

The Free Thinker

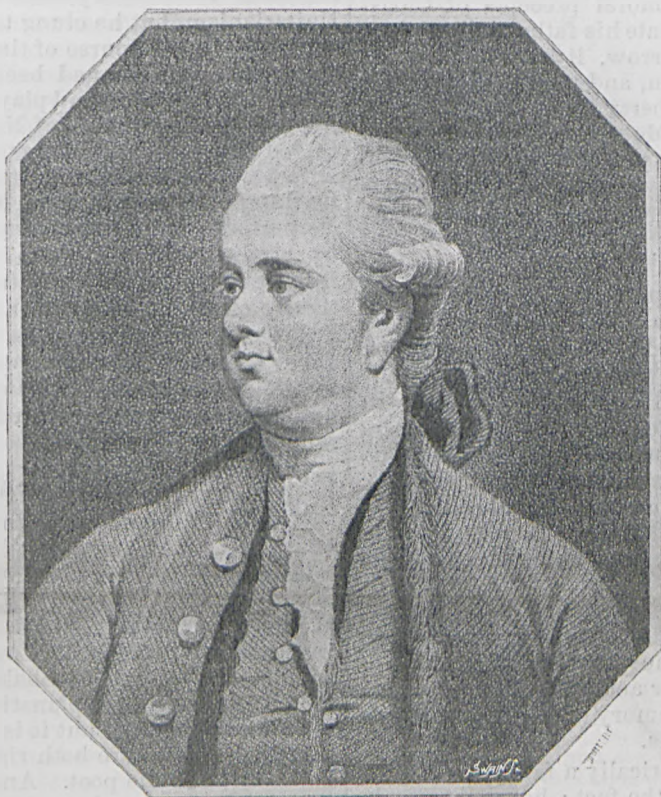
Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

VOL. XIV.—No. 15.

SUNDAY, APRIL 15, 1894.

PRICE TWOPENCE.



EDWARD GIBBON.

(See page 239).

MR. LE GALLIENNE'S "CHRIST."

(Concluded from p. 218.)

Hereafter.

MR. LE GALLIENNE'S god is the old celestial despot of theology in a new costume. On the question of a future life, however, we are pleased to find a vein of heterodoxy and common sense. Mr. Le Gallienne asks, with respect to the "hereafter," whether we "really care about it so much as we imagine." We talk about meeting our old friends in heaven, for instance, but do we not "meet them again already on earth—in the new ones"? It is said that if fine, cultivated personalities do not survive death, they are wasted, and have existed in vain. Mr. Le Gallienne's reply to this objection is clear, sufficient, and well expressed:—

"But how so? Have they not been in full operation for a lifetime? 'Tis a pity truly that the old fiddle should be broken at last; but then for how many years has it not been discoursing most excellent music? We naturally lament when an old piece of china is some sure day dashed to pieces; but then for how long a time has it been delighting and refining those, maybe long dead, who have looked upon it.—If there were no possibility of more such fiddles, more such china, their loss would be an infinitely more serious matter; but on this the sad-glad old Persian admonishes:—

No. 664.]

' fear not lest Existence, closing your
Account and mine, should know the like no more;
The Eternal Saki from the bowl has pour'd
Millions of Bubbles like us, and shall pour.'

Nature ruthlessly tears up her replicas age after age, but she is slow to destroy the plates. Her lovely forms are all safely housed in her memory, and beauty and goodness sleep secure in her heart, in spite of all the arrows of death."

Without saying what they are, or which of them he considers at all convincing, Mr. Le Gallienne observes that the arguments as to a future life are "probably stronger on the side of belief"—which is rather a curious expression. But, whichever theory be true, it "does not really much matter." Very likely. But how does this fit in with the teaching of Christ? If he and his apostles did not believe in the "hereafter," what *did* they believe in? "Great is your reward in heaven," and similar sentences, lose all meaning without the doctrine of a future life, about which the early Christians were intensely enthusiastic. It was not in *this* world, as Gibbon remarks, that they wished to be happy or useful.

Essential Christianity.

Mr. Le Gallienne argues that Christ taught in parables. He promised heaven, and threatened hell, but he spoke in a Pickwickian sense. However he used such phrases, it is "certain" that the evangelists "have distorted their importance out of all proportion

to the rest of his teaching." By "certain" we are not to assume that Mr. Le Gallienne has access to occult sources of information. We are only to infer that he deals with the gospels arbitrarily; accepting them, or rejecting them, as they accord or disagree with his preconceptions. Indeed, this is what "essential Christianity" must always be. What each picker and chooser likes is "essential." What he does not like is unessential, if not a positive misrepresentation.

Short and easy is Mr. Le Gallienne's criterion for deciding when Christ is literal and when parabolical. "It is only Christ's moral precepts that are to be taken literally"—"all the rest is parable." What a pity it is that the Prophet of Nazareth did not give us a clear hint to this effect! The theory is one of admirable simplicity. Yet, for all that demure look of his, Mr. Le Gallienne is not so admirably simple as to work it out in practice. Taking the moral precepts of Christ literally, a Christian should hate his father and mother, take no thought for the morrow, live in poverty to obtain the kingdom of heaven, and turn his left cheek to everyone who takes the liberty of striking him on the right. Mr. Le Gallienne does not ask us to do these things; he does not say he performs them himself. He would probably say, if pressed, that allowance should be made for oriental ways of speaking. But, in that case, what becomes of the "literal" method of reading the "moral precepts" of Christ?

Mr. Le Gallienne, who despises "thinkers," is all at sea in his chapter on Essential Christianity. He does not know his own mind. He declares that Christ "combined" in his own person and teaching "the intense spirituality of the Hebrew, the impassioned self-annihilation of the Hindoo, the joyous naturalism of the Greek." Yet he also remarks that there is something beautiful in "such presences as Pan, Aphrodite, and Apollo," which we do not find in Christianity; though he is careful to add that there is not "actually any strife between them and the sadder figure of the Galilean." "All the gods of all the creeds," he says, "supplement or corroborate each other." Perhaps so; but what becomes of that "masterful synthesis," in which Christ gathered up the "joyous naturalism of the Greek," no less than other ancient characteristics? It is well to have a good memory (at least) when you are setting the world to rights.

Christianity has been historically a failure. Mr. Le Gallienne more than admits the fact; he emphasises it, and tries to explain it. In the first place, he says, the priests have been too many for Christ; they got hold of Christianity, and turned it into the channel of their interests. In the next place, the world was not ready for "essential" Christianity; an argument in flat contradiction to the doctrine of "preparation," which has played so important a part in Christian apologetics ever since the time of Eusebius. In the third place, "essential" Christianity is an idealism, and "a throng of idealists is an impossibility." The horde of earthly-minded people have simply trodden upon the precious pearls of Christ's teaching. It is not true that the world has tried the Gospel of Christ and found it wanting; the world has never tried it at all, and "in this nineteenth century of the so-called Christian era, it has yet to begin."

Supposing all this to be true, what does it prove? On the theory that Christ was God, or sent by God, it proves either that Providence interfered too soon, or that it is incapable of making any real impression upon the stubborn inhabitants of this planet; either alternative being a reflection on the wisdom or the power of the deity. On the theory that Christ was only a man, it proves that he taught an impossible gospel. After all these centuries it is still contested and still to be explained. Would it not, after all, be better to put aside this source of confusion and quarreling, and to rely upon reason and the common sentiments of humanity? Mr. Le Gallienne admits that in some respects "such a book as Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* is more helpful than *The New Testament*—for it includes more." Why then all this chatter about Christ? Can we ever be united on a question of personality? Is it not absurd, and worse than absurd, to thrust this object of contention into the arena where

the forces of light should be fighting, like one man, the strong and disciplined forces of darkness?

All this talk about "the sublime figure of Christ" is a reminiscence of his faded deity. We do not indulge in heated discussions as to the personality of any other *man*. We speak of other "sublime" figures, but the expression is one of individual reverence. We do not say that those who do not share our opinion of Buddha, Socrates, Mohammed, Bruno, Cromwell, Danton, or even Plato or Shakespeare, are grovelling materialists and candidates for perdition. No, the chatter about Christ is only explicable on the ground that he was, and still is by millions, worshipped as a god. The glamor of the deity lingers round the form of the man.

It is impossible for persons of any logical trenchancy to remain in this stage. Francis Newman gave up orthodox Christianity, and also the equivocations of Unitarianism, but he clung to "the moral perfection of Christ." In the course of time, however, the scales fell from his eyes. He had been blinded by a false sentiment. Letting his mind play freely upon the "sublime figure" of the Prophet of Nazareth, he at length perceived that it had its defects. No mortal is endowed with perfection. Such monsters do not exist. Indeed, the teaching of Christ is as defective as his personality. Its perfection and sufficiency can only be maintained by those who never mean to incur the perils of reducing it to practice. Who really tries to carry out the Christianity of Christ? Only one man in Europe that we know of, and his name is Count Tolstoi; but he is saved from the worst consequences of his "idealism" by the more practical wisdom of his wife, who will not see him, any more than herself and her children, reduced to godly beggary.

Sentimentalism.

Mr. Le Gallienne seems to us to belong to the sentimentalists, though we hope he will grow out of their category. He appears to dread accurate thinking, and to imagine that knowledge destroys the charm of nature. "Which," he asks, "comes nearest to the truth about love—poor Lombroso's talk about pistil and stamen, or one of Shakespeare's sonnets?" The root, he says, is no explanation of the flower.

This may be fine, but it is fine nonsense. Lombroso and Shakespeare are both right. The physician does not contradict the poet. And if the root is no explanation of the flower, what will happen if you are careless about the root and the soil in which it is planted? Does a gardener act in that way? Is it not the horticulture of Fleet-street sentimentalists?

Mr. Le Gallienne is great on what he calls the "root" fallacy. Wishing to keep the "religious instinct" in mystery, or at least obscurity, he objects to anthropological "explanations." He cannot tolerate talk about ancestor-worship, and other such "rude beginnings of religion," although it comes from the lips of his intellectual superiors, such as Tylor, Lubbock, and Spencer. Even if they are right, he falls back upon his old exclamation, "What does it matter?" If the flower began as a root, he says, that is no argument against "the reality of the flower." But this is a shifting of ground. The reality of the flower, the reality of the "religious instinct," is not in dispute. The question is, What is its explanation? No one denies that man idealises and reveres. The question is, How did he come to let these faculties play upon ghosts and gods? And the explanation is to be found in his past. It cannot possibly be found in his present, unless we take him as a savage, in which case he is an embodiment of the past of our own ancestors, from whom we derive every vestige of what we call our "religion."

Man's nature, like his destiny, is involved in his origin. However man's nature may be developed, he will never be more than "the paragon of animals." And it is the recognition of this unchangeable truth which makes all the difference between the evolutionist, who labors for rational progress, and the sentimentalist, who fritters away his energies in cherishing the delusions of faith.

G. W. FOOTE.

BLAISE PASCAL.

"La maladie est l'état naturel des Chrétiens."—PASCAL, *Vie par Mme. Périer*, Havel i. xc.

"Nous avons un autre principe d'erreur, les maladies. Elles nous gâtent le jugement et le sens. Et si les grandes l'altèrent sensiblement, je ne doute point que les petites n'y fassent impression à leur proportion."—PASCAL, *Pensées*, Havel i. 35.

In the list of eminent Christians so often cited for our admiration and example, the name of Pascal has deserved prominence. The piety, the orthodoxy, or the attainments of others may be questioned, but the eminence of Pascal as a Christian is as indisputable as his position in science and in literature. And Pascal was more than a Christian. He was a worthy man. His writings display both depth of thought and feeling, and elevation of character. They have the note of distinction which marks the nobleman of letters. Yet I hold that beneath his faith there was a profound scepticism, and that his Christianity was of a fanatic fervor which no modern Christian dares imitate, and was, indeed, in the nature of a disease which tended both to thwart and shorten his services to humanity. A brief sketch of his career may make clear my point of view.

Born of a distinguished and pious family, June 19, 1623, he was a child believed to be bewitched, and his father employed a wise woman to remove the spell by herbs culled before sunrise and the expiatory death of a cat. As a child he had a sort of hydrophobia, being unable to look on water without falling into convulsions. He suffered from paralytical fits. When other children were devoted to play, his mind was occupied with problems of geometry or natural philosophy. At twelve he had formed a theory of sound, and at sixteen wrote a treatise on Conic Sections, which excited the mingled incredulity and astonishment of Descartes. He was cut out for a mathematician, and all that was wanting was attention to his physical health. But an accident to his father diverted his thoughts, and he, his father and sisters, became a devoted religionist. Their view of religion including a dislike of all worldly pleasure and a reliance on the grace of God, his health grew worse. He suffered from excessive headache, and great internal heat and pain. A singular characteristic was inability to swallow water unless it was heated, and even then only drop by drop. His sister says that for years he was hardly a day without suffering. He so earnestly threw himself into the study of theology that he injured his frail health.* His lower limbs became paralysed from excess of blood to the brain. Common sense would have prescribed abstinence from work and religious thoughts, and mingling with society and its amusements. This his friends suggested. He returned to Paris, and indulged in its gaieties, and some think even in its sensual dissipations. What seems more likely is, that he fell in hopeless love with a lady above him in rank, the sister of the Duc de Roannez. His *Discourse on the Passions of Love* indicates as much, and shows what the Rev. John Owen calls a tone of healthy animalism in completest contrast to the morbid asceticism of later years. He says roundly, "Man is born for pleasure. He feels it and needs no other proof. Hence he follows reason in giving himself to pleasure." Here we have the same energetic concision as in his *Pensées*, but how different the sentiment from their sombre austerity. But a change was to come.

He had suffered two attacks of partial paralysis, and in October, 1654, when crossing the bridge at Neuilly, on the Seine, the horses took fright and leaped off, leaving the carriage poised on the edge. The shock made him faint, and from that time he had the hallucination of an abyss yawning at his side. From that date he was lost to science and the world, and won for theology and the Church. Some vision appeared, of which he kept a permanent record on his person, stitched inside his vest. It was found after death, and

* "I do not wish to imitate Ste. Beuve, who, with delicate irony, suggests that the abandonment of the world by the female leaders of Port Royal might have some remote connection with their having been severely disfigured by small-pox, and, therefore, I by no means wish to ascribe Pascal's conversion to increased physical debility; I only observe it as a noteworthy circumstance that both on this, and the later occasion of his re-conversion, the access of religious fervor was undoubtedly accompanied by nervous disorders of a very marked kind."—Rev. John Owen, *The Sceptics of the French Renaissance*, pp. 745, 746.

a facsimile is given in M. F. Lélut's book, *L'Amulette de Pascal*.* It begins: "The year of grace 1654. Monday, 23 Nov., day of St. Clement, Pope and Martyr, between 10 30 and 12.30 midnight. Fire! God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, not of philosophers and savans. Certitude, certitude, sentiment, joy, peace. God of Jesus Christ. My God and our God. Thy God will be my God. Oblivion of the world and of all outside God." It goes on yet more erratically and mystically, and ends: "Total submission to Jesus Christ and to my Director." Whatever view we take—and some would certainly think the document warranted a committal for lunacy—it doubtless marked a turning-point in his life. He thought a special miracle had been wrought for his house by the cure of his niece, Marguerite Perier, by the Holy Thorn, and he wrote: "How I hate those who make men doubt of miracles . . . the Church has no prop if they are right." His sister had to expostulate with him on his neglect of his ablutions, and to remind him that godliness did not necessarily mean uncleanness. He told her she ought not to caress her own children, or suffer them to caress her. When the question arose of the marriage of a niece, he said: "The married state is no better than paganism in the eyes of God; to contrive this poor child's marriage is a kind of homicide—nay, Deicide—in her person." After death, at the age of 39 (Aug. 19, 1662), it was found he carried an iron girdle with spikes, which he was in the habit of pressing to his side when he felt anything which his sensitive mind considered a temptation. A *post-mortem* examination revealed a strange condensation and solidification of portions of the brain, a dried liver and stomach, and gangrened intestines. The light in which he came to regard his sufferings is best seen in his eloquent prayer:—

"I praise thee, my God, and I bless thee all the days of my life, that it hath pleased thee to reduce me to the incapacity of enjoying the sweets of health, and of the pleasures of the world. . . . Make me to know well that bodily evils are but the punishment and entire figure of the evils of the soul. . . . I confess I have esteemed health a good, not because it is an easy means of serving thee usefully, to consume more cares and watchfulness in thy service, but because by its favor I could abandon myself with less restraint in the abundance of the delights of life, and better taste fatal pleasures (*les funestes plaisirs*). . . . Let my sufferings serve to appease thy anger. . . . 'Twas by the marks of thy sufferings thou wert recognised by thy disciples, and it is by their sufferings that thou also wilt recognise thy disciples."

One cannot contemplate the life of Pascal without intense sympathy with his sufferings, and admiration at his mental elevation amid it all. His saying that "Sickness is the natural state of the Christian; it puts us in the condition in which we always ought to be," is at once the utterance of a thinker and of a fanatic, and his whole life illustrates that other quotation which I have placed at the head of this paper, to the effect that diseases are a source of error. They impair our judgment and sense. And if great ones perceptibly alter them, I doubt not that the small ones produce their proportionate impression. Pascal is not to be classed with the great sane thinkers like Shakespeare, Hobbes, Montaigne, Bentham or Comte, but rather with the ecstasies of genius like Mahomet, Luther or Fox, mistaking their own hallucinations for communication with the supernatural.

J. M. WHEELER.

If a man be possessed of but one idea, and that a wrong one, he will not only evoke a fetich for himself, but, by the power of concentration and example, institute a very ugly persecution for those who venture to doubt the divinity of his fetich. To do no harm and think no evil is not sufficient in many quarters to ensure a man a quiet life: uniformity is a very exacting fetich. To sing in chorus is, to minds of an unconquerable torpor, not only easier, but more meritorious than to attempt a solo. And so the dull little fetich unanimity takes the place of thoughtful readjustment of ideas, a process which would entail an almost impious exertion of powers enervated by habitual irresolution and disuse.—*Ethics of Fetich Worship*, "Chambers' Journal."

* Paris, 1846. It is criticised by M. Littré in his *Médecine et Médecins*, pp. 95-110.

SECULARISM AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS.

[CONCLUDED.]

FROM what has already been stated it will be seen that, in my judgment, it would be unwise to mix up Secularism with every phase of revolution that from time to time appears, not only in England, but throughout the civilised world. This has been already too frequently done by some of our Christian opponents for the purpose of discrediting Secular principles in the estimation of the public. It behoves us, therefore, to allow no uncertainty to exist as to what is the Secular relation to the various schemes now being submitted for attempting to solve our social problems. It is not my present object to go into the merits or the demerits of the popular "isms" now before the public. No doubt there is much in connection with each of them that is commendable; and, as a Secularist, I should defend the right of the exponents of all the schemes to be heard, so long as they confined themselves to argument and intellectual exposition, free from all physical violence. Personally, I cannot accept the theory of Individualism, if it is not based upon regard for the rights of others. Neither can I adopt that phase of Socialism that would entirely obliterate the just claims of the individual; whilst with that form of Anarchism that would destroy individuals indiscriminately Secularism, as I understand its principles, can have no sympathy whatever. It is not a question of motive, but of method, that has to be considered.

While I recognise the right and utility of combination for mutual protection, and for advancing the good of those united, I am not blind to the fact that there may be interests outside of any one particular combination that should be fairly considered. If, for instance, a person accepts the theory that the land, which is the source of all social comfort, should be nationalised, and that the reasonable value of its use should be applied to defraying the national expenditure, it does not follow that he should consent to have his house, his family, and his wages also nationalised. Many persons prefer the form of Socialism known as Co-operation, which is at once legal, rational, and useful. There are approximations to this plan in building societies and profit-sharing manufacturing concerns. And neither of these involves the extinction of individuals or of individual interests; on the contrary, they contribute to the maintenance of both in their integrity.

In seeking to solve social problems, there is one thing that must always be observed—namely, that, in pursuing our own good in our own way, we should strive not to unnecessarily damage the interests of others. This is a wholesome rule to observe in every state of society, and particularly in one that claims to be free. Freedom of thought, of speech, and of action for all is a claim consistent with reason, and essential to human progress. I have not yet been able to discover who has the right to withhold such freedom from any sane section of the community. It is quite true that the principle here involved has been held in the past, even in this country, to be of a revolutionary character. But the question is, was it rightly and justly so held? History teems with instances that such an equitable use of freedom has proved to be the fundamental principle of all progress. The point here to be insisted upon is, that the exercise of personal liberty, which does not infringe upon the freedom of others, is the right of all without any regard to class distinctions. This principle Secularists maintain, without committing themselves to all that is taught in the exercise of that right. If it is asked how true freedom is to be distinguished from that which is false, the answer will be that every individual should be free to give expression to his thoughts; but whether or not such thoughts represent that which will prove beneficial to society must be tested by comparison, and by fair and open discussion. Such is my view of the case, involving as it does the very essence of Secular Freethought. To the application of this principle are we indebted for the liberty we enjoy to-day in the religious, the political, and the social phases of life.

It will be thus seen that while, in my estimation, Secularism recognises the justice and need of revolution, that revolution must be one of thought and of principles. This cannot be too much emphasised, more especially at the present time, when revolt, in some instances, has assumed the brutal form of reckless violence in the shape of bomb-throwing, which cannot be too emphatically condemned, as being not only cruel and diabolical in its nature, but also as being a barbarous hindrance to the progress aimed at by all true reformers. I am thoroughly opposed, under the present conditions of society, to all violence and the destruction of persons and property. It indicates either insanity or uncontrolled passion, rather than a clear insight into the causes of social advancement. At any rate, violence, if resorted to at all, should be the last, not the first, process in the struggle for any reform among reasonable beings. Possibly in times past violence might have been necessary; but the people did not then possess the means for redressing wrongs that they have at their command to-day. In the past they were kept down by a domineering Church and by a despotic Government, and all political rights were withheld from the masses. Now the Church has lost its former power, and governments must "assume a virtue if they have it not." Besides, the people, although they have not all the political power that is their due, have sufficient to enable them, if they use what they possess wisely, to obtain further reforms in a peaceful manner. Secularism enjoins reliance upon free speech, a free platform, and a free press, in the conducting of our present social warfare. These are weapons more in harmony with the intelligence of the age than is the use of instruments of physical violence. Further, the employment of moral force gives promise of a success that will be useful in its influence and enduring in its results.

Of course it is not my intention to attempt to dictate to others what course they should pursue in seeking to secure social emancipation; but I have no hesitation in stating the policy which seems to me to be the correct one, and one, moreover, that is in accord with the teachings of Secularism. It is desirable that the latter fact should be known, inasmuch as our theological opponents are constantly associating our principles with reckless violence and disorder, whereas the very opposite is the truth. As a Secularist, I regard the use of violence, either in proposing or in opposing measures intended to reform an existing state of things, as fatal to the success in either case, and as being frequently attended by consequences that cannot be justified by Secular morality. It prevents the reign of justice, and it delays the cause of progress. Terror has been the instrument used by the enemies of all advancement, and we have yet to learn the wisdom of its being employed by the friends of progress.

To sum up, the duty of Secularists towards our social problems appears to me to be this: To recognise the necessity of discovering the best possible solutions, and, when those solutions are found, to apply them with all the moral force at our command. This useful work must be carried on by each of us in our capacity as social reformers—a task which will be inspired by the genius of Secularism, for no consistent Secularist can remain idle while evils abound that mar the happiness of the human family. The special duty of a member of the Secular organisation consists in demanding that freedom which will enable every reformer to carry on his good work without intimidation or persecution of any kind, and also in doing his utmost to remove such impediments to progress as have been caused by priestly invention, and the false conceptions of human duty which have been engendered by theological teachings. Here the Secularist will have ample scope for his reforming aspirations. He can commence at the root of the evil—that is, at the theological errors with regard to the nature and destiny of man, and the persistent opposition of the Church to mental freedom and social independence. When these errors are eradicated from the human mind, it will be in a condition to more readily receive those truths discovered by long and patient study—truths that will form the real basis of the solution of our social problems.

CHARLES WATTS.

ACID DROPS.

The Lord seems kind to pious Jabez Balfour. There appears to be small hope of his extradition. "I shall be very agreeably surprised," says Detective Craggs, "if we have the good fortune to take Balfour back to England." Meanwhile the Holy Jabez reads his Bible, and feels sure that Providence will pull him through.

Mr. J. Page Hopps has been criticising the Rev. Dr. Horton, and his remarks are reported in the *Daily Chronicle*. Dr. Horton has been tempted into explaining his orthodoxy, and emphasising his belief in the miraculous birth of Jesus Christ and the resurrection of the body, both of which Mr. Hopps describes as "nonsense"—just as we do, only our own views do not get into the morning papers. Mr. Hopps hopes that "God" will not hurt us for using our faculties as we can; and surely, he says, to be rational is to be on the right road, and to be honest is to be saved. Well, it ought to be, anyhow.

A young lady recently applied for admission as nurse at the Children's Hospital in the metropolis. All went well with her application till she was questioned as to her father's profession. When she replied that he was a Unitarian minister she was at once told that her request could not be entertained.

A Dutch doctor who has been making investigations in Java has found the cranium, thigh-bone, and grinder of the *Pithecanthropus erectus*, supposed to be the animal which comes between the ape and the man. He is recommended to take them to Brooklyn for comparison with Talmage.

The Church of England is popularly supposed to be the Church of the people. It appears, however, from the *Church Year Book* that, while the population of the diocese of Manchester is 2,644,424, the number of communicants is only 114,001.

From the same publication it appears that the total amount of voluntary contributions last year to the Church and its various organisations is £5,401,982 from a population of about thirty millions. For the maintenance of schools only £801,226 was raised. No wonder the Church schools are crying for rate-aid—in other words, for liberty to dip their hands in the public pocket.

Gorleston Parish Church, Norfolk, has a new organ, and Canon Venables, preaching on the occasion of its opening, thought it necessary to point to the instrument and say: "Don't turn that organ into a praying machine, which is a very easy thing for you to do. If you should do this, it is just as silly and quite as sinful as the act of the heathen in respect to the praying machine." Will not Christian theology admit the supposition that God is as much pleased with a tune on the organ as with a supplication from Canon Venables? We should say the one was at least as efficacious as the other.

A queer chain of incidents has come to light in the Calcutta High Court. A wealthy Oingalese lady died, leaving provision for the up-keep of six Buddhist idols of quaint appearance and strange names. The bequests were duly carried out, but through some misadventure or accident the idols found their way to an auction sale-room one day, and were knocked down to a bid of a judge of the High Court. Time passed; the strange gods graced the judge's residence. Now a claimant to the deceased's lady's estate has turned up, and, among other things, claims the gods and the allowance for their keep.

The Church Missionary Society, which has stations throughout Persia, has informed the United Press correspondent that it has received no news of outrages against Christians in Persia, and believes that rumors of murder and massacre such as have been published in the United States and elsewhere are without foundation in fact. The harrowing accounts of these alleged massacres were communicated to the press by a rival missionary organisation.—*The Crescent*.

Mr. Bartley, the pious Conservative M.P. for North Islington, is such a close student of the Bible that he edited the House by declaring that in England we did not apply the

Mosaic law which laid down that, if a man did not work, neither should he eat. This saying, it happens, is found only in Paul, who is placed some 1,400 years after Moses. It would be a bad thing for some of Mr. Bartley's friends if the saying were reduced to practice.

The peculiar attitude of the Pope towards the Italian Government is displayed by a recent circumstance. A Vatican official embezzled 13,000 lire. To prosecute him it would be necessary to notify the Italian authorities, but this could not be thought of, as the Holy See does not recognise an Italian Government, and, therefore, will not entertain any official relations with it. The embezzler can, therefore, live in Rome quietly and undisturbed.

Origen refuted the calumny of Celsus that the father of Jesus was a certain soldier named Panthera, by instancing that some animals, for instance vultures, conceived without any connection with a male. A certain Christian Evidence lecturer, possibly without having heard of this, was overheard last Sunday to cite Prof. Huxley as saying, in favor of the virgin birth of Jesus, that virgin reproduction was an every-day occurrence in nature. Mary, we suppose, though a mammal, was a curious instance of atavism, reverting to the *parthenogenesis* of plant-lice. If the analogy were carried out, it might make Joachim the husband of God's grandmother, St. Anne the real father of Jesus Christ; for what is called virgin production in nature, is where one impregnation descends from mother to daughter before its effect ceases.

At the General Synod of the Church of Ireland, Canon Stavley moved that the Lectionary, as far as regards the Book of Revelation, be re-arranged. He said large parts of the book were "altogether unprofitable." The matter came to a crisis in his mind on the Sunday before Christmas Day, last 24th December, when he was compelled to read the 13th chapter, and there was not a single word of that chapter which could be called edifying to a congregation. Canon Stavley should have remonstrated with God for putting unprofitable stuff in his book. He was severely called over the coals by his clerical brethren, the Dean of Armagh quoting that all scripture was given by inspiration and was profitable. Moreover, "it was well to impress their worshippers with the poetic mystery which hung round" St. John's nightmare.

"Catholicus," writing in the *Horwich Chronicle*, makes a little slip. To defend his Church, he instances Government persecution, and says, "They suppressed the *Freethinker* and other publications of eminent infidels." Now the prosecutions against the *Freethinker* were instituted by Sir Henry Tyler and the corrupt City Council, and, so far from suppressing it, they did not stop its issue for a single week.

The Rev. B. Davies, a clerk in holy orders, lately residing in Jasper-road, Upper Norwood, is a bankrupt. He has not surrendered to the Court, but Mr. Cohen, on behalf of the petitioning creditor, announced his intention of applying for a warrant against the bankrupt. The bankruptcy was stated to have been brought about through Stock Exchange speculations.

Emmeline Maud Harris, a housemaid lately in service at St. Mary's School, Wantage, conducted by the Sisterhood of St. Mary the Virgin, committed suicide. In a letter she left she said: "If any girl wants to be sent to the Devil, let her come and live six months at St. Mary's School."

Rev. S. Gilmer Stephenson, of the genuine Christian congregation of Pittsfield, Ill., eloped with Miss Dove Heavener, aged twenty-three. He deserted a wife and three children, one a babe only a few weeks old. The mother of the girl is almost insane.

English law is a curious thing. It makes you liable for twelve months' imprisonment for laughing at the story of Jonah and the whale, or Balaam and the jackass. On the other hand, you may steal children for the same price. We notice that Marie Jacobs has just been sentenced to eighteen months for her second offence in this line. For our part, we would never give her another chance of repeating the crime. She is really worse than a murderer. When death happens you know the worst; but just imagine the life of a poor distracted mother, robbed of her child, thinking of it day by day, dreaming of it night after night, yearning after it with

a never-satisfied hunger of love, picturing it in all kinds of miseries, and perhaps (we know such a case) going mad under the intolerable torture. Society is simply senseless to let Marie Jacobs loose again. She ought to be kept in comfort, but out of mischief, for the rest of her life.

Christ's old coat at Trèves is not to do all the business. The rival rag, at Argenteuil, has obtained some excellent certificates recently, including one from the Sacred Congregation of Relics. There is to be a festival in its honor in 1894, from May 14 to June 10. Cardinals and bishops will attend from all parts of Europe and America. The show would be complete if J. C. were present in person. He was not good at smiling when he lived in Palestine, but he would find it difficult to keep his countenance on such an occasion. Perhaps he would exclaim—"Verily, verily, I say unto you—Holy Moses, what a swindle!"

The teachers have made their emphatic protest against the imposition of religious tests. If the matter of education were left in their hands, Secularists would be easy. But unfortunately they are under men who are elected on School Boards not for their educational fitness, but because they represent certain ecclesiastical or sectarian interests, and often sit there not to forward but to hamper the work of education.

The *Western Mail* is responsible for this story of General Booth. When the General was travelling to South Wales in a first-class carriage a few days ago, he had as his companions a well-known colliery proprietor and a friend, both of whom were enjoying cigars of the best quality. "How much better it would be," said Mr. Booth, "if you gentlemen, instead of wasting money on shilling cigars, gave it to the poor." The colliery manager, who recognised the General, and had enjoyed his uneasiness in the presence of tobacco-smoke, retorted:—"There's something in that, but don't you think, General, that if you, who pose as a philanthropist, were to ride third-class instead of first, and give the poor the difference in the fare, you might do some good?" The General did not pursue the argument.

Mr. James Payn tells of an amusing incident which took place the other day on board an Australian liner. A shy Australian major, after spending the first evening very late with his friends in the saloon, suddenly returned to them, after saying "Good-night," and requested an interview with the purser. He was very white. "There is a lady," he said, "in my cabin—No. 42." "Rubbish!" exclaimed the purser. "Here's the list; your companion is Captain Higginson." "Nothing will induce me to go into the cabin again," said the major. "Well, I'll go," returned the other. He returned with great celerity, and with as white a face as the major's. "Upon my life, you are right! We'll put you somewhere else for the night, and see about it in the morning." With the earliest dawn they sought the steward and demanded an explanation. "It's all a mistake, gentlemen," he said. "It's Captain Higginson all right; here's his luggage." "We must have this explained," said the purser. "This portmanteau is unlocked; let us see what is in it." It contained a lady's wearing apparel. "By Jingo," cried the steward, "that's what comes of taking names as don't belong to us! She said she was Captain Higginson; but she didn't say as it was only in the Salvation Army!"

A negro was preaching in front of the East India Dock gate last Sunday evening. He did not appear to be a very prosperous laborer in the Lord's vineyard. His breeches were tattered, and a piece of rope yarn served him for a belt. Primitive Christianity—very primitive—was the staple of his address. The Lord would pardon you, he said, if you went right along and committed a murder, provided you told him all about it. He also thanked the Lord that he was washed as white as snow. Some of the audience thought a cake of Pears' soap would have done the job better.

The *Somerset and Wells Journal* reports the case of Thomas Bossiter, of Mellis, a Wesleyan local preacher and manager of the Band of Hope at Elm, who has been fined £2 and costs, or one month's imprisonment, for indecently exposing himself to little girls, members of the Band of Hope.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* gives in its "Science Notes" a paper on "Nature's Torture Chambers," devoted to the insectivorous

plants which Darwin brought so prominently to the attention of naturalists. It says: "The cunning by which insects are allured to their traps, and afterwards drugged or imprisoned, is nothing short of devilish; and the variety of methods employed—for there are nearly five hundred species of such plants scattered over the globe—shows a truly human ingenuity, and might well have been taken as a source of inspiration by the tortures of the Inquisition." Query—What must intelligent insects think of such instances of the Creator's design?

Here is an anecdote as to the perils of extempore prayer. A well-known solicitor, great at Evangelistic work, had been away for a holiday. On his return he re-appeared at the parochial prayer meeting. Imagine his anguish when a neighbor, offering prayer, returned thanks for that "our dear brother W — has safely returned 'from going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.'" The quotation, of course, refers to Satan.

Bigotry and superstition of the good old Bible order still exist in the Transvaal. A writer in the local *Press* says: "Without doubt locusts and other plagues have been sent as punishment, not only for flagrant desecration of the Sabbath, but for us allowing blasphemous heretics like the Catholics and Jews to practise their diabolical tenets in our midst. How can you expect our children to grow up good members of our church when they see chapels, convents, and synagogues flourishing everywhere?" He proposes that every resident in the State should be compelled to attend church once a month, under penalty of a fine of £5.

Rhetorical rotundities on the platform, which are almost lost in eager applause, sometimes look rather absurd in print the next morning. At the great Scotch Church Defence meeting the other night, Dr. Macgregor grandiloquently spoke of the Auld Kirk as the Church of a thousand generations, and now some of his political opponents are making merry over the claim of the Auld Kirk to be the Church of pre-Adamite man in the palæolithic ages.—*Echo*.

A good Anarchist story is going the rounds of the Continental papers. A performance of "Carmen" was about to begin at the Grand Theatre, Bordeaux, when a couple of police officers noticed a pale, thin young man, who evidently preferred a dark corner of the theatre, and who manifestly wore a false wig and beard. He was politely invited to the manager's room, when he proved to be an innocent young abbé, who wanted to hear Bizet's opera without the knowledge of his clerical superiors, and had consequently adopted this clumsy form of disguise.

A little girl who was ill, was visited by a sky-pilot, who asked her if there was any hymn she would like to have sung. Yes, she said that one about "Sally Comfort and George." Further questioning elicited that she meant the verse:

'Tis religion can supply
Sally comfort when we die.
After death our George will be
Lasting as eternity.

For "solid" she read Sally, and for joys "George."

Dr. R. Park, of Glasgow, has been giving a course of lectures at the Accountants' Club, on the Emotions, in which he took occasion to deal with the Hebrew and early Christian notions of "soul." The lectures were reported in the *Scottish Weekly*, which was taken to task by a Mr. Field for countenancing "modern Sadducees." Mr. Field might be told that the reproofs of Jesus were mainly addressed to the opposing sect of the Pharisees.

Religion is a lovely thing. But when it takes a wrong direction, it is rather liable to be a nuisance. It is often so in India, where there have again been religious riots between Mohammedans and Hindoos. In the Malabar district a band of Moplah Mussulmans made a furious attack on the Hindoos, murdering all who came across their path, and destroying the Hindu temples, quite in the spirit of Jehovah's injunctions against idolatry.

The *University Correspondent* for December 23 publishes, under the heading of "Howlers," so charming a list of blundering answers to examination questions that we can hardly believe that it was not prepared by some artistic hand

—some one who loved to follow the advice of Dr. Johnson to put a cocked-hat on an intrinsically good story, and place a stick in its hand. For example—Q.: “Why was it that his great discovery was not properly appreciated until long after Columbus was dead?” A.: “Because he didn’t advertise.” Again, Q.: “Who was Joan of Arc?” A.: “Neah’s wife.” Again, Q.: Give the derivation of ‘mother.’” A.: “My other (parent).” Again, Q.: “Define ‘function.’” A.: “When a fellow feels in a funk.” Q.: “Who was George the First?” A.: “The son of the Electric Sophia.” Q.: “Define ‘faith.’” A.: “That quality which enables us to believe what we know to be untrue” (evidently an Agnostic squib). Or take this in philology—Q.: “Give examples of ‘diminutives.’” A.: “Pump, pumpkin; bull, bullet.” Surely, some of these, and many others of the answers, have an artistic twist about them which looks very like elaborate design.

Father Lambert, the Catholic priest who attacked Ingersoll, has made a new bid for notoriety by becoming a Protestant. He says it is on account of the intolerance and extortion of the Church. “The confessional was another abomination that I could not stand.”

They are going to celebrate the beatification of the now “venerable” Joan of Arc, at Notre Dame, on the 22nd. Though using a woman burnt as a witch for the advantage of the Church, the Archbishop of Paris will not allow any woman to join in the anthem, or in any other part of the musical service at Notre Dame. Though the cathedral is dedicated to motherhood, the participation of women in the service would be a profanation. What said St. Paul?

Moody and Sankey have been to Washington to try the effect of their revival songs and services upon Congress. The result was a failure, as might be expected from the hardness of the material. Not a member of the House of Representatives was converted, though they have a chaplain of their own, paid for out of Uncle Sam’s pocket.

The Birmingham *Owl* has a cartoon representing Miss Florence Marryatt lecturing to asses on her *Letters from the Dead*. It is called “The Latest Humbug.” Distinguished Novelist: “You swallowed Mrs. Besant’s fictions; surely you won’t choke at mine.”

The Mahatmas, who took such trouble to mend broken saucers for Madame Blavatsky, should not set to work to heal the rent between the rival Theosophic leaders. Colonel Olcott and Mrs. Besant have made up their minds to bring Mr. W. Q. Judge, the president of the American Theosophists, to trial for alleged bogus Mahatma writing. Judge is, indeed, already judged, but he can hardly be pronounced guilty without inculpating Madame Blavatsky, who put him in his high position. W. Q. Judge certified to the Blavatsky miracles, and she certified to his fitness. If he is deposed by Olcott and Besant, he may in turn depose them, and assert that he is the true inheritor of the Blavatsky mantle, and we should incline to agree with him.

The Roman Catholic *Tablet* admits that the managers of the Catholic elementary schools are at their wits’ end to know how to find the money needed to make the alterations and additions required by the Education Department. This is the real secret of the claim for rate aid. The denominational schools are woefully deficient, and those who want religious education will not shell out to pay for it.

In answer to the statement made by Sir James Ferguson, M.P., to the effect that the Catholic Church was opposed to disestablishment, Cardinal Vaughan has written a letter stating that “the Catholic Church has not pronounced anything on the question of the disestablishment of the Church.” We presume it would be ready to utilise the disruption of the Anglican Church, although the Catholic bishops before the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 gave the most solemn assurances that the Church would never do anything of the kind.

Here is a curious wedding notice from the *Gentleman’s Magazine* of 1781:—“Married, the Rev. Mr. Roger Waiana, of York, about twenty-six years of age, to a Lincolnshire lady, upwards of eighty, with whom he is to have eight thousand pounds in money, three hundred pounds per annum,

and a coach-and-four during life only.” One would have thought that the rev. bridegroom would hardly care to have the particulars of his purchase money so candidly and openly published.

The Rev. W. Pedr Williams has returned from America, friends having offered to liquidate the liabilities which led to his bolting. He tendered his resignation to the members of the Congregational Church, but on the motion of Mr. Feigate it was not accepted, and Mr. Pedr was called in and consented to resume his ministrations. For there is more joy in heaven over one repentant sinner than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

Herr Oscar Blumenthal has been visiting Count Tolstoi at Moscow. He says: “The elegance of the entrance hall surprised me, and the footman in black who took my card astonished me still more.” It appears, however, that the ascetic Count lives in Moscow as the guest of his wife, who does not approve of his Christian theories. The winter residence in the capital is built for her and the children, who grow up amid all the pleasures and joys of youth, their ruminating father not in the least begrudging them the vanities of the world. Count Tolstoi is apparently satisfied with making his own salvation sure, since he lets his wife and children take the primrose path to the everlasting bonfire.

Hugh Price Hughes does not approve the Sunday golf playing at Penarth. He has said so to an interviewer of the *South Wales Daily News*. We guess the golf players care as much for his opinion as he does for the truth.

Lord Rosebery, says the *Church Times*, was at Christ Church, Epsom, the Sunday after he accepted the premiership. The vicar asked the prayers of the Church for “one who had recently undertaken a post of the highest responsibility,” and Lord Rosebery was “much affected by the appeal.” Very likely. But *how* affected? Ay, there’s the rub.

EDWARD GIBBON.

EDWARD GIBBON is still the greatest of modern historians. His life was uneventful, except that it produced that stupendous event, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Carlyle called this magnificent work “the splendid bridge from the old world to the new.” To have your name mentioned by Gibbon, said Thackeray, is like having it written on the dome of St. Peter’s which is seen by pilgrims from all parts of the earth. Born at Putney on April 27, 1737, Gibbon died on January 14, 1794, within eight months of the publication of the last two volumes of the work which had occupied twenty years of his life. His death was quite tranquil. According to his friend and biographer, Lord Sheffield, he did not, at any time, evince the least sign of alarm or apprehension of death.

Byron says that Gibbon sapped a solemn creed with solemn sneer, and the observation would be just with an alteration in the second adjective; for Gibbon’s “sneers” at Christianity, especially in the famous fifteenth chapter, were not so much solemn as exquisitely malicious. He is our greatest English master of grave and temperate irony—to use his own expression in regard to Pascal. How the clergy writhed at such a sentiment as this!—“It was not in *this* world that the primitive Christians were desirous of making themselves either agreeable or useful.” Sometimes the irony was so subtle that the Christians actually took it for a panegyric. There is consequently some danger in this form of composition. Mill even remarked to John Morley that he thought Gibbon’s style “detestable,” but Mill was not an authority on style. Besides, it must be remembered that Gibbon wrote while the Blasphemy Laws were in full swing. He had therefore to be prudent. Nevertheless he did manage to express his religious views, which is more than Mill ever did during his lifetime.

It is worthy of remark that the founders of modern historical science—Montesquieu, Voltaire, and David Hume—were all Freethinkers. Gibbon, Grote, and Mommsen belong to the same category. History, as well as Science, is fatal to the claims of the Christian superstition.

Aunt Samantha is visiting at a house in Buffalo. She is an old maid and is very devout, always concluding her prayers with the Gloria.

“Why does she say such funny things in her prayers?” asked the little daughter of the house.

“Why, what does she say?” replied the fond mamma.

“I don’t remember all she says, but she always ends with ‘world without men, ah me.’”

A PROSECUTION.

CHRISTIAN Evidence speakers for the most part follow a policy of defamation. Several of them have but one lecture, though they give it different titles. It consists of stale, silly, impossible libels on the dead and living leaders of Freethought. Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant used to be the butt for all kinds of malicious innuendoes. I have myself been accused, directly or indirectly, of every crime in the Newgate Calendar. The number of men's wives I have run away with, according to these people, is something prodigious. Friends sometimes come to me and say "Look at this horrible libel!" My reply is a smile, and the statement that I am used to these things. I do not get angry, because it is a waste of time and energy; and if I killed a slander to-day, I should only make room for a fresh one to-morrow. Besides, the slanderers are really very small fry; and an advertisement would gratify their vanity far more than any punishment—if it could be inflicted—would hurt their feelings. It is not always easy, either, to prove the case to the satisfaction of a court. Slander is always difficult to establish. If you bring a dozen witnesses to prove that a man said a certain thing, he may bring a dozen witnesses to swear that, in their recollection, he said nothing of the kind. When the slander is printed, and becomes a libel, it is generally an insinuation rather than a direct assertion; which leaves a loophole of escape to libellers who are also liars and cowards—as libellers are apt to be.

Places are attacked, as well as persons. The London Hall of Science, for instance, has been a constant object of calumny. It is said to be opposite a lunatic asylum, though it is not. It is really midway between a church and an asylum, but on the opposite side of the road; and the position is a good one, since it gives us an opportunity of intercepting the persons whose wits may be disordered at the house of God before they arrive at their destination in the house for imbeciles. But this is a jocosity, though its object is malicious. Infinitely worse things have been said about the Hall of Science; and, because we have treated them with disdain, the libellers count upon a perpetual impunity. They count upon too much, however; there comes a point where it is advisable, and possible, to teach them a lesson.

There happens to be a man of reckless scurrility, who has eclipsed all previous achievements in the calumny of Secularists. The Christian Evidence Society, which does not stick at trifles, would have nothing to do with him. He therefore joined what is called the Anti-Infidel League, whose patron saint is W. R. Bradlaugh. I have frequently warned the N.S.S. Branches against having anything to do with him. His name is Walton Powell. According to a report in the *Leeds Mercury*, he recently announced that he had arranged for a week's debate with the President of the National Secular Society. The announcement is an absolute falsehood, without a shadow of foundation; and it may be taken as a sample of his *veracity*. I cannot pollute this journal by giving samples of his *manners*.

This Walton Powell has met with some Secularists who lack discretion. Amongst them is Mr. Greeves Fisher, of Leeds. A debate between Powell and Mr. Fisher was held some time ago, in which the Anti-Infidel champion behaved like a madman. Mr. Fisher should have had the sense to terminate the debate by walking off the platform. Instead of this, he sat still while Powell uttered the most disgusting charges against the Hall of Science, in language which, let us hope, was never before heard from a public platform. This filthy stuff was actually printed in W. R. Bradlaugh's paper, and was brought to my attention. Unless it went farther, I was inclined to treat it with contempt. But I heard that the debate was to be reprinted in pamphlet form, which was more serious; and I therefore instructed someone, whose name will appear in due course, to effect a legal purchase of the paper and the pamphlet during my absence in Scotland. Copies were purchased at W. R. Bradlaugh's house, and at the office of the other publishers, John Snow and Co., 2 Ivy-lane, Paternoster-row, E.C.

I felt it my duty to bring the matter before the N.S.S. Executive, which carries on Freethought work at the Hall of Science, and is therefore interested in its reputation. The Executive shared my view that action should be taken.

It is impossible to reprint the exact language of the libel in the *Freethinker*. The substance of it is that, in 1879, there was a class at the Hall of Science for teaching boys unnatural vices. The *Standard* is cited as vouching for the fact; but, of course, the editor of that journal denies that any statement of the kind ever appeared in its columns. Anyhow, the "fact" is no fact. It is a monstrous lie. And as it is a specific lie, actually in print, it will be nailed down in a court of law.

Mr. R. O. Smith was the sole lessee and responsible manager of the Hall of Science in 1879. The libel is therefore a personal one upon him, and at first we thought of his proceeding criminally. But there are reasons against this course. Out of respect for our dead leader, we had better keep the name of Bradlaugh out of the case; and, after all, W. R. Bradlaugh is scarcely worth powder and shot. What has been resolved upon, after consultation with Charles Bradlaugh's solicitor, is this. Mr. R. O. Smith, the old lessee, and the National Secular Hall Society, the new lessee, join in an action for damages against the printer and publisher of the libellous pamphlet. The solicitor is instructed to accept no offer of compromise; the case must be determined in court, so that the libel may be publicly exposed and annihilated. By this means, while we leave creatures like W. R. Bradlaugh and Walton Powell to their fetid obscurity, we shall probably teach more "respectable" persons a necessary lesson. We shall teach them, we hope, that there is some danger in printing and publishing the most abominable libels on Secularism. And by this means, though we shall not kill Christian malignity, we shall render more difficult and less profitable its systematic trade in reckless defamation. G. W. FOOTE.

MORE LIE-HUNTING.

LAST February, during the debate upon Secular Instruction on the West Ham School Board, already reported in the *Freethinker*, Mr. Maurice Russell stated that there had occurred cases of intolerance in the schools when forms of "Withdrawal from Religious Instruction" were sent. He mentioned, when questioned, the name of Mr. W. R. Woodward as a person able to substantiate the statement. Whereupon that gentleman, who, I am informed, attends a Congregational church at Plaistow, if he is not a member of it, blurted out in an insolent manner, "He had a complete answer to it," and proceeded to misstate facts and to bring a charge against myself, and to cowardly libel a workman who is well-known as a teetotaler in the neighborhood, and who has lived there respected for many years.

Mr. Russell states that, having received complaints, he took Mr. Woodward with him to North-street School, and together they investigated the particular case in question. There had been other cases of improper usage of children, but he brought none but this of Caroline Morris before Mr. Woodward. They found the child had been receiving religious instruction, although a "Withdrawal Form" had been sent in a proper manner. The schoolmistress excused herself on the plea that she had not proper accommodation to carry out the instructions. This was false, and the teacher was reprimanded. Those are the facts.

It seems probable that, finding a sympathetic, because religious, listener in Mr. Woodward, the teacher poured out to him some more falsehoods, which he, without inquiring further, and without reporting to or consulting with his colleague as he should have done, has publicly used to bolster up the Bible reading in the schools and the futile Conscience Clause. It must be either this, or the lies are Mr. Woodward's own.

The veracity of the schoolmistress (she is utterly unknown to me) is impugned by the excuses she has made to the child's father. Mr. Morris tells me that, when he went to her after sending a notice, she said she or the child had lost it, but afterwards produced it covered with mud, as though dropped in the street. She then said nothing about "the secretary of a certain institution."

I have written twice to Mr. Woodward, but, like Price Hughes, he stands upon his dignity, and will not answer my letters. E. ANDERSON.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Wednesday, April 18, Workman's Hall, High-street, Walthamstow; at 8, "A Search for the Soul."

April 22, Bolton; 29, Plymouth.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHAS. WATTS' ENGAGEMENTS.—April 15, Hall of Science, London; 22, Failsforth; 29, Dundee. May 6, Glasgow; 7, 8, 9, debate at Glasgow; 13, N.S.S. Conference; 20 and 27, Hall of Science. June 3, South Shields; 10, Sheffield; 17 and 24, Hall of Science. July 1, Liverpool.—All communications for Mr. Watts should be sent to him (if a reply is required a stamped and addressed envelope must be enclosed) at 81 Effra-road, Brixton, London, S.W.

S. PHUDSTEIN.—Aveling's *Darwin Made Easy* can be obtained of Mr. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, for one shilling. A larger work is Dr. Wallace's *Darwinism*, price 7s. 6d. Pleased to have the congratulations of yourself and other Jewish friends on our exposure of Mr. Hughes.

R. S. ROSE.—See paragraph.

SAMUEL HOLE, late chairman of the Camberwell and Peckham Christian Evidence platform, informs us that he attended a recent "Evidence" lecture at the Lambeth Baths, at the close of which the Rev. W. Mattram referred to the Atheist Shoemaker story, speaking in defence of Mr. Hughes. Our correspondent replied that Mr. Foote had not been dealt with fairly; the real question at issue was the conversion of such an Atheist as Mr. Hughes depicted; and in justice to truth and religion the matter should be submitted to a Court of Honor. The audience listened with rapt attention to these remarks.

NOAH LOT.—Shall appear.

W. BOYD.—In Mr. Wheeler's article on "Education and Crime," *Freethinker*, March 11, 1894, it was pointed out that there were special causes for increase of crime in Victoria during the last few years, and that therefore the recent returns are of no value as affecting the question of secular education, which must be judged by a wider field. Down till 1888 there was a decided decrease of crime.

W. BROADBELT (New York).—Always pleased to receive American papers.

T. CLARK.—The verse is smart, but the Philistines would be on us if we printed it, with all the legions of Mrs. Grundy.

W. CHIVERS.—Sorry for the delay. One hundred copies have been forwarded to you.

T. HOLSTRADE.—Your letter was addressed to the Executive, and must go before that body in the regular course of business. Had it been addressed to us, we would have answered you in this column.

W. B. THOMPSON.—It is a handsome letter. We thank the Chatham Branch for its courtesy and good temper; not, of course, because it is in any way exceptional, for we have always found your members what the festive song calls "jolly good fellows."

A. J. MARRIOTT.—Mr. Burrows was no doubt speaking sincerely, but we venture to doubt his accuracy. We have heard that Mr. Bradlaugh did give some attention to what was once called Mesmerism, and is now called Hypnotism, but we are not in a position to give any details. Mrs. Bonner would be a much better authority.

JAMES MARCHANT.—You deny that you ever called "all Secularists insane devils." We record your denial, but several persons, including Mr. Charles Watts, inform us that they heard you employ the description. Perhaps your denial only applies to the "all." Our comments on your lecture were founded on the report in the *Free Press*, and on looking over it again we see no reason to alter them.

C. LECOQ.—See paragraph. We hope the cause will revive at Cardiff.

C. DOEG.—We earnestly hope the Liverpool City Council will reverse the bigoted decision of the Committee.

W. M. KNOX.—One of the pieces has been in type for a week or more.

J. BRODIE.—We believe it was Justice Stephen who used the expression. Lord Coleridge said the Blasphemy Laws were "unpleasant for a judge to administer."

F. G. ROE.—Impossible to insert in that way. It would lead to confusion. We announce here that those who wish to take tea in the Bristol Branch's ramble on April 25 should let you know by the previous Thursday evening.

V. PAGE.—All right. Not at all alarmed.

N.S.S. BENEVOLENT FUND.—Miss E. M. Vance acknowledges: J. Proctor, 5s.

NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY.—For Open-Air Work, £5 from George Anderson, per Miss Vance.

C. YEAXLEE.—You must please write Lecture Notice on separate sheet of paper. When you send a report of any kind, let it be on a separate sheet too. The non-observance of this rule gives us much trouble. See paragraph.

M. E. SLATER.—Thanks. See list of acknowledgments.

CELSUS.—(1) You confuse belief and knowledge. To say that you believe a thing is to say you are not sure of it. Proof is proof, but belief may be of various degrees of strength. As Locke said, it should be proportioned to the evidence. (2) Your second question is controversial. We have often stated our objection to Paul's views on marriage.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish to call our attention. **CORRESPONDENCE** should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

LECTURE NOTICES, ETC., should be written on postcards or the envelopes marked outside, and be sent to 14 Clerkenwell-green, London, E.C.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Der Lichtfreund—Boston Investigator—Open Court—Freidenker—Two Worlds—De Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Liberty—Clarion—Flaming Sword—Liver—De Dageraad—Progressive Thinker—Post—Secular Thought—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Pioneer—Twentieth Century—Independent Pulpit—Islamic World—Progres—Referee—Shields Daily Gazette—Altruist—Shields Free Press—Echo—Irish Times—Crescent—Fur Unsere Jugend—Staffordshire Evening Post—The Chart—Birmingham Owl—Isle of Man Times—Liverpool Daily Post—Leeds Express—Horwich Chronicle.

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.

SCALE OF ADVERTISEMENTS.—Thirty words, 1s. 6d.; every succeeding ten words, 6d. *Displayed Advertisements:*—(Narrow Column) one inch, 3s.; half column, 15s.; column, £1 10s. Broad Column—one inch, 4s. 6d.; half column, £1 2s. 6d.; column, £2 5s. 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.

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.

SUGAR PLUMS.

Despite the sultry weather, Mr. Foote had an improved morning audience at the London Hall of Science on Sunday, and a really large audience in the evening, which made the place uncomfortably hot. "Is Religion the Cause of Progress?" was the question dealt with, with special relation to Mr. Benjamin Kidd's work on *Social Evolution*, which we shall criticise presently in the columns of the *Freethinker*. Prior to the lecture, Mr. Foote made an announcement of the prosecution of the printer and publisher of a certain libellous pamphlet, which the reader will see more of in another column. The announcement was greeted with loud applause. Evidently the audience felt it was time to put a check on Christian audacity.

Mr Foote lectures next Wednesday evening (April 18) in the Workman's Hall, High-street, Walthamstow, on "A Search for the Soul." The admission is free, with a collection for the London Secular Federation.

Mr. Charles Watts lectures this evening (Sunday, April 15) at the Hall of Science, London. Previous to the lecture our colleague will announce what he intends doing in reference to the election of the London School Board, which will take place in November next.

We repeat our last week's reminder that the National Secular Society's Conference takes place on Whit-Sunday, and we appeal again to the Branches to lose no time in making arrangements to be represented. Individual members, who may feel inclined for a little outing just then, might do worse than attend the Conference. We hope there will be an exceptionally good gathering this year.

Mr. W. B. Thompson, secretary of the Chatham Branch, has been instructed to inform us—as he does—that in view of our last week's paragraph his Branch is prepared to withdraw its nomination; in fact, it has voted for Liverpool. "We have no wish," Mr. Thompson says, "to press the claims of Chatham against the success of the Conference and the prosperity of the Society." This generous action should be remembered on some future occasion.

The Liverpool Branch has sent out a circular to the other Branches asking for their votes. The circular is bright and

effective, as it could not help being, seeing it is signed by Laurence Small and Charles Doeg. But the printer, to whom they left the reading in their hurry, has played the devil with the orthography and punctuation in some places. There is a Mohammedan mosque at Liverpool, and it gets into the circular as "a Morgue." Freethinkers will see by this correction that the Liverpool Branch does not invite them to visit a dead-house.

The Camberwell Branch had a very successful tea-meeting on Sunday, followed by a concert and a dance. It must not be supposed, though, that this Branch is too fond of amusement. It has done an excellent year's work, and its balance-sheet to March 25 is a wholesome document. The receipts come to £149 and the expenditure to £153, leaving a balance of £10 still in hand from the previous surplus. We note subscriptions to the Benevolent Fund, to the Hospital Sunday Fund, and to the Locked-out Miners' Fund; also the sum of £3 10s. for circulating the "Hughes Exposure" pamphlet. We congratulate the Camberwell Branch on its past year's record, and wish it still greater success in the year just opened.

Diderot the Atheist was a byword in England before the publication of Carlyle's essay, which did a little, but only a little, to clear his reputation. Mr. John Morley's monograph on the father of the great Encyclopædia was far more just and useful, and now we have a translation of some of Diderot's lighter literary pieces into English by Beatrice Tollemache, which has called forth a long review in the *Daily Chronicle*. It is a striking sign of progress to find Diderot praised so enthusiastically in a great morning newspaper. We must remark, however, that Diderot was not, as the *Chronicle* reviewer seems to imagine, less hostile to Christianity than was Voltaire. He thoroughly accepted the cry of "*Ecrasez l'Infame*." Was it not Diderot, and not Voltaire, who put on record that grim wish of someone for the time when the last king would be strangled with the entrails of the last priest? At the same time, it must be allowed that Diderot had a certain tender sympathy for the simple religionists who prayed and worshipped without attempting to injure or insult those who did neither. All honest good feeling, however mistaken, appealed to his rich and genial nature.

The last of the N.S.S. social gatherings for this season takes place at the London Hall of Science on Wednesday, April 25. There will be music and singing, with readings, including one by Mr. Foote; the whole to conclude with a dance. The tickets are only sixpence.

Mr. George Anderson, who has sent the National Secular Society £5 for its open-air work, is of opinion that there ought to be a good distribution of Freethought literature at such meetings, and he is ready to subscribe towards this object if others will do the same. What do the "others" say? For our part, we consider the literature, in the long run, more important than the lectures.

Mr. Herbert Burrows, a few weeks ago, went to the London Hall of Science and lectured on "The Malthusian Delusion." Mr. George Standing has been yearning ever since to set him right on that subject. Indeed, a debate between these two gentlemen has been arranged for next Wednesday evening (April 18). The admission is free, and there should be a large attendance. Mr. Burrows is a speaker of reputation, and Mr. Standing wields a very pretty rapier in such encounters.

Mr. Cohen has just terminated a six-weeks' engagement at Portsmouth, where he has been lecturing and teaching in connection with the local Branch. Two open-air addresses were delivered to large audiences on Southsea Common. Mr. Cohen's abilities and power of speech are highly appreciated by the Portsmouth Secularists.

At the annual meeting of the Toronto Secular Society, Mr. J. S. Ellis was re-elected president, Mr. D. Densmore vice-president, Messrs. Denton and Falconer secretaries, and Mr. F. Armstrong treasurer.

M. Spuller has authorised the institution of humane clubs for the promotion of kindness to animals in connection with the communal schools of France. Another instance of the pernicious tendency of secular education.

The *Westminster Review* for April contains "A Short History of Marriage," by Lady Cook, *née* Tennessee Claflin, and an interesting paper on M. Charles Letourneau's work on Literary Evolution. The great French evolutionist regards the Jewish race as mentally enslaved, and their literature as vastly overrated.

The April number of *Liberty* contains an article by O. Næwiger, explaining why he is an Atheist as well as a Socialist.

An excellent week-night audience assembled at the Hall of Science on Wednesday, April 4, when the Rev. S. D. Headlam lectured on "The Work of the London School Board." Mr. Foote took the chair, and Mr. Watts occupied a seat on the platform. The lecture was extremely interesting, and was well punctuated with applause, varied by occasional bursts of laughter at a sly sarcasm or quaint bit of humor. Mr. Headlam seemed well pleased with his reception, and acknowledged in happy terms the compliment paid him by the chairman on behalf of the meeting. It goes without saying, at this time of day, that Mr. Headlam is thoroughly sound on "secular education." He holds, as he has held all along, that no kind of religion should be taught in the schools.

A bright young clergyman, who accompanied Mr. Headlam, told us in private that an East-end Secularist he had called upon (we need not give his name) declined on "political grounds" to go for "secular education." It was rather humiliating to find a clergyman hot against religious teaching in public schools, and a Secularist supporting it, especially when the Secularist was a zealous follower of Charles Bradlaugh, whose motto of "Thorough" his follower seems to have forgotten.

"Freethinker" sends to the Shields *Free Press* lengthy extracts from Mr. Foote's exposure of the Atheist-Shoemaker story. Two columns appear in the issue for April 7, with a promise of the "conclusion" to follow. We cordially recognise the editor's honorable sense of fair play.

Le Progres, a French Masonic organ, in its April number, notices the French translation of Mr. Foote's *Virgin Mother* by M. Cilwa, and gives long extracts from the brochure. Mr. Foote is strangely called "l'auteur protestant."

The *Freidenker* of Milwaukee has two able papers by W. Gørling and Konrad Ettl on the veteran Dr. L. Büchner, who has just been celebrating his seventieth birthday.

In Holland they have celebrated the event by issuing a popular Dutch translation of *Force and Matter* at the low price of sixpence.

The many Freethinkers who recognised the untiring work of the late Miss Mary Robins will be glad to know that her sister, Miss Emmeline Robins, has taken up her work in Finsbury Park. Mr. Bunn, the secretary of the Hospital Saturday Fund, has sent a letter to Mr. Ward, in which he says: "I should be very glad to add my testimony to the value of the life which has so abruptly and painfully come to an end. Into Miss Robins' creed or opinions I never thought it my duty to inquire, but I can bear testimony to her unselfish work for the good of others in connection with our fund."

The *Family Herald* (April 7) has an essay "On Toleration." It remarks that the public defence of toleration is only about two hundred and fifty years old. The subject can draw but scanty illustrations from the past. It is intolerance which then reigns supreme: "Prynne of pillory fame defended, when his party was in power, the principle of suppressing dangerous opinions—a principle which, carried out by his enemies, had cost him his ears; and John Knox found a precedent in the action of the Jews, who 'lay low' when they were weak, and exterminated, as soon as they had the power, the people whose opinions differed from their own. At Geneva the Protestant Beza fashioned plausible arguments why the Catholic should be made to feel severely the heinousness of standing aloof from the Reformed faith; and the same arguments did good service for the Catholics outside the city when they were asked why they harried the unfortunate Protestants. Neither side could understand the true value of toleration. Probably this fierce repression of other men's baneful beliefs was fed by familiarity with the

Bible, and with its stern ruling that one side in the Jewish controversy was wholly right, and could wreak its outraged faith upon the rest of the world as opportunity arose." This is pretty plain speaking for so domestic, not to say feminine, an organ as the *Family Herald*.

The Rev. Prof. Cheyne, reviewing the Rev. A. H. Sayce's book on *The Higher Criticism and the Verdict of the Monuments*, in the April number of the *Nineteenth Century*, makes some notable admissions. Thus he says: "Two Hebrew records can be shown to be represented in the Joseph story. One is the Elohist's; the date of this record is shown with some plausibility, by the names in Genesis xli. 45, to be between 687 and 524, the period during which the Saïnte dynasty ruled over Egypt. The other is the Yahvist's. The date of this may be placed earlier, though still later than the fall of Samaria (B.C. 722)." That is to say, the story is at latest nearly 700 years later than the time of Moses.

On the legend of the exodus and lawgiving at Sinai he asks: "Is not the story of Moses a combination of two traditions, according to one of which Arabia, and according to the other Egypt, was the land in which the ancestors of the Israelites sojourned? We can hardly doubt that the tribe of Joseph sojourned there, but Stade's doubts may permissibly be felt with regard to the return of other Hebrew tribes."

Prof. Cheyne thanks Mr. Sayce for his outspokenness on the date of the Book of Daniel, which, our readers will remember, he says is of the time of Antiochus, while its story "is at variance with the testimony of the inscriptions." But, adds Dr. Cheyne, "I only wish he had utilised his cuneiform lore as well on the subject of Jonah and his whale, instead of quoting from a recent absurd tractate by that good geographer, but weak mythologist and theologian, Dr. Clay Trumbull. I wish, too, that throughout the book he had given more evidence of a critical study of the Hebrew text."

Catholic readers will be astonished at the bold attack on "The Papal Encyclical on the Bible" by a professed Catholic in the current number of the *Contemporary Review*. The writer is a complete rationalist, and declares that the Pope's dictum that God is the author of the Bible "compels Catholics to take up an attitude which it will be more difficult still to reconcile with respect for truth and the practice of religion, than it is to harmonise many of the most explicit statements and peremptory commands of the Old Testament with the facts of history and the promptings of humanity." He showed that the defenders of the traditional view have to do continual violence to human reason and to elementary morality, "in order to shield the omniscient and omnipotent author from inconsistencies and contradictions, of which a Wilkie Collins would be ashamed."

Some of these are pointed out by the writer. Thus he says: "In 2 Chronicles (xxi. 12) we read that the prophet Elijah forwarded a letter to Jehoram, son of Jehosaphat and King of Judah, the terrible contents of which are there given in full. The inspired Book of Kings, on the other hand, informs us that Elijah had left this world before Jehosaphat died, and his son Jehoram could have become King of Judah (2 Kings, iii.), so that the incompatibility of the two statements can be smoothed away only by our believing that the prophet Elijah indited his letter up above in his extramundane dwelling-place—a miracle of which neither of the sacred writers appears to have the least suspicion." He contrasts, too, 2 Sam., xxiv. 1, which says that the Lord moved David to number Israel, with 1 Chron., xxi. 1, which says it was Satan; and shows, by a comparison of the Hebrew and Greek text of Genesis, xlvii. 4-7, that the Greek gives the text in an earlier state of elaboration than the Hebrew. Altogether, the article is one that can be commended to the attention of the Bibliolater, for, as the author says, "If God is the author, whom shall we saddle with the errors, then?"

Mr. Charles Watts has just issued two new pamphlets. One is entitled *Is there a Life beyond the Grave?* It is a reply to Dr. B. B. Westbrook, and is carefully written. People who think of leaving this life for something better should read this pamphlet and see what a dubious prospect is before them. The second pamphlet is entitled, *Education: True and False*. It should be extremely useful in the coming struggle between the "religious," and the "secular"

parties. We recommend its circulation by the friends of liberty and progress.

An excellent protest, signed J. Roberts, appears in the *Liverpool Mercury* against the action of the Library and Museum Committee of the City Council in refusing to let the Picton Lecture Hall for the evening meeting of the National Secular Society's Conference on Whit-Sunday. Mr. Roberts appeals to the Council to undo this piece of bigotry—"to be public-spirited and magnanimous by revoking so unworthy a decision of the afore-mentioned committee, thereby preventing it going abroad that Liverpoolians are petty, narrow, ungenerous, and above all unjust."

We shall have to write at length in the next number of the *Freethinker* on the attitude of the Secular Party in regard to the approaching elections to the London School Board. Let it suffice to say, for the present, that the Executive of the N.S.S. has not been asleep. It has been patiently watching events and maturing its plans. The Secular party will certainly put some distinct candidates into the field, and amongst them will be Mr. Charles Watts. Other names will be mentioned presently. Messrs. Foote and Wheeler are also preparing a solid pamphlet on Secular Education, which is to be circulated gratuitously in London, and also in the provinces. Money will be required for this purpose, and for the expenses of the candidates. The Executive has ordered a Special Fund to be opened, and the first £2 has already been subscribed by Mr. Hartmann.

SHAKESPEARE'S SCEPTICISM.

IN that work which has done so much to discredit the old historical method, *The Short History of the English People*, John Richard Green has recorded his opinion that Shakespeare was distinctly sceptical; as were Hobbes, Marlowe, and most other of the finer spirits of that wonderful Elizabethan epoch. "The spiritual sympathies of the poet," he says, "were not those of the coming time. Turn as others might to the speculations of theology, man and man's nature remained with him an inexhaustible subject of interest. Caliban was among his latest creations. It is impossible to discover whether his faith, if faith there were, was Catholic or Protestant. It is hard indeed to say whether he had any religious belief or no. The religious phrases which are thinly scattered over his works are little more than expressions of a distant and imaginative reverence. But on the deeper grounds of religious faith his silence is significant. He is silent, and the doubts of Hamlet deepen his silence, about the after-world. 'To die,' it may be, was to him, as to Claudio, 'to go we know not whither.' Often as his questionings turn to the riddle of life and death, he leaves it a riddle to the last without heeding the common theological solutions around him. 'We are such stuff as dreams are made of, and our little life is rounded with a sleep.'"

If these opinions are tested by a candid examination of Shakespeare's writings, they will be found to be well grounded. A critical inquiry as to the real spirit of the plays, when it is made with a mind free from the common religious bias, makes it clear that Shakespeare cannot have been other than he is here represented, and, further, induces the conviction that his scepticism was of a pronounced and actual type. Shakespeare does indeed express a poetic and dreamlike religious sentiment, but it is always so remote and intangible as to favor the belief that he employed it principally as a dramatic effect, and for the purpose of heightening the romantic intensity of his scenes.

The comedy of "Much Ado About Nothing" is a story set forth by a little knot of merry, jesting sceptics. A tendency to harp in a light, careless way on tenets of orthodox belief is very noticeable throughout. Beatrice speaks much in the tone of our modern Freethinkers: "I will even take sixpence in earnest of the bearward and lead his apes into hell," she says; and in reply to Leonato's, "Well, then, go you into hell?" she answers, "No, but to the gate; and there will the devil meet me, like an old cuckold, with the horns on his head, and say, 'Get you to heaven,

Beatrice, get you to heaven; here's no place for you maids'; so deliver I up my apes, and away to Saint Peter for the heavens; he shows me where the bachelors sit, and there live we as merry as the day is long." Dogberry speaks no two consecutive sentences without introducing the name of the deity, and always with the most ludicrous effect. "God's a good man," quoth the honest constable; and it is a certainty that Dogberry's deity is still living and thriving in the midst of our present-day civilisation. Claudio, alluding to the scene where Benedict plays the eavesdropper, jestingly remarks, "Moreover God saw him when he was hid in the garden."

With the porter in "Macbeth," those souls whom the all-merciful has predestined to eternal wrath as a means of adding to his glory are no more than "those that go the primrose way to the everlasting bonfire." "As for the life to come," says Autolycus, "I sleep out the thought of it." Mistress Quickly, watching the last moments of Falstaff, "bid him he should not think of God." She "hoped there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet." So it is with all the minor characters of the play; and with the nobler personages, when a religious sentiment does drop from their lips, it is rarely more than an easy observance of the demands of conventionality.

Nevertheless, there are one or two widely-sundered passages which prove at least that Shakespeare was attracted by the romantic aspects of Christianity. One or two lines show a deeper feeling for the picturesque effects of the story of Christ. Of these the most famous are those occurring at the beginning of "King Henry IV," and spoken by that king when exhorting his followers to forward his crusades to Palestine. Here he speaks of

Those holy fields,
Over whose acres walk'd those blessed feet,
Which, fourteen hundred years ago, were nail'd
For our advantage on the bitter cross.

Difficult as it is to give positive judgment from an examination of internal evidences, yet this passage, taken with others, would lead us to the conclusion that Shakespeare valued the scriptures as powerful dramatic tales rather than believed in them as books containing the only soul-saving truths in existence. He gives no indication that he believed men must hardly and with fear and trembling work out their own salvation, lest they fall under condemnation. His mind was too healthy to allow of such a thought gaining admittance. There is no such thing in Shakespeare as a character exhibiting the symptoms of religious mania, or even possessing a holy melancholy; and that there is no reference to such is fair evidence that none such existed in his time. For what had his minute and widely-ranging eye missed in the varied and brilliant life around him? It has fallen to these later times to fill the asylums with wretches laboring under the most horrible form of madness known to science. The hot-press of modern religionism turns out scores of these yearly as one of the most tangible and complete of its results.

So much for Shakespeare's freedom from the all-pervasive element of Christian religion as it developed in later days. It can hardly be said, even by those who consider him inspired with a love for Biblical doctrines, that his religion was of a very devout and fervent nature. There is no evidence whatever to prove him an earnest-minded apostle of the faith, but we are not forced to go without a distinct and unmistakable utterance of doubt. No scepticism ever expressed itself more clearly than Shakespeare's does through the mouth of his creature, "Richard II." Musing deeply upon the misfortunes and uncertainties of life, the King says:—

No thought is contented. The better sort,—
As thoughts of things divine,—are intermix'd
With scruples, and do set the faith itself
Against the faith:
As thus,—Come little ones; and then again,—
It is as hard to come as for a camel
To thread the postern of a needle's eye.

This is scepticism downright. Here no equivocation lurks, and no sophistry. It is the facing of an inconsistency with clear mind, and with no intention

of making a false pact between irreconcilables, or begging a well-defined question at the expense of mental honesty.

The noblest ethical utterances of Shakespeare occur in "Measure for Measure." Some of these are of a distinctly orthodox cast, and one involves the whole question of the common condemnation of mankind after the fall of Adam, and their restoration to some degree of favor by the sacrifice of Christ. Against these speeches of Isabella the lines spoken by Claudio must be contrasted. There cannot be an honest scruple against setting down Claudio as a sceptic. His ideas of death are wilder and more heterodox than those of Paganism. His tone is always thoughtful and reasonable, but he dreads death as the entering of the unknown, or as extinction. When in the hands of the provost being led to prison, he says, ironically:—

Thus can the demi-god Authority
Make us pay down for our offence by weight?
The words of heaven; on whom it will, it will;
On whom it will not, so; yet still 'tis just.

The character of Angelo is the most masterly exposition of a self-deluded rather than deluding soul which we possess in any literature. There is nothing of the vulgar hypocrite about him. He has supposed himself secure in his own rectitude; is devout, honest and severe. Religion is the inward stay of such a man, yet it is a religion without love, which weighs and balances each action by a cold standard of morality, and renders no mercy to those naturally unfitted for such rigid self-discipline. When he falls he makes no inward excuses for himself; but he would cover his guilt from the eyes of the world. It has ever been the fate of human nature thus to slip from over-rigorous rules of conduct into the wildest abandonment of infamy and vice.

If we mark Shakespeare in his museful and tender moods, we shall find all that stood to him as a faith and actuating motive in life. We find that he had a great sympathy for human suffering; for the poor, naked wretches that "bide the pelting of the pitiless storm." He expresses a grand humanitarianism. He loves all creatures, high and low, and loves them none the less when he laughs at their foibles. He is all for man. Man is enough. He cannot divide his affection for the sufferer and the thing that causes him to suffer. Too deep and too logical for such poor compromises, he clung to humanity with gentle but strong affection, letting the first part of the commandment fulfil itself in the second if it might. For the rest, he would not pretend that he was assured of anything that lay beyond the boundary of the space we inhabit. But he loved mystery, and often sent keen and puzzled glances into the gloom, speculating upon what might or might not exist there. To suppose him capable of choosing the poor, confined prison-house of orthodoxy for the profundity of the unsearchable—dark, wide, and vast as eternity itself—is to be ignorant of his true nature. Knowing that abysmal depth to be impenetrable, he turns again, always unweariedly, to the world of men, to find it inexhaustible in its interest and unfailling in its attraction for the heart that is akin to it all.

T. E. M.

FUND FOR NAILING DOWN THE "ATHEIST SHOEMAKER" LIE.

George Anderson £5, — Wilbar 1s., A. Bailey 1s., — Baker 1s., T. Leeson 2s. 6d., J. Brodie 1s., H. Kirk 1s., Finsbury Branch 6s.

Per R. Forder: F. Wheelbell and Friends 11s., F. Southard 5s., W. Pike 1s., J. Yates 2s., J. Pickup 2s., T. Townsend 2s., Jas. and John Crabtree (from money-box) 5s., D. Gloak 4s., G. F. Wenborn (second sub.) 5s.

The beadle was in by-gone days always a prime hand at throwing in a little bit of sarcasm at the expense of some young sprigs of the ministry. A young minister with rather an exalted opinion of his own powers said to the beadle, "I don't think I need put on the gown, John. It's only an encumbrance, though some folk seem to think it makes a preacher more impressive." To this John, who had a less exalted opinion of the preacher's power, quietly replied, "Ay, sir—that's just it, sir. P'it it on for ony sake. It makes ye mair impressive; and ye need it a', ye need it a'!"

THE METHODIST ATMOSPHERE.

AT a big Methodist meeting held recently in Exeter Hall, one speaker congratulated himself that he found himself in a "Methodist atmosphere," which he considered so much more genial than that of any other religious body. If the atmosphere of Methodism is responsible for the mental attitude of some individuals who habitually breathe it, I should put it down as miasmatic.

What struck me more than anything else was an intense egotism—shall I call it conceit?—pervading the utterances of most of the speakers. One believed that God had specially floated Methodism as an organization to achieve the conversion of the world. Another told a long yarn, the kernel of which was that he was at a meeting of another sect, the proceedings of which were deadly dull and uninteresting until *he* enlivened it and saved the affair from fiasco by telling a Methodist story.

In a smaller Methodist meeting, on the following night, the Rev. Mark Guy Pearse concluded his speech by saying he would make way for "more worthy" speakers. The gross vanity of this remark is apparent when it is remembered that this gentleman is at the very top of the list of Methodist preachers and functionaries, and when I add that the other male speakers were only of local reputation.

Interesting, in the light of recent events, was the character of an observation made by the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. Advising the audience to attend a lecture to be given during the week by a colonial bishop (who had just spoken), he said the bishop would then speak a hundred times better than he had that night. Now, under ordinary circumstances, it would be mere carping to find fault with this bit of stretching, but I mention it simply as bearing out the charge brought against Mr. Hughes, by his own fraternity, of habitual "enormous exaggeration."

Some difficulties in the way of understanding the evolution of a certain much-discussed story were cleared up to me by hearing Sister Lily, of the West London Mission, recite some narratives concerning her feats of conversion. She ran off, with the utmost fluency, long conversations in the first person, which, if actual history, would prove her possessed of a memory which would bring her a fortune as a public entertainer.

Having been cradled in Methodism, and that system now holding some of my dearest associations, I cannot be accused of antagonistic bias; yet my latest experience forces me to say that the "Methodist atmosphere" seems to me wonderfully generous to the production and growth of egotism, and—well, loose assertion.

A. GUEST.

THE SCHOOL BOARD AND RELIGION.

AN important meeting of a thousand members of the Metropolitan Board Teachers' Association was held last Saturday, in the Memorial Hall, Farringdon-street. Two resolutions were passed—one in the form of a manifesto addressed to the Board, and praying for the withdrawal of the recently passed circular; the other fixing a certain course of action in the event of the circular being insisted upon and issued to the teachers. There were many speakers during a very warm debate; but every one, except myself, either avowed himself a Christian or used no expression leading hearers to suppose anything to the contrary. I did not intervene till the discussion had proceeded a considerable length, and I then found an opportunity of shortly stating the circumstances under which, for six years, I have been exempted from the duty of giving Bible teaching. I am bound to say that, though I stood alone as a Freethinker, my words were received with respectful attention; and the applause which followed my remarks testified to the fact that Board-school teachers were not inclined to scout a man who was not ashamed of his opinions. I had told them I was not a Christian, and they raised no scornful protest. I feel grateful to my fellow-teachers for their courtesy towards one who dissents from their creed; and I entertain the hope that, before long, we may all be of one mind in giving the place of prime honor to moral training, and agreeing to banish all forms of religion from the public elementary schools.

F. J. GOULD.

CHRISTIANITY AND SLAVERY.

CHRISTIAN teaching was neither the sole nor the chief cause of the abolition of slavery. Slavery was first condemned as a violation of natural right by certain Greek philosophers long before the Christian era; and legislation of a kind favorable to emancipation was initiated by Roman jurists imbued with the spirit of Stoicism long before the conversion of the empire to Christianity. The economical disadvantages of forced labor and the closing of the slave-markets by a series of political and military events quite unconnected with religion did the rest; and it is notorious that the human chattels of the religious houses were the last to be manumitted. With the discovery of America and the opening up of Africa came a revival of the hateful institution under forms worse than any known to classical antiquity; and in this revival some very pious Christians bore a prominent part, while none that I know of raised a protest against it. At last a protest came, but it was uttered by the rationalistic philosophers of the eighteenth century, and was first put into the form of law by the anti-Christian Convention of France. So with the whole emancipating movement of modern times. In all its phases it has been originated and supported by rationalists, and, until lately, has counted many devout religious believers among its most strenuous opponents. I am well aware that quite recently the public opinion of the religious world has undergone a great change in this respect—a change well illustrated by the very book I am reviewing—but it is a change for which their religion is no more to be thanked than for their acceptance of the Darwinian theory, both being due to the serpentine rather than to the dovelike qualities of pietism.—A. W. Benn, in the "Academy."

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

COUNCIL MEETING, April 5, 1894. Present: Mrs. Fisher, Miss E. Vance, Messrs. J. M. Wheeler, G. Ward, Wood, Rowden, G. H. Baker, J. Neate, Dowding, Renn, O. Turner, W. H. Baker, G. Standing, and Mr. G. W. Foote in the chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting having been read and confirmed, the lecture list for May was ordered to be printed.

The coming School Board election was next discussed, and the President made a statement as to the policy to be adopted. It was also resolved, "That a public meeting of Freethinkers be held at the Hall of Science for the purpose of forming a School Board Election Committee for Finsbury."

The date of the Annual Excursion was fixed for Sunday, August 19.

The vacant secretaryship was the next business, and nominations were asked for. It was decided to extend the time for nominating until April 19. All names, with proposer and seconder, should be sent to the undersigned as early as possible.

The meeting then considered the special resolution of which notice had been given by Mr. Renn. After a short discussion the following was resolved: "That secretaries of Branches affiliated to the Federation be admitted honorary members of the council, without power to vote on any alteration in the constitution."

The meeting then adjourned to May 3.

JAS. ANDERSON, Sec. (*pro tem.*).

CORRESPONDENCE.

BOOMING JESUS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

"W. M. T.," who is understood to be a Democrat, in a letter in last week's *Reynolds's*, goes in for unlimited praise of Jesus, and finds fault with the Church dignitaries for breaking Christ's command, "Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses." With the latter part I quite agree, for if they profess to be followers of Christ they should obey his commands. But when the writer goes so far as to declare Jesus to be "the true Apostle" of liberty, I think he is going—well, "a bit past himself." *True liberty*, I take it, should include mental freedom. Are the threats of Jesus to damn everybody that don't believe in him, and the jealous egotism of his demand to be loved by us better than we love father, mother, wife and children, and brethren, compatible with liberty of thought? Have not such doctrines fettered human thought, and turned men into fierce, implacable bigots? Are not the countless numbers—yourself included—who have suffered for having the moral courage to avow their disbelief, the direct result of Christ's damnation doctrine? Whilst the Christian persecute they "Babble of love and mercy."

D. HENRY.

Who was Jonah's tutor?—The whale, because it brought him up.

BOOK CHAT.

Atheists have an easy task. All they need do is to take hold of the admissions of the various demonstrators of deity and set one against the other. Sometimes their work is almost completely done for them by Theists. Many of the acute old divines argued that all we knew of deity was derived solely from revelation, and, following them, the Rev. A. Norman, in his work on *The Necessity of a Revelation*, took to pieces all the arguments to prove that nature demonstrated a deity. Mr. Gillespie, in his *Argument à Priori*, showed the inadequacy of any other argument than his own; and here comes Dr. William Knight, Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of St. Andrew's, with his *Aspects of Theism* (Macmillan and Co.) demolishing all the old arguments on purpose to found the belief in God on intuition.

* * *

Dr. Knight classifies the arguments for Theism as the ontological, the cosmological, the teleological, the ethical, and the intuitional. Of the first, which argues there must be a God because we have an idea of one, he makes short work. He says: "Whether in the form in which it was originally cast by Augustine, Anselm and Aquinas, or in the more elaborate theory of Descartes, or as presented in the ponderous English treatises of Cudworth, Henry More, and Dr. Samuel Clarke, it is altogether a *petitio principii*." Again: "The only valid issue of the ontological argument is a system of absolute idealism, of which the theological corollary is Pantheism." But, as this is not the Deity it essays to reach, the argument must be pronounced illogical throughout.

* * *

The cosmological argument is also dismissed as an illogical begging of the question. For all are agreed that something has ever existed, but the question is as to what that something is. Is it the universe we know, or something else? Dr. Knight says (p. 57): "We may choose to call it 'the first Cause' (an explanation which implies that our notion of endless regression has broken down), and we may say that we have reached the notion of an uncaused cause. But is that a conceivable notion at all? Is it intelligible and representable? Do we not, in the very assumption, bid farewell to reason, and fall back on some form of faith?"

* * *

The argument from design fares as badly. "The effects it examines, and from which it infers a cause, are finite; whereas the cause it assumes is infinite." "There is no analogy between a human artificer arranging a finite mechanism, and a Divine Creator originating a world." "The main difficulty which confronts the Theist, and which Theism essays to remove, is precisely that which the consideration of design does not touch, viz, the *origin* and not the *arrangement* of the universe." "There is no parallel whatsoever between the process of manufacture and the product of creation; between the act of a carpenter working with his tools to construct a cabinet, and the evolution of life in nature." "Again, design is a plan to overcome hindrance, to effect a contemplated end by conquering difficulty, and by adjusting phenomena each to each. But it is only a being of limited resources that requires so to act or work. The omnipotent can have no hindrance to overcome, no difficulty to surmount." Dr. Knight concludes that "no study of the existing arrangements and disposition of Nature's mechanism can carry us beyond the mechanism itself," and contends that if the inference of benevolence be valid the inference of malevolence is at least equally valid, and that "unless the supposed spectator were equal in knowledge to the Architect and Builder himself, he could affirm nothing with absolute certainty as to his designs."

* * *

Having thus demolished Paley's God with the rest, Dr. Knight goes on to build up his own deity on Intuition. Is he not venturing on a more shifting quicksand and floundering in a yet deeper bog than his predecessors? For what is intuition but this to me and that to thee? One man's intuition of deity leads him to offer him human sacrifices, another only offers flattery, while the poor benighted Atheist has no such intuition. All this, and more, we can imagine, may be said against Dr. Knight's argument by the next Theist who comes forward with a new demonstration of deity of his own.

* * *

Messrs. Macmillan will publish immediately new editions of three volumes of Mr. George Meredith's poems, which have been for some little time out of print. They are *Ballads and Poems of Tragic Life*, *Poems and Lyrics of the Joy of Earth*, and *Modern Love*.

* * *

George Meredith's admirers will soon be able to obtain a good portrait of him. It is a wood engraving by Mr. W. Biscombe Gardner from an oil painting by Mr. Watts, the great artist. There will be 600 proofs on Japanese vellum, signed by painter and engraver, and at one guinea. Messrs. Matthews and Lane are the publishers.

OBITUARY.

MADAM DE ROCHE, who for several years has been associated with the Hammersmith Socialist Society, was interred on Saturday, the 7th inst., in Hammersmith Cemetery. Deceased was actively connected with the Paris Commune and suffered exile for her opinions. The funeral was attended by a large number of Socialists and Secularists, the West London Branch of the N.S.S. being represented. An unsuccessful attempt was made by the official employed by the Burial Board to stop the ceremony at the graveside, on the ground that it was not a religious service. Among those present were noticed E. T. Craig (of Ralahine fame), Davis, Tochatti, Branantlin, Towers, Munton, Tindale, H. H. Sparling, and Mrs. Sparling. Addresses were delivered by Mr. William Morris, Mr. H. H. Sparling, and M. L'Assasayo. The Socialist choir sang "No Master" and the "Marseillaise."

The remains of the late Mr. William Dodd, Monk Bretton, formerly of Sheffield, were interred in the local cemetery on Thursday, March 29, a large gathering having assembled to witness the ceremony, which was carried out in accord with the wishes of the deceased, and was of a purely Secular character. Mr. A. B. Wakefield, of Hipperholme, performed the duty of reading the Burial Service (the late Austin Holyoake's); and several were heard by the writer of this notice to say there was nothing out of place in the service to wound the feelings of any reasonable person. It may be said Mr. Dodd has left behind him a family of several sons and daughters, some of whom, like their late father, are adherents of the cause of Freethought. Intellectually speaking they are above the average of ordinary work-a-day people, and sympathy will be extended towards them by their fellow Freethinkers in the loss they have sustained through their father's death.—*Communicated*.

HAVING, as a youth, derived profit from the conversation and criticisms of the late W. Willis, I should like to supplement Mr. Forder's notice with a few words. Mr. Willis was born at Bridgwater, Somerset, on Aug. 29, 1830. Early in life he went to Bristol, where, with Mr. C. Watts, he heard Southwell, Emma Martin, and others. He came to London in 1859, and was connected with the old Hall of Science, and was one of the first committee in connection with the present Hall, where for a time he conducted the bookstall. He acted as secretary for the old Freethinkers' Benevolent Fund, was a prominent worker with the National Sunday League, and for some time editor of the *Free Sunday Advocate*, as well as an occasional contributor to the *National Reformer*. He went to Australia some ten years ago, and was one of the most active Secular workers in Sydney, being for some time President of the Secular Association in that city. He also did good work there as purveyor and distributor of Freethought literature. By his death at Hobart, Tasmania, on Feb. 9, the cause has lost an indefatigable worker and an earnest, clear-headed, high-principled man.—J. M. W.

Works by G. W. Foote.

- The Grand Old Book.** A reply to the Grand Old Man. An Exhaustive answer to the Right Hon W. E. Gladstone's "Impregnable Rock of Holy Scripture." 1s. Bound in cloth, 1s. 6d.
- Is Socialism sound?** Four Nights' Public Debate with Annie Besant. 1s. Superior edition, in cloth, 2s.
- Christianity and Secularism.** Four Nights' Public Debate with the Rev. Dr. James McCann. 1s. Superior edition, cloth, 1s. 6d.
- Bible Heroes.** Cloth, 2s. 6d.
- Letters to the Clergy.** *First Series.* 128pp., 1s.
- A Defence of Free Speech.** Three Hours' Address to the Jury before Lord Coleridge. With a Special Preface and many Footnotes. 4d.
- Comic Sermons and other FANTASIAS.** Contents:—A Sermon on Summer—A Mad Sermon—A Sermon on Sin—A Bishop in the Workhouse—A Christmas Sermon—Christmas Eve in Heaven—Bishop Trimmer's Sunday Diary—The Judge and the Devil—Satan and Michael—The First Christmas—Adam's Breeches—The Fall of Eve—Joshua at Jericho—A Baby God—Sermon on Judas Iscariot. 8d.
- Darwin on God.** 6d. Superior edition, in cloth, 1s.
- Infidel Death-Beds.** Second edition, much enlarged, 8d. On superfine paper, in cloth, 1s. 8d.
- Reminiscences of Charles Bradlaugh.** 6d.
- Rome or Atheism—the Great Alternative.** 8d.
- Letters to Jesus Christ.** 4d.
- Interview with the Devil.** 2d.
- Philosophy of Secularism.** 3d.
- Atheism and Morality.** 2d.
- My Resurrection.** A Missing Chapter from the Gospel of Matthew, discovered by G. W. Foote. 2d.
- The Folly of Prayer.** 2d.
- Ingersollism Defended agst Archdeacon Farrar.** 2d.
- Was Jesus Insane?** A searching inquiry into the mental condition of the Prophet of Nazareth. 1d.
- Christianity and Progress.** A Reply to Mr. Gladstone. 2d.
- The Impossible Creed.** An Open Letter to Bishop Magee on the Sermon on the Mount. 2d.
- What Was Christ?** A Reply to J. S. Mill. 2d.
- The Bible God.** 2d.
- Salvation Syrup; or, Light on Darkest England.** A Reply to General Booth. 2d.
- Is the Bible Inspired?** A Criticism on *Luz Mundi*. 1d.
- The Dying Atheist.** A Story. 1d.
- The Rev. Hugh Price Hughes' Converted Atheist.** A Lie in Five Chapters. 1d.
- Mrs. Besant's Theosophy.** A Candid Criticism. 2d.
- Secularism and Theosophy.** A Rejoinder to Mrs. Besant. 2d.
- The New Cagliostro.** An Open Letter to Madame Blavatsky. 2d.
- The Shadow of the Sword.** A Moral and Statistical Essay on War. 2d.
- Royal Paupers.** Showing what Royalty does for the People, and what the People do for Royalty. 2d.

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, Dr. F. Macdonald, "Evolution and Anarchism" (free); 6.30, musical selections; 7. Mr. Charles Watts, "Christ, Not a Reformer for Modern Times" (admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.). Wednesday at 8.15, debate between Mr. Geo. Standring and Mr. Herbert Burrows on "The Malthusian Delusion" (free).

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, J. B. Coppock, F.C.S., "The Substance that Fills all Space" (free). Monday at 8, entertainment by the Marlowe Dramatic Company (tickets 3d. and 6d.). Tuesday at 8, social gathering (free).

Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, Mr. C. Cohen, a lecture.

Hammersmith Club, 1 The Grove, Broadway: Thursday, April 19, at 8, Mr. Touzeau Parris, "Theosophy," a further reply to Mrs. Besant (free).

Tottenham—Workpeople's Educational Union, Gas Workers' Hall, Seven Sisters-road, Woodberry Town: 7.45, debate between Mr. Stanley Jones and Mr. Clarke, "Are the Teachings of the Sermon on the Mount Beneficial?" (free).

Wimbledon—Liberty Hall, Curtis's Coffee House (Broadway entrance): 7, a lecture (free); 8.30, members' general meeting.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.30, C. Cohen, "Beliefs." Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 6, A. B. Moss, "Design and Natural Selection."

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, A. B. Moss, "The Trial of Christianity"; 3.30, J. Rowney, a lecture. Wednesday at 8, J. Rowney, a lecture.

Islington—Prebend-street, Packington-street, Essex-road: 11.30, A. Guest, "Christ's Death and Resurrection."

Mile End Waste: 11.30, W. Heaford, "Why we Reject Christianity."

Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Hell Up to Date." Tottenham Green (corner of Seven Sisters-road): 3.30, Sam Standing, "The Resurrection of the Body."

Victoria Park (near the Fountain): 3.15, C. Cohen, a lecture. Wood Green—Jolly Butchers'-hill: 11.30, Stanley Jones, "Miracles and Medicine"; 7, A. J. Herzfeld, "Conversion and Converts."

COUNTRY.

Bolton—Borough Chambers, Rushton-street: 7, John Mawson, "Social Poverty."

Derby—41 Copeland-street (off Traffic-street): Tuesday at 7.30, members' meeting.

Hull—St. George's Hall, 8 Albion-street: 7, M. Whitehead, "The Life and Writings of Robert Burns."

Liverpool—Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street: 7, Harry Smith, "An Experiment in Man-making."

Manchester—Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints': 6.30, Edward Jackson, "A Freethinker's View of 'The Christ.'"

Newcastle-on-Tyne—Good Templar Hall, 2 Clayton-street, East: 7, Carl Aarstad, "Did Christ Practise all his Precepts?" (free).

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 7, social evening.

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

Sunderland—Bridge End Vaults (long room above), Bridge-street: 7, Mr. Weightman, a lecture.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Brighton: Lecture on the Level at 3, and on the Front at 7.30.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, E.—April 15, m., Battersea; a., Victoria Park; e., Camberwell; 22, m. and a., Victoria Park; e., Battersea.

O. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—April 15, m., Finsbury Park; 22, m., Pimlico Pier; 29, m. and a., Hyde Park; e., Hammersmith. May 13, m., Clerkenwell Green; 20, e., Edmonton; 27, m., Pimlico Pier.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—April 15, m., Hyde Park; e., Hammersmith; 22, m., Wood Green. May 6, m. and e., Camberwell; 13, e., Edmonton; 20, m., Clerkenwell Green; 27, m., Hyde Park; e., Hammersmith.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, Clare Lodge, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith: London, W.—April 15, Sheffield; 22, Camberwell; 29, Hall of Science; May 6, South Shields.

THE TRUTH SEEKER.

Edited by JOHN GRANGE.

Sub-Editor, A. B. WAKEFIELD.

A NEW FREETHOUGHT MONTHLY.

Price One Penny.

UP TO DATE IN EVERY RESPECT.

Order with your "Freethinker."

Published by R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

Have you anything you wish to Sell or Exchange? If so, send an Advertisement to

THE TRUTH SEEKER

Advertising Department, 36 Villiers-street, Bradford.

Charge, 20 words for 4d., and 1d. for every 6 additional words.

Guaranteed Circulation 3000 copies monthly.

ADVICE TO THE MARRIED

All persons whose circumstances will not permit them to maintain a large family should send for

"PRUDENCE AND PLENTY,"

an interesting dialogue, which should be read by all who wish to maintain and improve their position in life.

Copy, together with our Illustrated List of all the MODERN APPLIANCES as recommended by Dr. Allbutt and Mrs. Besant, sent on receipt of stamped envelope to—

E. LAMBERT & SON,

Manufacturers of Hygienic and Malthusian Appliances,

60 AND 62 QUEEN'S ROAD, DALSTON, LONDON, N.E.
Or from R. Forder.

TWO NEW PAMPHLETS BY CHARLES WATTS.

IS THERE A LIFE BEYOND THE GRAVE?
The Secular Position Stated. Price 2d.; by post 2½d.

EDUCATION: TRUE AND FALSE. (Dedicated to the London School Board.) Price 2d.; by post 2½d.

London: Watts and Co., 17 Johnson's-court, Fleet-street, E.C.

Flowers of Freethought.

BY G. W. FOOTE.

FIFTY-ONE SELECTED ESSAYS AND ARTICLES

221pp., bound in cloth, 2s. 6d.

R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

CHEAP PROPAGANDIST PAMPHLETS.

No. 1—A HUNDRED AND ONE QUESTIONS FOR THE ORTHODOX.

No. 2—THE BOOK OF GOD: An Open Letter to the Churches. By G. W. Foote.

Price One Halfpenny.

Price One Halfpenny.

ROBERT FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

W. J. Rendell's Infidel Death-Beds
"WIFE'S FRIEND."

By G. W. FOOTE.

SECOND EDITION, MUCH ENLARGED,

Price 8d.

Superfine Paper, in Cloth, 1s. 3d.

Recommended by Mrs. Besant in "Law of Population," page 82, and Dr. Allbutt in "Wife's Handbook," page 51. Made solely by J. PULLEN, 15 Chadwell-street, Clerkenwell; 2s. dos., post free (reduction in larger quantities). For particulars send stamped envelope. Higginson's Syringe, with Vertical and Reverse Current, 3s. 6d., 4s. 6d. and 5s. 6d. Dr. Falfrey's Powder, 1s. 2d. Quinine Compound, 1s. 2d. Dr. Allbutt's Quinine Powders, 8s. dos. All prices post free.

W. J. Rendell

15 Chadwell Street, Clerkenwell, E.C.
(Near the "Angel.")

TO FREETHINKERS, Ladies and Gentlemen requiring SUPERIOR CUT GARMENTS at moderate prices. First-class Style and Fit Guaranteed.—H. HAMPTON, Artiste Tailor, 14 Great Castle-street, W. Three doors from Regent-street. [Patronised by leading Freethinkers.]

STANTON, the People's Dentist, 335 Strand (opposite Somerset House).—TERTIUM QVAERITUR. 2s. 6d. each, upper or lower set, £1. Best quality. 4s. each, upper or lower, £2, completed in four hours when required, repairing or alterations in two hours. If you pay more than the above they are fancy charges. Teeth on platinum 7s. 6d. each, on gold 15s, stopping 2s. 6d., extraction 1s., painless by gas. 5s.

JOBGING COMPOSITOR (Society seeks Permanency; age 25; platens and press.—W. P. Jacobs, Patna-place, Plymouth.

TO all requiring a Change of Air.—Board and 1 Apartments by the Sea-Side, from 12s. 6d. per week. Apply to Mrs. Foote, 1 Bersted-road, Bognor, Sussex.

TROUSERS.

EASY FORM FOR SELF-MEASUREMENT.

INCHES

Round waist over trousers.....
Round seat, widest part.....
Inside leg seam
Full length of trousers
Round thigh
Round knee
Round bottom.....
<i>Please say—</i>	
Lined or unlined
Side or cross pockets

We are now supplying a special line of

10/6

TROUSERS TO MEASURE, in over 200 different colors and designs.

Fill up self-measurement form and state the color you like, and we will Guarantee Fit and Satisfaction, failing which we return money in full and allow you to keep the trousers for nothing.

We will submit Patterns of above if stamped addressed envelope is sent.

NEW SPRING PATTERNS NOW READY.

All kinds of Gentlemen's Cloths and Ladies' Dress Fabrics sent on approval to any address post free.

J. W. GOTT, 2 & 4 UNION STREET, BRADFORD

WHY BE ILL?

MEDICAL ESSAYS. VOL. I. *For Postal Order for 1s. 2d.*
Management of Infancy, Health, Longevity, Teeth, Brown Bread, Bread Making, Food, Vegetarianism, Tobacco, Drink Question, Fruit, Fresh Air, Exercise, Bathing, Light, Holidays, Cause and Cure of Disease, Constipation, Biliousness, Eczema, Blackheads and Pimples, Nervousness, Coughs and Colds, Chest Complaints, Deafness, Thread Worms, Long Worms, Tape Worms, Itch, etc.

MEDICAL ESSAYS. VOL. II. *For Postal Order for 1s. 2d.*
The Healing Power of Nature; Clothing; Electricity in Disease; Apparent Health; Vegetarian Experiments; The Pig as Human Food; Popular Fallacies about Flesh; The Beef Tea Delusion; Salt; Saline Starvation; Tea Drinking; The Hair and its Management; Sleep and Sleeplessness; Want of Energy, etc.; Health Hints for Workers, Shop Assistants, and Servants; Advice for the Thin; for the Stout; and on the Proper Treatment of Simple Fever, Measles, Scarlet Fever, Whooping Cough, Ringworm, Hypochondria, Bloodlessness, Diarrhoea, Ulcerated Legs, Tumors, etc.

MEDICAL ESSAYS. VOL. III. *For Postal Order for 1s. 2d.*
Health and Wealth; No More Death; Youth; The Necessity for Pure Air, and How to Get it; The Management of Young Children; Hunger and Appetite; Effects of Fasting; Perfect Foods; Green Foods; Suppers; Unsuspected Domestic Poisons; Thirst; Perspiration; Sea Bathing, etc. HOW—to Eat Properly, to Eat Fruit, to Judge Wholesome Bread, to Breathe Properly, to Grow Tall, to Keep Warm, to Live, to Live One Hundred Years, to Improve the Memory, and to become Beautiful and Attractive. On the Cause and Cure of Stomach Troubles, Flatulence, Sleepiness, Varicose Veins, Boils and Carbuncles, Sebaceous Tumors or Wens, Hay Fever, Winter Cough, Chilblains, the Diseases Produced by taking Mercury, Epilepsy.

MEDICAL ESSAYS. VOL. IV. *For Postal Order for 1s. 2d.*
New Year Resolutions, Prevention better than Cure, Health Savings Banks, Hardening, Rubbish, Work and Overwork, Sugar and its Abuse, Macaroni, Salads, Wholesome Cookery, Porridge, Celeraio or Celery Root, Milk as Food, The Tomato, Against Butter, Poultrices, Quinine, Against the Knife, Arsenical Poisoning, Tonics, Infant Mortality, Against Stimulants in Disease, Stays and their Substitutes, About Swallowing Pins and other Articles, also the Cause and Rational Cure of Sun Stroke, Dog Bites, Pains in the Back, Pediculi or Lice, Chicken-pox, Synovitis or Inflammation of the Joints, Tonsillitis or Quinsy, Herpes (Tetter or Shingles), Erysipelas, Ulcer of the Stomach, Epidemic Influenza, Sciatia, Psoriasis or English Leprosy. Appendix.

The Four Volumes, strongly and neatly bound, for 5s. 6d.
HYGIENIC MEDICINE. An Eye-Opener to Drug Takers. *Post free from the Author for Postal Order for 1s. 1d.*

RHEUMATISM: Its Cause and Cure. *Post free 7d.* — **CONSUMPTION:** Its Cause and Cure. *Post free 7d.* — **DIET AND DIGESTION.** *Post free 7d.*

THREE PAMPHLETS TO YOUNG MEN. *Post free 1s. 1d.*

* * * *All these books (except Pamphlets to Young Men) bound together in cloth in one volume. Post free 8s. 6d.*

All the above can be got from DR. T. R. ALLINSON, 4 SPANISH PLACE, MANCHESTER SQUARE, LONDON, W.

HOURLY CONSULTATION are—Morning from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.; fee, 10s. 6d. Evening from 6 to 8; fee, 5s.

Patients visited in London for a fee of 10s. 6d. Patients visited in the country. Fee according to distance and the time occupied in going and returning. *Advice Given by post.*

THE HOUSEHOLD DOCTOR

Or MEDICINE MADE EASY.

By GEORGE THWAITES.

Wholesale and Retail Herbalist,
2 CHURCH ROW, STOCKTON-ON-TEES.

Sixpence each, or by post six penny stamps.

Those who value health—and I presume all do, as we are not of much account without it—should have one of these books.

The symptoms of most diseases we suffer from are fully described, with a cure by herbs, which are Nature's remedies; or a Herb Recipe sent to anyone on receiving a directed wrapper, or a stamp-directed envelope, to Cure any Disease or Disorder.

Price List Free on application at the above address.

THE BEST BOOK.

ON NEO-MALTHUSIANISM IS, I BELIEVE,
TRUE MORALITY, or THE THEORY AND
PRACTICE OF NEO-MALTHUSIANISM.

By J. R. HOLMES, M.M.L., M.V.S., M.N.S.S.

160 pages, with portrait and autograph, bound in cloth, gilt lettered.
Price 1s., post free.

* * * In order to bring the information within the reach of the poor, the most important parts of the book are issued in a pamphlet of 112 pages at ONE PENNY, post free 2d. Copies of the pamphlet for distribution 1s a doz. post free.

The *National Reformer* of 4th September, 1892, says: "Mr Holmes' pamphlet . . . is an almost unexceptionable statement of the Neo-Malthusian theory and practice . . . and throughout appeals to moral feeling. . . . The special value of Mr. Holmes' service to the Neo-Malthusian cause and to human well-being generally is just his combination in his pamphlet of a plain statement of the physical and moral need for family limitation with a plain account of the means by which it can be secured, and an offer to all concerned of the requisites at the lowest possible prices."

The Council of the Malthusian League, Dr. Drysdale, Dr. Allbutt, and others have also spoken of it in very high terms.

The Trade supplied by R. FORDER, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C. *Other orders should be sent to the author.*

J. R. HOLMES, HANNEY, WANTAGE, BERKS.

Printed and Published by G. W. Foote, at 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.