

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

TO THE RESCUE.

FOR a whole week the English newspapers have contained reports of the seven explorers who were accidentally imprisoned in a cave in Austria. The unfortunate men were known to have some food and some candles, but the extent of their supply was uncertain, and their condition was suspected to be desperate. Extraordinary efforts were made to effect their release, the Government even sending engineers to assist in the undertaking. It may be said that the whole of Europe was interested in their fate. Many people in England looked anxiously at the morning and evening papers for tidings from Gratz; and when at length, after eight days of entombment, the seven explorers were released, a sigh of satisfaction was breathed by millions of men and women who never saw them, and never will see them, and who will soon, perhaps, forget or half forget the incident in the bustle of our eager civilisation.

While those seven imprisoned explorers were, so to speak, in the very shadow of death, thousands of other persons were passing out of existence. But they were expiring in the "ordinary course of nature." Familiar things do not strike the imagination. Old soldiers on the battle-field see comrades fall around them with almost absolute unconcern. Undertakers lose all sense of the solemnity of funerals. And in the same way we do not shudder at the ordinary bills of mortality. But in circumstances of exceptional peril a fresh appeal is made to our sympathies. Thus it was that thousands of men, women, and children died of all sorts of painful or loathsome diseases, while the fate of those seven explorers trembled in the balance, without causing a single pang to the general heart of the community.

It is not our object, however, to write an essay on sympathy and imagination. What we really want to do is to indicate the religious moral of this episode in last week's history.

Seven men were in peril of death—a horrible slow death from starvation in utter darkness. The world at large knew nothing of them but their danger. It was ignorant whether (as men) they were good, bad, or indifferent. Whatever their characters, it was impossible to leave them to such a terrible fate. Society insisted on every effort, at any cost, being made for their release. Many persons near at hand—not relatives, nor even friends—could scarcely sleep for thinking about them in the lone still night with its "giant heart of memory and tears."

Now all this is something new in the world. Not that sympathy is new, not that there is anything novel in help between man and man. The novelty is in the scope of the emotion. A cosmopolitan humanity is growing up which realises the sentiment of the Roman poet who made a stage character exclaim that, as a man, nothing human was alien to him. The world is becoming more sensitive. It shivers at the thought of suffering which, hundreds of years ago, it would have regarded with sheer indifference. And this intensity,

this expansion, of the sympathetic emotions, is not due to any religious causes. It is due entirely to the progress of science, which has brought about a rapid intercommunication between different parts of the world, multiplied interests and attachments, and quickened all the springs of life.

Directly, this progress is material; indirectly, it is ethical; still more indirectly, it is religious. It is a fond conceit of the theologian that religion is a *cause* of progress. Religion is a purely conservative agency. It stereotypes what it finds. Always the last to move, it brings up the rear of the great procession of humanity. The gods of to-day reflect the ideas and characters of the men of a thousand years ago.

Still, religion *does* move, however slowly; though it only moves because it must, because it cannot afford to be left utterly behind. In an age of humanity, the brutal old doctrines of divine caprice, holy vengeance, and heavenly malignity, die a natural death. Yet they are not buried; they become transformed. The old words are retained with new meanings. Some little adjective, adverb, or preposition is seized upon, and magnified into infinite meaning; and thus, by changing the proportion of the ingredients, the compound is totally changed in its character. Once it was taught that most men went to Hell; now it is taught that most men go to Heaven. There has been no alteration in the "inspired" text, only a change in its interpretation. The Word of God is compelled to follow the growth of the Spirit of Man.

How is it possible for men and women who are wretched at the thought of the peril of seven men they never heard of before—how is it possible for men and women who make frantic efforts to save them—to believe in their heart of hearts that the Creator of *all* men and women will thrust the majority of them into Hell, and hold in his untrembling hands for ever the key of their dungeon of torture? Hell is doomed when the very worst of men would shrink from keeping their enemies in it for a single hour. Cruel lynchings, and other atrocities, may be wrought by "civilised" men in moments of fierce passion, when the beast within them leaps through the restraints of humanity. But cruelty is no longer inflicted deliberately in cold blood. How then can we go on worshipping a God who coolly plans, and remorselessly carries out, the wholesale damnation of his own creatures?

Gradually, but surely, generation after generation, the world is growing sweeter, purer, and brighter. The barbarous ideas of the old theology are fatally discredited. A new religion is springing up—the Religion of Humanity. Rescuing souls from Hell is a decaying employment. Science and Brotherhood are striving to rescue the poor, the downtrodden, and the wretched. The policy of the new Reformation is to make the most of *this* life. The promises of bliss in another life begin to fall upon the people's ears as idly as the threats of future pain. Man is entering upon his heritage of comfort, hope, and dignity in this world—which is the world of all of us, and where in the end (as the poet says) we find our happiness or not at all.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE EARLIEST LIFE OF CHRIST.*

THERE is a special Providence always looking after the interests of the Church. When any document is very much wanted, it is pretty sure to turn up.† The Diatessaron, or harmony of the four gospels, by Tatian, is a case in point. It had often been cited as an evident of the existence of the four gospels in the second century; but alas, it could not be produced. So in 1874 the author of *Supernatural Religion* declared, "It is obvious that there is no evidence whatever connecting Tatian's gospel with those in our Canon." Howbeit, he spoke unwitting the wily ways of Providence. In 1883 an Arabic Version of Tatian's Diatessaron turned up, or rather an essay announcing it by Agostino Ciasca, one of the Guild of Writers to the Vatican. By 1886 another version was providentially found in the East and brought to Rome, and it was published both in Arabic and Latin in 1888 in honor of the jubilee of the priesthood of His Holiness, Signor Joachim Pecci. An English version has been published this year. For it we are indebted to the Rev. J. Hamlyn Hill, B.D., and to it he is indebted for receiving his degree without any examination. For the Church is not without its rewards to the instruments, under Providence, of its defence. And verily the Christian Evidence man may fairly ask, Where be your scoffings now? Here you see the real original and only genuine four gospels as they were in the second century, and as like our own as four peas. Here you have all the miracles, Satan setting Christ on the pinnacle of the temple (iv. 47), and Christ turning the devils into the pigs (xi. 43). What can the perversest sceptic wish for more? Surely no one will cast doubt on the *bona fides* of that learned instrument of God's providence, Signor Agostino Ciasca, of the Guild of Writers to the Vatican.

And yet a suspicion may creep in that, after all, the work that has so providentially turned up after sixteen centuries, for the confutation of the wicked author of *Supernatural Religion*, is not exactly the very identical work said to have been written by Tatian before the end of the second century. The learned but unvaracious "Eusebius" is the first to mention the Diatessaron, and he does not venture to say he has seen it. According to "Epiphanius" (Hær. xlv. 1), the Diatessaron of Tatian was called the Gospel according to the Hebrews. Now the document produced is nothing like the Gospel according to the Hebrews, the fragments of which have been reproduced by Mr. E. B. Nicholson. "Theodoret," moreover, says (Hær. i. 20) he [*i.e.*, Tatian] also composed the gospel which is called Diatessaron, cutting out the genealogies and whatever other passages show that the Lord was born of the seed of David according to the flesh.‡ Now this gospel, it is true, omits the genealogies, possibly from the impossibility of reconciling them in one narrative; but it gives the narrative of Christ's birth from Matthew and Luke, and calls him "the son of David" (39, 32, 40, 2, etc.), as in our gospels. All the early fathers spoke of Tatian as a heretic, and considered his Diatessaron an heretical work. It is quite possible that his Gospel of Four meant four Gnostic principles, though Victor of Capua tells us it was also called Diapente, "by five." The Fathers have left us an account of Tatian's views, which is hardly reconcilable with his knowledge and use of our gospels. He was a Gnostic, believing in many æons, or emanations from

the Supreme Deity; the Logos, or Word, being the chief. He considered the God of this world and the God of the Old Testament as distinct from and inferior to the God of the New Testament. He believed in the non-salvability of Adam. He advocated and observed celibacy, condemning marriage as no better than whoredom, and he advocated abstinence from animal food and also from wine. Yet here he gravely records (xiv. 13): "But the Son of man came eating and drinking; and ye said, Behold, a gluttonous man and a wine-bibber."

This providential find opens with the words of the fourth gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word itself is God." It omits the declaration, "There was a man sent from God whose name was John," but otherwise singularly closely following and entwining together the narrative of our four gospels. This is very curious, especially in view of Dr. Tischendorf's admission, "I have no doubt that very shortly after the books of the New Testament were written, and before they were protected by the authority of the Church, many arbitrary alterations and additions were made in them."* And then the sceptic may say: This Arabic concoction, which has so providentially turned up, shows manifest signs of acquaintance with the Peshito version and Cureton's Syriac. Indeed, it conforms so strangely to Dr. Tischendorf's Harmony of the Gospels that, since Dr. Tischendorf knew nothing of it, one may suspect that the compiler had the benefit of a precognition of Tischendorf. Occasionally his orthodoxy betrays him, as in retaining the passage at the end of Mark, which is entirely wanting in the two earliest manuscripts (attributed to the fourth century), and which passage Eusebius says was wanting in accurate copies. The story of the woman taken in adultery, John vii. 53-viii. 11, is of course omitted, being too evidently spurious, although said to have been in the Gospel according to the Hebrews; but other passages, as, for instance, Matt. xviii. 11, wanting in the earliest manuscripts, are given. It is these little things that tell the tale that what we have is a late production; and when the Arabic version is closely scrutinised by sceptical scholars, possibly far more will be apparent than in this translation.

Finally, the wicked sceptic may ask, What does this "Earliest Life of Christ" prove? Its date, the very language in which it was originally written, is uncertain. It gives us no information concerning the evangelists, whose stories it copies, as to their personality, character, or trustworthiness. If their yarns are inherently incredible, are they a bit more worthy credit because they were twisted together in the early days of the Church?

But let the sceptic "ca canny." He said, Let Tatian be produced, and lo, the image of Tatian—or his imitation—is here. Let him not shout too loud. He may bring down the avalanche. Providence, that has done so much for the Church, may do yet more. Who knows but that some writer to the Vatican, or wandering Simonides, may yet discover the very original long-lost manuscripts of the holy evangelists themselves—with, perhaps, the sign manual of Jesus Christ authorising them to act as his biographers, and, maybe, adorned with photographs of their hero, taken on the spot, say on the pinnacle of the Temple, together with Satan? Who knows but the gospel may yet be proclaimed by angels coming from Heaven with a shout? Hallelujah—Ta-rara-boom-deay, *Gloria in Excelsis*, God hath spoken, and the world, after being kept a considerable time in suspense, is convinced!

J. M. WHEELER.

* The Earliest Life of Christ ever compiled from the Four Gospels, being The Diatessaron of Tatian [circa. A. D. 160]; by the Rev. J. Hamlyn Hill, B.D.; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark; 1891.

† After an attack by the Rev. Mr. Cotterill on the genuineness of the First Epistle of Clement—of which one argument was that an epistle, said by Eusebius to have been read in the churches, ought to be extant in more than one manuscript, other copies providentially turned up. But they were evidently founded on the Alexandrian MS., and where that was at fault were at fault also. See *Critical Review*, May, 1891, p. 291.

‡ Theodoret, or the monks who wrote in his name, says he destroyed two hundred copies of this *Earliest Life of Christ Compiled from the Four Gospels*. This yarn and the heresy of the Diatessaron, first mentioned by the monks styling themselves "Eusebius."

Is it not disgusting and loathsome to hear some broad-backed, thick-calved, greasy-faced, well-fed and not badly-druuk caitiff of some canting caste, preaching and exhorting young people full of flesh and blood of the purest and clearest quality, to forsake and forswear the world and its riches?—*Professor John Wilson.*

* Introduction to the Tauchnitz edition of the New Testament, p. xv.

THE PROTESTANT CHURCH.

PROTESTANTISM, as embodied in the Anglican Church, is regarded by its adherents as the representative of England's national religion and as the only legitimate exponent of Christian theology. It is pronounced to be the genuine article bearing the Government stamp; while the various Dissenting faiths are condemned as spurious, being without the necessary authority. This view is taken by the Rev. F. A. Grace, M.A., who, in his work entitled *Some Questions of the Church Catechism and Doctrines Involved, briefly Explained*, says: "We have among us various sects and denominations who go by the general name of Dissenters; in what light are we to consider them?—A. As heretics; and in our Litany we expressly pray to be delivered from the sins of false doctrine, heresy, and schism.

"Is, then, their worship a laudable service?—A. No; because they worship God according to their own evil and corrupt imaginations, and not according to his revealed will, and, therefore, their worship is idolatrous.

"Is Dissent a great sin?—A. Yes; it is in direct opposition to our duty towards God.

"Is it wicked, then, to enter a meeting-house at all?—A. Most assuredly, because, as was said above, it is a house where God is worshipped otherwise than he has commanded, and, therefore, it is not dedicated to his honour and glory." This, surely, is a unique specimen of that charity which thinketh no evil, and is a marked illustration of that loving kindness and affection that are supposed to cement the "Christian brotherhood."

The clergy of the Church of England may be divided under the three following heads:—1. The High Churchmen, who look upon science and Freethought with ill-concealed aversion. Clergymen of this class pander to credulity and thrive upon the weakness of women, and upon the uncontrolled emotions of men. Theatrical display enchants where reason fails to command. 2. The Evangelicals, who are frequently more intolerant than is the Papacy. They seldom encourage modern scientific revelation, as they cling to the old notion that the two standard revelations contain all that is necessary for man's salvation. 3. The Broad Churchmen, who are comparatively tolerant and liberal, and who are disposed to welcome all that the scientific method of investigation may reveal. These men are useful, because their principal deeds are secular. Their Church religion sits but loosely upon them, and they seek to teach people that to live well is the best preparation to die happily. While it is quite true that this Church has always had within its ranks some eminent and learned men who have attempted occasionally to deal, from their standpoint, with the social questions of the day, it is equally true that the Establishment has decidedly failed as a reforming agency. Although it possessed great facilities for improving the secular condition of the people, and had great wealth at its command, with no powerful competitor in the field, it has proved impotent to successfully grapple with the many evils that afflict society.

There is no lack of historical evidence to show that the clergy of the Church of England have not been merely apathetic towards the improvement of the masses, but ample proof exists that they have invariably and persistently arrayed themselves against the progress of the people. Macaulay, in his essay on Hallam's *Constitutional History*, after describing the compromise which gave birth to the Church of England, says: "She continued to be, for more than a hundred and fifty years, the servile handmaid of Monarchy, the steady enemy of public liberty. The divine right of kings, and the duty of passively obeying all their commands, were her favorite tenets. She held those tenets firmly through times of oppression, persecution, and licentiousness; while law was trampled down; while judgment was perverted; while the people were eaten as though they were bread. Once, and but once, for a moment, and but for a moment, when her own dignity and property were touched, she forgot to practise the submission which she had taught." Lecky, in his *History of Rationalism*, observes: "When, in the gloomy period

of vice and of re-action that followed the Restoration the current set in against all liberal opinions, and the maxims of despotism were embodied even in the Oath of Allegiance, the Church of England directed the stream, allied herself in the closest union with a Court whose vices were the scandal of Christendom, and exhausted her anathemas, not upon the hideous corruption that surrounded her, but upon the principles of Hampden and of Milton. All through the long encroachments of the Stuarts she exhibited the same spirit. No other Church so uniformly betrayed and trampled on the liberties of her country. . . . She invariably cast her influence into the scale of tyranny." These facts were corroborated by the London *Times* in a leading article written some years ago while the Church Congress was being held at Plymouth. Therein the following severe indictment was preferred against the so-called "National Church": "As a fact, expressed in popular language, and understood by the people of this country, the 'Church,' or the 'Church of England,' was in favor of the alliance of Continental Absolutists against constitutional government; it was against the amelioration of the criminal code, and in favor of the principles of vengeance and prevention as against that of reformation; it was in favor of hanging for almost any offence a man is now fined for at the assizes; it was in favor of the slave trade, and afterwards of slavery; it was against the repeal of the Test and Corporations Act; it was against Catholic emancipation; it was against Parliamentary reform and municipal reform; it was against the commutation of tithes, though it has since had to acknowledge the Act a great benefit; it was against the repeal of the corn laws and the navigation laws; it was against free trade generally; it was against all education beyond the simplest elements." Strong as this impeachment is, its truth is borne out by the subsequent antagonism manifested by the Bishops in the House of Lords. With few exceptions, they have opposed all progressive legislation down to the present time, as the recent rejection of certain measures by the Upper Chamber amply testifies.

Another charge to be brought against this Church is, that its leading exponents have maintained an utter disregard for the rights of all outside their own sect. Professor James E. Thorold Rogers, in *The British Citizen*, remarks: "You may search in vain for any National Church . . . which has ever taken the first step in acknowledging any right on the side of those who resist, or even criticise it. The various Church reformers who, up to comparatively recent times, have quarrelled with the existing order of things have never pretended to have any consideration for those whom they wished to supplant and remodel." So palpable has been the failing of the Church as a reforming medium that the State has been compelled to intervene and to take the work of the education of the young from the control of the clergy, and now we have to resist the bigotry of the Church representatives upon our School Boards. They are, at the present time, endeavoring to thrust their theological doctrines into the instruction given in our public schools. Unable any longer to prevent the onward course of the pure stream of education, these "lights" of the Church seek, both in and out of season, to pollute that stream with their narrow creeds and their absurd dogmas.

With the most barefaced assumption it is urged that the Church of England represents the national religious thought of the age. Such a claim is entirely unsupported by facts, for the union of the Church with the State is the main ground upon which the assertion is made. But only a slight reflection is necessary to demonstrate that such a connection cannot make the Church national, using that term in its proper sense. Before it can consistently deserve that designation, it must be shown that the Establishment represents the religious ideas and aspirations of the majority of the people of the United Kingdom. Such, however, is not the case, inasmuch as the bulk of the Protestants of Great Britain do not subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles, and will not be bound by the priestly dogmas of the Established Church. The religious faith of Christendom outside the domain of Roman Catholicism grows broader day by day, and less inclined to be

fettered by the creeds and ecclesiastical teachings of priests and councils. Even numerically the Church is behind its rival, Dissent. The published figures of the Statistical Society show that Dissenters are far more numerous than Churchmen; and a Parliamentary return states that in 7,369 English and Welsh parishes, having an aggregate population of 20,500,000, there were 11,267 churches and 14,000 chapels. If, then, this Church does not represent the principal religious thought of the nation—which it certainly does not—how much less does it reflect the national intellect of the present time. Scepticism is spreading on every hand, and with its diffusion the national aspirations are becoming more and more illuminated with the spirit of freedom from all forms of ecclesiasticism. This form of modern thought finds no encouragement in a Church that seeks to fetter the human mind with traditional authority, and to cloud it with the stagnating influence of the Thirty-nine Articles. The truth is that the Anglican Church has really been tried and found wanting; as a progressive institution it must therefore no longer be relied upon in time of need, nor must we trust to its power; but we must rather seek that material, unsacerdotal aid which is alone capable of adding dignity to man, and of conferring benefits upon mankind.

CHARLES WATTS.

MR. STEAD'S LATEST OUTBREAK.

ONE can have considerable sympathy with a case like Mr. Stead's. He is the victim of a malady that evidences itself by periodic attacks. Now it takes the form of divine revelations in prison-cells; again in Modern Babylon scares; yet again in dazzling "Daily Paper" schemes. Like the sufferer from alcoholism who must have alcohol, Mr. Stead has now reached the stage that he must have a "sensation" twice or thrice a year, or he will expire. There was a time when Mr. Stead was taken somewhat seriously, but it belongs to the past. Now the less reverent do not conceal their laughter; the more friendly look on, as one freak succeeds another, with half-wondering, half-pathetic gaze.

Mr. Stead went to Chicago, spent a more or less brief time there, took lodgings in the most disreputable quarter, interviewed all kinds of wretched characters, swept street-crossings disguised in old clothes, talked Jesus by the yard to the inmates of brothels; and the result is a book entitled *If Christ Came to Chicago!* What Mr. Stead really meant was, "What I would do if I had my way in Chicago." For of course it so happens—singular coincidence—that Christ is precisely of the same view as Mr. Stead; which is flattering to Christ. We should say that, if Christ went to Chicago, the political "heelers" and "boodlers" would run him for all he was worth.

The readers of Mr. Stead's book are presented with a colored ground-plan of the Nineteenth Precinct of the First Ward, showing the proportion of brothels, pawn-brokers, and saloons. The thing is characteristic of Mr. Stead's method; he mistakes exposure for remedy, and imagines that by stirring up filth you have got rid of it. He has no comprehensive idea how the evils he exposes are to be grappled with, and when the "boom" is over, and his book has become—as probably it will—the precious companion of the prurient and degraded, Chicago will be—just where it was.

Mr. Stead of course was shocked at all he heard and saw in Chicago; he is so unaccustomed to that sort of thing. We get the impression that Chicago is veritably the cesspool of the universe—the home of every vice and fraud. The judges and police-officials raise money by making raids "for revenue" on the criminal class; the City Council is simply a huge bribery-shop which grants municipal privileges according to scale. If a man wants to put up a sign-post, he must get the permission of the City Council, and to get this he must bribe the members. All this and much more in the most approved Stead style. Chicago is a dreadful place, in short. But all this Mr. Stead—as a Christian—has to account for. Either Chicago is a Christian city or it is not. If it is, then it speaks badly for the prac-

tical outcome of his creed. If Chicago is not a Christian city, then Mr. Stead has to account for the failure of Christ. If, after nineteen centuries of Christ's teaching, the chief cities of Christendom do not acknowledge his authority, and flout his teaching, what can be said of the force of Christ's influence? On either horn of the dilemma is the Christian impaled.

Mr. Stead—undoubtedly with the best intentions in the world—has a positive "nose" for the nasty and the filthy. It is inconceivable that a city without a brothel or a gin-shop would have the least interest for him; for there would be no field for "exposures." Speaking without any direct knowledge, we should assume that Chicago, in its normal condition—for, with the disbandment of the large number of people brought together by the World's Fair, Chicago is possibly now in an abnormal condition—is no better and no worse than the average of modern "Christian" cities; which is saying that it has plenty of vices and disorders and social sores. But let us be sane. These social diseases must be cured; at least it is the business of the future to study their genesis, and the function of science to find the remedy. But they will never be cured by the mere sensation-monger who pays a flying visit and then concocts a blazing pamphlet, or the religious quack without any social philosophy or economic knowledge, whose only contribution to the discussion is uncritical babble about a long-dead Jew.

FREDERICK RYAN.

CHRIST'S NIMBUS.

THERE has been a considerable amount of writing in the *Freethinker* anent the nimbus which surrounded the head of J. C. The writers show, by their truly reverent and touching language, that they have come to their conclusions after careful thought. It is in this spirit of "deep reverential calm," as the G. O. M. would say, that I desire to communicate my views on this truly important and interesting subject to the readers of the *Freethinker*. Indeed, I think I should commence by telling them that what I am about to write is a revelation: whether they would be likely to consider it a revelation or not I cannot say, but I will tell them the story, and let them judge for themselves.

On Saturday night, the 7th of April, 1894 (the date is important—all revelation should be dated), I was sitting at "my ain fireside" reading F. A.'s solution of the nimbus riddle, smoking my pipe, and taking an occasional sip of—well, no matter what—that was not the cause of the vision—when the door was opened, and in slipped a very beautiful young creature, still in the years of her girlhood. I rose and offered her my seat, but she smiled—O, such a serene and heavenly smile—and said in a voice, clear as the tinkling of a bell, "Follow me."

Waving aloft the *Freethinker*, I said, in my best dramatic style, "Lead on, I'll follow thee." I tried to walk, but my feet were of no earthly use to me; they were dangling in the air, and I felt myself borne along by some irresistible force, my sweet companion by my side, who spoke no more until we arrived at the top of a high mountain. I shall not occupy the space of this journal by attempting a description of the view which I enjoyed from my elevated position; but I was hurried along—whether in the body, or out of the body, I know not. At the summit of this mountain we entered a deep pass or ravine, and alighted on a large boulder, by the side of which lay a skeleton dressed in a pair of breeches and a coat. The former were of the ordinary "Balbriggan hose" pattern, the latter bore close resemblance to the regulation blood-and-fire jersey of the Salvation Army. Around the skull was a loose mass of soft-looking material, which, on closer inspection, proved to be india-rubber stamped with a peculiar looking trademark, and the words, "Jerusalem Rubber Co., Limited." My companion, observing my look of bewilderment, addressed me as follows:—

"The skeleton which you see lying there is that of the person whom the Christians worship as God. You have been for some time interested in the nimbus question, and I have brought you here for the purpose of enlightening you on that point. This loose mass of rubber was of a bright yellow color, and worn turban-fashion by this unfortunate individual: it fitted very tightly to the skull,

by passing below the frontal eminences and occipital protuberance; it was furnished with a valve and a rubber-tube, which passed close behind the wearer's ear. This tube—which was flesh-colored—was tolerably well concealed from observation by the beard, as it passed down the neck. It was then completely under cover of the coat until it entered the breeches pocket, where it was attached to a bottle containing sulphuric acid; at the upper part of this bottle there was fastened a tube with a bellows arrangement. The middle portion of this last-mentioned tube was dilated, and in the bulb thus formed was placed some finely powdered zinc. The wearer was pretty well up in chemistry; he could play many a trick better than that of turning water into wine—that was a very common bit of jugglery. You will remember having read that some time before his ascent he, Bourdin-like, cautioned a lady friend. 'Touch me not, my hour has not yet come,' he said, well knowing that, if his chemicals got mixed before the proper moment, he would assuredly shoot aloft without producing the desired effect. He was naturally anxious to secure a good audience; and when the crowd had gathered he worked the bellows, which blew the powder into the bottle of acid. The hydrogen, being very quickly given off, soon inflated the rubber cap, which, getting paler in color as it increased in size, soon assumed the appearance of a cloud—hence the saying that 'he went to heaven in a cloud'—and, rising like an Easter balloon, it soon carried him out of sight of the ignorant and flabbergasted fisher folk. (In some parts of the country, Belfast for example, balloons are sent up every Easter Monday, doubtless in commemoration of this great event.) He, however, had not calculated on—possibly he had forgotten—"the law of the expansion of gases;" so the rubber of the balloon as it ascended was subjected to less pressure from without, and more and more from within, until at last it could not stretch another fraction of an inch—it burst, and down came poor J. C. without a parachute, which I am sure he would have provided himself with before starting had he only thought of Boyle and Marriotte's law. Now you understand the nimbus mystery, and when you send a report of this discovery to the *Freethinker* (you need not shake your head in that doleful fashion; I know the editor will publish it: he is an old friend of mine), through its columns inform those holy coat showmen at Trèves, and also those of the rival exhibition at Argenteuil, that neither shop can boast of possessing the genuine article; it lies there (pointing to the garment with her finger) and will be lost forever to the Christian world, unless an explorer is sent out to recover it. Now let us leave this place."

Again I felt myself in motion, and on attempting to speak I found that the rate at which we were travelling had literally "taken the breath out of me." I saw nothing on my return journey but my companion's beautiful form and thoughtful face, from which I could not withdraw my gaze. At last, feeling that I was not flying so quickly, I again essayed to speak, and succeeded in jerking out, "What is the name of the person to whom I am indebted for so much valuable information? Really, I don't know how to thank you." "Well, don't bother trying, never mind the thanks: my name is Knowledge."

At the mention of her name I was seized with a burning desire to kiss her feet; and, as I rushed forward to carry out my intention, I stumbled and fell. After the stunned feeling passed off, I found myself lying on the hearthrug, as if I had just slipped off the chair. Everything was as I had left it. There lay the *Freethinker* by my side; on the table were my pipe and half-empty glass. I arose, and, clinking it against the amber of my pipe, drank to Knowledge.
JOHN SAMUEL.

AN ODD NAME — Of all the odd appellations that ever came to my notice is one I heard not long ago in a little town down in Mississippi. I was passing along a side street one day when a coal-black negress appeared from a neighboring doorway and shouted "Glory! Glory Hallelujah!" I thought the woman was crazy, and paused to see just what her form of dementia could be. Looking around a moment, she repeated the call, this time much louder than before. This time I heard the answer from behind a fence: "Yer I is, ma'am; what yo' want?" "Nebber yo' main' child, what I want; yo' cum yer!" Immediately after there appeared from behind the fence one of the blackest little pickaninnies I ever beheld; and upon inquiring I learned that the child had actually been christened "Glory Hallelujah Jones!"

RELIGIOUS PROSECUTIONS ABOLITION BILL.

A BILL TO ABOLISH PROSECUTIONS FOR THE EXPRESSION OF OPINION ON MATTERS OF RELIGION.

WHEREAS, certain laws now in force which were intended for the promotion of religion are no longer suitable for that purpose, and, whereas, great wrong and injury are often caused by the operation of such laws, and it is expedient to repeal them:

Be it therefore enacted by the Queen's most excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in the present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1. After the passing of this Act no criminal proceedings shall be instituted in any Court against any person for schism, heresy, blasphemous libel, blasphemy at common law, or atheism.

2 The Acts contained in the schedule to this Act are hereby repealed to the extent in the third column of that schedule mentioned.

3. Provided that nothing herein contained shall be deemed to affect the provisions of an Act passed in the nineteenth year of his late Majesty King George the Second, chapter twenty-one, intituled "An Act more effectually to prevent profane cursing and swearing."

4. This Act may be cited as the Religious Prosecutions Abolition Act, 1894.

SCHEDULE.

SESSION AND CHAPTER.	TITLE OR SHORT TITLE.	EXTENT OF REPEAL.
1 Edward VI. c. 1	An Act against such as shall unreverently speak against the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ, commonly called the Sacrament of the Altar; and for the receiving thereof in both kinds.	The whole Act.
1 Elizabeth c. 2, s. 3	An Act for the uniformity of Common Prayer and Divine Service in the Church, and the Administration of the Sacraments.	In section 3 the words, "shall in any interludes, plays, songs, rhymes, or by other open words, declare or speak anything in the derogation, depraving, or despising of the same book, or of anything therein contained, or any part thereof, or,"
9 & 10 William III. c. 32	An Act for the more effectual suppressing of blasphemy and profaneness.	The whole Act.
21 George III. c. 49	An Act for preventing certain abuses and profanations on the Lord's Day.	In preamble the words, "under pretence of enquiring into religious doctrines and explaining texts of Holy Scripture by persons unlearned and incompetent to explain the same, etc.;" and in section 1 the words, "or for publicly debating on any subject whatsoever, upon any part of the Lord's Day called Sunday."
6 George IV. c. 47	An Act for restricting the punishment of leasing, making, sedition, and blasphemy in Scotland.	So much of the Act as relates to the crime of blasphemy.

STRANGE!

It is strange that, if God so loved the world that he gave (to the hangman) his only begotten son, he could not give something to eat to the starving and something to wear to the ragged;—

It is strange that, if prayers are answered, no one gets what he wants in the world;—

It is strange that, with all the Churches to preach the gospel of salvation, so many prefer to be lost;—

It is strange that ministers, who work for the love of God, should ask how much salary they are to have for their labor;—

It is strange that a day that was made holy by God should not have some sign of sacredness about it;—

It is strange that men, who put their trust in God, should depend so much upon statutes;—

It is strange that, if Christianity makes the world better, so many Christians should be sent to the house of correction;—

It is strange that men, professing to follow the "prince of peace," should like so well to fight.—*Boston Investigator.*

ACID DROPS.

When the Atheist Shoemaker exposure was begun in the *Freethinker*, we printed as a heading, and put as a line on the contents-sheet—"The Lie Nailed Down at Last." To some people this was simply shocking. At least they said so. But lo and behold, only the other evening, a London newspaper—sober and Conservative—had a similar line on its contents-sheet in reference to the Hackney election. Will the Brighton oracle on "manners" send an admonition to the *Evening News*?

Mr. Fletcher Moulton, the Liberal candidate, contradicted what he called "lies" about himself, one of them being that he was an Atheist. This he regarded as the worst "lie" of all. It was the very same "lie" that the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes told of Charles Alfred Gibson, the pretended "Atheist Shoemaker."

No one will censure Mr. Moulton—not even Mr. Holyoake. All the sermonising about "manners" is dispensed to Freethinkers. A Christian may steal sheep, but a Freethinker's nose is snapped off if he only looks over the hedge.

The Dean of Worcester, at Westminster Abbey, waxed eloquent over the woes of the poor clergy. One curate had not eaten meat for six weeks. "My food," he said, "is almost as bad as a common laborer's." How shocking! But then, if God is no respecter of persons, why should a common laborer's food be any worse than a curate's?

The richer clergy have plenty, and to spare. Why, then, do they not help their poorer brethren? They know a trick worth two of that. The eloquent Dean of Worcester did not declare his intention of giving up half his income to find meat for curates. Oh no! He appealed to the Westminster Abbey congregation to do something. They were to put their hands in their pockets and pay the butcher's bill. Yet the Church of England is the richest ecclesiastical body in the world, and if its wealth were fairly allotted, there would be no need to cadge from laymen.

Mr. J. C. Kenworthy is a Christian Socialist, and has apparently been commissioned to write a series of articles on "The New Movement in England" for the *London Echo*. His first article is "Preliminary," and the sample does not tempt us to consume the bulk. Mr. Kenworthy mentions the Hebrews and the Greeks as "the greatest peoples of antiquity." He also talks about their "millenniums of history." If he can write thus loosely about matters of fact, his opinions are not likely to be very valuable. But what can be expected of a Christian Socialist? Generally speaking, he means well, but he is apt to be a sentimentalist.

"Tay Pay" O'Connor is a good fellow in his way, but he has been in contact with the Blarney Stone. He is a democrat; but how he loves to write about royal personages! Referring to the child of Louis Napoleon and Eugenie, Mr. O'Connor says that "He became the Prince Imperial, the name by which he won the affections of the English race, and bearing which he finally died fighting for our cause." All of which is sheer rubbish. The young fellow lived in England because it was the only possible place of exile for his father. He went out to Zululand to gain a little military experience, which would be serviceable to him as a pretender to the throne of France; and one day, as he went out to reconnoitre the Zulus, they reconnoitred him. *Voilà tout*. England did not love him, and he did not die fighting for our cause. He was serving his own ends all the while; and, like his pious mother, he did not mind bloodshed if it ministered to his glory.

The Church Defence Society is trying to raise £20,000 to oppose the Welsh Disestablishment Bill. The Duke of Westminster appeals for a further sum of £25,000 for the same object. According to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who endorses the Church Defence Society's appeal, the present is "the gravest issue" that has been before the Church "since its planting." This statement provoked the *Christian World* to inquire whether the Archbishop has forgotten the Reformation, Oliver Cromwell, James II., and Irish Disestablishment. Of course he has not forgotten them, and still he is right, for the present peril is the greatest of all

Irish Disestablishment was bad enough, but Wales is nearer home, and the disestablishment of the State Church in the principality is sure to lead to the doom of the State Church in England. This is seen by the Archbishop of Canterbury, who is anything but a fool; and he knows that, if the Church is disestablished by the Democracy, it can never be set up again; whereas, if one king oppressed it, there was always the chance of its being favored by another.

The discussion concerning foul contagion in the Communion cup is characteristic of this analytical, microbe-fearing age, says the *Boston Journal*. One clergyman believes in each communicant having a cup, as "every idea of delicacy and good breeding is in accord with this idea," which remark leads one to deplore the wretched ignorance of the laws of etiquette displayed by thousands of Christians, dead and living.

In darker days horrible vengeance used the sacrament as an instrument. It was believed that Henry VII. of Luxembourg was poisoned by receiving the Host from the hands of a monk corrupted by the Florentines. So it was believed that the sister of Clovis I. drank death at communion. And these were not the only instances of poisoning with the body, blood, bones, and divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

A correspondent of the *South Wales Daily News* reports a ridiculous occurrence in a church in East Glamorgan. The sexton bought some wine for the communion, and some vinegar for his own use at the same time. He took the vinegar to church, and this was duly consecrated and administered to the communicants. Their faces, on finding how sour their Savior had turned, may be imagined.

The Wesleyan Missionary Society reports that last year's receipts were £5,000 less than those of the previous year, and the adverse balance was £7300. There is "a balance on current account against the Society of £28,827." At this rate bankruptcy is only a question of time.

Dr. Alexander Robertson sends an important communication from Venice to the Working Men's Lord's Day Rest Association. "A profound impression has been caused in Venice," he says, "by the refusal of the Emperor William to attend the theatre on the Lord's Day." This is no doubt highly commendable on the part of the Emperor. But would it not be still more commendable if he devoted the money he is spending on costly new yachts to relieving the sufferings of some of his destitute subjects?

Pious William's spouse is fond of "spreading religion amongst the masses." That is, she finds the religion, only it won't spread. In five years, mainly through her zeal, no less than fifteen new churches have been erected in Berlin, though the old ones were always half empty. Eighteen more are to be built, and the Town Council is sick of granting sites.

It must be very gratifying to the Siberian prisoners to know that the Czar of Russia is very devout. He carries religion into every ceremonial of his official life. When the keel of his new yacht was laid recently, it began with religious ceremonies, in which the Czar kissed the prelate's hand and was sprinkled with holy water. After this he remained for about a quarter of an hour with the Empress engaged in silent prayer in front of the altar.

Professor Friendewald, of the Baltimore College of Physicians and Surgeons, would have stood a good chance of passing as a miracle worker, or being burnt as a wizard, in the good old days. By means of a flexible rubber tube, he passed a small electric lamp into the stomach of a patient, and, the room being darkened, over two hundred persons were able to watch the working of the patient's internal organs through the "transparency" created by the light in the abdominal wall.

A passion play, like that of Oberammergau, is to be produced at Hoeritz, in the centre of the great Bohemian forest. A great amphitheatre has been erected, and the living tableaux that make up the play have been perfected and completed. Additional tableaux will be: "The Deluge," "Joseph's Elevation," "The Birth of Moses," "Giving the Law at Sinai," and "The Flight from Bethlehem." It is

hoped that the sacred play will draw pilgrims all the summer. There are those who think that the elements of the gospel story pre-existed in the form of dramatic representations.

At Longchung, in China, a young fellow from Taimingfu, in Chihli, was practising at the last dates on the credulity of the people. He represents himself as possessing a bowl of marvellous virtues, which he proposes to take to Peking this year and present to the Empress-Dowager, whose birthday is to be celebrated this autumn. He represents himself as having lived at one time in Shansi, and having then been suddenly spirited away to the Ling mountains, where he dwelt eighteen years and made the acquaintance of the gods. Seated in the room which he has prepared for him, he "kowitzes" to all who come. The number of the deluded ones is immense; men, women, and children flock to him by the thousand. A wooden sword which he carries is able, he asserts, to dissipate all evil influences. In order to have him flourish this wonderful weapon, presents of cloth, food, and cash pour in upon him. Mothers take him their children to name, and consult him as to proper amulets to hang around their necks to keep off disease and ill-luck.—*Daily News*.

There are fashions, it seems, in pulpits, and many of them, to judge by Mr. Langston's article in *The Argosy*. This reverend gentleman tells a story of a vicar of a Cheshire parish, where he was about to preach, who had invented a contrivance on the screw principle, by which the clerk could either raise or lower the floor of the pulpit to any level. "During the hymn," said one who had had experience of this apparatus, "I felt myself 'screwed' for the first time, and the idiot did not stop until my knees were visible; when, seeing his mistake, I came down with a run which did not lessen the too audible titter or my own confusion and fright."

In another instance, three disused hassocks gave the occupant of the pulpit the proper elevation. These proved so unsteady that he was obliged to grasp the pulpit ledge with one hand, and during the sermon, needing this to find a reference, the top hassock glided backwards, and he suddenly disappeared with a bang, Bible and all. An amusing arrangement is stated to be still existing at St. James's Church, Bath. Before the sermon the pulpit, a veritable Jack-in-the-box, is wheeled to the east end of the nave, and after the "fifthly" has been disposed of, is duly trundled back again.

In the new chapel, St. George's, Hanover-square, is a tablet on which Mr. Malone records of his wife:—"She was hot, passionate, and tender; a highly accomplished lady, and a superb drawer in water-colors, which was (sic) much admired in the exhibition room in Somerset House some years past. For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

If the Jews go back to Jerusalem, it will be when they see the chance of making something out of it. Soon after the completion of the Jaffa-Jerusalem Railroad a regular real estate boom started in Jerusalem, and is still on. Thirty miles of a new railroad have been built from Haifa and Akka, on the Mediterranean, to Damascus, and Syrian real estate agents will soon offer gilt-edge property cheap. It will not be long before camels will be superseded by the American iron-horse rushing through the Jordan Valley with trains loaded with Syrian wheat for the seaboard.

In 1219 the German Emperor, Frederick III., issued a decree permitting the Jews to dwell in Nuremberg, and to take a percentage for the use of money. Inasmuch, he said, as this business is essential to the growth of commerce and the prosperity of the city, it will be a lesser evil and wrong for Jews to practise usury than for Christians, since the former are a stubborn and stiff-necked race, and if they persist in their perversity, as they probably will do, are doomed to be damned anyhow.

A Salvation handbill is sent us headed, "Which route will you take?" One side sets forth that the Salvation railroad runs from earth to heaven, the other advertises the "Damnation Railroad. The Quick Route to Hell. Many miles and much time saved by this route. Terrific scenery! Through Desol Swamp, Murderers' Gap, Hangman's Gorge, etc., reaching the Valley of the Shadow of Death at midnight, plunging its passengers into Eternal Woe." The one side has, for motto, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be

saved"; and the other, "He that believeth not shall be damned." This is the good old doctrine in all its pristine loveliness.

Here is a sample paragraph from the *War Cry*: "'I feel cold chills shivering all through me. Are you mesmerising me?' said a California infidel, who, out of curiosity, attended an Army meeting in a town he was visiting. 'The shivers' reached his inmost parts, and, thank God! he got saved, and has since been the means of leading a number of other sceptics to the Savior." It would probably be useless to inquire for particulars, even in California.

Mrs. Bliss, a Spiritist lady who has been lecturing at Brighton, is reported as saying "She thanked God that hell was depicted in the Bible as the bottomless pit, for the reason that those who were cast in it finally emerged into the Spirit-land." This is but one more instance that you can make whatever you please out of the Holy Book.

The Spiritists have now a slap at one of their revilers, the *Two Worlds* giving prominence to an apology made by the Rev. Thos. Ashcroft, of The Manse, West Leigh, near Manchester, to Mr. John Biddulph Martin, for aspersions on his wife.

Emerson said that a well-dressed woman had a sense of satisfaction and composure which religion was powerless to afford. We are not disposed to quarrel with this statement, for religion seems about the last thing to keep people quiet and dignified in embarrassing circumstances. How often do we read of a panic in some place of worship, where the children of God ought to feel particularly safe. Quite recently, for instance, at the Eglise des Carmes, Avignon, a young girl who was carrying a lighted taper set fire to some muslin drapery she was wearing. The flames were soon extinguished, and she was very slightly injured. But the congregation were so alarmed that a wild rush was made for the doors, and many persons were crushed and badly bruised in the struggle.

The departed dead, even before they are canonised as saints, are still supposed by Catholics to have great influence over mundane affairs. The Archbishop of Lyons, speaking last Sunday on Joan of Arc, whose *fête* the Catholics hope will supersede the celebration of the fall of the Bastille, said: "I am fully convinced that she who saved France four centuries ago will again be the instrument of our salvation. This is also the conviction of his Holiness the Pope." Doubtless the Archbishop and his Holiness mean that the name of Joan, like the names of Jesus, Mary, and God Almighty, serves excellently well to conjure with.

The Venerable Bede explained Noah's ability to complete so large a vessel as the ark, by supposing that he worked upon it during a hundred years. As to the provision of food, he declared there was no need of a supply for more than one day, since God could throw the animals into a deep sleep, which would also save trouble in regard to the sanitary arrangements.

The latest acquisitions at the Zoological Gardens, Regent's Park, are a couple of curious spiders known as "praying mantis." They are so-called from the habit of holding the forelimbs in a bent position, indicative of adoration. As usual, the word might just as well be spelled with an "e," for the praying manti is one of the most voracious of insects, dexterously catching all flies incautious enough to approach to witness its devotions.

Wirchand A. Gundhi, a Hindu, writing in the *Forum*, says that, notwithstanding the efforts of Christian missionaries, "not a single true Aryan has been converted in these three or four hundred years." This may be an exaggeration, but it shows the way in which natives look at conversions. Missionary successes among the hill tribes of India, only lower the status of Christianity in the Aryan Hindu mind.

A Kentucky editor published what he thought was a very appreciative and kindly obituary of a prominent citizen, but wound up with the statement that the deceased had "gone to a happier home." He is now defendant in a libel suit brought by the widow; and, moreover, is afraid the widow will assassinate him before the case can come to trial.

The *Children's World* and *Church Missionary*, for May, tells of a gospel humming-top, used by Mr. Etheridge, a missionary in Bengal, to collect a crowd. And "then a hymn is given out, and the gospel is preached." Doubtless the gospel is as puerile as the previous attraction.

The Bishop of Peterborough was one of the speakers at the Royal Academy Dinner. He began as follows:—"If dinner does not immediately stimulate the intellect, it undoubtedly quickens our moral faculties." Well, now, we don't care to discuss this point with the Bishop. We only beg to say that he differs very considerably from Jesus Christ, who recommended prayer and fasting. Undoubtedly, though, the Bishop's philosophy is the more agreeable, especially when you have several thousands a year to provide the dinners.

Lord Rosebery was less solemn than the Bishop of Peterborough; in fact, he poked sly fun at the story of the Tower of Babel. Referring to a tower which is being erected by a certain speculator, his lordship said: "It had apparently been abandoned at a lofty stage, possibly in consequence of the workmen having found that they spoke different languages at the point at which they had arrived." The academicians and their guests laughed at this sally, and perhaps the Bishop joined in the merriment.

Mr. George Rapkins, who was for ten years and a half on the staff of "General" Booth, and for two years chief statistician, has been confiding his experience to a *Pall Mall Gazette* interviewer. Mr. Rapkins resigned because he could not stand Booth's financial methods. During the two years in which he kept the figures the "Army" lost 6,000 members. During the same period the number of converted people who came up to the penitent form was 220,000. "These figures indicate incontestably," says Mr. Rapkins, "the flimsy nature of the spiritual work done by the Army. Obviously no permanent grip is obtained over the penitents. I believe a crash must come before two or three years have flown."

The Rev. H. W. Dick, of Manchester, is a zealous servant of the Lord. His speciality, perhaps, is infidel-slaying. He regards religion as a patent pill for all the ills that flesh (or the spirit) is heir to. Having observed that the Moss Side boys are very ill-behaved, he writes to the *Guardian* attributing their demoralisation to "the absence of religious teaching in Board schools." As luck would have it, he could not have taken a worse illustration; for, as Mr. Walter Payne points out, denominational schools have always held a monopoly of education in that district. Mr. Dick must try again.

Christ ought to follow Mr. Stead to Chicago. They have had the devil on trial there. He was indicted by the Salvation Army, who brought many witnesses who swore he was responsible for their crimes. Though he did not put in an appearance, a certain Mr. Barr offered himself as witness for the defence. This person said he considered the devil had been the greatest friend of the human family; and, when asked if he had known of the devil doing any harm, replied: "No, I have evidence that he has done good. He induced the occupants of the Garden of Eden to take the fruit that made them wise like God. If the devil had not made them take that fruit, we would all be as ignorant now as they were then—would not know when we are naked."

"I object," said Prosecutor Winchell. "What the witness says is only theory." "Then the whole Bible is a theory," retorted Barr. "These things are put down in the Bible as facts. God said the man who would eat that fruit should die that day. They ate that fruit, and Adam lived 930 years." The judge ruled that, as the Bible had been admitted as truth for the prosecution, it must stand for the defence. But having admitted that he had no personal knowledge of the devil, the evidence of Mr. Barr was struck out. The jury found Satan guilty, and all the Salvation Army have to do is to catch him and incarcerate him for the term of his natural existence.

A house-to-house visitation has been carried on at Pontypridd by the sky-pilots, with a view to inducing the people to attend church or chapel, since they can no longer compel them to come in. It was estimated that those outside the churches number 5,200, while those claiming to be

attendants are 11,000; the total church and chapel accommodation being 9,000. Some of the replies were disappointing; thus the reply from one house was, "We do not want anyone to visit us, as we are very happy as we are, and we want nothing to do with church or chapel." Another professed himself a member of the Anti-Poke-Your-Nose-Into-Other-People's-Business-Society, while a third "had been to church and had been disappointed." One of the men of God, speaking on the question, strongly denounced football as "the dullest and most senseless game the world had ever seen." Yet some prefer it to chapel-going.

Professor Garner is by no means a pioneer in the investigation of the simian language. Lady Burton records in her husband's biography that the late Sir Richard had forty monkeys, which sat down daily with him at dinner, and that he had quite mastered the elements of their speech. He had made a list of about sixty of their most familiar words; but the paper was lost in a fire.

The Irish Nationalists are to hold a demonstration in Liverpool on Whit-Sunday afternoon. Amongst the speakers Dr. Commins, M.P., is announced. It is quite right for Irish Nationalists to hold Sunday meetings, but quite wrong for Secularists. "The canting prigs of Liverpool" is now a very common phrase.

FARMER JOHN SMITH'S DYING SENTIMENTS.

"WAL, sonny, here I lie, an' they do say I be a dying. But bless you, Johnny, I've a got over far wuss trubbles an this yer, an' maybe I'll desavie 'em. They wants ter sen' fur doctor, an' laiyer, an' pairson. I'll have nowt to do wi' none o' un, as well you know, Johnny. I wants no pheesic, an' no law, an' no religion; I've allus looked after my own body, an' my own proputtly, an' my own mind. Pheesic! Gi' me a rump steak, washed down wi' mother's brew. What do I want wi' law? I can trust you to look after mother, sonny. All I have's her'n, an' yours after her. As to pairson, he knows better nor shove his nose here, where he ain't wanted. I found out long ago as he knows just as much about God an' another worruld as I do, an' that's just nothing at all, sonny. As for this worruld, I wouldn't give much for the judgment o' a man as thought to get rain by a-praying for't. Why, sonny, it's all one as believin' witchcraft, an' I mind the time when the boys pelted poor old Mother Bent 'cause they said she wor a witch.

"I says, sonny, now, as I've said afore, don't go for to put your trust in prayer. It's nigh as silly as cussing an' swearin'. You do what you knows the right thing. Do it well, an' stick to it; never mind what God or devil thinks on it. Use your own raison and your own conscience, sonny, and love your mother as long as she's left you, my lad. There's nothun better in this worruld nor love—unless it's hard wurruk. Wal, here I lie abed, an' I'd rayther be a lying on the greensward sucking in the sunshine; 'twould do me more good. When I hear the pigs a-grunting how I longs to go down an' feed 'em. There's nothing like joy in your wurruk, sonny. Why, boy, when the cattle stall was all flooded, an' I worked knee-deep in water, I delighted in it, 'cause I knew I was doing right. Wal, I got the screwmatics. Do you think God or devil sent that for helping the cattle? I don't. I tell you, Johnny, you do your bit o' wurruk, an' never mind about either God or devil."

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

A human legislature would be grossly unjust if it inflicted (assuming that it could inflict) infinite and endless torture, in such a way as to be least efficient. A judge would be grossly unjust if he let off a guilty man because he punished an innocent man. Therefore, my conscience tells me that a God who is supposed to act in this way does not deserve worship. If there be a day of judgment, I don't want God to forgive me, but to be perfectly fair to me; I don't want Him to acquit me because He has punished His Son; I shall not try to propitiate Him by sacrifices, any more than to bribe a human judge; and I shall hope that He will remember that, as He created me (more or less) He might have made me better, or put me out of the way of temptation.—*Leslie Stephen.*

SPECIAL.

Letters for the Editor of the "Freethinker" should be addressed in future to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

May 13, N.S.S. Conference, Liverpool; 20, Plymouth.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHAS. WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—May 13, N.S.S. Conference; 17 and 18, debate at Dundee; 20 and 27, Hall of Science, London; 30 and 31, debate at South Shields. June 3, South Shields; 4, West Auckland; 10, Sheffield; 17 and 24, Hall of Science. July 1, Liverpool; 8, Manchester.—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.

BRANCH SECRETARIES are requested to send their Lecture Notices *at once*, so that they arrive at 28 Stonecutter-street by first post on Saturday.

GEORGE WARD desires the name of the gentleman who handed him five shillings, some three weeks ago, at the London Hall of Science, for the Benevolent Fund. The name is requested for the purpose of acknowledgment.

LOUIS LEVINE (Charleston, S.C.).—Many thanks. American papers and cuttings always welcome. See "Sugar Plums."

W. JACKSON (Preston).—Mr. Wheeler will shortly take up the subjects you mention. Always pleased to receive suggestions.

W. E. COLEMAN.—Thanks for San Francisco papers. Shall be pleased to notice your book when it appears.

SAM STANDRING will conduct a party of Freethinkers over the Tower of London on Saturday, May 19. Meet at the gate at 3 p.m. sharp.

O. JORTAN.—Hardly full enough for comment. The reverend gentleman seems a jocular person, and after all it is better to amuse than to frighten a congregation.

G. PAINTER.—There is nothing new in the Rev. A. J. Forson's remarks. All the "advanced" clergy are now working that little "six chapters" dodge to reconcile Genesis and Science.

WALTER PAYNE.—Thanks. See paragraph.

STANLEY JONES, late secretary of the N.S.S., is very anxious to obtain clerical or similar employment in London. We shall be much pleased to hear from any Freethinker who can make him an offer.

T. E. M.—Verse received. Under consideration.

A. N. STAIGER.—See paragraph.

J. HART (Oardiff).—(1) Yes, there was a Hittite civilisation. But what of that? Who says that there is *no* truth in the Old Testament? Do your Christian friends mean that the book is inspired because it is sometimes right? (2) The precise words of the Christian Evidence lecturer would be necessary before we could reply.

J. E. STAPLETON.—Thanks for your kind letter. See paragraph.

NOAH LOT.—Sorry you think your verse marred by the omission of two lines.

LECTURE NOTICES, reports, and letters that can be dealt with by the sub-editor should be marked outside.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. Forder.

FRIENDS who send us newspapers would enhance the favor by marking the passages to which they wish to call our attention.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Der Lichtfreund—Boston Investigator—Open Court—Freidenker—Two Worlds—Der Arme Teufel—Western Figaro—Liberator—Liberty—Clarion—Flaming Sword—Liver—De Dageraad—Progressive Thinker—Post—Secular Thought—Truthseeker—Ironclad Age—Pioneer—Twentieth Century—Isle of Man Times—Straits Times—Crescent—Fur Unsere Jugend—Blue Grass Blade—Western Daily Press—American Sentinel—San Francisco Morning Call—Searchlight—Religio-Philosophical Journal—San Francisco Examiner—Brighton Herald—Children's World—San Francisco Chronicle—Daily Telegraph—South Wales Daily News—Rad—Spy.

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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.

Next week's *Freethinker* will contain a good report of the National Secular Society's Conference at Liverpool. We have been urged to enlarge the number and raise its price to threepence. But we hesitate to do this on such an occasion. What we shall do, in order to gain room for a lengthy report of the Conference, is to have recourse to smaller type for once.

Mr. Foote is improving in health, slowly but surely. He has had to return to London to see to matters preliminary to the Conference, and other urgent business. He hopes to preside at the Conference in a moderately efficient condition. His real time of rest and change for renovation will have to come afterwards. He intends to be very careful of himself during the whole of the summer.

This is our last opportunity of appealing to the Branches of the National Secular Society, and to individual members, to make the Liverpool Conference to-day (May 13) a great success. Up to the time of writing the delegation forms have come in rather slowly; but then they are generally late in arriving at headquarters. There is still time for Branches that are hesitating to make a final effort to be represented.

An old friend of Charles Bradlaugh, who is unable to attend these annual Conferences, has placed a cheque in the hands of Mr. Robert Forder, the honorary secretary, for the purpose of providing lunch for the delegates between the morning and afternoon sessions. The repast will be served, no doubt excellently, at the Victoria Hotel. Tickets will be provided the delegates by Mr. Forder at Liverpool, on Saturday night or Sunday morning.

In another column we print the full text of the Bill introduced by Mr. Samuel Storey, M.P., and ordered to be printed by the House of Commons. The Bill is also backed by Mr. Madden, Mr. Dalziel, Mr. Labouchere, and Mr. Lloyd-George. It is really the measure which was introduced by Mr. Bradlaugh in 1889. Mr. Storey has been urged to take charge of it by Mr. E. G. Taylor, a member of the Manchester Branch of the National Secular Society, who feels very deeply upon this subject, and has spent a good deal of time and money in promoting the measure, which will occupy the attention of the Liverpool Conference.

The Nottingham Branch, at its recent annual meeting, unanimously resolved—"That this meeting congratulates Mr. Foote on the thoroughness of his exposure of the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes's 'Atheist Shoemaker' myth."

Last Sunday was "Labor day" in Glasgow, which somewhat affected Mr. Watts's afternoon meeting; but in the morning he had a good audience, and in the evening the hall was filled. Our colleague had a most gratifying reception on each occasion. We are glad to hear that Glasgow will be represented at the Conference of the N.S.S. to-day at Liverpool.

On Monday last Mr. Watts commenced a three nights' debate in the City Hall, Glasgow, with Dr. Jamieson, upon "God and the Soul." We hope to give a report of the discussion in an early issue.

After attending the N.S.S. Conference Mr. Watts returns to Dundee to debate two evenings with the Rev. David Macrae upon the Bible and the "Christian Ideal." The rev. gentleman is the most popular minister in Dundee, thoroughly unorthodox, and an eloquent speaker. The discussion is causing considerable excitement, more than eight hundred tickets for the debate having already been sold. The friendly encounter takes place on the evenings of Thursday and Friday, May 17 and 18.

On Sunday evening Mr. T. Parris, who is always instructive, will lecture at the Hall of Science on "How to Make the Best Use of our Knowledge." We hope he will have a good audience.

We are glad to hear that Mr. George Jacob Holyoake is recovering from his severe attack of pneumonia. He appears to have been taken ill about the same time as Mr. Foote.

We were not aware of Mr. Holyoake's illness until after last week's *Freethinker* had gone to press, or we should have alluded to it earlier. His great age, and somewhat frail constitution, make all accidents dangerous; and after his complete recovery, which we hope will be soon, we trust that he will take great care of himself—or that, if he does not, those about him will insist on taking it for him.

Another convalescent is Mr. Bonner, the husband of Mrs. Hypatia Bradlaugh Bonner. We regret to hear that he has been dangerously ill with typhoid fever. He is now, however, well on the road to recovery, though he is still in hospital.

Chiefly through the generosity of Mr. Passmore Edwards, a Convalescent Home for the exclusive use of Club members is being prepared at Ramsgate. At the recent monthly meeting of delegates from the Clubs affiliated to the Club and Institute Union, the rules for this institution were discussed, one of which was that "religious meetings and services" should be held in connection with the Home. This was opposed by Mr. W. Kimber, a Secularist, representing the Bermondsey Gladstone Club. He was howled at and hooted, but he won in the division by 49 to 32 votes. This is an excellent outcome of the late Freethought agitation in Bermondsey.

The Gladstone Club has also withdrawn from an Association formed to select candidates for the School Board. There were chosen, a workman and two ministers. The Gladstone Club delegate could not stand this disproportion. He withdrew, and the Club endorsed his action.

Mr. Moncure Conway recently lectured before the Rev. Dr. Clifford's congregation on "Thomas Paine." The incident shows how the principles of Thomas Paine are permeating the Christian mind. The author of the *Age of Reason* may yet be a saint in the Christian calendar. Who knows? Is not Darwin buried in Westminster Abbey?

The new edition of the "Lie" pamphlet—Mr. Foote's exposure of the Atheist Shoemaker story and its author, the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes—has been in abeyance for some time. It was nearly completed when Mr. Foote was taken ill; in fact, it was all in type with the exception of a few pages required to bring the exposure right up to date. It will be finished as soon as possible, and a supply will be printed as soon as the present stock is exhausted. Those who can distribute copies to advantage need not hesitate to apply to Mr. Forster. In particular, we hope our friends will keep an eye on Mr. Hughes's provincial meetings (they have been well worked in London), and distribute copies of the pamphlet among "the faithful." When the new edition is fairly in circulation we shall give an account of the income and expenditure of the "Lie Fund."

Owing to the editor's illness, the *Freethinker* is somewhat late in bowing to a new comer in the field of Freethought journalism. We refer to the *Truth Seeker*, a penny monthly, edited by Messrs. John Grange and A. B. Wakefield. From the nature of the case, we are not in a position to criticise this venture. All we can say is that we have long known its conductors as zealous advocates of Secularism. We can only introduce it to the notice of the Freethought public. The rest depends upon itself. Only by itself can any journal be written up or written down. We may add that, in addition to articles by the editors, the first (May) number of the *Truth Seeker* contains contributions by Mrs. Bradlaugh Bonner, Stanley Jones, Alvan Blake, J. G. Fisher, and Henry Smith. Our young contemporary has our best wishes for a long career of honor and usefulness.

The late Mr. Charles Bradlaugh was a much-maligned man, but the writer can speak from personal experience of his kindness of heart and broad sympathy with all classes of human beings. Not only was he ever ready to serve those who sought his advice or influence, but his purse was always open to all kinds of need. At a very busy political time he never ceased to exert himself until he had obtained some employment for a poor country girl who was alone in London.—*Tit Bits*.

The *New York Times*, in an article on the late Robertson Smith, notices the progress of heresy in America. It says that the Tübingen school begat Robertson Smith, Robertson

Smith begat Dr. Briggs and Heber Newton and other clergymen who have of late years been troubling the peace of American churches. Professor Smith, however, was by no means a blind follower of his German guides. He deserves credit for original research and original thought, and he has left in his writings a valuable legacy to English and American students of the Bible and of Semitic history.

The Brooklyn Philosophical Association have resolved to renovate and beautify Thomas Paine's monument on the farm given to him by the American Government at New Rochelle, and on May 30 (Decoration Day) an excursion will run to New Rochelle for those desirous of witnessing the ceremony.

Our Dutch contemporary, *De Dageraad* for May, gives the place of honor to Herr ten Bokkel's learned paper on "The Origin of Religious Worship." We are pleased to note that there is now a Dutch translation of Herr Specht's work on *Theology and Science*.

The Comité d'Etudes Morales propose to publish two works—one, Elementary Lessons on Secular Morality; the other on the Astronomical Origin of the World.

Professor Bain has issued a new edition, the fourth, of *The Senses and Intellect*. It has a new preface.

In the May *Fortnightly Review* Professor Karl Pearson says (p. 562): "The worst types of prejudice can only be combatted by ridicule which it is easy to call flippancy;" and in a footnote to this passage remarks: "The best, indeed the only, argument for the man who believes in Jonah and the whale does seem a picture of the prophet disporting himself inside the cetacean." Our readers are aware that the *Freethinker* not only pursues this policy, but actually supplied the illustration mentioned by Professor Pearson.

In the New York *Popular Science Monthly*, for May, Dr. A. D. White says: "With many other features in the Hebrew legends evidently drawn from the Chaldæan, the account of the creation in each is followed by a legend regarding 'the fall of man' and a deluge, many details of which clearly passed in slightly modified form from the Chaldæan into the Hebrew accounts."

Under Mr. Protheroe the *Quarterly Review* is being lifted a little out of its old Conservative rut. For the first time it speaks with fairness, even with favor, of the higher criticism of the Old Testament, and, in fact, recommends the abandonment of the outworks of bibliolatry in order to defend the citadel.

Mr. George Ward has handed us over the sum of one pound for the National Secular Society. It is the profit realised up to date on a handsome pendant monogram of the N.S.S., which is sold in three styles—at 1s., 3s. (silver), and 7s. 6d. (gold). Branches that have not returned samples, etc., are requested to do so at once, so that the accounts may be cleared up. Mr. Ward should be addressed, for this purpose, at the London Hall of Science.

Mr. George Ward has also, at the request of several friends, had some excellent photographs done of the late Miss Robins, who was such a zealous, and indeed invaluable, worker for the Freethought cause in London. They are sold at one shilling by Mr. Forster, and at the Hall of Science bookstall. Many of our readers, we should imagine, would like to have the portrait of one whom Mr. Foote, in his funeral address over her grave, called "a true servant of humanity." It should be added that Mr. Ward is not seeking any profit. The surplus of proceeds over the cost of production will be handed over to the N.S.S.

THE CONFERENCE.

Some members of the Liverpool Branch will be present at the Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne's-street, from two o'clock on Saturday till nine or ten o'clock.

Parties who wish to be met at the station should send a post-card, addressed "Secular Society," at the hall.

Those requiring hotel accommodation should write at once to Mr. Hall, 20 Montague-street, Liverpool.

The stewards will each wear a pansy as a button-hole.

ABSURD BIBLE STORIES.

THE Bible says that the earth brought forth grass and herb-yielding seed, and tree-yielding fruit, before the sun existed (Gen. i. 12); that Cain had a wife before there was a woman on the earth, except his mother (Gen. iv. 17); that "when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, they bare children to them."

It is said in the book of Ezekiel that God visited harlots, waited on them, and entered into covenant with him, and they bare him sons and daughters (Ezek. xvi. 7, 8, 20-26; xxiii. 2-5).

The Bible is crowded with stories of robbery and murder, said to be expressly commanded of God. As samples, see the following:—Ex. xxxii. 27; Num. xxxi. 7, 17; Deut. xxv. 19; 1 Sam. xv. 2, 3; Ezek. ix. 6; Luke xix. 27. See also God's law how to satisfy a jealous husband (Num. v. 11-31). Read the account, and see how God treats married women. Read all these passages here referred to, then ask yourself how it can be possible for anyone to believe that God would have inspired men to so terribly blacken his own character that it even pains the clergy to have the matter investigated.

God is represented in the Bible as a bloodthirsty and barbarous murderer. (See Deut. xxviii. 53-57; xxxii. 22-27, 42; 1 Sam. vi. 19, 20; 2 Sam. xxiv. 15; Isa. ix. 19-21; Jer. xix. 9.) And the priests hold that the Bible is true, yet they teach people contrary to what the Bible teaches, and they assume that God is good, and that the Devil is bad; but if the passages above referred to were ascribed to the latter, then there would be sufficient reason to pronounce him bad; but since they are ascribed to God, the Devil is far the more respectable of the two, for there is no account that he has ever taken anyone's life or anyone's property; and there is no proof that he ever told a single lie. The one laid to him in the Garden of Eden was no lie at all; it proved true, every word. Yet he is called a liar and a murderer, without a particle of proof to rest upon. Nevertheless, he is said to be the father of those Jews that believed on Christ (John viii. 31-44). And so it says in Luke vi. 36, that they should be merciful as their father.

Now, since God's chosen people (especially those who are said to have believed on Christ) are declared to be the children of the Devil, then whose children are we to suppose those to be who were unbelievers? It says in John, "Neither did his brethren believe in him" (John vii. 5).

And so the Bible teaches that the earth has four corners (Isa. xi. 12; Rev. vii. 1); that it rests on pillars (1 Sam. ii. 8; Job ix. 6); that the sun runs around it (Ecl. i. 5; Psalm xix 5, 6) and moves forward and backward (Isa. xxxviii 8; 2 Kings xx. 11); that a man built a city ten years after he is said to have been dead and buried (1 Kings xvi. 6, 8; 2 Chron. xvi. 1); that one man was two years older than his father (2 Chron. xxi. 5-20; xxii. 1, 2); that a father and his son were both of one mother (1 Kings xv. 2, 8-10).

The writers of the books of Matthew and Luke have attempted to give a genealogy of Christ. Although both claim he was begotten by the Holy Ghost, yet they also both claim that Joseph was his father. However, they must have been ignorant concerning Joseph's descent, because when the name of Joseph's father is required they seem to have lost the track, and each makes his own selection of names for his list. Matthew says Jacob begat Joseph (Matt. i. 18), and Luke says it was Heli (Luke iii. 23). And in this manner they proceed, disagreeing till they reach David; and no doubt his reputation was familiar to both writers, so his name was enrolled in both lists. And during that period, from Joseph to David, Matthew has on his list twenty-seven names which are supposed (by Christians) to be the exact number, and the proper names in their right places; and within the same period Luke has forty-two names on his list, and which are also supposed to be the exact number and the right names. Yet only two names are alike in the two lists—that is, from Joseph to David.

Now, since these two writers were unable to trace

the lineage of Christ even to his grandfather, without making such blunders, how then, can we suppose that they could make a true record of his more remote ancestors?

If God inspired men to write an account of Christ's lineage, why did he not do it before he had forgotten most of the names of the ancestors? Had it been written while Joseph lived, he might, at least, have told them the name of his father.

The probability is that so long a period of time had passed when the gospels were written that all traces of Christ's lineage were lost, and that the whole story regarding Christ and the miraculous conception was an afterthought, the fabrication of designing priests.

The writer of the book of Matthew has made up a genealogy of the Jewish kings down to David, except those he has left out by mistake. It says in chapter iv. 8 that Joram begat Ozias (Uzziah), who, as stated in the Old Testament, was not born until sixty-one years after Joram was dead and buried, and during that period three generations were produced, and their names Matthew has omitted. They were Ahaziah, Jehoash, and Amaziah. Uzziah is also called Azariah, the son of Amaziah (see 2 Kings xv. 1, 2, 7, 32; 2 Chron. xxvi. 1, 3, 23; 1 Chron. iii. 11, 12). Read these passages that you may form an idea of; what credit you can give to this gospel writer.

The gospel makers tell us that Christ was of the seed of David. However, they contradict themselves on that point, since they tell us that the Holy Ghost was his father. And as they have failed to give us any account of his mother's pedigree, then what evidence is there left to ascertain the true descent of Christ? Not any at all.

It is not Joseph's pedigree we want, as that has nothing to do with the ancestry of Christ, unless Joseph was his natural father; if so, then his divinity is disproved. Yet it cannot be proved that he was a descendant from David, especially since the genealogical lists are contradicted in the Old Testament; besides, they contradict each other in every particular, and are consequently unfit to prove anything, least of all God's descent from David. If Mary was the only earthly parent of the Son of God, we should have had her genealogy instead of that of Joseph. The fact is, that a true genealogy of Christ is nowhere to be found.

As to who was the real father of Christ, his mother's opinion ought to have more weight on that subject than the opinion of others. But there is no evidence to the effect that she believed her boy was the son of a ghost. It says in Luke ii. 41, 42, that "his parents went to Jerusalem every year [not to Egypt as Matthew says], and when he was twelve years old" his parents lost sight of him at the feast of the passover, and with their utmost effort could not find him till after three days; and when they found him his mother said to him (verse 48), "Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."

But Mary's testimony has been of no use to the Church, as there could be no money in it, therefore it has not been acceptable. Because a story about a son of Joseph would cause no better result for impostors than a story about any other man's son. So that, had not the ghost story been invented, it would not have been practicable for designing priests to obtain money from people by offering them Christ's security, notwithstanding there is not a priest living who knows whether either Christ or the Holy Ghost ever existed; and by way of proof they can adduce no better evidence than the tale of a dream. A. JACOBSON.

GILLES DE RAYS.

The following were the last words of Gilles de Rays, the original Bluebeard (of whom an account appeared in the *Freethinker* for March 11). This monster, who had butchered nearly one hundred children, thus addressed his accomplice Prelati at the place of execution: "Farewell, friend Francis! In this world we shall never meet again; but let us place our hopes in God; we shall see each other in Paradise" (*Mackay's Popular Delusions*, vol. i, p. 131). What a miracle of divine grace! A (converted) Atheist Shoemaker could not have made a better ending.

A MODERN PARABLE.

It was the chilliest night I had experienced that autumn. The wind was sweeping along the streets in gusts sharp enough to pierce one through, and every now and again a sprinkle of rain swept down and was flung against the panes with an angry rattle. When I got up to look out I saw the gas-light dimly reflected from the shining wet thoroughfare. The night overhead was dark as pitch. How drear and wretched it looked—ugh! I shivered and retreated hastily to my cosy chair by the hearth. The fire was burning cheerily, fizzing and making a resinous splutter as the faggots glowed into ruddy brands in the heat. Looking into the clear, intense heart of the logs, I nestled closer in my chair, and blessed myself that I was not out in the cold *that* night. As for those who were, if I did spare a thought for them, it was to wonder, in a casual way, how they survived, and to feel glad that I was not one of them. I wondered if, suppose, I were there, would the universal law of things insist that one of them should be here, so as, somehow, to preserve the balance of comfort and misery? and if I *were* there, would I feel the discomfort more than the man whose place I should take? But here my stretched imagination refused to comprehend the idea, and I gave up the attempt to reason it out.

I took up a book and lazily commenced to read; but, somehow, I was not in the mood for reading, and I soon laid it down again. I should have liked to have fallen into a drowsy reverie. But again I found that I could not compose my mind, or follow any train of ideas continuously or for long; all my meditations were by fits and starts, and my dream was interrupted by sudden turns of thought. I began to be aware that my brain was phenomenally restless, and by-and-bye I sprang to my feet and paraded the room uneasily.

I drew the blind again and looked out; what a wretched night! The sky lowered heavy and wrathful; inky-blue spaces appeared, surrounded by clouds of the most sable blackness. The rain still came down in the wind, which itself sounded between the houses, over the pavement, round the corner in long thrilling exhalations—horrible! Once again I turned gratefully to the warm room and the firelight.

But it was no use; I could not rest. Some mysterious inner consciousness kept me from dozing or sitting quietly with a book as I could do on most evenings. On this night of all others, when one might have fancied I would be content and happy to sit still, I could not settle myself to anything. After peering out of the window several times I resolved that I must follow my inclination and *go out*. Whatever evil spirit was upon me would not be resisted or quieted until I had plunged into the darkness and dreariness of the streets.

There was no help for it; a command was laid upon me which I must obey. I began to believe in messages from the unseen, and other occult ideas, as I shook myself into my great-coat. Or was it merely that my body and brain were heated by the busy thoughts of the day, and craved the coolness even of the inclement wind?

I pulled the hall-door behind me and stepped on to the footway. Whither now? Anywhere my steps would take me; and mechanically I began to walk along, though the direction was opposite to that in which either friends or ordinary places of amusements lay. I walked smartly, like one on important business, and by-and-bye I found myself approaching a very poor and squalid part of the city.

The houses were mean and small and huddled together, as if for mutual support in a hard and oppressive world. The fronts were dingy and the roofs uneven, and from the broken and burst pipes dribbles and streams of water were falling on the flags. Before one of these houses, a forbidding-looking tenement, with blank, unilluminated windows, I stopped as though I knew my journey to be ended. I pushed the door with an assured hand; it yielded and swung open before me.

Peering in, I could see the foot of a steep flight of uncarpeted steps some way back in the darkness. Never pausing to think how unusual, nay, perhaps dangerous, an action I was performing, I went in, laid to the door, and mounted the crazy stairs. Up I went, with one or two stumbles, and, having finally gained a lobby, I stood before a door, under which a faint light was shining.

Here for a moment I paused, and my heart beat high. I cannot tell what excitement thrilled me, whether of fear or of indefinite expectation; but my hand shook as I rested it against the panel. What was I to see, or whither did this mysterious influence lead me? But in the night, in the darkness, in the chill breath of the air, I seemed to hear and feel that I was being urged on, irresistibly and uncontrollably, not of my own volition.

I should, perhaps, explain that I am not usually thought of a wildly excitable or enthusiastic temperament. I am considered a hard man on change, and I never had reason to suspect that the imaginative side of my nature was abnormally developed.

Still I paused on the threshold, oppressed by a sense of hidden mystery, which I knew the opened door would in a moment reveal. As I stood, the front door of the tenement, which I had not latched, seemed to be blown open, for a

violent gust of wind rushed round me murmuring hoarsely, and as it whirled about my ears it seemed to whisper pressing, eagerly: Go! go! go! With a great effort I pressed the door until it burst wide open, revealing the chamber within.

The room I saw was a bare, unfurnished, and dingy apartment. The floor was unwashed and rotted, broken in parts, and the crevices at the foot of the walls were pierced and gnawed into holes, as by rats or mice. The soiled white-washed walls were bare; the room was empty save for a plank-bed with a torn straw mattress, which stood towards the further end. Something lay thereon. Then, as I looked, I began to be aware of a strange and wonderful presence—a sight grew upon my eyes which filled me full of awe and astonishment.

At the head of the wretched pallet stood a figure, gigantic, unearthly—a sublime, serene, white-robed form like that of an inhabitant of some nobler sphere than ours. I trembled as I stood there, and would have fallen to my knees, but that I saw the majestic countenance was benign and unterrifying. The look upon the seraphic face was one of calm sorrow; it stood in solemn stillness as though mourning, not bitterly or passionately, but tenderly and quietly. It was keeping watch and ward over the figure on the bed—a little figure, a tiny heap—something, I saw, that was dead.

As I looked the great spirit fixed its eyes upon me and calmly beckoned me to draw near. Unresistingly I came forward and looked upon the bed. I saw a small chilled face and tiny up-curved hands. It was the face of a young and tender child, little more than a baby in years. Then I raised my eyes to the awful figure that stood above it; but it pointed again to the child, and said, in gentle tones, "Look again!" Obediently I looked at the rigid little form, and then I noticed that the face and arms and shoulders were covered with livid, deep, and cruel marks. I saw a cut across the cheek, a bruise above one of the closed lids, a thin blue streak about the neck. Shuddering, I turned to the spirit. "It has been done to death," I said, in a hushed breath of awe. And the angel answered, "It is even so."

A great stillness brooded over the chamber; no sound came from the wind or the people in the streets. I was there alone with the spirit. It still stood by the bed-side, with its broad, wonderful pinions over-shadowing the child, and with loving, calm looks it dwelt on the young, dead face.

I gazed long and silently upon it; but its form remained unchangeably the same; its eyes drooped; its hands were locked together, and its glorious head was bowed. What was it that I should do? Whilst the angel maintained its immutable silence, what was I to hear? A sudden rushing sound aroused me, and, looking around, I saw a man sidle, with a fearful and tremulous aspect, into the room. Behind him came another superhuman and portentous figure. It was unlike the spirit by the bed; its glance was haughty and fierce; its face glowed with a terrifying look, and it carried in its resistless hand a naked sword.

When the man came before the bed he stopped and trembled, and the angel of wrath pointed to it with his brand.

"Why do you bring me here?" asked the man, in hurried accents. "I—I didn't do it."

"Did you punish the crime of the murderers?" asked the fierce angel, sternly.

"Y-y-yes," stammered the man; "to be sure I did."

"How have you done so?" asked the angel; and its lips were immovable as adamant.

"I administered justice to the criminal," said the man; and I noticed that it was only his immediate fear of the revenging spirit that kept him from being pompous.

"Man," said the angel, "mock me not with falsehood; the child has *not* had justice; its blood yet cries for vengeance. It rested with you to punish the murderers, and how has this been done? Is a child's life no more precious than a dog's? Is a child's heart harder and more unimpressionable than iron that it may not feel the cruelty shown it by those who should love and cherish it best? Answer me this question."

"No," said the man. "Oh no—certainly not."

"Again I ask you, have you shown justice to the child?" said the angel.

The little man began to wag his head and assume a judicial air. He was evidently carried away by his imagination, and had forgotten the sword. He seemed to pull up gradually, frog-like. "State the case," said he, magisterially.

"The case is well known," replied the angel; "look at this mark, and at this, and at this. What punishment do you allot for these wrongs?"

"We gave a very severe sentence—*once*," replied the little man, complacently; "a whole year—twelve calendar months, with such labor as the medical man should think fit for the criminal's health."

"Let me hear another instance," said the angel.

"There was a case of a child being tied up to a beam and flogged, and left there all night; also forced to swallow brine, soap-suds, and eat a candle; pepper also thrown in the eyes; immersed for a long time up to the neck in water—in cold weather. Probable intent: to kill, and pecuniarily benefit the guardian."

"And how was this atoned for?"

The little man wagged his head ponderously. "We fined the perpetrator of these acts ten pounds—ten pounds sterling—a large sum for one of the poorer classes."

"Let me hear another case," said the angel, in the same stern monotone.

"There was a case in which a child's body was bruised and lacerated. Deposition made that it had been beaten with the leg of a chair. Bad burn on chest; burn two inches long on right arm; bumps and cuts on head. Died of blood-poisoning from neglected wounds."

"What retribution did the law, through your hands, exact?"

The little man looked a trifle sheepish even in his pomposity.

"We—very severely—censured the defendant."

"It is enough!" said the angel. "At the dreadful bar of the country's law you have dared to stand, mocking with hollow shams the sacred name of Equity. In the tribunals where righteous laws are said to be enforced you have dared to sit, degrading the temple raised to Justice with your presence. You have made her palaces the palaces of untruth and iniquity. You have profaned her hallowed courts with falsehood and the mockery of right; and none the less that it has been shown in regard to the feeblest of human creatures. How long shall this be suffered? How long shall you unworthily usurp that high position?"

Then I knew that the name of the man was THE MAGISTRATE.

At those stern words the little man seemed suddenly to collapse; but he pulled himself together to make a speech for his defence.

"The authority of the parent or guardian over the child is a sublime right," he began, "and its punishment is entrusted to their hands. Does not Solomon say—"

But the angel cast such a look of withering scorn upon him that he stopped suddenly, abashed and speechless.

And the calm, white-robed angel stood by the child's head, mourning, serene, motionless, and her kind wings still overshadowed it. I knew her then, and I said within myself, "She is the children's angel—the bright humanitarian spirit."

The fierce angel raised his keen sword and said to the man, "Go hence, lest I strike you before your time comes; but know that you shall be changed, or the law taken from your unworthy hands."

The man, not daring to appeal from that sentence, crept from the room with a mean and cowering aspect.

Then said the mighty avenging angel, "I will go forth and wake the world from its lethargy, for it is decreed that the child's bitter days shall pass, and that it shall have the privilege of law and the loving care of men."

I beheld then, as in a vision, the strong angel going forth to wake the earth. And the justice-loving spirit of the angel was transfused into men, so that there arose a cry, "Justice! justice for the child!" I saw men gathering in great multitudes and surging in masses through the thoroughfares, and still the cry rose and swelled louder and yet more loud, "Justice! justice for the child!"

The crowds gathered before the door of a great temple on the banks of a river; but the door could not be opened for a vast iron bar that held it fast; and the name of the bar was LAW.

The crowd gathered greater and thicker, and they came with hammers and levers to beat down the door, still crying, "Justice! we will have justice for the child!" And the cry rose up until it smote the face of heaven, and seemed to be echoed back from thence, serenely and triumphantly, "Justice! we will have justice for the child!"

Then at length the bar gave way with a mighty crash, and the people thronged in victoriously.

Again I saw them surging to the law-courts, but the doors were also close shut and fastened with great bands that could not be broken, and the name of the bands was RED TAPE.

But the men had forged for themselves a lever with which they forced the door, and they entered with jubilant shouts, crying, "We will have justice for the child!"

And when I turned I saw the angel still standing over the bed, and her wings were spread lovingly, protectingly, over the little dead form; and when the people had gained entrance into the law-courts she stooped down and lifted it gently and caressingly, laying its head upon her breast, and holding it close in her strong arms; then she rose and floated upward from the bare, soiled room, and from the cold wind, and from the chilling rain, and from the world's un pitying eyes, and up and over upward until both were lost to sight.

And I was left alone gazing upon the empty pallet in the dingy, rotted chamber.

T. E. M.

"Mamma," said Flossie, "when I was a baby did I come from heaven?" "Yes, dear." "And will I go to heaven when I die?" "Yes, I hope so." "Well," said Flossie, admiring herself in the mirror, "I guess they won't know me when I get back."

THE A 1 PUZZLE.

THE Father, Son, and Holy Spook,
As evening was advancing,
To Folly's Hall a growler took,
To see sweet Yum-Yum dancing.
When snug within their private box
They each arrayed their glasses,
To scrutinise the pretty frocks
That decked the lovely lasses.

"By holy Mo.," the phantom cried,
"She dances like a fairy;
Such lovely limbs I've never spied
Since I got mashed on Mary.
I'll go and tell her straight away
How she has raised a blizzard;
How Cupid holds tyrannic sway
Within my godly gizzard."

Up jumped the dad: "Sit still, you dunce,
And cease your silly fooling;
You know how you begot me once
And queered my people's schooling:
That three are one, and one is three,
The parsons all are preaching;
But how they work it few can see,
For all their pious teaching.

"I'm you, you're me, and young J. C.
Is both of us together;
You're him, he's me, I'm all the three;
Then some bring in the mother.
She by the half of me one night
Was visited in slumber,
And I was born in sorry plight,
And thus increased my number.

"I'm number one, he's number two;
Yet you called on the lady.
I'm his papa; then who are you?
For still he calls me daddy.
I must consult some holy man
To work me out the puzzle;
I've quite forgot the blooming plan;
Come on, let's have a guzzle."

T. CLARK.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

COUNCIL MEETING, May 3, 1894. Present—Mrs. Fisher, Miss Vance; Messrs. W. H. Baker, J. Neate, Rowden, Schaller, Renn, Ward, A. B. Moss, J. M. Wheeler, W. Heaford, G. H. Baker, Wood, Warren, Webb; and G. W. Foote in the chair.

The minutes of the previous council having been read and confirmed, reports were made *re* Concert and Ball, Waltham-stow Lectures, etc.—Application from Lambeth Branch postponed till next meeting.—Details *re* Excursion also postponed in the interim; delegates to consult their Branches as to mode of excursion.—The Lecture list for June was ordered to be printed.

Mr. Foote then vacated the chair, and Mr. A. B. Moss presided for the remainder of the meeting.—The election of secretary was the next business; there were four applications, but one was ruled out of order through informality. The remaining candidates were Miss Annie Brown, Messrs. Henley and Pack; the voting resulted in the election of Miss Brown.

Branch secretaries are reminded that particulars of June lectures should be sent as early as possible to the Hon. Sec.—MISS ANNIE BROWN, 22 Pembridge-road, Notting Hill, W.

The two principal sources of superstition are ignorance and danger; ignorance keeping men unacquainted with natural causes, and danger making them recur to supernatural ones. Or, to express the same proposition in other words, the feeling of veneration, which, under one of its aspects, takes the form of superstition, is a product of wonder and of fear; and it is obvious that wonder is connected with ignorance, and that fear is connected with danger. Hence it is that whatever in any country increases the total amount of amazement, or whatever in any country increases the total amount of peril, has a direct tendency to increase the total amount of superstition, and therefore to strengthen the hands of the priesthood.—*Buckle's "History of Civilisation."*

A banker lately died at Paris who was noted for miserly habits. On his death-bed he noticed that a priest was comforting his wife, and, summoning up his last remaining strength, he called to her, "Listen, my dear; if he is trying to induce you to have masses said for my soul, so that I may get out of purgatory the sooner, it is not at all necessary. I will bide my time!"

OBITUARY.

It is with sincere regret that I have to announce the death, at the age of eighty, of a veteran in the Freethought army, Mr. Lot Hill, of Ealing. Mr. Hill was for many years a bookseller at Bridewell-alley, Norwich, and his shop was noted as the rendezvous for all the ardent spirits of rationalism and progress during the troublous times of Robert Owen and the Chartist agitation. Some years ago he removed to the metropolis, and down to a few weeks before his death was a constant contributor to local newspapers on any subject relating to Freethought and progress. He had been in feeble health for several years; but his intellect was clear, and he maintained his cherished convictions to the last. Those who had the pleasure of knowing him will agree that we have lost a courageous soldier, a faithful friend, a good man. He had *Christian* burial.—R. FORDER.

HOW TO HELP US.

- (1) Get your newsagent to take a few copies of the *Freethinker* and try to sell them, guaranteeing to take the copies that remain unsold.
- (2) Take an extra copy (or more), and circulate it among your acquaintances.
- (3) Leave a copy of the *Freethinker* now and then in the train, the car, or the omnibus.
- (4) Display, or get displayed, one of our contents-sheets, which are of a convenient size for the purpose. Mr. Forder will send them on application.
- (5) Distribute some of our cheap tracts in your walks abroad, at public meetings, or among the audiences around street-corner preachers.
- (6) Get your newsagent to exhibit the *Freethinker* in the window.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 7, musical selections: 7.30, Touzeau Parris, "How to Make the Best Use of our Knowledge" (admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.).

Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, Dr. T. R. Drysdale, "The Population Question" (free). Monday and Tuesday, at 8, social gatherings (free). Wednesday at 8, dramatic club.

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

East London—Swaby's Coffee House, 103 Mile End-road: 8, W. H. Smith, "Egypt: Ancient and Modern."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.30, G. H. Baker, "The Coming Creedic Crash." Tuesday, at 7, C. Cohen will lecture.

Camberwell (Station-road): 11.30, C. Cohen, "Evolution of the Devil."

Edmonton—Angel-road: 7, A. B. Moss, "The Trial of Christianity."

Finsbury Park (near the band-stand): 11, G. H. Baker, "The Fighting Policy at the coming School Board Election"; 3, E. Calvert, "Is the Bible Reliable?"

Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 7, St. John will lecture. Corner of the Grove: Thursday, at 8, Harry Courtney will lecture.

Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30 and 3.30, St. John will lecture. Wednesday, at 8, St. John will lecture.

Kingsland—Ridley-road (near Dalston Junction): 11.30, Stanley Jones, "God, Man, and Design."

Leyton—High-road (near Vicarage-road): 11.30, W. Heaford, "What is Christianity?"

Mile End Waste: 11.30, W. J. Ramsey, "Hell."

Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Exodus from Egypt: is the Story True?"

Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 11.30, James Rowney, "Christ's Teaching Opposed to Morality"; 3.30, F. Haslam, "Why I am a Secularist"; 5.30, Messrs. Gooderich and Paul will lecture.

Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15, A. B. Moss will lecture; 3.15, C. Cohen will lecture.

Wimbledon—The Broadway (near the Railway Station): 7, Stanley Jones, "The Story of the Creation."

Walthamstow—Markhouse-road: 6.30, W. Heaford, "Theistic Difficulties."

Wood Green—Jolly Butchers'-hill: 11.30, E. Calvert, "Is the Bible Reliable?"; 7, J. Rowney, "The Sermon on the Mount." Wednesday, at 8, C. Cohen, "The Fate of Religion."

COUNTRY.

Derby—Friar Gate Coffee Tavern: Wednesday, at 7.30, J. G. Briggs (late Salvation Army), "Why I Renounced Christianity."

Glasgow—Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street: 12, members' annual business meeting; 6.30, social reunion.

Portsmouth—Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea: 7, G. Pinhorne, a reading. Wednesday, at 7.30, dancing class for members and friends (3d.).

Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 3, Robert Law, F.G.S., "The Motions of the Worlds, and how they were Weighed and Measured"; 7, "The Origin and Probable Destiny of the Human Race."

Sunderland—Bridge End Vaults (long room above), Bridge-street: 7, R. Mitchell, "Christ's Gospel of Hell."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Rochdale—Town Hall Square: 11, Sam Standring, "Over-population"; 3, "Archdeacon Wilson on Biblical Inspiration"; 6.30, "The Voice of Labor in our School Boards."

Sunderland—near the Miners' Hall: 11, R. Mitchell, "Gospel Devils."

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—May 13, m. Camberwell, a. Victoria Park, e. Camberwell; 15, Battersea; 16, Wood Green; 20 to 28, Manchester; 29, Battersea.

O. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—May 13, Conference; 20, e. Edmonton; 27, m. Pimlico Pier.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oredon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—May 13, e. Edmonton; 20, m. Clerkenwell Green; 27, m. Hyde Park; e. Hammersmith.

TOUZEAU PARRIS, Clare Lodge, 32 Upper Mall, Hammersmith, London, W.—May 13, Hall of Science, London.

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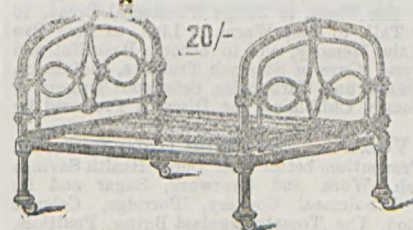
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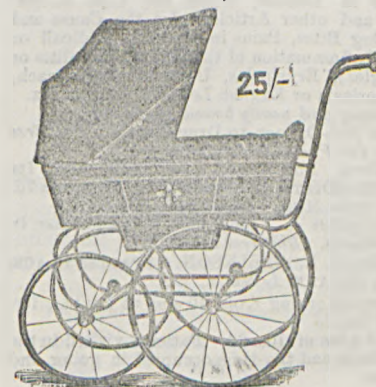
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