indebted for that intellectual stimulant which has invariably promoted free inquiry. It is mental liberty and free investigation that have illuminated the mind of the nation, opened up new sources of knowledge, and made intellectual progress possible. We contend that the men who established the right of Freethought, and who protected the pursuit of science, are deserving of the nation's gratitude. And yet how few reflect on their indebtedness to those self-denying workers in the past who secured for the general masses of this country such priceless advantages as public schools, free speech, a free press, and the right of free publication of opinions.

Whatever orthodox believers may say, the fact is, that Freethinkers were the principal fighters in the great battle which culminated in the winning of the liberties that to-day we enjoy. They made a stand against kingcraft, priestcraft, and the evils of ignorance, by advocating equal laws, the personal right to think, and by establishing a free press for the diffusion of useful knowledge. Notwithstanding the rendering of this heroic service in the cause of human emancipation by Freethought pioneers, history is comparatively silent in reference to the sacrifices and persistent labors of such men as Carlile, Hetherington, and their many valiant supporters, during long and arduous struggles. Theology has made the world ungrateful to some of its noblest benefactors. It therefore becomes our duty to remind the present generation who some of their real benefactors were, and how much we are all indebted to the great cause of Freethought which is the glory of the nineteenth century. Let the truth go forth that it was Thomas Paine who proclaimed the Rights of Man and sent forth his Age of Reason. The sound principles enunciated in the one, and the bold criticism contained in the other, did much to remove political injustice, and to disperse the dark clouds of superstition which for ages had oppressed and overshadowed the people of this country. With pride we allege that the efforts of Paine and of other reformers have resulted, to a large extent, in paralyzing the arm of the tyrant, and in subduing the ferocity of the persecutor.

Another Freethought achievement was the passing of the Affirmation Bill in Parliament. This was a splendid triumph of justice and freedom over traditional prejudices and orthodox bigotry. The honor of this victory is chiefly due to the great Freethinker, Charles Bradlaugh. Through his dauntless labors it has been made possible for any one, even without any religion, to maintain his right to life, to liberty, and to his property in a court of law. Christians boast of their love for liberty, but not one of them volunteered to provide the means whereby a

Freethinker could claim legal redress for injuries inflicted by fanatically-disposed persons. Before this reform was secured by the leading Atheist of England, an unbeliever was not even allowed to discharge the duties of citizenship in defence of the rights of others, simply because he refused to use a form of words called taking the oath, and which words to him were objectionable and misleading. Fortunately, the age is becoming more and more secularised, and, in consequence, a brighter future is dawning. It is now admitted by the leading intellects of the day that truth, industry, and the cultivation of man's mental powers are of more real service to the world than belief in the Athanasian Creed, in the Articles of the Church of England, or in any of the dogmas of the Churches. The desire of the age is that liberty and progress shall have a real, not a sham, foundation.

Our work in the future must be to endeavor to realise, to the fullest extent, the value of past struggles, and to lay ourselves of all the advantages arising out of the legacy of freedom that has been bequeathed by those Freethinkers, whose memories we have just cause to revere. Our object should be to convince mankind that the Church is not necessary to produce good and useful citizens; that as an institution, it has retarded personal and national advancement; that it has allowed no social privilege which had not the sanction of its clergy, therefore, we conjure all who have hitherto been fettered by the power of the Church to throw off the yoke and become men and women, free in their own individual liberty. We have faith that the revolution of opinion, that is at present going on, will culminate in sweeping away those impediments to the progress of the world, which were caused by the teachings of a theology, that has been like a upas tree, poisoning the moral and intellectual atmosphere of society. We urge upon all our readers to direct their attention to the Secular education of the rising generation, for the young of to-day will be the controllers of England's future destiny. We must not permit the minds of our children to be biased upon subjects that should be left to their own reason, when it is sufficiently matured to exert its legitimate prerogative. Some persons, for motives of their own, regard theological interference with education with utter indifference. But we, as Secularists, must be active in defending our public schools from being entrammelled with the snares of orthodoxy and the machinations of an interested priesthood. It must not be forgotten that we have to deal with a clerical party possessing vast funds, also numerous supporters who are hostile to all changes that affect their power and control over the people. Their cry is, "hands off the sacred ark, and beware of spoliation of the things of God!" Secular philosophy, however, is too practical to allow its adherents, by false alarms, to be arrested in their efforts to promote the good, not of one class only, but of the whole of the population of this, in many instances, misguided nation.

We have thus claimed what we deem to be due to the Secular efforts of the past, and we have indicated what we regard as being our present duty, which is to provide a useful and a happy future for those who will fill our places when with us "life's fitful dream is o'er." While our own preference would be to deal more fully with the positive principle of Secularism, we are compelled to deal with all things as we find them. We have to face indisputable facts. Wealth and fashion are still on the side of endowed error, and thousands are yet ignorant of those principles of liberty that are necessary for the promotion of free inquiry and of impartial discussion. Agencies are established and supported throughout the country for the teaching of doctrines that are no less erroneous now than they were in the days of Voltaire and Thomas Paine. The tendency of such doctrines is to make men and women as narrow-minded and intolerant as their predecessors were. Hence, we are compelled to continue to war against every form of faith that impedes the establishment of liberty and goodwill among the sons of men. The great aid to reformation is sincerity of purpose, for as Emerson has said: "A man is relieved and gay when he has set his heart into his work and done his best. . . . Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string." CHARLES WATTS.

RENAN ON HIMSELF.

LET us be austere to ourselves, but do not let us impoverish life. Let us not deprive humanity of its joys; let us take pleasure in beholding its enjoyment. The joy of others is a great part of our own; it constitutes that great recompense of a good life, which is gaiety.

I have been reproached with too much parade of this religion, so easy in appearance, but the most difficult of all in reality. Wishing will not make one gay. One must belong to an old race, not *blasée*; one must also be satisfied with one's life. My life has been what I should wish, what I conceive as the best. I would not alter much if I had to live it over again. On the other hand, I have little fear of the future. I shall have my biography and my legend. My legend? Yes. Having myself a little of the trick of ecclesiastical writers, I can trace it out in advance. The legends of the enemies of the official Church are all cast in the same mould. The fate which the book of Acts attributes to Judas is its essential feature. For one party of tradition I shall finish like that, in a fashion compounded of Arius and Voltaire. God, how black I shall be! All the more because when the Church feels herself lost, she will go down maliciously, biting like a mad dog.

In spite of all I have confidence in reason. The enlightened part of humanity, the only part I care for, will hold me in some esteem. Five hundred years hence the Committee of the Literary History of France, in the Academy of Inscriptions and Letters, will redact my biographical notice. It will have to discuss some singular documents. It will read in the books approved by the Church, that I received a million from Rothschild for writing the *Vie de Jésus*, and nearly as much from Napoleon the Third, who, afterwards, having reduced me to destitution, gave me a fine pension on the *Journal des Savants*.—[Footnote—I joined the *Journal des Savants* in 1873, the fixed salary being 500 francs (£20) a year.] The committee will disentangle all this as it can, according to the rules of criticism; I am sure that its judgment will be an authority to sensible people in the future.

The only thing I really fear is apocryphal texts. There is already a considerable mass of phrases, sayings, and anecdotes attributed to me, which amuse the Catholic press. The clergy quote in general at second-hand; they take their citations from little, low clerical reviews. Almost all that the religious polemicists father upon me is sophisticated or full of absurdity. I implore the friends of truth only to count as mine what has appeared in the volumes published by the firm of Levy. When I gave to the world the *Vie de Jésus*, the journals subventioned by the Jesuits published pretended autographs of mine, which I never took the trouble to denounce. It is in this respect that the Committee aforesaid, in the twenty-fourth century, will have an opportunity to display its sagacity. If criticism, instead of making progress, should decline—then I shall be lost. But if humanity is doomed to cretinism, I no longer covet its esteem; it may think of me all the nonsense it pleases. . . .

I am thankful for my life. It has been sweet and precious to me. I have not been without sin; I have had the defects of all men; but, whatever may be said by those who call themselves God's priests, I have never committed any very bad action. I have loved truth, and made sacrifices for it. I have desired the diviner day, and I believe in its advent. When my old beliefs crumbled away, instead of weeping and feeling irritated, I faced ill fortune with a stout heart. Weeping would have been cowardice, and irritation the greatest absurdity.

[Translated, with slight alteration, from *Feuilles Détachées*.]

The good clergyman said he had always felt an absorbing interest in the subject of Women's Rights. The wicked printer made it "Women's Tights."

A sky-pilot divides the young men of his congregation into two classes—those who fall asleep in church, and those who keep awake and cast sheep's eyes at the pretty girls.

THE GREATEST LIVING MAN.

THE *Boston Sunday Globe* has been having a number of articles on "Who is the Greatest Living Man?" Mr. Lemuel K. Washburn, editor of the *Boston Investigator*, boldly states his conviction as follows:—

My answer is Robert G. Ingersoll.

One gets the conviction of this man's superiority by simply being in his presence. The outer man makes the impression of greatness upon the mind.

It is not the silent assertion of a splendid form, however, that persuades us. A large body serves to accent and emphasise a large mind, but heroic physical proportions are not essential to greatness. The king of men to-day is not he who, like Saul, "from his shoulders and upward is higher than any of his people." Dr. Watts truly says, "The mind's the standard of the man."

But we cannot think of Robert G. Ingersoll with a diminutive physical equipment. His ample form radiates the man. But it is the royalty of his intellect that makes him great. It is in the kingdom of mind that he is master. Every mental tool fits his hand. He has wit, learning, imagination, eloquence, philosophy, and that rare quality, sense. He is a great lawyer, a great orator, a great poet, and a great man. He is too large for conventionalities, too large to respect what smaller minds have declared right, what weaker minds have made holy.

The intellectual grandeur of the man is no less apparent than his moral fearlessness. He is greatest where most great men are little—in the face of a powerful and domineering superstition. He knows that the highest manhood makes the trappings of religion but the playthings of feeble minds.

His love of liberty is only equalled by his passion for truth, and he listens to the timid whisper of doubt with the chivalrous attention that others give to confident faith. He strips things of their clothes, of fashion, of falsehood, of pretension, and demands that they stand for what they are and no more. He has the sincerity of greatness, and his mind wears the white robe of spotless integrity.

Above all living men he possesses the power of utterance. He has the highest literary instinct, and never marries a mean word to a noble thought. He uses language as Phidias used marble. He is the literary artist of the age, and knows all the colors in the brain. He can make words laugh and weep.

This man has a large heart. He is filled with human sympathy. He does not care for gods, but he pities men. The springs of feeling feed the mighty rivers of thought that cross the continent of his mind. There is about him the warmth, the kindness of summer—Nature's season of forgiveness.

He has the highest philosophy—that of cheerfulness. The clouds never cover all his sky. He is the apostle of good humor, and preaches the gospel of sunshine to dry the tears of the world.

He is true to himself, loyal to his head and his heart, and upon his brow shines the jewel of self-respect.

Robert G. Ingersoll has the greatness of genius. It is useless to try to account for an intellectual giant. Dowered by Nature, parents are of small account. We cannot find the secret of his marvellous power by digging in a graveyard.

Johnnie—"Do you say your prayers every night?" Johnny—"I do whenever I've got ter sleep in the folding bed."

Johnny (who objects to the frequency of dumplings in the menu)—"Will there be any dumps in heaven, ma?" "I can't tell, my love; but I shouldn't think so." Johnny (with determination)—"I'll try and be very good, ma' all my life."

A gentleman had a servant who became attached to the Salvation Army. Out of curiosity he attended a meeting of body, and was much surprised at the noisy devotions. On mentioning this to his servant, the latter remarked that the noise was necessary, in fact, it was directly enjoined in scripture; for did not the Lord's Prayer say, "Hollered be thy name"?

THE SAVIOR.

FROM any rational point of view, it is impossible to regard Jesus Christ as the savior of the world. For a god, his failure is egregious. His apostles were to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature; according to the last chapter of Mark, those who believed were to be saved, and those who disbelieved were to be damned. Eighteen centuries have rolled by, and little more than a quarter of the world's inhabitants even *profess* Christianity. Missionaries are still laboring to convert the "heathen," but the proselytes they make are not a tithe of those who are lost to the Churches at home through scepticism or mere indifference. Further, the "revelation" through Christ is so obscure, so complicated, or so self-contradictory, that Christendom is split up into a multitude of sects, each declaring itself the only true custodian of "the faith once delivered unto the saints." The only points on which they are universally agreed, are the cardinal doctrines of pre-Christian religion. To imagine such a poor, confused result as the work of a deity, is to sink gods below the level of men. To bid us regard it as the work of a being at once omnipotent and omniscient, is to insult the very meanest intelligence.

Christ is a failure also as a man; though, perhaps, it is less his fault than his misfortune. The true story of his life—if, indeed, he ever lived at all—has been buried under a monstrous mass of myths and legends. The sayings ascribed to him have given rise to endless disputes and bitter quarrels, in the course of which blood has flowed like water and tears have fallen like rain. His very name has been an instrument of terror and oppression. Priests and kings, age after age, and century after century, have used it to delude and despoil the people. The nails of his hands and feet have been driven into the brains of honest thinkers; the blood from his wounds has been turned into a poison for the veins of society. Could he see all the frauds and crimes done in his name, he would wish it to perish in oblivion.

In no sense has this Galilean saved the world. As a simple man, and no god, how could he possibly do so? The world's salvation is far too huge a task for *any* man, let him be ever so wise and great. It is a task for the soldiers of liberty, truth, and progress in every age and every land. Why should millions of men be constantly bending over the tomb of a single dead young Jew? Is not the whole world a sepulchre of poets, artists, philosophers, statesmen, and heroes? Do not the stars shine like night-lamps over the slumbers of our mighty dead? And why confine ourselves to one little country, one petty nation, and one type of character? Not in Palestine, not in Jewry, not in Christ, shall we find all the elements of human greatness and nobility. Let us be more catholic than our forefathers. They were narrowed by a creed; we will be as broad as humanity. It is a poor, cowardly spirit that dreads the cry of "Lo here!" or "Lo there!" The wise, brave man will be curious and eclectic. He will store the honey of truth, beauty, and goodness from every flower that blooms in the garden of the world.

—G. W. Foote, "Will Christ Save Us?"

DEATH OF M. VICTOR SCHÖLCHER.
A REVOLUTIONIST OF 1848.

THE death is recorded in Paris of M. Victor Schœlcher, one of the last survivors of the revolution of 1848, M. Albert, the working-class member of the Provisional Government which sprang up in that year, being still alive. M. Schœlcher was born in Paris in 1804. Being disappointed in the outcome of the revolution of 1830—for he was deeply Republican—he threw himself, with his friend Barbes, into polemical journalism and secret societies, coming forward in both as the enemy of the new dynasty. Before 1830 his wealthy parents induced him, in order to keep him out of mischief, to make a business tour in Mexico, the West Indies, and the United States. He was then twenty-three years old. It was in the course of this tour that he became an Abolitionist, and that he resolved to devote his best energies to the work of negro emancipation. He kept the promise he made to himself with a tenacity that never relaxed for a moment from that time until the work he undertook was accomplished. On his return home he wrote against slavery.

In 1840 Schœlcher went to Hayti to see how the black race used their liberty, and came to the conclusion, from what he saw, that they used it well, and had made wondrous progress since the Toussaint-Louverture revolt. Turkey, Egypt, Greece, the Soudan, were subsequently visited for the single purpose of being able to expose the evils of slavery. In 1847 he landed in Senegal and penetrated into the country. He had just returned with his mind full of the horrors of the chases for slaves for the French Colonial and American markets when the revolution of 1848 took place. His friends of the "Réforme" seizing on power, Schœlcher got himself named Under-Secretary of State for the Marine and Colonial Departments, and had a commission appointed without loss of time to study the question of slave emancipation in the French colonies. In two months a decree was prepared and adopted by the Constituent Assembly to sweep off slavery. The freshly-liberated population of Gaudeloupe and Martinique elected their emancipator to represent them in that Assembly. He was also elected to the Versailles Assembly by a negro constituency. He was as much the abolitionist in other directions as they, and went dead against capital punishment, which he looked upon as a state lesson in crime. He was in favor of the election of judges and of military officers, and for giving the suffrage to women. For the last thirteen years he devoted himself to humanitarian and philanthropic question. Victor Schœlcher was a pronounced Freethinker, in fact an Atheist. In 1874 he became a life Senator, and as chairman of committee on compulsory education he stated in debate that, being an Atheist, he advocated secular teaching. This caused a scene, but his colleague, the Protestant Pastor Pressensac, used to tell him, "You are an Atheist who makes people in a God." Of late years he has lead a secluded life, preparing for the end by presenting his library and collections to public institutions. The "Father" of the Senate, he was respected by all parties as a thoroughly honest man. His name used to appear frequently some years ago in the *National Reformer*. He was personally acquainted with Charles Bradlaugh, through whom he subscribed to the Freethought cause in England.

INFANTILE INFIDELITY.

WHAT GOD CAN'T SEE.

"Mamma, do you believe that God can see everything?"

His mother assured him that God was omniscient, explaining to him what the term meant.

"But I know, mamma, there is something that God cannot see."

The mother, naturally, was shocked at the little sceptic's asseveration.

"But I *know* he can't see everything!"

"What can't he see?"

"Why, mamma, he can't see the top of his own head."

BROTHERLY KINDNESS.

A superintendent was asking the school questions relating to the lesson, which treated upon brotherly kindness.

Superintendent: "What does the lesson tell us about?"

School: "Brotherly kindness."

Superintendent: "Ah! that's good. Now doesn't this lesson teach us that we should be kind and good and love our enemies?"

School: "Yes, sir."

Superintendent: "Now then, Willie (pointing to a boy about ten years old), suppose you were playing marbles and another boy should come up and try to take them from you, what would you do?"

Willie (rising to his feet): "By jinks! I'd punch him in the eye, that's what I'd do."

PREACH WHAT YOU PRACTISE.

Lawyer Brown is a Sunday-school teacher. He was endeavoring to inculcate in his pupils' minds the necessity of a firm belief in things spiritual, when one of the class, with open-eyed astonishment, exclaimed, "Why, Mr. Brown, I heard you tell a witness in court the other day that you didn't care what he believed! All you cared about was what he knew!"

DO ASSES SPEAK?

One afternoon Crissy lost her place in the class, and on being questioned replied—

"Our teacher was telling us about a man Balaam who had a speaking ass, and I thought it one of her funny stories and laughed."

"Then you deserved to lose your place, you foolish girl," I replied.

"But do asses speak, ma?" Crissy asked, with a look of astonishment.

"Well, we read in the Bible about Balaam's ass speaking."

"But it is funny for all that. I couldn't help laughing. Wouldn't you laugh, ma, if you saw an ass speaking?"

The last sally was too much. I was obliged to laugh in spite of myself, when my tormentor again asked—

"Did Balaam's ass speak, or was you just saying it for fun, ma?"

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, January 7, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.:—
"A Royal Sponge; or, Duke Alfred's £10,000 a year"; at 7,
"Professor Mivart's Surrender, and the Re-establishment of
Hell." (Admission free; reserved seats, 3d. and 6d.)

January 14, Hall of Science; 21, Manchester; 28, Ports-
mouth.

February 4, 11, 18, Hall of Science; 25, Liverpool.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

- MR. CHARLES WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.**—January 7, Baskerville Hall, Birmingham; 14, Nottingham; 15, Derby; 21, Leicester; 22, Rushden; 23, Hall of Science, London. Feb. 4, Glasgow; 6, 7 and 8, Dundee; 11, Edinburgh; 18, Bradford; 25, Hall of Science, London. March 4, Hall of Science, London; 11, Liverpool; 18, Nelson.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at Baskerville Hall, The Crescent, Birmingham.
- G. JACOB.**—You say the New Year's gift idea is "a sensible appeal." We hope a couple of thousand of our readers will regard it in the same light.
- L. D. HEWITT.**—Your parish parson seems to be of the usual type. The "men only" dodge is a very paltry one. Secularism has never descended to it. It is best left to the churches.
- W. SIMONS.**—Your balance-sheet of the Ball's Pond Secular Sick and Tontine Society to hand. It is a healthy document. We wish the Society all success in the new year.
- G. A. MEADOWS.**—Thanks for your good wishes with the subscription.
- J. P. BROWN.**—Pleased to have your good wishes. We hope to see all the Glasgow friends again in the early part of the spring.
- N. BAILLY.**—It will be decided one way or another in our next issue. Many thanks.
- E. R. ROSE (Johannesburg).**—Your Christmas card to hand. Our kindest regards to the "saints" out there. The matter of your letter shall be attended to.
- P. KANANAGH.**—Our compliments to your better half. Mites are welcome. The poor man's small subscription often involves more self-denial than the rich man's large one.
- ANTI-THEOSOPHY.**—We believe Mrs. Besant is at present in India. When she is in England her lectures are advertised in the usual way.
- M. CHRISTOPHER.**—We fancy 1894 will be an improvement on 1893 so far as our cause is concerned.
- J. D. LEGGETT.**—Thanks for your good wishes. Your N.S.S. subscription handed to the secretary.
- W. C. MCBAIN.**—Pleased that you think "a special collection of this kind ought to be made at least twice a year." You say "there must be many people who would give a guinea to the cause." We hope there are, for the guineas are badly wanted.
- T. DUNBAR.**—Many small subscriptions make a large amount. We only expect each to give according to his means.
- J. M.,** in sending a subscription to the New Year's Gift Fund, says "I have much enjoyed the Sunday evening lectures at the Hall of Science, and I wish you all success."
- H. MALTON.**—Thanks for pointing out the error. We have made a correction in "Acid Drops."
- J. G. ROE.**—Glad to hear of your success. See "Sugar Plums." We reciprocate your good wishes for the new year.
- C. E. SMITH.**—Thanks. We hope to make use of it shortly.
- GEO. DUDDERIDGE,** Christian Evidence Society, Bristol.—We prefer to answer your letter through this column. The President of the National Secular Society does not see any particular reason why he should debate with Mr. George Wise. If you want to arrange for a debate at Bristol between Mr. Wise and a Secular representative, you should write to the secretary of the Bristol Branch of the National Secular Society, who will no doubt be pleased to hear from you.
- N. F. PRESS.**—An old joke, but it will bear repeating.
- S. HOLMES,** in sending a cheque for the New Year's Gift fund, says it is "a mark of my appreciation and esteem of your services to the cause."
- N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.**—Miss E. M. Vance, sec., acknowledges:—J. Chamberlain, 2s. 6d.; Mr. and Mrs. A. Lupton, 10s.
- J. NORTON.**—Mr. Forder has sent you copies of the paper. Pleased to hear you think the article on "Did Bradlaugh Backslide?" so valuable. We may reprint it as a tract.
- J. H. SALTER.**—Thanks for your list of subscriptions "obtained in the train." If all do their share in this way, we shall have a big sum to divide.
- W. LAMB.**—It is, as you say, uphill work, but we do advance.
- A. J. MARRIOTT.**—Your letter opens up a grave question of policy. Certainly the Dissenters, with their Bible compromise, deserve no support from Freethinkers—but very much the reverse.

E. T. NICOLLE.—Will keep it by us for possible use. We shall be glad to have what you wish us, a happy and prosperous new year.

LEEDS WORKING MAN.—Half-a-crown is a fair gift from one in your position. We hope all our readers will give in proportion. You regret that Freethought lectures are not more frequent at Leeds. So do we. There seems a difficulty in obtaining a central hall for special lectures. Still, we don't think all is done that might be done there.

W. SWEETMAN.—Thanks for your donation and good wishes. These subscription times discover who are the earnest friends of the movement. There isn't much earnestness about a man who never gives anything. He is really a Nothingarian.

A. SIMMONDS.—Read the *General View of Positivism*, translated from the French of Comte by Dr. J. H. Bridges, Harriet Martineau's larger compendium of the Positive Philosophy, in two vols., is an excellent piece of work. Comte himself praised it highly. John Stuart Mill's *Auguste Comte and Positivism* is also worth reading. Comte's *Positive Polity* has been translated into English by a Positivist committee. It is in four volumes, and the price is £1. We believe, however, it has been for some time out of print.

H. ATKINSON.—Marriages cannot be transacted at Secular Halls. Civil marriages take place at the Register's. Glad to hear you are pleased with *Comic Sermons* and the *Bible Handbook*. Keep pegging away.

X. Y. Z.—Thanks for the reference.

R. FLETCHER.—The complete edition of Diderot is expensive—about £7; but a second-hand copy might be obtained for about £1. A collection of his masterpieces is published in four volumes by Lemerre, Paris. It is well edited by Louis Asseline and André Lefèvre. There is also the centenary volume of Selections, published at three francs.

J. A. ROBERTS (New Plymouth, New Zealand), in sending his subscription for 1894, considers the *Freethinker* the best journal now or ever published, and would not care if its price was threepence instead of twopence. He sends greetings to all its contributors from the other side of the globe.

L. SPURGEON.—If you sent a proper withdrawal notice the schoolmaster is bound not to give your child religious instruction. Send full particulars to your local member of Parliament. If that fails, send them to us.

E. SIMS, sending donation, writes:—"I sincerely hope that your suggestion will meet with a hearty response. The noble cause for which you are making such praiseworthy efforts deserves the hearty support of every Freethinker; and if every one of them would this day do his duty, you receive a good round sum to help you push on your fight."

G. J. HOLYOAKE sends his donation to the New Year's fund. The veteran's example should stimulate other Freethinkers to do likewise.

D. F. GLOAK.—Delighted to hear of the continued success of the Dundee Branch, and pleased to have your good opinion of our own efforts.

C. DORG.—We note what you say about the Billingsgate match between the Christian Evidence and the Anti-Infidel people at Liverpool. Perhaps the correct attitude is one like Voltaire's. When the great "infidel" heard two ladies "going for" each other, he said, "I believe them both."

E. S. H.—Will answer you next week.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.—R. O. Smith, hon. treasurer, acknowledges:—A. G. Lupton, 5s.; Edmonton Branch Collection, 6s.

C. SHUFFLEBOTHAM.—Your pamphlet is interesting. The Co-operative movement has done a great work; it will do a greater when it tackles Production. Glad you are so pleased with the general character of the *Freethinker*.

S. BYKES.—Mr. Forder can no doubt supply you with Mr. Bradlaugh's pamphlet on *Perpetual Pensions*. Of course Mr. Bradlaugh did not desert his position on this matter. Lies about him are getting quite common.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Der Lichtfreund—Boston Investigator—Open Court—Freidenker—Two Worlds—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Liberty—Clarion—Flaming Sword—Truthseeker—Fritankaren—Secular Thought—Progressive Thinker—Twentieth Century—Le Soleil—Food, Home and Garden—Church Reformer—Singapore Advertiser—Boston Globe—Catholic Times—Liver—Isle of Man Times—Religio-Philosophical Journal—Derbyshire Times—Crescent—Reynolds's Newspaper—Weekly Bulletin.

LITERARY communications to be addressed to the Editor, 14 Clerkenwell-green, London, E.C. All business communications to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements:*—One inch, 3s.; Half Column, 15s.; Column, £1 10s. Special terms for repetitions.

IT being contrary to Post-office regulations to announce on the wrapper when the subscription is due, subscribers will receive the number in a colored wrapper when their subscription expires.

NEW YEAR'S GIFT TO FREETHOUGHT.

THE readers of the *Freethinker* are earnestly desired to send us anything they can afford, from a shilling upward, as a New Year's Gift to Freethought. We lead off the list with our own guinea. All we receive will be acknowledged. When the list is closed we shall divide the money as promised. One half will be paid over to the National Secular Society; the other half will be invested in fully paid up shares (in the name of the N.S.S.) in the Hall of Science scheme, which is explained in our advertising columns.

This number of the *Freethinker* goes to press very early. We are only able, therefore, to acknowledge subscriptions received up to the first post on Tuesday morning (Jan. 2). During the rest of the first week in the new year we hope to be busy for at least an hour every day in opening letters and extracting cheques and post-office orders—all of which should be crossed.

All we get out of the subscription is the trouble. Every penny will go to "the good old cause." We can therefore beg without blushing. We tell Freethinkers that they ought to give, and we expect them to give. They owe something to the principles that have emancipated them from the darkest curse of life.

THE NEW YEAR'S GIFT TO FREETHOUGHT.

[Where not otherwise marked the subscriptions are one shilling.]

G. W. Foote £1 1s., J. D. Leggett, T. Dunbar, W. C. McBain £1 1s., J. M. 2s., J. Heritage £1, G. A. Meadows £1, Elijah Seed 2s. 6d., William Jackson 2s., P. W. Baldwin 2s., A. Wilkinson, W. Walton, J. P. Browne 5s., P. Kavanagh, M. Christopher 3s., E. H. £1, G. Jacob 2s., J. W. Gott, C. Shepherd 2s., Leeds Working Man 2s. 6d., W. Sweetman 2s., C. M., A. Searle, S. Holmes, per Miss Vance—Four Britons 4s., H. Good, Mrs. A. G. Lupton 5s., W. Lamb 5s., J. Morton 2s., J. R., T. S., F. L., E. S., A. R., J. S., C. C. Andrews 5s., C. Shuttlebotham 2s. 6d., C. 1s. 5d., E. Sims 10s., G. J. Holyoake 10s., R. Crowther.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Monday evening next (Jan. 8) is the date of the London Secular Federation's annual dinner. We hope our metropolitan friends will make an effort (if necessary) to attend, as we should like to see a large gathering on this occasion. The dinner is to take place at the Holborn Restaurant, which is a sufficient guarantee that it will be in every way satisfactory. Mr. Foote presides, and will be supported by Mr. Watts and other well-known Freethinkers. After the tables are cleared there will be some brief speeches and good music. Those who come may depend on having "a good time."

Mr. Foote lectures at the London Hall of Science to-day (Jan. 7). His morning subject is "A Royal Sponge: or Duke Alfred's 10 000 a year." All seats at this lecture are free, and our London readers should induce their Liberal and Radical friends to attend. In the evening the lecture is a warm one to suit the weather—"Professor Mivart's Surrender: and the Re-establishment of Hell." The hall should be packed on this occasion. Seats in the gallery are free. Secularists and sympathisers who can afford three-pence or sixpence are expected to pay for seats in the body of the hall.

This New Year's Number of the *Freethinker* is a good one to circulate among the liberal minded general public, and we have printed extra copies to provide for this being done. First-class illustrations are very expensive, and the extra cost of this number will not be covered by the extra penny charged for it; but Special Numbers serve as an advertisement, and they are valued by the great majority of our readers as a change from the ordinary weekly issue.

During the new year it is our intention to vary the contents of the *Freethinker* as much as possible, so as to make it acceptable to a wider circle of readers. Of course we shall not forget the chief object of this journal, which is to spread Freethought and destroy superstition, especially the Christian

species of that noxious genus. We shall continue to do this as vigorously as ever, and we hope more effectively. But we shall try to provide our readers with more literary matter—in particular reviews of the best advanced books; and also articles on great social and ethical questions, without trenching on mere party politics. More than this it is unnecessary to say at present. Our readers will see the character of our design as it is carried out in the course of weeks and months.

We take this opportunity of asking our readers to do all they can in the new year to advertise the *Freethinker* and promote its circulation. We don't offer silly little prizes for those who sweat the most in our interest. We simply put it to them, that in promoting the circulation of this journal they are spreading the gospel of Freethought, and at the same time helping to bring us a little return for all the time, energy, and money we have invested in this enterprise. The *Freethinker* is a standard. We made it, we upheld it in difficulty and danger, and we hope to bear it aloft for many and many a year.

From what we hear occasionally we fancy there is an impression abroad that the Presidency of the N.S.S. is a lucrative office. As a matter of fact, it is an expensive office. There is no salary attached to it, nor even an allowance for out-of-pocket expenses, which in the course of a year are very considerable. Mr. Foote does not even charge the Society for the postage of the many letters he writes in connection with its business. He made a self-denying ordinance for himself on accepting the presidency, never to take a farthing of the Society's money for any service he rendered. In some cases this has weighed rather heavily, for his shoulders are thought strong enough to bear a pretty good load; but it stops malicious tongues and obviates all misunderstanding.

Mr. Charles Watts has lectured the last two Sunday evenings in Baskerville Hall, Birmingham, to highly appreciative audiences. He again lectures at the same place this evening (Sunday, Jan. 7) taking for his subject, by special desire, "The House of Lords: is it Doomed?"

One of our most welcome exchanges is the New York *Truthseeker*. Like other things that come from America—cyclones, for instance—it arrives irregularly. The latest number before us is bright and interesting. Watson Heaton continues his cartoons, George Macdonald has his keen pen again at work on the paper, and Charles Watts contributes Freethought notes from England. Mr. Watts says that the National Secular Society, at whose birth he assisted, is "in a better condition in every way than it has ever been." This is a statement which we are not prepared to contradict.

The *Daily Telegraph* gives the following as a genuine answer to a school question: "What is a parable?—A heavenly story with no earthly meaning."

The departed year carried off a goodly number who have labored for Freethought. On its death-roll stands the names of Hippolyte Taine, John Addington Symonds, Ramon Chies, Benjamin Jowett, John Tyndall, and Victor Schoelcher. It is not easy to see how such men are to be replaced, though a new crop is ever springing. Most of them had completed their work. As the Irishman said, "Everybody hears of it when a great man dies, but nobody knows of it when a great one is born."

The Finsbury Branch holds its annual members' meeting to-day (Jan. 7) at 12 noon in the minor Hall of Science. Financial statement, election of officers, and other important business should secure a large attendance.

"Matter, Space, and Time" is the comprehensive title of a lecture by Mr. Carl Aarstad, to be delivered this evening (Jan. 7) before the Newcastle Branch. Mr. Aarstad has recently joined the Branch. He has formerly occupied the Christian platform. We hear that the lecture is likely to prove interesting as well as instructive.

The Bristol Branch's social gathering was a great success. More than 150 persons sat down to tea and spent a very enjoyable evening together. This Branch has had a large accession of young blood lately, and is likely to give an extra good account of itself in 1894.

The Bradford Branch holds its annual tea and social party next Wednesday evening (Jan. 10) in the Milton Rooms, Westgate. Tea on tables at 6.30; dancing at 7.30. Tickets for both functions 1s.; for the latter only 6d. Apply to J. Sunderland, 24 Hammerton-street. A good attendance is expected.

The South Shields Branch starts an Ethical Class this evening (Jan. 7) at 6.30. Members are invited to join. The class will read and discuss Spencer's *Data of Ethics*.

It is characteristic of the standing of that great four-square sceptic, Hume, that an American firm, who are commencing an ethical series, begin with *The Ethics of Hume*. The work gives his "Treatise of Morals" and "Treatise of the Passions," with an introduction by Dr. J. W. Hyslop. Hume is a standing refutation of the assertion that philosophical scepticism means ethical disintegration.

A. B. Williams, a noted lawyer of Washington, D. C., whose death occurred on the 25th ult., shortly before he died dictated the following telegram to Colonel Ingersoll, then at New York: "I am dying to-day and want you to know that I died as I lived, an infidel." Colonel Ingersoll immediately responded: "Just heard of your sickness to-day. My heart is with you. Cling to the willows and live. Give yourself my love."

1894 is the anniversary of the publication of the first part of the *Age of Reason*. The imprint is Paris, printed by Barrois, London; sold by D. I. Eaton, at the Cock and Swine, 74 Newgate-street, 1794. The work was only fifty-six pages, yet few bombs have created more sensation. The title of brave Daniel Isaac Eaton's shop was suggested by the Gallic cock, and Burke's allusion to "the swinish multitude."

In the *Church Reformer* for January Mr. Stewart Headlam publishes the whole of the correspondence between Mrs. Bonner and the Rev. Allen Rees, on the question, "Did Mr. Charles Bradlaugh Die an Atheist?" In exhibiting this his accustomed fairness and courtesy, Mr. Headlam stands in strong contrast to the mass of his clerical brethren.

Mr. H. Snell is one of our most promising young lecturers. On Wednesday evening next (Jan. 10) he occupies the London Hall of Science platform. His subject is "What is Freethought." We hope all who can will go to hear him:

THE LATE J. P. ADAMS.

IN the death of J. P. Adams the Freethought movement has lost one who for many years was one of its most persistent workers. True, for some time past, he took no active part in Secular advocacy, but thirty years ago he was a hard and constant worker in the cause. He was a capital conductor of the meetings at the old Hall of Science, doing the duties of committee, secretary, chairman, and sometimes of lecturer. He had a unique style of advertising and reporting Freethought meetings, and he always gave particular attention to the advent of young and aspiring speakers on our platform. He was a most enthusiastic admirer of Mr. Bradlaugh, who always paid great deference to what he said or did. Mr. Adams made a good impression on the minds of visitors at the hall from the provinces, and seldom would they come to London the second time without making special efforts to see him. He always had a suitable joke for the audiences over which he presided on Sunday evenings. He was a fine example of what a man could do for a cause when his heart was in it.

J. P. Adams' reading of the works of the early Freethinkers was extensive, and his memory of them was exceedingly good. He lived and worked in troublesome and stormy times. His mode of advocacy was more destructive than constructive. He was a lively lecturer and a ready debater. For many years he was my personal friend, and ever willing guide. He is now no more, but he has left a record of useful and consistent service in the ranks of Freethought. Although comparatively unknown to the present generation of Freethinkers, his name is familiar to, and will be honored by, those who are conversant with the Secular struggles of over a quarter of a century ago.

CHARLES WATTS.

THE WARFARE OF TRUTH.

THEIR *image* of Truth—the dead form, the more shell
Whence the spirit escapes them—men worship too well;
But the goddess herself, all unknown to their gaze,
They shrink from with horror, they dread all their days:
And if vision grew not with renewal of youth,
The world would ne'er witness the triumph of Truth.

In their systems on earth, in their dreams of the sky,
Men love the delusion, they cherish the lie;
Who dares undeceive them they hang and they burn,
And only of martyrs will man ever learn.
Dead Sea apes still enchanted, with nail and with tooth
Men rend the rash brother who brings them new truth.

Fair Science arose and she read the dim past,
The ascent of our species through periods vast;
She taught us new lessons of thought and of act—
Not guesswork of fiction, but guidance of fact.
From Protestant Oxford, from Popish Maynooth,
Came the howl against Science, the shriek against Truth.

Who sees the sad city where, weary and worn,
The victims of want wish they never were born,
Let him delve to the root and proclaim the true cause
And the means of controlling stern Nature's grim laws:
Him they stone as of old, they revile without ruth,
For seeking strange knowledge and speaking new truth.

The poor are too many, competing to death;
Yet tell them, with ever so earnest a breath,
To limit their children, to limit their dead,
To limit their horrible struggle for bread,
And straight you're a fiend, a foul monster uncouth,
To dare be so vile as to teach precious truth.

All truth must be pleasant—the edict so runs—
And never must point to a path that man shuns;
Or else 'tis a madness, a crime, a disgrace,
A heresy hell-born that flaunts in our face:
For the world never welcomes such wisdom, forsooth,
As shows the strait way of salvation by truth.

Men talk of their Savior, hung high by the priest,
Of Socrates martyr'd for teaching the Beast—
That beast the great Public that crushes true friends
And crouches to flatterers seeking their ends;
But this only they see: In the world's cruel youth
The wisest and bravest were martyr'd for Truth.

How many have died but for seeing too well,
Have swooned on the rack and have sighed in their cell!
Men honor such brave ones, such heroes of old;
They can worship the past with devotion untold:
But they see not that *now*, in *this* age, forsooth,
Victims still suffer for speaking new truth.

So age after age is Truth's triumph begun;
So battle by battle the war must be won.
Pioneers must push forward ahead of the host,
And the foremost and bravest must suffer the most.
Must it always be so? Must the Fetish, forsooth,
For ever take toll of the vanguard of Truth?

Not if manhood survive, not if wisdom endure,
To teach life's true lessons to rich and to poor.
For the dawn is upon us, the daybreak is near,
The evil deciphered, the problem grown clear.
Even now men are learning the wisdom that smooths
The pathway of brothers who bring them new truths.

W. P. BALL.

AN OLD LIE STILL ON ITS TRAVELS.

Ingersoll's remarks about the vitality of the religious lie are the results of accurate observation. We have discovered a notorious example in a recently published volume, *Piccadilly Bookmen: Memorials of the House of Hatchard*, by A. L. Humphreys; 1893. Hatchard, we are told, became shopman to Tom Payne, the bookseller of Mews Gate, Castle-street, St. Martin's. It is a melancholy proof of the author's conviction of the invincible ignorance of the "reading public" that we are bidden carefully to distinguish between Tom Payne the bookseller and the world-renowned Thomas Paine, whom Mr. Humphreys, continuing the insolent tradition of the orthodox, styles "Tom Paine the Atheist."

"Well, little boy, what's your name?" asked the Sunday-school teacher, opening her Catechism.

"Shadrach Nebuchadnezzar Jones."

"Who gave you that name?"

"I don't know. But if I find out when I gets me growth they'll be sorry for it!"

NOSES.

SOME people will think this a strange heading for an article. A few, perhaps, will turn up their noses at it, and ask, "What will the man write about next?" Probably the most severe will say the subject is below the dignity of philosophy. But, with all due respect, we think they are mistaken. There was once a cant about the dignity of history; everything was beneath its attention except the doings of princes, popes, generals, and statesmen. But the *coup de grace* was given to that superstition by Lord Macaulay. Nothing is really trivial to the eye of a philosopher. The laws of the universe are as much involved in a grain of sand as in a planet. The mystery of life is as great in an insect as in a Shakespeare. A common song has often been more powerful than a law passed by both houses of parliament, sanctioned by the crown, administered by judges, and enforced by policemen, gaolers, and soldiers. Has it not even been said that the history of the world would have been changed by a difference of an eighth of an inch in the length of Cleopatra's nose? Let us have done then with "dignity," and let us look at facts. And who can say that noses are not facts? Is not the nose called "the prominent feature"? Why, there was a gentleman, immortalised in an old epigram, whose long nose was an advance agent—a herald to announce he was coming. *His nose was a fact, anyhow.* Look at Cæsar's nose, look at Wellington's, look at Napoleon's. Such noses are not only facts, but *tremendous* facts. They ploughed deep furrows in the world's history. They are unforgettable noses.

Laurence Sterne, our great English humorist, wrote a long dissertation upon noses, which is well worth reading; although, like the Bible, it is not exactly fit for children. A later writer devoted a whole book to noses—and a very witty and instructive book too. We are therefore not the first in the field. Nevertheless, our remarks will have their speciality. We shall not follow Sterne or his successor, except in point of time, but strike out a line of our own.

The nose, dear reader, has played a very great part in religious history. The priests have always led the people by that organ. It was the easiest to catch hold of, but that was not the reason. The fact is, the nose was the gate of piety. The soul went in and out of the nostrils. When the Hebrew prophet had a dead boy to resuscitate, he stretched himself upon the lad seven times; at last the lad's soul came back, and the reanimated corpse sneezed. And why did it *sneeze*? Parsons cannot answer the question. But we can. The lad's soul re-entered his body through the nose; in doing so it set up a titillation, and relief was found in the usual way.

Dr. Tylor, in his splendid work on *Primitive Culture*, has some instructive pages on this subject. Sneezing customs are general, though not universal. When the Englishman who sneezes cries "God bless me!" he is following an old custom of which he has lost the original meaning. The object was to keep evil or foreign spirits from entering. Zulu diviners cultivate sneezing, which they regard as an indication of the presence of the spirits they are invoking. Calabar negroes, when a child sneezes, will say "Far from you!" with a gesture as if throwing off some evil. On a Samoan's sneezing, the bystanders exclaimed, "Life to you!" The Jewish sneezing formula is "Good life!" The Moslems say "Praise to Allah!" Prometheus, in the Greek mythology, prays for his artificial man, when it gives the first sign of life by sneezing. Jehovah breathes into Adam's nostrils to make him a living soul. Jacob prays that man's soul may no longer depart from his body when he sneezes. The sect of Messalians used to spit and blow their noses to expel the demons they might have drawn in while breathing. Mediæval exorcists drove the devils out through the patients' nostrils. Josephus, the Jewish historian, relates that he saw a Jew, named Eleazar, curing demoniacs in the time of Vespasian, by drawing out the demons through their nostrils with a magic ring.

This is enough to explain the religious mystery of noses. The reader is now aware why the priests have

kept their eyes on those organs. The men of God suspect and hate our eyes. They tell us we must not walk by *sight*. We must walk by *faith*. That is, we must follow our noses; or, in other words, walk by *smell*. The parson goes in front, and we must tramp after him. As Hamlet says, "you shall nose him as you go," by his flavor of brimstone, until at last you come to the great treacle-pot called Heaven.

G. W. FOOTE.

NATURE.

A COMELY face hath Nature, but no heart.
None! Are you sad? She smiles. Is your grief past
And gladness come? Her skies are overcast.
In your chameleon moods she hath no part.
Praise her—your warmest words will ne'er impart
A flush the more to her full loveliness;
Flout her, and she will offer you, no less,
Flowers, fruitage, all the affluence of her art.
Die, she will send her merriest birds to sing
Outside your window, and, upon your brow,
Shed showers of sunbeams, bright overflow;
Go down into your grave, no cloud will fling
Its shade in sorrow that your tale is told.—
She is a comely mother, but stone cold.

T. WESTWOOD.

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President, G. W. FOOTE.

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SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 11.15, G. W. Foote, "A Royal Sponge; or Duke Alfred's £10,000 a Year" (free); 6.30, musical selections; 7, G. W. Foote, "Professor Mivart's Surrender, and the Re-establishment of Hell" (admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.) Monday at 8.30, debating class, Mr. Baker, "Can any Man Hold a Private Right in any of Nature's Gifts?" (free). Tuesday at 8, athletic class. Wednesday at 8.15, H. Snell, "What is Freethought?" (free). Thursday and Friday at 8, dancing classes. Saturday at 8.30, in the minor hall, social evening (free).

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, W. Willis, L.C.C., "London Government: what it is and what it ought to be" (free); 9.15, members' quarterly meeting. Tuesday at 8, social gathering (free). Wednesday at 8, dramatic club.

Bethnal Green—Libra Hall, 78 Libra-road, Roman-road: 7.30, C. J. Hunt, "The Inquisition" (free).

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 4.30, members' general meeting; 6, tea, etc. Friday at 7.30, free science classes in chemistry and astronomy.

Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove, Broadway: Thursday, Jan. 11, at 8.30, Touzeau Parris, "The Messianic Prophecies."

South Essex Secular Society, 33 and 35 Salway-road, Stratford, E.: 7, W. H. Smith, "The Geology of Stratford" (free).

Westminster—Mr. Ross's Coffee Room, 156 Horseferry-road: 7.30, members' half-yearly general meeting.

Wimbledon—Liberty Hall, Curtis's Coffee House (Broadway entrance): 7, a lecture (free).

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.15, Sam Standing, "Ally Sloper and Jesus Christ" (in the hall if the weather is unfavorable).

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30 and 3.30, W. Heaford will lecture.

COUNTRY.

Birmingham—Baskerville Hall, Crescent, Cambridge-street: 11, members' quarterly meeting; 7, Charles Watts, "The House of Lords: is it Doomed?"

Blackburn—Secretary's House: 3, a meeting.

Bradford—Unity Lodge Rooms, 65 Sunbridge-road: 6.30, A. B. Wakefield, "The Errors of the Present Day Labor Agitation."

Bristol—Shepherd's Hall, Old Market-street: 3, Mr. Rogers, "The Difficulties of Social Re-organisation."

Dundee—Cutlers' Hall, Murraygate: 11.30, mutual improvement class, Mr. Ogilvy, "Socialism"; 1 to 2, music class; 2.30, concert; 6.30, Mr. Cameron, "Is the Bible True?"

Grimsby Sunday Association, Hall of Science, Freeman-street: 2.30, G. E. Conrad Naewiger, "Is Overpopulation the Cause of Industrial Depression?"

Hanley—Secular Hall, John-street: 3.30, debate between Ex-Rev. Joseph Taylor and Geoffrey Hilton on "Is Christianity Worthy of Acceptance?"; 7, "Is Christianity True?" Thursday at 8, improvement class.

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: discussion class, selected article from *Free Review*; 6.30, Zosimus, "Language and Writing," with special lantern slides.

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 7 (large hall), L. Small, B.Sc., "John Tyndall."

Manchester N.S.S., Secular Hall, Busholme-road, Oxford-road, All Saints': C. Cohen, 11, "Christianity and Science"; 3, "Are Christians Sceptics"; 6.30, "Evidences of Theism." Monday from 8 to 10.30, dancing (6d.)

Nelson—Page's Shop, 36 Leeds-road: Tuesday at 7.30, business meeting.

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Eldon Hall, 2 Clayton-street: 7, Carl Aarstad, "Matter, Space, and Time."

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 3, chess club; 7, debate on "Individualism and Socialism" (free).

Reading—Foresters' Hall, West-street: 7, G. Fraser, "Our Civilisation."

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 7, W. Dyson, "Christ as a Social Reformer—a Reply to Celestine Edwards."

South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street: 6.30, ethical class; 7.30, business meeting.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, E.—Jan. 7, Manchester; 14, m. and e., Birmingham; a., Wolverhampton; 15 to 18, Hanley; 21, Liverpool; 28, South Shields. Feb. 4, South Shields; 11, Sheffield; 18, Manchester; 22, Hammersmith.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Jan. 21, North Camberwell Progressive Club.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, Clare Lodge, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—Jan. 21, Hall of Science. Feb. 4, Camberwell.

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