

# The Free Thinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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## RELIGION: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Two facts in connection with the term religion should be kept in view in these days of persistent attempts upon the part of theologians to monopolise whatever is supposed to be good, and to misrepresent all systems opposed to their own. The two facts referred to are, that religion is not the exclusive property of Christians, and that whatever is good and practical in the Christian religion can be found in Secular philosophy. We wish it to be distinctly understood that we have no desire that the word religion should be substituted for that of Secularism, as representing our philosophy of daily life. Religion has been so long associated with superstition, tyranny, bigotry, and hypocrisy that we may well hesitate before claiming any relationship to it. We agree with the late Mr. Bradlaugh that it will "be wiser, franker, more honest, to avoid using an old word in a new sense, and thus prevent the certainty of misconception on the part of those around us." Still, at the same time, we decidedly object to the adherents of the Christian Church assuming that their idea of religion is the only true one, and, moreover, that the welfare of society depends upon the acceptance of their meaning of the word. That this is the notion entertained by the orthodox party in this country in reference to the nature and influence of religion is evident from the fact that the Christian majority upon the London School Board have persistently sought to make their conception of religion the basis of the education of the children in our public schools. The clergy and their supporters are not content that the rising generation shall be taught a religion, but they insist that it shall be the *Christian* religion with its orthodox interpretation. Many persons may be willing that the first proposal should be accepted, who would be strongly opposed to accepting the second.

What is the true meaning of religion? Many persons consider that religion does not necessarily imply the belief in God, Devil, heaven, or hell, and that those who can honestly say with Thomas Paine, "To do good is my religion," are really the religious members of society. Whether or not, therefore, any form of religion is desirable depends upon the definition given to the term. According to its popular theological signification, the word is generally associated with the belief in a creator, sustainer, and savior of the world. But this was by no means its original meaning, neither does the etymology of the word justify such a construction being put upon it. The term religion is derived, observes Servius, from *religare*—to bind again, or to bind fast; while Cicero says it comes from *relegere*—to re-consider. In referring to these definitions, the *Encyclopædia Britannica* remarks: "In either case the import of the word religion is different from that of theology, as the former signifies a number of *practical duties*, and the latter a system of *speculative views*." In his work, *Familiar Words*, David Urquhart deals with the matter thus: "Religion coming to us from the Romans, we must seek first its Latin sense. It is derived from the verb to bind, the binding of man by his faith to the performance of those duties that in modern English language are political. So the Roman religion presented not worship, not faith—it signified the binding

of man to do justice by and to the State, as a member of the community. In Greek the word politics, in Latin the word religion, were equivalent to wisdom and justice. There was no religion that could be adopted as a vesture; there were no politics that could be worn as a mask. Politics were the knowledge of right, and religion the obligation to perform it." John Stuart Mill says: "We venture to think that a religion may exist without belief in a God." And Max Müller takes a somewhat similar position in the Gifford Lectures. These facts warrant us in disputing the right of the clergy to charge us with being destitute of "the one thing needful," unless we accept their erroneous ideas of religion, which are based more upon faith than upon works. True, works are required by Christianity, but they are regarded as being only of secondary importance. A man who never performed good works would be deemed a religious person, from the orthodox standpoint, if he only believed in "Christ and him crucified." Now, for what reason should we allow ourselves to be considered as inferior individuals, when we can obtain all that is noble and good in religion, not from Christ, but from the ancient and grand Roman Empire? It is a part of the priestly nature to attempt to dominate over all, and to claim superiority for themselves; but the first we resent, and the second we dispute.

We allege that the good which is professed to be achieved by religion, as that term is popularly understood, can be secured by acting up to the highest conception of morality, which has no necessary connection with any form of supernatural religion. Lord Chesterfield incidently remarks that, if we knew a man's religion, we should still inquire as to his morals; but, if we knew the latter, the former question would not arise. This is quite true among the really thoughtful portions of society, for experience has proved that ethics, not theology, contribute to personal excellence. Dean Milman laments that Christianity in the Roman Empire was divorced from morality, and thus became destitute of many of the virtues that so greatly distinguished Pagan life at the best period of its history. With orthodox Christians, religion and morality are not regarded as being identical. Hence many of them contend that morality is indebted to religion for its very existence, and that, but for the latter, the former would be comparatively unknown. They argue that a man without religion is an inferior character—one who has but little claim to sympathy here, or to salvation hereafter. This is a monstrous orthodox delusion, which we desire to expose and to refute with all the powers at our command. The observance of truth, the love of doing good, and the consistent practice of all the higher virtues that adorn human character did not commence with the dawn of Christianity. Such emblems of moral excellence were known in all their glory and potency long before Christ was heard of, and to-day they flourish in their grandeur where the influence of Jesus is unknown. To say that purity of life never existed except in the domain where Christianity was professed would be to offer an insult to some of the sublimest characters whose lofty aspirations enhanced the moral status of nations where Christianity never predominated.

The considerations here avowed should have more than ordinary weight at the present time, when special clerical efforts are being made to introduce theological

doctrines into our public system of education. Such priestly impertinence, if allowed to be successful, would perpetuate the evils that in former times marred the instruction given to the rising generation, and which produced in the minds of the young erroneous ideas of life and false conceptions of the duties of existence. It requires no elaborate argument to convince unprejudiced persons that the teaching of the speculations of theology is not necessary to the formation of moral character. This is not simply an academic question, but one that has a practical bearing upon social life. To make good citizens it is necessary to educate the emotions so that they shall be controlled by reason, not misled by the fanaticism of theology. It is also necessary to develop the moral nature of individuals, by which the conduct of men towards each other is made either tolerable or intolerable. Those who recognise the performance of social duties as contributing to the well-being of society will agree that such duties should be taught to the children, and that the practice of them should be encouraged in all schools. What is wanted is good citizens, not good Christians—terms by no means convertible in modern times.

Let us emphasise the fact that, while we have no desire for Secularists to adopt the name religion with regard to their principles, we wish professed Christians to remember that there is nothing unique in their faith which would entitle them to suppose that theirs is the one true religion; and, further, we declare that whatever is useful and commendable in their faith is derived from morality, which can be had without the perplexing doctrines that are the principal elements in Christian theology. Freedom, justice, and all the many virtues which shed a halo of ethical glory upon the human race, belong to no one religion; they are the heritage of our general humanity. We agree with Robert Buchanan when he says:—

The world is weary of idolatries:  
Pan and Apollo and great Zeus are dead,  
And Jesus Christ hangs cold upon the Cross.  
Nay, more, the light of Science newly born  
Hath slain the night of the Divine Idea.

Henceforth a grievous shadow quits the Earth,  
While man, the fruit and flower of things,  
Walks fetterless and free.

CHARLES WATTS.

### TRUE CHRISTIANITY.

ARCHDEACON FRASER contributes to *McClure's Magazine* of New York an article with the title, "Christianity True and False." It is characterised by all the sophistry and disingenuousness of the Church which calls itself Broad, because, while retaining all the emoluments connected with the dogmas it discards, it persists in trying to palm off a new article under the old name. The Archdeacon of Westminster, rector of St. Margaret's and chaplain to the House of Commons, sets out with an aspect of fairness, asking how it has happened that "many have argued, and have unhappily argued with serious and passionate conviction, 'that religion has been a curse to the human race,' 'that Christianity has inflicted upon mankind more harm than good.' To illustrate these sentiments he takes first Lucretius, to whom he declares religion meant the whole system of priestcraft, of cruel superstition, of dark belief in non-existent forms of the divine." Well, this is just what religion was in his day, and Lucretius showed himself in advance of his age in rejecting it.

As an example of the other mistake—this first being no mistake at all—he takes Voltaire. And here he shows that it is Christians who have made an error in regard to his famous saying, *Ecrasez l'Infâme*. Many have been led to believe—*horresco referens*—that by 'the Infamous' Voltaire intended our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." He is good enough to explain that by *l'Infâme* Voltaire did not mean a person, but a system—what Archdeacon Farrar calls "the

travesty of true Catholicism such as he saw it all around him, and such as he knew it to be stained through and through with crimes against humanity of the deepest dye."

If Voltaire was not exactly such a fool as to attack a dead Jew instead of a living system, he certainly was shrewd enough to see that the system derived much of its authority from its sacred books, which he unceasingly attacked. He knew Christianity was no vague humanitarianism such as could be accepted by Buddhist, Jew, Turk, or Atheist, but definite dogmas embodied in a definite ecclesiastical system. Archdeacon Farrar is good enough to say that in the three great public movements in which Voltaire took part—the case of Calas, the case of La Barre, and the case of the Sirvens—the infidel was "absolutely right in the line he took, while the prelates and priests and the representatives of the Church generally were so absolutely in the wrong that we cannot think of their error without something of horror and indignation." But he conceals the fact that the intolerance of the priests arose naturally out of their belief in an infallible revelation, while the tolerance of Voltaire arose from his scepticism.

It is artful of the Archdeacon to select Voltaire as his example, since he can always contrast him with the Catholic Church of the last century; the absurdity of making the Pope of Rome a false Christian, and Voltaire a true one, never giving him pause. But how would it have done to take the case of the late Professor Clifford, who was face to face, not with the corrupt Church of Rome, but with what he believed to be the equally corrupt Broad Church of Archdeacon Farrar, and who nevertheless pronounced Christianity one of the greatest disasters that ever afflicted the human race?

Archdeacon Farrar winds up by saying: "Religion means, as the great thinker Benjamin Whichcote said, 'a good mind and a good life.'" Let the Archdeacon answer a plain question. Can an Atheist have a good mind and a good life? Dare he, in the face of men like Socrates, Confucius, Lao-tse, Gautama Buddha, Marcus Antoninus, Epictetus, Bentham, Grote, Mill, Darwin, Clifford, Strauss, Feuerbach, assert that a good mind and a good life are exclusively confined to Christians? Let me remind him of words that ought to be familiar: "It can do truth no service to blink the fact, known to all who have the most ordinary acquaintance with literary history, that a large portion of the noblest and most valuable moral teaching has been the work, not only of men who did not know, but of men who knew and rejected, the Christian faith."\*

The Broad Church view is throughout a perversion of history. This being so, it is no surprise to find that Archdeacon Farrar winds up with a perversion of Scripture. "The kingdom of heaven is within you," he quotes, this meaning whatever vague moonshine you please. The words of the gospel writer are, "The kingdom of God is in the midst of you;" as every Greek scholar is aware, the meaning being a Messianic one. But Archdeacon Farrar preaches a Christianity which does not even need the belief that Jesus was the Christ.

J. M. WHEELER.

### AM I COMPETENT TO JUDGE FOR MYSELF?

IN a matter of such paramount importance as my eternal welfare, it becomes me, with all humility and truthfulness, to ask deliberately, and to answer conscientiously, the question—Am I competent to judge for myself?

When I am sick, I send for my medical man, and take the physic which he prescribes; and in weighty matters of business I consult with my lawyer, and follow his advice. Why, then, in a matter so tremendously momentous to me as my eternal welfare, should I not select a spiritual guide, and do as he may tell me? Let me consider the point.

A medical man is one who knows, or is supposed to know, the properties of drugs, and the rules by which

\* J. S. Mill, *On Liberty*.

they should be prescribed; and a lawyer is one who knows, or is supposed to know, the laws which have been made by Parliament for the civil government of the nation. I know, as a matter of fact, that instruction in these branches of knowledge is given under the sanction of the State, and that every man who practises physic or law is licensed by the State to do so; the State being satisfied, through the appointed examiners, of the skill and ability of such practitioners. It may well be that one medical man, or one lawyer, is more learned or much cleverer than another; but each must possess a minimum amount of the requisite knowledge before he can obtain his diploma or licence to practice; and I have, therefore, a guarantee that he is abreast of his general compeers in his particular profession, and that he is, in consequence, more competent to advise and direct me in such matters than I am to advise and direct myself. Well, is it not so with religion? Are there not men who are "learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts vii. 22), and who, having been specially instructed in theology, have been publicly appointed to teach the nation? And must not they know, much better than I can myself, what I ought to believe?

To those who are not accustomed to think for themselves, the questions here put admit, apparently, of but one answer, and that in the affirmative. But the questions proceed on an assumption that may, or may not, be true—the assumption being that the case of the teacher of religion is exactly on all fours with the cases of the medical man and the lawyer. But is it so? And, even if it be so, am I bound to intrust—nay, more, am I justified in intrusting—my eternal welfare to the *ipse dixit* of another man?

Are the cases parallel? They are not parallel! Because the medical man and the lawyer, each in his separate sphere, speak of and deal with facts which they know of themselves, but of which their clients are necessarily ignorant; whilst the teacher of religion speaks only of that which is "within the veil" (Heb. vi. 19); of that which "eye hath not seen, nor hath ear heard" (1 Cor. ii. 9); and of which he cannot possibly know more than other human beings who are similarly situated and similarly constituted to himself. "What knowest thou, that we know not? What understandest thou, which is not in us?" (Job xv. 9).

The medical man and the lawyer have much to learn; indeed, they never cease to learn, for scientific knowledge is always progressing, and laws are being continually made or altered; but it is not so with the teacher of religion. He has but little to learn, and, therefore, but little to teach; he can but repeat the same old story, though he may vary his mode of telling it. What he has learned I also can learn, though haply what may have carried conviction to his mind may not carry conviction to mine. Why is this? Why is it that learned men have differed, and still differ, from each other on the most important theological points? and have taught, and still teach, doctrines that are not only divergent from, but utterly contradictory of, each other? Why is this? For common sense tells me that, though *some* of these men *may be* right, *all* of them *cannot be* so. Let the teachers of religion throughout Christendom answer the question.

I know it is said that those only who can read the Scriptures, intelligently and critically, in the languages in which they were originally written, are capable of interpreting them correctly; but, if that be so, how comes it that there are thousands of ordained preachers of the Book who do not possess this special knowledge, and who, consequently, are as dependent as other men are upon the translations with which we are all familiar? The question to be asked and answered is: Are these translations faithful and true?

It may be conceded that no translation is so beautiful and expressive as its original; that errors in copying, as well as errors in translating, invariably occur; and that these regrettable defects are most likely to be most numerous when, as in the present case, the book is the translation of a translation—if not of many translations. But, on the other hand, it must not be forgotten that our translations are many; that, from time to time, these translations have been care-

fully revised by the most profound scholars; that marginal readings give alternative renderings of the text; and that, if errors there be, they are such as rarely affect, if they ever affect, the doctrines that the Bible teaches.

I assume, therefore, and rightly assume, that these translations are correct, and that what is mysterious in them is mysterious in the originals. Now, Christ commanded his disciples to "search the Scriptures"—that is, the Old Testament, for not a word of the New Testament had then been written; and the command was given because, said Christ, "they are they which testify of me" (John v. 39). And, in the apostles' time, those who "searched the Scriptures daily" to ascertain for themselves "whether those things were so" or not were considered to be "more noble" than those who did not do so (Acts xvii. 11). It is not egotistical, therefore, for me to act as I am acting, to speak as I am speaking; the egotist is he who dares to thrust himself between a man and his God.

To discuss this question further would be an insult to one's understanding, and would give a fictitious value to the arrogant pretensions of those who claim to know, not only more than their peers, but also that which is absolutely unknowable. These men claim to be infallible; claim to be endowed with a special knowledge of exegesis, or the science of interpretation; claim to be able to construe and interpret the incomprehensible. But were they, as they are wont to assert that they are, the "veritable successors" of the apostles, they would be able not only *in words* to "remit or retain sins" (John xx. 23)—as they assert they have authority to do, although such authority cannot be tested this side the grave—but they would also be able *in very deed* to "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils" (Matt. x. 8). "For whether is it easier to say, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee'; or to say, 'Arise, and walk'?" (Matt. ix. 5). But they are impotent to do so; and, therefore, their pretensions in this respect are as ridiculous as they are blasphemous. They possess no supernatural power; and, as for their knowledge of the spiritual world, must they not, like other men, wait until Death, and Death alone, divulges to them the grand secret? Christ, we are told, worked miracles to prove himself to be the Christ that should come. "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" (Matt. xi. 3) was the question asked of Christ by John the Baptist. And Christ's answer was: "Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matt. xi. 4, 5). It follows, then, from Christ's own declaration, that he who would teach religion to others must prove his right to do so by giving practical evidence of his faith. "Ye shall know them by their fruits" (Matt. vii. 16).

The Apostolic Fathers—that is, the teachers who immediately succeeded the apostles (Ignatius and Polycarp, martyred in A.D. 112 and 155 respectively; for Barnabas and Hermas are mere names)—never claimed for themselves the possession of supernatural powers; and, of course, never pretended to be able to perform miracles. They tacitly admitted that with the apostles all supernatural gifts to mankind vanished—a fact that sweeps away the cobweb pretensions of those who profess to have received, through them, the supernatural gifts which Christ conferred upon his disciples, and on them alone.

Carlyle tells us, in "Sartor Resartus," that the Bible is "a hieroglyphical prophetic book, the lexicon of which lies in eternity, in heaven; a volume written in the true sacred writing, of which even prophets are happy that they can read here a line and there a line." And Whately asserts, in his book on Logic, that "on those mysterious points which are inscrutable to man the learned can have no advantage over the ignorant and the simple; for, *in utter darkness, the strongest sight and the weakest are on a level.*" It behoves, therefore, every man to think, and speak, and act for himself. For these reasons I conclude, not only that I am competent to judge for myself, but that it is my bounden duty to do so. N. M. X.

## THE NATIONAL SECULAR SOCIETY'S CONFERENCE.

(Held on Whit-Sunday, May 13.)

REFUSED the use of the Picton Hall, the Liverpool friends made the best of their own headquarters, and the Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street, a tolerably spacious building, accommodating 600 or so, was brightened up with decorative plants and sweetened with hawthorn blossom, reminding the city folk that we are in the merry month of May.

Among the Societies represented were Battersea, E. Newman, J. Roberts; Bath, J. Welby; Barnsley, W. Hatcher, Mr. Wadmore; Bedlington, R. Forder; Belfast, Mr. Hunt; Birmingham, J. H. Ridgway, C. Burton, J. Bridges; Blackburn, H. Jones, J. Titherington; Bolton, T. Halstead, J. Primrose; Bradford, J. W. Gott, J. Sutherland; Camberwell, S. Hartmann; Chatham, J. S. Taylor; Cheshire, J. Fish; Chester, J. Edwards; Cramlington, C. J. Hunt; Derby, W. H. Whitney, F. W. Swain; Dundee, O. Watts; Finsbury, G. Ward; Finsbury Park, E. Robins, G. J. Ward; Grimsby, G. L. Alward, T. Darrell; Glasgow, G. Faulkner; Hanley, J. Charlton, J. Radford; Huddersfield, T. Ollerenshaw, W. Cliffe, J. Stead; Hull, R. Forder; Islington, G. Ward; Liverpool, L. Small, C. Doeg; Manchester, C. Pegg, Mrs. Pegg, W. Payne; Nelson, J. Home; North-West London, A. Brown; Nottingham, J. Hooper; Oxhill, C. J. Hunt; South Shields, D. Profit; Sunderland, C. J. Hunt; West London, B. Munton, A. Brown; Westminster, C. J. Hunt; West Auckland, Mr. Hunt; Warrington, Mr. Marshall, T. Sykes; Wigan, A. Gibson, Mr. Grey; Wolverhampton, M. Christopher.

At 11.30 a.m. the PRESIDENT took the chair, and, in opening the business, expressed a hope that the Conference would be animated by the one spirit of desire for the welfare of the Society and the spread of the cause.

It having been moved by Mr. HOOPER (Nottingham), and seconded by Mr. SUTHERLAND (Bradford), that the minutes of the last Conference be taken as read, the President proceeded to read

### THE EXECUTIVE'S ANNUAL REPORT.

The Executive of the National Secular Society, in presenting this annual Report to the Conference, has first of all to express a regret that the long-continued and general depression in the trade of the country has to some extent told on the Society's position. Not that there has been any retrogression; on the contrary, the Society has more than held its own; but the rate of progress of a few years ago has been somewhat checked. There are indications, however, of a coming improvement, and in any case it would ill become such a Society, so pledged to combat and fortitude, to lose a jot of hope because it has to wait a little for the rising tide.

During the past year 433 new members have joined the Society. These are the official figures, but they are probably below the reality, as several Branches appear to have held back, until too late, the names of their more recent accessions.

New Branches of the Society have been formed at Dundee, Ryhope, Lewisham, and Wimbledon. The Dundee Branch has made surprising progress in a short space of time, and is looking forward with great expectations to the public debate which is to take place shortly between Mr. Charles Watts and the Rev. David Macrae, who is one of the most eloquent, popular, and influential ministers in that city.

The General Fund of the Society has been fairly maintained, partly by special subscriptions raised in the *Freethinker*, as will be seen by the Balance Sheet. The Benevolent Fund was reinforced by a handsome donation of £100 from a generous friend of the movement, and was thus enabled to deal more effectually than would otherwise have been possible with an exceptional number of applications for relief.

The Executive should, at this point, tender thanks on the Society's behalf to the ladies and gentlemen of the Benevolent Fund Committee, who do their not too pleasant work with patience, tact, and quietude, and without diverting a penny from the Fund in the shape of expenses.

Taking the whole of the country into view, the Executive is very far from being dissatisfied with the general condition of the Secular party. What is really wanted is what has always been wanted—adequate financial resources. It is necessarily very trying when a poor, unpopular movement is further hampered by odious laws which, while they shed no blood and only occasionally inflict imprisonment, are nevertheless a serious persecution. More will be said upon this matter presently. Meanwhile it must be borne in mind in any review of the National Secular Society's operations.

Beginning with London, the Executive has to note that the Hall of Science is still used as the headquarters of the movement. The tenancy has been renewed at a rental of £200 for the year 1893-4, the Directors of the National Secular Hall Society having made a reduction of £50 in consideration of the difficult year its tenant had gone through in 1892-3. In connection with the Sunday evening lectures a new feature has been introduced. The entire gallery has been thrown open free to the public, and the result on the whole has been larger audiences with about the same pecuniary return. For the sake of Branches that may be inclined to try this experiment in

their own districts, it should be added that the collections yielded by the free seats are extremely slender. Nine-tenths of the takings are from the paid seats in the body of the hall.

In the South of England the most active Branches are at Bristol, where a good deal of propagandist work has been done; at Portsmouth, where Mr. Cohen has recently fulfilled a six-weeks' engagement with great satisfaction; and at Chatham, where, in its pretty new hall, the Branch carries on lecture work and a flourishing Sunday-school. It should be recorded that Mr. Thompson, the secretary of this Branch, has been elected on a local School Board, despite the efforts of Christian ministers, who denounced the Atheist's candidature.

At Leicester there is a prosperous Secular Society which has never been affiliated to the N.S.S. Still, it is on good terms with the national organisation, which owes it no ill will for standing aloof, but on the contrary wishes it all success in its noble efforts. At Birmingham, it is to be regretted that the Baskerville Hall experiment did not succeed. Mr. Charles Watts found it impossible to overcome the special difficulties of the undertaking. He has therefore settled down in London, after handing Baskerville Hall back to its original owner, Mr. Daniel Baker, one of your Society's vice-presidents, and a veteran friend of the Secular movement.

The Yorkshire district is apparently to be worked with fresh energy. Messrs. Gott, Grange, and Wakefield are aiming at a more efficient propaganda and organisation in their locality, and have started a monthly organ, *The Truth Seeker*, to aid in the carrying out of their ideas. The Manchester Branch continues to do excellent work in its admirable hall, and good progress is observable at Bolton. The Liverpool Branch is also making headway in the face of a bigotry that denies the evening meeting of this Conference the use of a large public hall, which is not denied to any other section of the community. Perhaps it will be possible to organise a week's or a fortnight's Freethought Mission in Liverpool, in order to let the inhabitants know as widely as possible what are the principles and the policy of a Secular Society which the City Council of Liverpool regards as unentitled to the common rights of citizenship.

The North-Eastern Secular Federation, having been considerably affected by trade disputes, has not been very active of late; but good meetings have occasionally been held at Newcastle, and frequently at South Shields. A public debate has also been held at Jarrow between Mr. Charles Watts and a representative of the Christian Evidence Society, and another is being arranged to take place at South Shields. The Edinburgh Branch is only able to have occasional lectures, but a regular and able propaganda is carried on at Glasgow. Success at Dundee has already been mentioned, and it is gratifying to notice a fresh promise of activity at Aberdeen. Away in Ireland there is still but one Branch, which is located at Belfast. It makes steady progress within its limits, and some day it may be able to assist in planting other Branches in some of the chief cities of Ireland.

Your attention is now asked to some miscellaneous items. It will be seen from the Balance Sheet that the sale of the Society's Almanack has just sufficed to cover the expenses of its production. With respect to the Quarterly Reports ordered at the last Conference to be made by the Branches to the Executive, it has to be recorded that two circulars, covering the winter season, have been filled in, but for various reasons the contents have not been classified for publication. It will be some time longer before the returns can be dealt with in this way without being misleading. Meanwhile they are valuable to the Executive. Another resolution of the last Conference ordered the drawing up of a list of Immediate Practical Objects of the Society. This was done with great care, and the list has been joined *pro tem.* to the Society's prospectus. In accordance with one item in the list, the N.S.S. has been affiliated to the National League for the Abolition of the House of Lords, whose immediate object is to deprive the hereditary House of its power of vetoing the will of the people's representatives.

The Society's lecturers have been busy during the past year in all parts of the kingdom. Mr. Watts's activity is universally recognised. Mr. A. B. Moss and Mr. W. Heaford have done yeoman's service both in and out of doors. Mr. O. J. Hunt has just completed his year's work by a course of lectures at Belfast. Mr. Cohen has become such a favorite in the South Shields district that he is to settle down there for six months as a lecturer and organiser. Those who have been doing the arduous open-air work in London are too numerous to recount. Certainly they deserve the warmest thanks of your Society, especially when it is remembered that their work is carried on, only too often, in the face of the most deliberate and scandalous rowdism.

Last summer, in June, your Executive organised a visit to the grave of our dead leader, Charles Bradlaugh. A large number of persons travelled to Brookwood Cemetery, Woking, and addresses were delivered outside the cemetery grounds by Messrs. Foote, Forder, Standing, and Rowney.

A different gathering took place in January, under the auspices of the London Secular Federation. A large dinner party met at the Holborn Restaurant, and the proceedings were fairly reported in the London press. Such convivial functions should be a source of social strength to our party.

The Executive is sorry to report that Sunday freedom has, during the past year, been actively threatened by the Lord's Day Observance Society. A prosecution has been initiated against the Sunday Society at Leeds, the result of which may not be known until next winter. Your President has meanwhile offered advice, and assistance if necessary, to Mr. Gavazzi King, the principal defendant. In London the Sunday popular debates, under the auspices of the Independent Theatre Society, were soon terminated. Your President wrote to the London *Star*, inviting the clerical secretary of the Lord's Day Observance Society to begin a prosecution at the Hall of Science, where for twenty-five years a charge had been made for admission to the Sunday lectures. Dr. Freake did not respond. He would rather threaten the timid than prosecute the resolute. It is always the Secular party which is to be absolutely relied upon to champion the rights of man against the tyranny of superstition.

A threat of prosecution has been made again at Portsmouth, but once more the police failed to take action. In August your President delivered a Freethought address on Douglas Head at the Isle of Man. This was not absolutely the first broaching of Freethought at Douglas, for the place was once visited by Richard Carlile and Robert Taylor. Nevertheless, it is worthy of mention, as the lecture was delivered in spite of the authorities, who claimed what was practically the power of deciding what opinions should be expressed in the public places under their jurisdiction. Here again threats were not translated into action. The hostility of the authorities only served to swell the congregation of the Atheist preacher.

Your President has also been embroiled in a controversy with "an eminent Wesleyan minister," the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. This gentleman published a long and circumstantial narrative of the conversion of an Atheist Shoemaker, a young man of great popularity and eloquence, who somehow escaped the attention of the Freethinkers in London, which was indicated as the scene of his exploits as a propagator of Atheism. The story had been pointedly challenged by Charles Bradlaugh, as well as by your President and your honorary Secretary. But one of your vice-presidents, Mr. George Jacob Holyoake, undertook a private investigation, and claimed that the result of his inquiries was a vindication of the veracity of Mr. Hughes. Fortunately your President soon after came into contact with the family of the Atheist Shoemaker, whose real name was Charles Alfred Gibson, and the result was a complete exposure of the falsehood of Mr. Hughes's story in all its principal features. Mr. Holyoake, however, adheres to his "vindication," and actually considers himself aggrieved; but the Executive does not doubt that the Conference will endorse its vote of £5 towards the gratuitous circulation of the President's pamphlet.

In Australia one of your vice-presidents, Mr. Joseph Symes, has been maintaining a strenuous fight in the face of hard times and many enemies. Located at Melbourne, where he conducts his journal, *The Liberator*, he has during the past winter visited Sydney (where we have lost an old worker in the person of Mr. W. Willis) and also made a tour through New Zealand. In this colony the cause of Freethought has to lament the death of Mr. John Ballance, the Premier, who had done much to forward Secularism. His death was, however, the occasion of bringing to the front his friend, the eminent Freethinker, Sir Robert Stout, who was reputed to have retired from politics, but who is again at the head of affairs. At the last elections, in which woman's suffrage was exercised for the first time, the clerical party sought to reverse the policy of Secular Education; but they were distinctly beaten upon that ground by a triumphant majority, and among the members elected to the new Legislature was your vice-president, Mr. W. W. Collins.

Last autumn a Parliament of Religions was held in the World's Fair, Chicago. It was notable for many reasons. It displayed the anxiety of religionists to find a common ground of union in face of the growing disposition to deal with one world at a time; but it also showed that no such common ground could be found save in attention to the duties of this life and the substitution of conduct for creed. Moslem, Buddhist, and Hindu delegates were express in their declaration of the unsuitability of Christian dogmas for their peoples; and from Buddhist priests and Jewish rabbis were heard declarations closely approximating to the principles of your own Society.

An International Conference of Freethinkers followed close upon this Parliament of Religions. This it was hoped your President and Mr. Charles Watts would have attended as delegates, but the former found it impossible to leave England at the time, and the latter represented the Society alone. This Conference, which lasted an entire week, one day being devoted to women, was called by the American Secular Union, and was presided over by Judge Waite, of Chicago. While not of the fully international character desired, it brought together the leading Freethinkers in the New World, and did much to forward the cause in America.

Mr. Watts was commissioned to see Colonel Ingersoll and to press him to visit England. Unfortunately a meeting could not be arranged, and the wishes of your Society had to be conveyed to Colonel Ingersoll by letter. No definite

answer has been received, but it may be judged from casual expressions that the English admirers of Colonel Ingersoll may yet have an opportunity of meeting him.

It has been proposed that the next triennial Conference of the International Federation of Freethinkers, with which this Society is affiliated, shall be held at Brussels, which is the seat of the Executive Council. Of the date of this meeting no intimation has yet been received.

In London the question of religious instruction in Board Schools has been brought prominently forward by the efforts of the clerical party, led by Mr. Athelstan Riley, to secure that the Christian teaching shall be of a definite character. The prolonged and wrangling discussions upon the circular intended to put a Trinitarian test upon the teachers have been well calculated to open the eyes of the public to the fact that nothing but dissension can result from the mixture of any form of supernatural teaching with secular education, and the comments of the Press have shown that this has been widely felt.

Your Executive has resolved that the question of Secular Education, pure and simple, shall be definitely raised at the School Board elections next November. With this view they have desired your President and his colleague, Mr. Wheeler, to prepare a pamphlet on the subject, which they hope to issue in large numbers, together with leaflets, before the elections. They have also decided to support certain candidates pledged to the Secular ticket. Mr. Charles Watts intends to contest the constituency of East Lambeth, and it is hoped that eligible candidates will be forthcoming for other divisions.

It is hardly necessary to say that, to fight this battle effectively, both willing workers and the sinews of war will be necessary. On the former we can readily count, and for the latter your Executive has decided to raise a separate fund for the School Board contests, which Mr. Hartmann, one of your vice-presidents, starts with a handsome donation.

Perhaps the most encouraging aspect of this important question is the spirit of revolt shown by the teachers at the imposition of tests, long since abolished in the universities. A requisition by the Metropolitan Board of Teachers, asking that they may be entirely relieved from the duty of giving religious instruction, has already been extensively signed, and may have far-reaching consequences. It is evident on all hands that the Secular party must be prepared to strike out on this question—to strike hard and to strike home.

Secularists in general have shown themselves—very naturally—unwilling to martyrise their children by demanding their withdrawal from religious instruction under the Conscience Clause. At the present juncture, however, it is felt that effective help could be given to the teachers in their contest with the clerical party by all parents, especially those in London, sending in forms of withdrawal, and at the same time demanding—as they are entitled to do under the resolutions of the first London School Board—that their children shall receive secular instruction during the hour devoted to religious teaching.

In closing this Report the Executive invites the attention of the Conference to a matter of the very gravest importance. As the law stands at present, Secular Societies have no rights of property. Not a stick or a stone can be held in trust for their principles. Money left by will to such Societies can be appropriated by relatives or residuary legatees. In spite of this law, however, small sums occasionally fall into your Society's exchequer. During the past year your President has arranged the terms of legacies in the wills of two members of your Society. But this is too unsatisfactory to all but the very determined. It is necessary to have a legal, instead of a personal, guarantee for the disposition of one's money after death. With this idea in view, the Liberty of Bequest Bill was formulated by a committee, of which Mr. G. J. Holyoake was chairman. It left untouched the general question of blasphemy and heresy, and sought to legalise the endowment of Trusts for promoting opinions at variance with orthodox Christianity. Introduced in the House of Commons by Mr. Manfield, one of the members for Northampton, it is blocked by one of the Ulster members, who is loud against the Roman Catholic tyranny which is to be rampant under Home Rule. There the matter rests, and is likely to rest, as Mr. Manfield will not seek re-election to the next parliament.

More recently, however, and largely through the zealous efforts of Mr. E. G. Taylor, of Manchester, another Bill has been introduced by Mr. Samuel Storey, and backed by Mr. Madden, Mr. Dalziel, Mr. Labouchere, and Mr. Lloyd-George. It is styled "A Bill for the Abolition of Prosecutions for the Expression of Opinion on Matters of Religion." Substantially it is the Bill which was introduced by Mr. Bradlaugh in 1889 and defeated by a majority of 111 to 46, after a violent and acrimonious debate. The Bill is printed, but Mr. Storey thinks there is little chance of getting a day for it, although he will do his best. In a certain sense it occupies the field. It would do all that is contemplated in the Liberty of Bequest Bill, and more; for it is really in consequence of the Blasphemy Laws that Secular Societies are in a position of outlawry. It will be for the Conference to decide, therefore, on the President's motion, what shall be done by your Society in regard to these two Bills; whether time and energy shall be given to promote both or either, and, in that case, which.

Whatever be the Conference's decision, it is a matter for

congratulation that two such Bills have been actually introduced, not by the fighting leader of our party, as Charles Bradlaugh was, but by persons entirely unconnected with our movement. It shows a welcome growth of the spirit of justice, and of what Ingersoll calls "intellectual hospitality." It gives our sorely-tried party a fresh gleam of hope that the injustice of generations may yet be redressed. With the common rights of citizenship conceded to us, with a legal security for whatever we devote to the service of the cause, with the same unchallengeable right as other parties to whatever may be bequeathed to our movement, we shall be face to face with our highest possibilities, and perhaps our endurance under adversity is the best guarantee that we shall overcome the smaller perils of prosperity.

The PRESIDENT having asked for questions or motions upon the Report,

Mr. TAYLOR (Manchester) noticed that the only new part of Mr. Storey's Bill was the preamble.

Mr. SUTHERLAND (Bradford) moved the adoption of the Report, which he considered an encouraging document. This was seconded by Mr. TAYLOR (Chatham). Carried unanimously.

Mr. HOOPER (Nottingham) moved the adoption of the Financial Report and Balance-sheet; Mr. CHARLTON (Hanley) seconded.

Mr. PEGG thought the lowering of subscriptions acted to the advantage of the Central Fund, but to the disadvantage of the Branches.

Mr. FOOTE explained that the minimum subscription was for individual Societies; the Branches had the utmost freedom in issuing the terms of their own members' subscription.

Mr. L. SMALL (Liverpool) thought a deal of the money, if raised in London, was also spent there.

After a little discussion, the Financial Report was unanimously adopted.

The election of President being the next business, Mr. Foote resigned the chair to Mr. C. Watts, who called on Miss ANNIE BROWN, who, on behalf of the North-West London Branch, moved that Mr. G. W. Foote be re-elected President for 1894-5. Mr. G. WARD (Finsbury) heartily seconded the motion, which was put with a few brief words of eulogy by Mr. WATTS, and carried without any dissentient.

Mr. FOOTE, who was received with much applause on resuming the chair, mentioned his doctor's opinion, that he had been over-working his naturally good constitution, as some proof that he had not been lacking in the service. He had done and would continue to do his best. His abilities, such as they were, would be devoted to the cause with the same sincerity as were the unapproachable abilities of his predecessor.

Mr. FOOTE then, on behalf of the Executive, moved that the previous list of vice-presidents—Messrs. T. R. Allinson, George Anderson, Daniel Baker, N. B. Billany, Joseph Brown, John Edwin Brumage, Ludwig Buchner, M.D., W. W. Collins, Robert Forder, S. Hartmann, W. Heaford, George Jacob Holyoake, O. J. Hunt, P. A. V. Le Lubez, Arthur B. Moss, Touzeau Parris, S. M. Peacock, William Pratt, Victor Roger, John Samson, E. Schlaeger, Thomas Slater, Robert Owen Smith, George Standing, Joannes Swaagman, Joseph Symes, Edward Truelove, J. Unpleby, Charles Watts, J. M. Wheeler; Mrs. Thornton Smith, Miss E. M. Vance—be re-elected.

Mr. O. J. HUNT said he had instructions from the West Auckland Branch to protest against the re-election of Mr. George Jacob Holyoake. He should do so on their behalf without saying anything further.

Mr. SUTHERLAND (Bradford) moved that Mr. Holyoake be no longer a vice-president of the Society. They considered his conduct in regard to the "Atheist Shoemaker" unworthy an officer of the Society.

Mr. RIDGWAY (Birmingham) said he had been in hopes that Mr. Holyoake would save them from a disagreeable task, but he held that to keep him in office was not doing justice either to their dead leader or present President.

Mr. WALTER PAYNE (Manchester) thought sufficient punishment had already been meted out to an old man who had fought well in former times.

Mr. FOOTE said that while in the chair he could not debar delegates from objecting to any name in the list of vice-presidents. If there was anybody who could consider himself reasonably aggrieved by Mr. Holyoake, it was himself. But he would now ask them to let this matter drop. He would ask the mover and seconder to withdraw their motion. Considering Mr. Holyoake's age, his past services, and that he is entirely in the wrong, let us say, if his connection with us is severed, it shall be by his own act.

Upon appealing to the mover, Mr. SUTHERLAND said that he liked to err on the side of leniency; Mr. RIDGWAY, though feeling strongly on the matter, concurred.

On behalf of the Executive Mr. FOOTE moved, and Mr. WATTS seconded, that Mr. Robert Forder be re-elected honorary secretary. The motion was carried unanimously.

Messrs. Lupton (London), Early (Brighton), and Thompson (Chatham) were elected as auditors.

Mr. TAYLOR (Chatham), then moved, (1) That the Branches

nominate towns for holding the Conference, but that the Executive state at reasonable length, in the circular forwarded with the voting papers, their opinion as to the most suitable place nominated. And, (2) That it be an instruction to the Executive, when issuing the circulars asking for nomination of places for the Annual Conference, that the "necessary arrangements" be detailed at length for the information and guidance of the Branches. He mentioned that Chatham had for some time been anxious to arrange a Conference, and he thought the Executive, knowing the needs of various localities, the best persons to advise upon the matter. Mr. WHITNEY (Derby) seconded.

Mr. PAYNE (Manchester) thought the first clause was taking the power out of the hands of the Branches.

Mr. SUTHERLAND (Bradford) strongly objected on the same ground, and in this was supported by Mr. HOOPER (Nottingham).

Mr. TAYLOR explained that the Executive were not asked to decide, but only to advise, as the President had done in the case of Liverpool.

On clause 1, Mr. FISHER (Leeds) moved the previous question. Mr. ALWARD (Grimsby) seconded, and, upon being put to the vote, the previous question was declared carried.

The second clause was agreed to *nem con*.

The PRESIDENT then stated that, pursuant to the order of the last Conference, a list of Immediate Practical Objects had been carefully drawn up, upon which he would now hear questions or motions.

Mr. HOLSTEAD (Bolton) protested against the resolution in favor of the abolition of the House of Lords, and against affiliation with the Society for that object.

The PRESIDENT explained that came too late. The objection should have been made before the Executive's report was confirmed.

Mr. L. SMALL (Liverpool) moved that the entire list, as drawn up, be adopted. The "principles and objects" of the Society pledged them to seek to realise the self-government of the people. Mr. HOOPER seconded.

Mr. HOLSTEAD still held that the Society had nothing to do with the question of the House of Lords.

Mr. FOOTE said the clause in question did not touch the question of a Second Chamber, upon which Secularists might have their several opinions; all it declared opposition to was hereditary distinctions and privilege as fostering a spirit antagonistic to justice and human brotherhood.

The list *en bloc* was eventually adopted.

Mr. J. M. WHEELER asked, and was accorded, permission, in the absence of Mr. E. H. B. Stephenson, to move the resolution standing in that gentleman's name: "That a clause be added providing for the promotion of the humane treatment of animals, and their protection from cruelty." There was nothing fanatical or even contentious in the motion, but it was desirable that the churches should be shown a needed example in this element of secular humanitarianism.

Mr. TAYLOR (Manchester), in seconding, gave some illustrations of stupid and brutal ill-usage of horses in the public streets.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Mr. DORG (Liverpool) moved, "That the reform of the administration of justice be in future a leading point in the program of the N.S.S.," and gave many illustrations of the absurdity, dilatoriness, and injustice of legal proceedings. He said the lawyers could outdo those who waylaid the man on the road to Jericho. He was only robbed and stripped, but they sent in the bill afterwards.

[At this stage the delegates adjourned to the Victoria Hotel, where an excellent dinner was provided.]

(Continued on page 323.)

## ACID DROPS.

We see from the *Illustrirte Zeitung* that among the new publications in Germany there is one by "Hughes H. P." It is entitled *Der Atheistische Schuhmacher*, and is a German translation of a book said to be out of print in England. It is published at Leipzig, and we shall endeavor before long to have a German translation of Mr. Foote's exposure in circulation there.

Talmage's Tabernacle at Brooklyn has been destroyed—for the third time—by fire, and this on the occasion of his silver jubilee. Surely the Almighty has something against the American orator.

In the Tabernacle were some famous holy relics from Palestine. Among them was some bitumen from the Dead Sea, which Talmage was fond of showing as a proof that the Lord rained fire and brimstone from heaven. We suppose the Lord wanted to show he could be equally effective another way, for he burnt up all the relics with his consuming fire.

Talmage is to be commiserated. A profane Yankee has called his race-horse "Dr. Talmage," and the animal has won the Mostyn Two-year-old Plate.

A Christian journal devotes a special paragraph to the fact that the Rev. Thomas Spurgeon quoted Shakespeare the other Sunday morning. No doubt the bard of Avon is duly grateful for this crowning recognition.

"Human nature is so ungrateful," says the *Christian Commonwealth*, "that it shows more gratitude to the retailer of puffy promises than to the performer of positive benefits." That accounts for the "success" of Christianity.

Two or three months ago we printed a story about a boy who said that the priest and the Levite passed by on the other side "because the man was robbed already." It is now doing duty in the orthodox press. Well, we are glad of being some use in enlivening their pages.

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children has held its tenth annual meeting. The Rev. Mr. Waugh is still secretary, but he appears to have dropped his lying nonsense about Secularist parents being the worst offenders his society had to deal with. Since he uttered that rubbish there have been some exceptionally bad cases of cruelty to children, and in nearly every case the culprits have been remarkably religious. Mr. Waugh has not, apparently, been able to produce a single case that tells against the body he so grossly maligned.

Emma Oxford, of 43 Royal-avenue, Chelsea, is a widow and a cook. She is also pious, and on intimate terms with the Lord. One day she engaged a cabman, who drove her about London for the space of three hours, at the end of which, instead of being paid his fare, he was invited to "summon" her for it. Emma accordingly found herself at the Westminster Police Court, where she explained that she "worked spiritually to God," who understood her, which the cabman didn't. The cabman would have to wait till she got the money from her Maker. Mr. De Rutzen ordered her to pay the claim and costs, and Emma wished him "good afternoon." We have not yet heard whether the cabman got his money from Emma or her Maker.

Jabez Balfour trusts in the Lord, and keeps a stiff upper lip—as stiff, that is, as his rather flabby features will allow. His recent study of the Bible in prison seems to have given him a strong dash of Davidism—if we may use that word to express the philosophy of the man after God's own heart. He is now bringing an action for false imprisonment, and claiming heavy damages. Holy Jabez!

The Rev. C. Butler, of Fort Mead, Florida, hung himself from his bedpost. The motive is unknown. A large sum of money was found on his person.

Ex-Rev. Tom Connellan is an Irish priest, who, having seduced a girl at Athlone, was reported to have been drowned in Lough Ree. He went out in a boat, and the boat was found with the clergyman's clothes, but the body was not discovered. He turned up again in Sligo, and is now being prosecuted for seducing a widow there.

The Rev. A. C. Dixon has been trying to bring himself into prominence by defaming Colonel Ingersoll for writing to the late D. M. Bennett, whom the worthy Dixon declared "the author of the vilest book ever published." Bennett, the founder of the *Truthseeker*, wrote a good deal about the Bible, but we never heard that he had any hand in its composition.

Recently, in asking for a collection for the West London Mission, Mr. Hughes remarked that he was constantly told that his wife looked ill. Well, he asked, why didn't they send in money for "the work"? Money would restore her health and prolong her life. Very likely! Money has a wonderful efficacy in Christian circles—though they say the love of it is the root of all evil.

A live countess, at one of Mr. Hughes's meetings, took off her necklace, valued at £2,000, and handed it in to be sold for the West London Mission. It was a present from her dead husband, and might as well have been kept till the end; but, of course, it was not refused on that account.

Now let us look at another picture. A testimonial has just been got up for Dr. Parker, and Mr. Hughes assisted at the presentation. Among the articles was a set of diamonds for Mrs. Parker. They take a countess's necklace (vain, ostentatious trash!) for the Lord, and buy a set of diamonds for a minister's wife! Christianity, thy name is—well, not honesty.

Dr. Parker received a cheque for £1,000, which must be very acceptable over and above his large salary. There were also a portrait in oil, a marble tablet costing £80, and a set of pulpit robes costing £15. Decked in that expensive pulpit finery, and rattling all that cash in his pocket, Dr. Parker will get up and prate about his Master, the Carpenter of Nazareth, the poor Son of Man who had not where to lay his head. Indeed, we shouldn't be surprised if Dr. Parker were to deliver a pathetic address on Christian Socialism.

The wife of the Rev. A. E. Bagot, rector of St. Mary's, Beswick, did not obey the injunction of the Apostle to be in subjection to her husband. She took to drink and assaulted him with the bedroom fender and other articles. He brought an action for judicial separation by reason of her cruelty, and obtained a decree.

In the divorce case of *Sheepwash v. Sheepwash*, the petition was that of a wife for judicial separation by reason of the adultery of her husband with the wife of the Rev. James Woodcock, a member of the Salvation Army, who took great interest in the manoeuvres of that body. The petitioner's husband was a member of the Free Methodist Church, Gillingham, and when remonstrated with gave her a string of quotations from Biblical texts. The case, however, was considered proved, and Sir Francis Jeune granted the petitioner a judicial separation with costs.

The *Truthseeker* explains that the Redemptorist priest, A. Lambert, who recently abandoned the Catholic for the Protestant Church, is not the priest, L. A. Lambert, who wrote against Ingersoll. He is probably a better man.

At Nantwich, a farmer got out of bed on Sunday for the purpose of saying his prayers. As he remained in this posture longer than usual, his wife became alarmed, and was horrified to find that her husband had died while on his knees. A verdict of death from natural causes was sensibly returned.

At Boston, Lincolnshire, the open-air Mission Band held a private baptismal service in the public Ladies' Swimming Bath, which they engaged for the occasion. Mr. George Heath, an evangelist from Kent, acted as John the Baptist, and dipped thirty-six persons, male and female, in cold, not tepid, water. Some of the ladies cried, but whether at the cold or overcome by their emotions is not reported.

More panic in a gospel-shop. At Augsburg on May 9 there was a special service in the cathedral. One of the congregation fainted. Some girls hurried out, the scare spread, there was a general rush for the doors, and many persons were knocked down and severely injured. The world would cry "Shame!" if such a thing occurred in a Secular Hall. Somehow or other, religion does not check these displays of selfishness, cowardice, and imbecility.

This is how an American paper records the performance of an abbreviating surgical operation recently performed upon a Jewish infant: "A large and interesting gathering of the congregation and friends of Rabbi X—met at his residence to witness the beautiful act and religious rite of circumcision performed on his little son." The circumcision of J. C. was a favorite picture in the old convents.

A terrible earthquake is reported from Venezuela. Many villages are entirely wrecked, and 10,000 people killed. "That there Providence" again!

When a child dies in Greenland, the natives bury a live dog with it, the idea being that the dog will be used by the child as a guide to the other world. When questioned with regard to this peculiar superstition, they only answer, "A dog can find his way anywhere."

An American item says: "There is a family in Oregon which has a peculiar religious faith. They work for six

years, and rest the whole of the seventh year. They base their religion on the Bible, and claim that all other religions are false." These folk are right. There is just as much Bible authority for resting every seventh year as every seventh day (see Lev. xxv. 4). But your Christian always picks what suits himself, and insists on his neighbor following the same Bible precepts that he has chosen.

Kossuth enjoined upon the Hungarians to secure the Civil Marriage Act. It was passed by a large majority in the Lower House, but has been defeated in the House of Magnates. Bishops, as well as courtiers, drove up in their carriages to vote against the Bill, amidst the open indignation of the people. Of course the Bill will be laid before the Lower House again, and if the Emperor does not instruct the Magnates to give way there will be trouble in Hungary, for the people are in earnest, and they remember how the Church insulted the memory of Kossuth, who is dearer to them than all the popes and prelates that ever lived.

The *San Francisco Examiner* reports the secession from the Theosophical Society of the secretary, Miss Gertrude Piper, in consequence of her belief in the trickery and imposture of the American president, Mr. W. Q. Judge, chief of the occult section. Mr. Judge was the peculiar confidante and intimate pupil of the late Madame Blavatsky, and the foremost witness to her "supernormal powers." Col. Olcott has formally brought against him a charge of "misuse of the names and handwriting of the Mahatmas." Mr. Judge has replied, objecting to being tried by a Theosophical Society committee, but is willing to have "a proper investigation by a body of persons who know enough of occultism as well as theosophy to understandingly inquire" into the charges.

The Rev. Dr. Lunn having attacked Hinduism in the *Methodist Times*, Mrs. Annie Besant replies in the same journal, which no doubt reckons her letter good copy. Mrs. Besant is now the champion of Hinduism, and she might easily retort on Dr. Lunn that the Bible is replete with everything he censures in that faith. Instead of this, however, she resorts to the grossest special pleading. For instance, she says that the "dancing girls" attached to Hindu temples are not of "the type found in Piccadilly." That may be true, yet they are prostitutes, inasmuch as they serve the lust of their gods' worshippers. On the whole, it seems pretty clear that Mrs. Besant will never be comfortable until she lives in India, where we hear she is going to settle down. Charles Bradlaugh went to India for the secular good of its people. Mrs. Besant goes there to aid them in clinging to their superstitions.

Mr. W. E. Coleman writes severely of Mrs. Besant for her defence of the Brahminical Code of Manu. He says:—"Woman in Manu is an abject slave. No woman can ever be independent. At first she must be the slave of her father, next of her husband, then of her sons, or, failing these, of her other male relatives. The wife must worship her husband as a god, though he be devoid of every good quality; and no divorce is allowed her, though the husband can divorce the wife for many causes. Widows cannot re-marry. No woman can take part in religious exercises of any kind apart from her husband or in her own name; and she is debarred from study of the Vedas. Mrs. Besant has been an advocate of women's equality, but now she lauds the excellence of a judicial code which makes of woman a worse slave, in some respects, than was the African in the Southern States of the Union, in antebellum days."

The *Christian World* is honorably distinguished among religious journals, and we are by no means astonished at its making Dr. Barrett, the new Chairman of the Congregational Union, to task for saying that the French Revolutionists cried out "Ecrasez l'Infame" against Jesus Christ. It was Voltaire who coined that phrase, and employed it in some of his letters; but it was never applied personally to the Nazarene. In fact, as the *Christian World* points out, the Revolutionists claimed the "sans culotte Jesus" as one of themselves.

Professor Totten works over in America the same racket that Prophet Baxter has found so profitable here. He predicts the date of the final dissolution of all things, but has recently found that his calculations were slightly at fault. At the same time Prophet Baxter shifts on his dates some half dozen years.

These quacks remind us of the following quotation from Voltaire. That arch-heretic says: "The theologians manage like a charlatan I have seen about the Pont Neuf on the Quai de l'Ecole. He showed to the people, toward evening, a turkey and several bottles of balsam. 'Messieurs,' said he, 'I am going to cut off my turkey's head, and I will bring it back to life the moment afterwards in your presence. But it is necessary beforehand that you should buy my bottles.' He always found some persons simple enough to purchase them. 'I am going to cut off my turkey's head,' continued the charlatan; 'but as it is late, and this operation is worthy of the full daylight, it will take place to-morrow.' Two members of the Academy of Sciences had the curiosity and constancy to return to see how the charlatan would extricate himself from the business. The farce lasted for eight days in succession; but the farce of waiting for the end of the world has lasted throughout Christendom for more than eight entire ages."

The Rev. E. Johnson Saxton, the heretic Congregationalist of Barnsley, has followed up his sermon on "Future Punishment" by another on "Damnation." Again he offered all treacle and no brimstone, damnation being simply an unstated condemnation or judgment, according to the Revised Version. As for the creeds and authority of the Church, that does not count with Mr. Saxton in the slightest.

At the distribution of the prizes won at the recent Scriptural examination of the Sheffield Sunday-School Union, Rev. E. Carrington, one of the examiners, said the subject of the examination had been "Abraham, the friend of God," and some of the papers contained very amusing blunders. Thus:—

What did God say to Abram when He called him?—God said unto Abram, "Go into Egypt and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

What promise did God make to Abram when Lot went away?—He promised when Lot went away that he should be king of the country.

What did God say when he appeared to Abram and changed his name to Abraham?—Now Abram had his name changed to Paul.

Tell the story of Abraham praying for Sodom.—Abraham said to Sodom, "I will pray for thee."

Tell the story of Abraham offering up Isaac.—Isaiah said to Isaac my eyes are getting dumb, and I want to give you my blessing before I die, go into the fields and fetch me a young goat that I may eat it and give you my blessing.

Another answer to the last question was:—

Isaac must have been very willing to be sacrificed, or else he could easily have got away from his weak old father.

In a Western town a small number of zealous people decided to put up a Young Men's Christian Association building. A committee was appointed, and they sent for a contractor to undertake the work. When he came, the first thing he did was to inquire, in a very worldly and matter-of-fact sort of way, into the financial resources of the organisation. The president replied: "Never fear, sir; we are sure of funds; the Lord is on our side." "That is all very well," replied the contractor, "but I want some one that I can send the sheriff after if necessary."

By the death of Mr. John Gillow, of Lilystone Hall, Ingatstone, Essex, the Catholic Church, which grows rich on threats of purgatory and promises of prayers for the dead, comes at one swoop into £130,000. At the same time not a stick or a stone can be legally left to a society bent on the work of secular emancipation. Yet we live in a land of liberty.

#### 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. Fordor 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.



## SPECIAL.

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

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

**MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.**—May 20 and 27, Hall of Science; 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.

**H. COURTNEY.**—Much too late for last week.

**JOHN ADAMS.**—The worst of the average Christian is, that he first denies that Secularism is under any legal disability, and when his mistake is shown to him he does not lift a finger to redress the grievance. What "particulars" does your Christian friend want? Is it not enough that bequests for a Freethought Society are invalid? There are at present two Bills before the House of Commons to alter this infamous state of things—one introduced by Mr. Manfield (Northampton), the other by Mr. Storey (Sunderland). Is it likely that such Bills would be introduced if there were no need for them?

**H. JONES,** secretary of the Manchester Branch, has removed to 36 Moss-grove, Urmston, Manchester.

**T. MARTIN** wants the address of a newsagent who sells the *Freethinker* at Bath.

**J. NICHOLSON.**—Christians only began to reckon from the birth of Christ eight hundred years after that event, and the practice was not common till hundreds of years afterwards. We date our letters, etc., "1894"—supposedly after Christ, though no one knows the exact year of his birth. But, on the other hand, the names of the days of the week are all Pagan. If the former is an argument for Christianity, the latter is an argument against it.

**A CORRESPONDENT** desires to know whether a man called Walton Powell has arranged to debate with Mr. Foote. The man appears to be saying so at various places, but it is an utter falsehood. Mr. Foote has never had any sort of communication with him.

**C. A. D.**—The Theistic Church, Swallow-street, Piccadilly, is conducted by the Rev. C. Voysey, formerly of the Church of England, but now a Theist.

**ATHEIST.**—The Christian era was fixed by Christian monks long after the alleged time of Christ. Jews, Mohammedans, Hindus, and Chinese have eras of their own. The use of the Christian era no more implies belief in Christ than using the terms Wednesday and Thursday means belief in Woden and Thor.

**W. BRODBELT.**—New York papers always welcome.

**TUNBRIDGE WELLS.**—Freethinkers willing to form a Branch of the N.S.S. are requested to communicate with Miss Vance, 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

**ANNIE BROWN,** the new hon. sec. of the London Secular Federation, sends her correct address as 22 Pembridge-road, Notting-hill-gate, W.

**ABINGDON.**—Miss Vance hopes to hear from sufficient Freethinkers to start a Branch.

**T. PATKMAN BARRON** (Leicester).—Your reply to "N. M. X." is couched in language unfitting it for insertion in our columns.

**J. C. MCCORQUODALE,** 14 New Inn Entry, Dundee, will be pleased to hear from young Freethinkers who will discuss Freethought subjects by correspondence. He proposes that each shall choose a subject, write upon it, and send it round to the rest for their opinions; and thinks the scheme would develop the talents of young members.—"The Gaberlunzie Man" will appear.

**JOHN SAMUEL.**—Received, and awaits consideration.

**J. SKINNER.**—Your MS. will be submitted to the editor upon his return.

**CORRESPONDENCE** should reach us not later than Tuesday if a reply is desired in the current issue. Otherwise the reply stands over till the following week.

**LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.,** should be written on postcards or the envelopes marked outside, and be sent to 28 Stonecutter-street, London, E.C.

**LONDON Branch Secretaries** should note that the *Weekly Sun* inserts notices of Sunday lectures, as well as the *Dispatch*, *Reynolds's Newspaper*, and others. Notices should be headed "N.S.S. Outdoor Lectures."

**J. W. MEIN,** sec. of the Newcastle Branch, has taken Dawson and Co.'s newsagent's shop, 225 Shield-road, and sells the *Freethinker* and Freethought literature.

**E. H. DALY.**—Your cuttings are always welcome.

**FRANK MCKAY.**—Mr. J. J. Earl, 11 Ash-street, Dean-street, Walworth, is secretary of the Lambeth Branch, and will doubtless be pleased to enrol you.

**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—South Wales Weekly News—Crusader—Cardiff Times—New York Herald—San Francisco Chronicle—Freedom—Crescent—Echo—Justice—Illustrirte Zeitung—Isle of Man Times—Twentieth Century—Liverpool Courier—Dundee Courier—Liverpool Post—Boston Guardian.

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

## PERSONAL.

THE National Secular Society has done me the honor of unanimously re-electing me as President. I hope to justify the confidence of our party during the new year. There is a great deal to be done, and I trust that we shall all work amicably and zealously together for the good of the cause. It is more difficult to carry out resolutions than to pass them.

I am happy to say that I got through my heavy task on Sunday without any serious damage, though I felt a little sore and tired on Monday morning. A week's holiday at the Isle of Man will, I trust, restore me to my normal condition of health; though I shall not make any fresh lecturing engagements until I return to London.

In next week's *Freethinker* I shall address my friends on the Conference and the new year's obligations. For the present, I must be satisfied with saying that the Conference was highly successful, and full of encouragement to all who value the progress of Secularism. The report of the proceedings is in the hands of my old friend and colleague, Mr. J. M. Wheeler, who has been looking after this journal and other matters very faithfully during my indisposition, and will himself be entitled to rest and change as soon as I am able to relieve him.

G. W. FOOTE.

## SUGAR PLUMS.

Mr. Foote has had to pay the penalty for his exertions at the Conference, and finds rest indispensable. His pen will, however, again be active in our next number, and meanwhile he is recuperating his strength. Correspondents whose letters remain unanswered will kindly accept this intimation.

The Conference at Liverpool was distinctly a successful one, marked by good spirit and practical aiming at common ends. The work of the new Executive will be enhanced, but those who have borne office in the past will not shrink from that, and new-comers are likely to be animated by the same spirit.

Mr. Charles Watts, having finished his debate with the Rev. David Macrae at Dundee, has returned to London, where he lectures this evening (May 20) at the Hall of Science on "Is Secularism a Philosophy?" It is some time since Mr. Watts lectured in London, and his friends will no doubt be glad to hear him on this occasion. He will take the opportunity of saying something to Londoners on the National Secular Society's Conference.

Owing to the space taken up by the Conference report, the account of Mr. Watts's debate with Dr. Jamieson stands over till next week.

The *Crusader* continues to pour broadsides into the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes. The May number opens with an article on the "Atheist Shoemaker Controversy." Reference is made to the Melksham incident, and the silence about it in the

*Methodist Times*, as an illustration of Mr. Hughes's wily policy. "Mum's the word" with the "eminent Wesleyan minister" when anything awkward turns up against his reputation. "The feeling is growing," the *Crusader* says, "that Conference should take a hand in this matter." We hope it will. We should be happy to produce our evidences before such a man as Dr. Rigg.

"Mr. Hugh Price Hughes as Epigrammatic Exaggerator" is the title of an article to appear in the June *Crusader*.

We have before us, for the first time, a copy of the *Blue Grass Blade*, of Lexington, Kentucky, the editor of which, Mr. Charles C. Moore, is being prosecuted for blasphemy. It claims to be "the only prohibition paper published by a heathen." The only heretical statement we find in the paper is the statement that, if teetotal Christians want to rebut the argument from the statement that Jesus turned water into wine, the safe course is to say he did not do it.

Lawyers have advised Mr. Moore to prosecute his prosecutor, the Rev. Mr. Southgate, for blasphemy, for expressing his wish that God would rain on the Irish on St. Patrick's Day. Mr. Moore, however, declines to have anything more to do with the law than he is obliged.

In closing his *Centenary History of the South Place Society*, Mr. Moncure D. Conway says: "I can't agree with those who think that it matters little about the laws, provided public sentiment is right. Popular sentiment is largely derived from the laws. The people generally get their ethics from the court-room. Antiquated laws are sometimes spoken of as 'dead letters,' but they are never dead; they continue their subtle work in the mind of the people, and survive as the prejudices which discourage the thinker and retard progress. It is, therefore, a great and worthy aim to which our energies may be wisely consecrated, in this centenary year of our society, to obtain the removal of all surviving censorship on literature, art, and ethical science, maintain the honor of individual independence, and establish entire intellectual, moral, and religious liberty."

Mr. C. J. Hunt lectures in Victoria Park next Sunday, both morning and afternoon, and the Branch ask us to request local Freethinkers to attend and support the lecturer.

Last Sunday, at the Islington open-air station, Prebend-street, Mr. Guest had the unusual but welcome opposition of two clergymen. There was a large attendance.

Freethinkers living in the neighborhood of Abingdon (Berks) are requested to communicate with Miss Vance, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

The French Freethought Federation hold a soiree next Sunday, May 20, at 7 Rue des Ecoiffes, in celebration of the inauguration of new headquarters for the Federation.

*Le Progrès* explains that, in calling Mr. Foote a Protestant, it only meant to indicate that some of the arguments in the *Virgin Mother* were those habitual to Protestants. *Le Progrès* is a French Masonic organ, and argues that Diderot was a Freemason. If so, to what Lodge did he belong? We know that Lalande was a Freemason, and that Voltaire belonged to the Lodge *Les Neuf Sœurs*; but where is the evidence that Diderot was of the craft, other than that he was well acquainted with their principles, and indeed went beyond them?

Colonel Ingersoll's lectures on "The Gods" and "The Ghosts" are translated into Dutch, and published by P. C. Wezel, Haarlem, Holland. Both translations are accompanied by a preface by "Vineta."

*The Heretic* (Charlton Tucker, 26 Beauchamp-avenue, Leamington) is a curious shilling quarterly, describing itself as "An Anti-Sacerdotal Homely Magazine." It seems mildly Deistic, but speaks out plainly on the school question.

The *Athenæum* (April 28), reviewing the Rev. A. H. Sayce's work on *The Higher Criticism and the Monuments*, alludes to the now acknowledged fact that the early narratives in Genesis are based on Babylonian records, and says: "But the Babylonian are by no means the only foreign elements to be found

in the Bible. Not to speak of the story of Joseph, of which 'the Egyptian coloring is too vivid and clear to admit of question,' even the book of Job, according to Professor Sayce, may possibly have had an Edomite origin."

On Prof. Sayce's plea that a greater degree of accuracy should not be demanded from the Bible than from other histories, the *Athenæum* justly says: "Unique demands are the result of unique pretensions." It continues: "To doubt the accuracy of Herodotus was enough to raise a storm in the Cam and a hubbub in Fleet-street; but even his champions among the journalists did not go so far as to call him inspired; and, after all, have not the strictures of the critics been pretty evenly balanced by the shuffles of the apologists?"

Dr. White, in the *Popular Science Monthly*, tells of Benoit de Maillet, a wide observer and close thinker upon Nature, who early in the eighteenth century was led into the idea of the transformation of species, and held that the structure of the globe must be studied in the light of nature. De Maillet disguised his name as "Telliamed," and worded the preface of his book so that, if persecuted, he could declare it a mere sport of fancy. He therefore announced it as the reverie of a Hindu sage imparted to a Christian missionary. "But this strategy availed him nothing; he had allowed his Hindu sage to suggest that the days of creation, named in Genesis, might be long periods of time, and this, with other ideas of equally fearful import, was fatal. Though the book was in type in 1735, it was not published till 1748, ten years after his death."

Dr. White gives a history of the progress of evolutionary ideas, and concludes with an eulogy on the American Freethinker, Edward Livingston Youmans, the founder of the *Popular Science Monthly*. He says: "He was, perhaps, the first in America to recognise the vast bearings of the truths presented by Darwin, Wallace, and Spencer. He became the apostle of these truths, sacrificing the brilliant career on which he had entered as a public lecturer, subordinating himself to the three leaders, and giving himself to editorial drudgery in the stimulation of research and the announcement of results."

This Whit-Friday, the Failsworth Secular Sunday-school hold their annual procession, which leaves the school, Pole-lane, at 10 o'clock prompt. All friends in the neighborhood are invited to join. We hope the party will enjoy favorable weather.

Mr. Bradlaugh's statue, erected by local admirers at Northampton, will be unveiled on the 28th. Mr. Foote was deputed by the N.S.S. Conference to represent the Society on that occasion. Other friends—co-workers and admirers of our late leader—have expressed an intention to be present from the metropolis and other parts.

On Sunday, May 6, 3,537 persons passed the turnstiles of the Art Gallery at Guildhall. The majority were artisans, clerks, warehousemen, and shop employes. Alderman Treloar says: "There was no disorder whatever, the duties of the police being confined to regulating the rate of admission as the crowd became dense." The exhibition is open again this Sunday, May 20, from three till eight.

#### SANDY'S SAWBATH.

An Englishman, who had a Scotch servant, was stopping at a country inn in Scotland, over Sunday, and early in the morning rang for hot water to shave with. He was told by the hotel-keeper "He could na' furnish hot water on the Sabbath day for such a purpose." The Englishman remonstrated in vain. Donald, his man-servant, said he thought he could arrange matters for his "maister," and rang again and ordered a kettle of hot water and the materials for a punch, which was at once sent up to the room, the explanation being given that to send up a punch-kettle was a work of necessity and "maircy," but to give shaving water was encouraging selfish vanity and work on the Sabbath.

On another occasion, a lady was walking early on Sunday morning with a valuable dog in a leash, when the dog slipped his head out of the leash and ran off to play down the street with another dog. The lady called in vain, and, noticing a Scotchman coming along, asked him to assist her by whistling for the dog, to which the man, who was in his cups, remarked: "It's na' well to fuzzle on the Lord's Day."

## THE N.S.S. CONFERENCE.

(Continued from page 318.)

## AFTERNOON MEETING.

Upon re-assembling at 2.30 Mr. DORG's motion for attention to reform in the administration of justice was seconded by Mr. RIDGWAY, and carried unanimously.

Miss A. BROWN, on behalf of the West London Branch, moved: "That only members who have been such for five years shall be eligible as Vice-Presidents." This was seconded by Mr. SMALL, and supported by Mr. Munton (West London). A member proposed three years, and this was seconded. Mr. ALWARD moved the previous question, which was seconded. Mr. Ridgway supported the motion as a necessary safeguard, as did also Mr. Hooper.

After expressing an opinion that the Society should not bind itself unnecessarily, the President took a vote on the amendment of three, instead of five, years, and this, being carried by a considerable majority, became the substantive resolution. Some discussion ensued; Messrs. Pegg, Doeg, Taylor, and Fisher being opposed to innovation, and Messrs. Small and Watts supporting the motion. Upon the delegates alone voting it was found that there were twenty in favor of the resolution and twenty-one against it. The President expressed the opinion that no poll should be taken, as such a change ought to be carefully thought out and be carried by a decided majority.

Mr. ROBERTS then, on behalf of the Battersea Branch, moved: (1) "That the Assistant Secretary be elected at the Conference." The motion found no seconder. (2) "That the Organisation Committee be elected at the Conference." The President explained that the Organisation Committee was, like the Benevolent Committee, a sub-committee of the Executive, appointed and removable by that body, and could not well be formed first. The motion was not pressed.

On the third motion of the Battersea Branch, "That members' certificates be issued within one month after their subscriptions are paid at headquarters," which was seconded by Mr. SUTHERLAND, there was more discussion; and an amendment of three months, proposed by Mr. PEGG and seconded by Mr. SMALL, was, on a vote being taken, carried by a large majority.

On their fourth proposition, "That cards of membership be issued which will serve as a kind of passport when members are visiting London or provincial Branches; the color of the card to be changed every year or every two years, to prove the contribution paid," proposed by Mr. ROBERTS and seconded by Mr. HOOPER, Mr. FOOTE reminded the Conference that the Executive had no authority over the Branches as to the issue of members' cards, but only over individual members who had cards issued on every day in the year. Mr. Hooper offered to withdraw with the consent of Mr. Roberts.

Mr. FOOTE, in moving "That the National Secular Society shall no longer await the convenience of the Liberty of Bequest Committee, but shall do its utmost to promote a Bill for the complete abolition of the Blasphemy Laws," said that this was perhaps the most important matter before the Conference. After explaining the purport of the two Bills, he stated that, in talking over the matter with him, Mr. Bradlaugh gave his opinion that, if the Liberty of Bequest Bill were carried, they might get over their difficulties; but very much would depend on the adjudication of judges, and that nothing could give us complete certitude but an express statute removing the laws against blasphemy. It might then be asked, why consent to smaller measures? When, however, Mr. Holyoake took the milder course of promoting the Liberty of Bequest Bill it was thought that if Mr. Holyoake and those who were working with him could associate his name with such a measure, they were well entitled to do so. Now the case was altered by the introduction of a new Bill, which would cover all the ground of the Liberty of Bequest Bill, and have an even better chance of discussion. He, the President, was of opinion that it would require just as much effort to get the smaller measure passed as the deeper and wider. Our resources were limited, and he proposed they should be entirely devoted to promoting Mr. Storey's Bill, to let the country see that, while we had been content to take instalments, we yet made our demand for the full debt of justice in the high court of reason and humanity.

Mr. E. TAYLOR, in seconding, said that, while he did not expect immediate success, that was no reason that we should relax our efforts. We should keep pegging away, and the Bill be introduced every year. Only one out of ten persons were aware of the injustice and disabilities under which we suffer. The present Bill was superior to that of Mr. Courtney Kenny, and Secularists everywhere should write to their members to support it. Mr. Taylor mentioned letters he had received from Mr. Storey, General Booth, who was too busy to attend to the subject, and the Bishop of Manchester, who significantly remarked that it was best to let sleeping dogs lie, or if you rouse them they will do mischief.

Mr. WATTS then moved, "That this Conference heartily endorses the action of the Executive in regard to the question of Secular Education in public schools, and calls upon Secularists throughout the whole country, and especially in London, to throw themselves promptly and energetically into

the struggle against religious usurpation over the minds of the young; and this Conference further considers it the duty of all Secularists, wherever possible, to record their votes entirely for the candidates who are pledged to the 'Secular' ticket." He held that this question was second in importance to none, and regretted that time would compel his reserving, until the evening, anything like a full exposition of the subject. Education was the great hope for the future, and now was the time for Secularists to assert their position, that education should be untrammelled by the disputatious matter of dogmas, creeds, and theology.

Mr. WHEELER, in seconding the motion, alluded to the revolt of the teachers, and how they might be helped by the withdrawal of children, together with the demand, empowered by the resolution of the London Board, that "during the time of religious teaching any children withdrawn from such teaching shall receive separate instruction in secular subjects." He drew attention to the need of eligible candidates and funds to carry on the fight.

The remaining business being a statement by the President *re* a certain prosecution, Mr. FOOTE remarked that the principal weapon now employed against us is calumny. Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant were subjected to most reckless and malignant accusations. That policy is not ended. Respectable opposition is nearly ended. It is now mainly of the gutter order. No calumny touched his own feelings; but there are a large number of people who hate us because they do not know us. Timid people were frightened by these reckless accusations, and it was time to fasten down the slanderers to their public responsibilities. An abominable calumny upon the Hall of Science having been circulated, Mr. R. O. Smith and the National Secular Hall Society had joined in an action for exemplary damages. If a civil verdict was obtained, it would be easier to prosecute these slanderers criminally. The law, as Mr. Doeg had said, was beautifully circumlocutory, but by-and-bye the case would come on, and they were pledged to accept no compromise—no apology and no offer of money. The case must go into court and be settled there.

Mr. HOOPER moved that the Conference thoroughly endorse the action of the President. Mr. TAYLOR (Chatham) seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

This concluded the business upon the agenda, but by leave of the Conference Mr. FORDER moved the election of Mr. Ridgway (Birmingham) as vice-president for his long services to the cause.

The motion was seconded and carried unanimously.

Mr. HATCHER (Barnsley) moved a hearty vote of thanks to the President for unearthing the lie propagated by the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes.

This was seconded and carried unanimously.

Mr. RIDGWAY proposed that our President be elected to attend as representative of the National Secular Society at the unveiling of the statue of Mr. Bradlaugh at Northampton on May 28.

Seconded by Mr. ALWARD, this was carried unanimously.

Mr. TAYLOR (Manchester) moved a vote of thanks to Messrs. Storey, Dalziel, Labouchere, Lloyd George, and Madden for bringing in a Bill to abolish prosecutions for religious opinions.

Mr. FORDER, in seconding, recommended that all Secularists should obtain a copy of the Bill and bring it to the notice of their representatives. They could be obtained from himself at the Government price of one halfpenny.

Mr. FOOTE then moved a vote of sympathetic respect to Mr. Daniel Baker, vice-president, who was absent through failing health.

This was seconded by Mr. WATTS, and carried unanimously.

Mr. C. J. HUNT then proposed a vote of thanks to the Liverpool Branch for entertaining the Conference, which was also carried with acclamation.

## EVENING MEETING.

In the evening there was a heavy downpour of rain, but the Oddfellows' large hall was filled with a good audience, the majority of whom were evidently sympathisers with the Free-thought cause.

The chair was taken by Mr. Foote, who was accompanied to the platform by Mr. C. Watts, Mr. R. Forder, Mr. R. O. Smith, Mr. C. J. Hunt, Mr. L. Small, Mr. J. M. Wheeler, Miss E. Vance, and Miss A. Brown.

The Chairman, in opening the proceedings, alluded to their hope to have held the meeting in the Picton Hall, but unfortunately the City Council was not sufficiently liberal to treat all sections of the community in the spirit of justice and equality. He denied the statement that the hall was applied for because they wanted to be offensive. They selected Sunday, not because it was offensive, but because it was convenient; Sunday being the day working-men could best give to the work of their own emancipation. He first called upon

Mr. C. J. HUNT, who alluded to the progress made by the cause, despite many obstacles, and its not holding out hopes of eternal reward or expectation of removing sin through the efficacy of the blood of Jesus Christ. He urged that every Freethinker who valued his own liberty should feel bound to

join some organisation. Individuals could do little, but collectively they could do much. He had just returned from Belfast, where he had illustration of the uphill fight against bigotry and hypocrisy. The work of Freethought propaganda was to clear the brain from the rubbish of superstition, and when that was done the natural result was, that the man turned his attention to improving this world. We did not dictate which way we should go, but when we looked at the number of reformers of all kinds who had gone through the training of Freethought, and at how they were dragging on the parsons behind, then we could safely congratulate ourselves, and say that the National Secular Society had not existed in vain.

Mr. L. SMALL then spoke of his own concern in the applications to the Library Committee and the Town Council for the use of the Picton Lecture Hall. Many misstatements had been made, and there was an impression that these gentlemen had been approached in a rough and ungentlemanly way. That was not so at all. The papers had altered his word "request" into "demand"; but he had said that, representing a body of citizens, he had some shadow of right in asking a favorable reply. Mr. Small commended Mr. Taggart, a Catholic (whose name was very heartily applauded), for maintaining that right. That, on a Liberal Council, only five voted for it showed they must, by taking interest in municipal matters, make these sham Liberals tremble.

Mr. C. WARRE followed with a rousing speech, which excited the enthusiasm of the audience, and was vehemently applauded. He went over the distinctive principles of Secularism; recounted the evils of superstition and theology, and their natural promotion of intolerance. He adverted to the unpractical character of Christ's teaching, and wound up with a stirring appeal for true education apart from Bible reading and catechisms.

Mr. FORDER followed with a brief speech of mingled levity and gravity. He alluded to the dangers of the Catholic and High Church attack on education, and finished with a humorous piece of verse, the moral of which was to "keep a-movin'."

Mr. FOOTE brought the proceedings to a close with a brilliant and powerful speech, into which, despite his illness, he infused much life and warmth. He alluded to the vitality of the party, notwithstanding its oft-predicted dissolution; to the disabilities and injustice under which it suffers, with public halls denied, and without legal property of its own. After adverting to various aspects of their work of rationalising life, he concluded with a powerful appeal to women to help in the work of emancipation, to make brighter days for succeeding generations. The speech was followed by a torrent of applause.

A collection was taken at the door on behalf of the Freethought Benevolent Fund, and £3 0s. 10d. was realised.

On Monday, Mr. Small and other Liverpool friends accompanied the delegates to Port Sunlight and to other places of interest in the neighborhood of Liverpool.

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#### SECULAR FUNERALS.

On Tuesday, May 8, at the meeting of the Hammersmith Burial Board, a letter was read from Mr. Harry Courtney, of the West London Branch of the N.S.S., calling attention to the action of the Cemetery keeper on April 7 in trying to prevent speeches being delivered over the grave of Madame des Roches. The writer asked, on behalf of the Freethought party, if the Board accepted the responsibility of this "deliberate insult," and by what law or regulation it was carried out.

Mr. Courtney was in attendance, and the chairman (Rev. Preb. Snowden) informed him that the Board considered they had discretionary power in making regulations for the conduct of funerals in the cemetery, and they had decided that where no religious ceremony took place they could not allow speeches to be delivered at the graveside.

Mr. Courtney then informed the Board that he claimed the right to conduct Secular Funerals according to the custom of the National Secular Society, and should do so when it was the wish of the friends responsible. Due notice would be given of such funerals, and the Board might take what action they thought desirable. He was within his legal right in acting as he suggested. He offered to submit a copy of the Secular Burial Service, and was sure there was nothing in it to which any member of the Board could reasonably object.

The chairman then announced that, if Mr. Courtney would forward the "Services" referred to, the Board would reconsider the matter at their next meeting. The Board were anxious to do all in their power to make arrangements for the satisfaction of the community, subject to decency and good order. Mr. Courtney then retired.

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"Now, Binny, can you tell what caused Adam's downfall?"  
Binny: "His fifth rib."

What is the difference between the problem of the unemployed and cremation?—One is, How to earn a living; the other, How to urn the dead.

#### THE CHEMISTRY OF BELIEF.

"And these signs shall follow them that believe. . . Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."—CHRIST.

If credence awaited desire,  
And wishing extinguished dubiety,  
The parsons might prate about fire  
With some little show of propriety.

For many would gladly receive  
The soothing old syrup of piety,  
If wishing could make them believe  
The Bible's conflicting variety.

To doubt is absurd, if the will  
Makes flat contradictories credible,  
Resulting in magical skill,  
And power to make deadly things edible.

O sceptic, just think of the gain!  
The Lord, in his speech valedictory,  
Said: Christians would always obtain  
O'er poisons and devils the victory.

Said Jesus: Believers shall cure  
Diseases at each opportunity,  
And take, while the earth shall endure,  
All poisonous drinks with impunity.

A real believer can drink  
With safety and perfect propriety,  
Since potions can no'er make him blink,  
Nor damage his health or sobriety.

It follows, as all must allow—  
Save those of the shamming fraternity—  
That faith makes us poison-proof now,  
And fire-proof throughout all eternity.

A Christian, if honest and true,  
Might swallow a quart of petroleum;  
No matter, no harm would ensue,  
Says Christ—unobscured by a scholium.

Away, then, with logic and brains!  
Just think of the boon to society,  
When cancers, and poisons, and pains  
Are conquered by credulous piety!

Jehovah, Ghost, Devil, and Son!  
Co-auto-genetic Quarternity!  
O multiple, quadrified one!  
O inter-paternal fraternity!

These verses are likely to be  
The means—through their fitting vacuity—  
Of leading "inquirers" to Thee,  
O shadow of human faculty.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

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#### TRUSTING THE CLERGY.

Mrs. Elizabeth Clarke, a widow, who lets lodgings, said in her haste that all clergymen tell the truth. She now knows that there is an exception to the law. It seems hard that precisely the one exception, Mr. Henry Edward Chapman, should have hired rooms of her at two pound ten a week. So long as this was his rent he paid it, but in an unguarded moment she reduced it to two pound five. "He did not pay much rent after that time," runs her simple story. He said he had not been paid by the Distressed Ladies' Association. At the first blush, indeed, one does not quite see why he should be. But it seems he said he was the manager of it, which in truth he was, and the creator of it also. So the good man went on patiently piling up his account until it came to £85, and the landlady had the brokers in. At the psychological moment he announced that his Association was bankrupt, but soon after that he had become secretary to a lady "who resides at Marble Arch," however you do that. But there was a blight on him. Soon that good Shunamite became bankrupt too, and then the horrid truth came out that Mr. Chapman was also bankrupt, and undischarged at that. From which we learn that there is a limit even to trust in the clergy.—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

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A friend recently heard the following pulpit utterance: "All along the untrodden paths of the past we discern the footprints of the almighty hand!"

Daigh: "Do you know the object of being born again?"  
Quik: "Yes; to give the self-made man a chance of getting a clean conscience."

## WHO WAS SOLOMON ?

ACCORDING to 1 Kings iv., Solomon reigned over all kingdoms from the river [Euphrates] unto the land of the Philistines and unto the border of Egypt; they brought presents and served Solomon all the days of his life. He had dominion over all the region on this side the river from Tiphshah even to Azzah, over all the kings on this side the river. He had forty thousand stalls of horses for his chariots. He "exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches" as well as in wisdom (1 Kings x. 23). His wives and concubines numbered a thousand (1 Kings xi. 3), while "the weight of gold that came to Solomon in one year was six hundred three score and six talents of gold." A talent being worth £7,200, this would be equivalent to an annual sum of over four millions. According to the veracious 1 Chron. xxii. 14, David said: "I have prepared for the house of the Lord an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver"—this is £720,000,000 in gold and £450,000,000 in silver!

The significant fact that, after many years spent in Palestine exploration, not a single coin of the age of Solomon has been found, nor, indeed, any Jewish coin prior to the time of Simon Maccabeus, taken together with the evidence of the monuments that during the time assigned to Solomon powerful empires existed both in Egypt and Assyria, makes it certain that the gateway between these two empires could not have been held by a third, having its seat at Jerusalem, in a country where in the previous generation, according to the Bible itself, "there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel" (1 Sam. xiii. 19).

The Bible Solomon being manifestly as fabulous a character as the Solomon of the Koran, to whom the winds were subjected so that they ran at his bidding (Sura xxxviii. 36), is there any historical character with whom he can be identified? I have long suspected that the Assyrian kings named Shalman-nezzar may have given rise to the tradition of Solomon's power and wisdom which prevails through Western Asia. Certainly it was no petty king of Judea who gave rise to the tradition, and I suspect it was Shalman-nezzar II., who conquered Syria 803-848, who gave his name to the mythical Solomon. This powerful monarch subdued many kingdoms, and had many tributaries under him. It is true he lived after the time assigned to the son of Bathsheba, but the tendency is usually to antedate such semi-mythical heroes. LUCIANUS.

## THE CHURCH AND SCIENCE.

At a time when the most eminent prelates of the older Church were eulogising debauched princes like Louis XV., and using the unspeakably vile casuistry of Suarez in the education of the priesthood as to the relations of men and women, the modesty of the Papal authorities was so shocked by Linnæus's proofs of a sexual system in plants, that for many years his writings were prohibited in the Papal States and in various parts of Europe where clerical authority was strong enough to resist the new scientific current. And Protestantism was quite as oppressive. In a letter to Eloius, Linnæus tells of the rebuke given to science by one of the great Lutheran prelates of Sweden, Bishop Svedburg. From various parts of Europe detailed statements had been sent to the Royal Academy of Science that water had been turned into blood, and well-meaning ecclesiastics had seen in this an indication of the wrath of God, certainly against regions in which these miracles had occurred, and possibly against the whole world. A miracle of this sort appearing in Sweden, Linnæus looked into it carefully, and found that the reddening of the water was caused by dense masses of minute insects. News of this explanation having reached the bishop, he took the field against it; he denounced this discovery as "a Satanic abyss," and declared "The reddening of the water is not natural," and, "when God allows such a miracle to take place Satan endeavors, and so do his ungodly, self-reliant, self-sufficient, and worldly tools, to make it signify nothing."

Dr. A. White, "Popular Scientific Monthly," May, 1894.

The apotheosis of human beings is part of the normal phenomena in all active religions. Gods are still being made in India by the popular instinct, and promoted in China by government orders. It requires, then, no supernatural intervention to account for the growth of the Christian mythology.—Leslie Stephen.

## BOOK CHAT.

*Secularism: its Progress and Morals*, by John M. Bonham, is announced as published by G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York. Mr. Bonham is said to treat the question from a philosophical and judicious point of view, and we shall probably bring his work further before the attention of our readers.

\* \* \*

A posthumous poem by Sir Richard Burton, entitled *Kasdah*, is edited by Lady Burton, who protests too much after the fashion of a pious Catholic, though a loving wife. The poem deals with Man and Destiny, and is decidedly anti-Christian. According to the writer's account, it is an Eastern version of Humanitarianism, blended with the sceptical, or, as we would say, the scientific spirit.

\* \* \*

The Society for the Protection of Animals from Vivisection and Swan Sonnenschein and Co. have jointly issued a new and cheaper edition of the revised and enlarged version of the now famous *Nine Circles, or the Torture of the Innocent*. It contains a lengthy Introduction, setting forth the opinions and observations of the most eminent physiologists on the value of chloroform, ether, morphia, and other anæsthetics (from which the reader will be enabled to estimate how much or how little the anæsthetics can be relied on to reduce the amount of suffering caused by the various lesions, burnings, etc., to which the victims of vivisection are subjected). It is from the pen of Dr. Edward Berdoe, the well-known opponent of vivisection, who also deals with the criticisms of the first edition. It was recently announced that Dr. Berdoe had gone over to the Roman Catholic Church, but his share of this work is of a very secular nature indeed. The price is sixpence.

\* \* \*

We have received Part I. of *Handbuch des Socialismus*, a Dictionary of Socialism, published at Geneva. It is announced that it will be completed in eight parts at tenpence a part. The book will supply a decided want. The prospectus promises that the theories of French, German, and English Socialism are to be fully detailed, and biographical sketches of the principal Socialist thinkers and leaders are to be given. The book is written from the historical standpoint, and is under the editorship of Dr. Carl Stegmann and Dr. C. Hugo. The notices on British contemporary Socialists are meagre and inaccurate. The first article deals with M. Albert, the colleague of Louis Blanc, and the organiser of the National Workshops of 1848. M. Albert's death is not announced, though it took place more than a year ago. The notice of Bakunin is not written in the historical spirit. It is ridiculous to assert that he advised the youth of Russia to take highwaymen as their ideals. Such stuff is only expected in a party organ; a serious scientific work should not be defaced with it. The editors will do well to add the following names to their list for notices: A. Brisbane, E. T. Craig, Delescluzo, Hector Denis, Patrick Dove, Etlzer, General Frey, Henry George, Horace Greeley, L. Gronlund, Henry James, Abbé Morelly, Bronterre O'Brien, George Ripley, Gustave Tridon, and A. R. Wallace. Some particulars of those who were prominent Freethinkers will be found in Mr. Wheeler's *Biographical Dictionary of Freethinkers*.

\* \* \*

The Labour Press, 59 Tib-street, Manchester, has issued a pamphlet by Edward Carpenter, the poet and author of "Nurcissus" and "Towards Democracy," on the important subject of *Sex Love*. He urges "That we should leave our children to pick up their information about the most sacred, the most profound and vital of all human functions, from the mere gutter, and learn to know it first from the lips of ignorance and vice, seems almost incredible, and certainly indicates the deeply-rooted unbelief and uncleanness of our own thoughts."

\* \* \*

*Mrs. Besant in India: Her Stratagem and Foolishness Exposed*, by Kaliprasanna Kavyabisharad, journalist, Bengal, Calcutta, and 163, Kalighat-road, Bhowampore, 1894, is a trenchant pamphlet by a native Freethinker, who is disgusted at seeing his fellow-countrymen sunk in the mire of superstition, and held there by those who should assist in their liberation. He accuses Mrs. Besant of abject flattery of the Hindus, and cites her as speaking of "India that was old before Egypt was born," and "India has been the cradle of every religion; the scriptures of India the source of all other scriptures in the world." Though a native, Mr. Kavyabisharad is too sensible to credit this nonsense, and, as to Mrs. Besant's professed Hinduism, he says: "A woman, born and brought up in England, and of British parents, separated from her husband, and still calling herself a Hindu, is the strangest anomaly a Hindu can ever come across." He ridicules the revelations of the Mahatmas, and plainly calls Madame Blavatsky a cheat; but in that he is backed up by the published report of the Society of Psychological Research.

SUNDAY LECTURE NOTICES, ETC.

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

LONDON.

Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C.: 7, musical selections: 7.30, Charles Watts, "Is Secularism a Philosophy?" (admission free; reserved seats 3d. and 6d.). Battersea Secular Hall (back of Battersea Park Station): 7.45, Mrs. Thornton Smith, "Secularism and Socialism" (free). Monday at 8, musical and dramatic entertainment (3d. and 6d.). Tuesday, at 7.30, dancing class (2d. and 4d.); 8.30, social gathering. Wednesday at 8, dramatic club. Camberwell—61 New Church-road, S.E.: 7.30, W. Heaford, "The Jargon of Theology." Notting Hill Gate—"Duke of York," Kensington-place, Silver-street, W.—Monday, at 8.30, business meeting of West London Branch.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Battersea Park-gates: 11.30, A. G. Herzfeld, "Christianity: its Origin and Development." Tuesday, at 7, Stanley Jones, "Christianity and Social Topics." Camberwell (Station-road): 11.30, W. Heaford, "Science and Theology." Edmonton—Angel-road: 7, C. J. Hunt, "Does Man Survive Death?" Hammersmith Bridge (Middlesex side): 7, J. Rowney, "God's Pedigree, Life, and Birth." Corner of the Grove: Thursday, at 8, a lecture. Hyde Park (near Marble-arch): 11.30, Sam Standing, "The History of the Holy Bible"; 3.30, F. Haslam, "Why I am a Secularist." Wednesday, at 8, Stanley Jones will lecture. Islington—Prebend-street, Packington-street, Essex-road: 11.30, T. Thurlow, "The Bible as a Superhuman Revelation." Kennington Green (near the Vestry Hall): 6.30, A. G. Herzfeld, "Conversions and Converts." Kingsland—Ridley-road (near Dalston Junction): 11.30, St. John, "Christianity and Freethought." Leyton—High-road (near Vicarage-road): 11.30, Stanley Jones will lecture. Mile End Waste: 11.30, F. Haslam, "The Exodus from Egypt." Old Pimlico Pier: 11.30, H. Snell, "Bible Teaching in Board Schools." Regent's Park (near Gloucester-gate): 11.30, James Rowney, "Holy Moses and Co."; 3.30, St. John, "The New Christianity." Tottenham Green (corner of Seven Sisters-road): 3.30, Sam Standing, "The Evolution and Future Position of the British Workman." Victoria Park (near the fountain): 11.15 and 3.15, C. J. Hunt will lecture. Wimbledon—The Broadway (near the Railway Station): 7, F. Haslam, "Modern Science and Revelation." Walthamstow—Markhouse-road: 6.30, Stanley Jones will lecture. Wood Green—Jolly Butchers'-hill: 11.30, A. Guest, "The Attitude of the Bible towards Woman"; 7, S. E. Easton, "The Teachings of Christ." Wednesday, at 8, Sam Standing, "Jonah and other Tales."

COUNTRY.

Bristol—Shepherd's Hall: 10, members meet for ramble to Portishead; election of officers. Derby—Friar Gate Coffee Tavern: Tuesday, at 7.30, F. W. Swain, "Creation Story." Failsforth—Friday at 10, procession of Secular Sunday-school. Jarrow—Co-operative Hall: 6.30, members meet for ramble in the country. Liverpool—Oddfellows' (Large) Hall, St. Anne-street: 11, Tontine Society: 7, Edward Jackson, "A Criticism of the Real Jesus of Ernest Newman." Manchester—Secular Hall, Rusholme-road, All Saints: 11, C. Cohen, "Epicurus"; 3, "Science and Man"; 6.30, "Gods and God-Makers." Reading—Foresters' Hall, West-street: 7, business meeting. Sheffield—Hall of Science, Rockingham-street: 7, vocal and instrumental music, recitations, etc. South Shields—Capt. Duncan's Navigation School, King-street, 6.30, ethical class; 7.30, "The Conference of 1894—Delegate's Report." Sunderland—Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street: 7, Hall Nicholson will lecture.

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

Sunderland—Ryhope, on the Green: 11, Hall Nicholson will lecture.

LECTURERS' ENGAGEMENTS.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—May 20 to 28, Manchester: 29, Battersea. June 3, m. Mile End, a. Victoria Park, e. Walthamstow; 5, Battersea; 10, Liverpool; 12, Battersea; 17, m. Finsbury Park, a. Victoria Park, e. Battersea.

U. J. HUNT, 48 Fordingley-road, St. Peter's Park, London, W.—May 20, e. Edmonton; 27, m. Pimlico Pier. June 3, m. and a. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith: 10, m. Clerkenwell Green, a. Regent's Park; 17, m. Mile End, e. Lambeth; 24, m. Pimlico Pier, e. Edmonton.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Oradon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—May 20, Barnsley; 27, m. Hyde Park, e. Hammersmith. June 3, m. Westminster; 10, m. and a. Victoria Park; 17, m. Wood Green, e. Edmonton; 24, m. and e. Camberwell.

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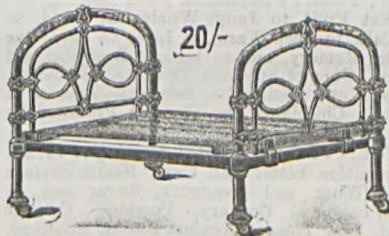
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