

The Freethinker

Edited by G. W. FOOTE.]

[Sub-Editor, J. M. WHEELER.

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PRICE TWOPENCE.

MRS. BESANT'S CONFIDENCE TRICK.

MRS. BESANT'S conversion to Theosophy, under the personal influence of Madame Blavatsky, necessitated my telling her publicly that, in my judgment, she was no longer a Secularist, and that her proper place was outside the National Secular Society. Having said this, I left it to her own sense and honesty to determine her procedure, and it was not long before she found her position in our party untenable.

On looking back over this episode I am entirely satisfied with the course I pursued. Many persons were dissatisfied at the time, but they did not understand the situation as I did, and I believe there are few Secularists at present who do not believe that I was in the right. You cannot have a strong and stable Society composed of persons of diverse and even hostile opinions in regard to what is ostensibly their bond of union. It is impossible for a sensible man to quarrel with the Church on account of "excommunication." Every organisation has the right to say who shall and who shall not belong to it. The mischief began when the Church, after excommunicating one of its members, proceeded to inflict upon him every possible suffering and degradation.

Before leaving us, however, Mrs. Besant elected to give a farewell address at the Hall of Science, which, of course, was crowded to suffocation. By this time she had assumed all the airs of a high priestess, who had inherited by a sort of divine right the mantle of Helena Blavatsky. The tradition of the Hall of Science, where she had lectured for so many years, was thrown to the winds. Mrs. Besant walked off the platform after her address without waiting for a single question or a moment's discussion.

Throughout that address Mrs. Besant maintained the attitude she had adopted from the beginning. To her old Freethought associates she said: "Did you ever know me to tell you a lie?" Of course they did not, and the impulsive lady took that as a guarantee that all she told them was absolutely true. Her logic allowed of no distinction between lies and inaccuracy.

I said at the time that this was a form of the confidence trick. No person had a right to demand such implicit credence. A man in a public-house said to a greenhorn: "Let me hold your purse while you go round the corner." Mrs. Besant said: "Let me hold your mind while you go out of it." The motives might be different, but the methods were the same.

Mrs. Besant created a profound "sensation"—as the *Chronicle* put it—by stating that, since Madame Blavatsky's death, she had received letters from the Mahatma who had been in communication with that lady. They might not believe her, but then the old question arose again, "Did they ever know her to tell a lie?" And this dispensed with all necessity for evidence.

Mrs. Besant would say that too much importance should not be attached to these "miracles" of precipitated letters.

At the same time she was wise enough to see that they were her trump card with the gaping mob of superstitionists. It is a way they have. Jesus Christ himself is reported to have made light, occasionally, of his "miracles," telling persons who profited by them to "tell no man," with the dead certainty that the advice would only make them more zealous advertisers.

"Did you ever know me to tell you a lie?" was an awkward question, especially when asked by a lady. Mrs. Besant might have got an answer if she had asked, "Did you ever know me to be deceived?" Several persons could have said "Yes."

It now appears that Mrs. Besant *was* deceived. The oracle was under the influence of mechanical inspiration. The afflatus of the god was simply the breath of Mr. W. Q. Judge. This gentleman has since been accused of forging the Mahatma letters in question, with others of the same kidney. A "Judicial Committee" was appointed by the Theosophical Society to investigate the charges, and the farce of this "investigation" has been fully exposed in the *Westminster Gazette*. The Committee sagely found that the rules of the Society did not permit them to try Mr. Judge. After this grave hocus-pocus, Mr. Judge and Mrs. Besant came to an agreement. Each made a statement which has been printed for circulation among the "genuine brotherhood." Mr. Judge's statement is a rigmarole worthy of Pecksniff. Mrs. Besant's contains the following passage:—

"I do not charge, and have not charged, Mr. Judge with forgery in the ordinary sense of the term, but with giving a misleading form to messages received psychically from the Master in various ways. . . . Personally, I hold that this method is illegitimate. . . . I believe that Mr. Judge wrote with his own hand, consciously or automatically I do not know, in the script adopted as that of the Master, messages which he received from the Master, or from *chelas*; and I know that in my own case I believed that the messages he gave me in the well-known script were messages directly precipitated or directly written by the Master. When I publicly said that I had received, after H. P. Blavatsky's death, letters in the writing that H. P. Blavatsky had been accused of forging, I referred to letters given to me by Mr. Judge, and as they were in the well-known script I never dreamt of challenging their source. I know now that they were not written or precipitated by the Master, and that they were done by Mr. Judge; but I also believe that the gist of these messages was psychically received, and that Mr. Judge's error lay in giving them to me in a script written by himself and not saying so. . . . Having been myself mistaken, I in turn misled the public."

Mrs. Besant was "mistaken," and she "misled" others. After all her posing I was right; it *was* a form of the confidence trick. What will she do now? This is what she *ought* to do. She should visit the Hall of Science again and confess that she was duped. She owes the people she "misled" this act of reparation. But I scarcely believe she will make it. The public admission of fallibility is fatal to those who trade on mystery.

G. W. FOOTE.

THE BIBLE AND THE CHILD.

It is only the fact that the Bible and religion are spoken of with awe and reverence in our early days which stands in the way of our regarding them in a common-sense light. If any one were to propose, as a part of education, any other subject about which there were disputes and no means of settling them—such, for instance, as the existence of Mahatmas in Tibet—all reasonable people would agree that such were not the subjects which should occupy children's minds to the exclusion of matters upon which all are agreed. Common honesty, indeed, dictates that, whenever a teacher has to lay before students matters upon which there is a question, the doubt itself, with the arguments on all sides, should be fairly stated. If, for instance, the question be the population of Central Africa, the teacher should fairly say he has no exact figures, or give the varying estimates of differing authorities. But who supposes it is part of the teacher's proper duty to place before children the divergent interpretations and conflicting authorities in regard to nearly every verse of the Bible? This would be to raise interminable controversies.

If it were proposed to use, as a text-book in the schools, some new Royal Reader, which contained such tales as the story of Lot and his daughters, of Judah and Tamar, of the Levite's concubine, of Amnon and Tamar, of David and Bathsheba, of Aholah and Aholibah, or such lascivious descriptions as those of the Song of Solomon, such a reading-book would be indignantly denounced as disgracefully unfit for school purposes and juvenile reading generally. No school committee in the land would admit such a book, and the very suggestion would be considered an insult to the children, their parents, and their teachers. Yet, in the name of religion, such questionable stories can be brought before the children's eyes at the public expense. It is useless to say that these stories are not brought directly before the children's notice. They reach them nonetheless surely because they are avoided. In the Bible there are fully three hundred chapters containing words of an indecent signification, about which children naturally wish to inquire. Stories of immorality are told with revolting directness and fulness of detail. Most of these stories no teacher would ever think of introducing to children's notice, but they *are* brought before their attention, and are passed from one to another, so that surreptitiously-read portions of the Bible such as no clergyman would dare read aloud in the pulpit are far more familiar to the children than the Sermon on the Mount.

The so-called Progressive party are so enamored of the Compromise providing for Bible-reading and religious instruction founded thereon that they are widely circulating the Syllabus of Bible instruction in actual use, to let voters see what excellent religious training the London children are receiving. In Standard I. the little ones are drilled in the Lord's Prayer and "The Lord is My Shepherd," a few simple stories from the book of Genesis, and simple lessons from the boyhood and youth of those barbarous favorites of God, Samuel and David. In Standard II. they are taken to simple stories from the books of the Pentateuch, which, at the discretion of the teacher, may include the story of Abraham offering Isaac, Joseph and Mrs. Potiphar, or that of Moses slaying the Egyptian. In Standard III. youths of both sexes have "Lessons from the books of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, and Kings." Now, what are the lessons from these books save lessons of barbarity, lust, and cruelty? The child learns that God's favorites were such wretches as Joshua, Gideon, Jael, Samuel, and David. All the instincts which it is desirable to repress are called into play and stimulated by such barbaric stories, and the child's mind is taken back to an old savage and incomprehensible world, in which things happened widely different from the way in which they happen around him. The children's minds are steeped in unreality. Without explanation, the books of the Bible present a mass of oriental legends and teachings, some of them very obscure, some crude and barbarous. With explanation, the children are launched on a sea of controversy upon which few of the teachers can enter with advantage. From its pages the most varied doctrines can be and are defended. Free will, predestination, universalism, eternal hell for the majority, the Trinity, Unitarianism, republicanism, monarchy, communism, slavery, anarchism, monogamy, polygamy, concubinage, celibacy, and innumerable

other doctrines, can all claim its sanction. Without explanation, these old books are simply distracting. With explanation, their teaching takes the bias of the individual teacher, and we cannot wonder at the majority wishing that the teachers shall be exactly of their opinions.

The teachers in Board schools, by whom and under whose direction the Bible is read, are not abstract, non-denominational, "unsectarian Christians." They are, or may be, Anglicans, Wesleyans, Baptists, Trinitarians, Unitarians, Positivists, Jews, or Agnostics. Each one has his religious bias, of which he must find it difficult to divest himself. While the Bible is kept in the schools it is sure to be perverted, intentionally or unintentionally, so as to subserve sectarian ends. It is a mistake to fancy that the making of improper comments by the teacher is the only or chief mode of using the book for sectarian purposes. A religious teacher is likely to, as far as he can without violating the rule prohibiting sectarian comment, guard his pupils against the errors of other denominations. And without comment he can by mere selection inculcate the doctrines of his particular faith as effectively as though he preached a dogmatic sermon from the pulpit. For the teacher, too, is in his coward's castle of unquestioned authority. The reading of the Bible is not, and in the nature of the case cannot be, other than a sectarian exercise. It is as much so as if the children were called upon to say their prayers, make the sign of the cross, and sprinkle themselves with holy water.

The teachers may be anxious to avoid all sectarianism; yet, being brought up to regard what are called the great fundamental truths of Christianity as beyond dispute, they naturally inculcate dogmas that are the very root of sectarianism. They know that the reading of the Bible is insisted on, not as a part of ancient literature, but as "the word of God." It is demanded as religious teaching, and notions of reverence and submission are inculcated in regard to it which would be out of place in regard to any other book.

The Bible, in short, is sectarian. The Catholic's version is different from that of the Protestant, and its relation to his faith is wholly different from its relation to the faith of a Protestant. Bible reading is really as sectarian as creed teaching. It is as much a violation of liberty and justice to levy a rate upon all classes to employ officials to teach the Bible in Board schools as to levy a rate for the teaching of the Athanasian Creed.

J. M. WHEELER.

SECULAR IDEAS AS TO RIGHT AND WRONG.

MOST persons can distinguish between right and wrong; but it is not so easy to decide *why* certain actions are right, and others the very reverse. According to orthodox Christianity, the sanction for right-doing is a conviction that our actions should accord with God's will, and that we should abstain from the performance of wrong acts through fear of punishment in some future existence. These are not the Secular reasons for doing the right thing or avoiding the wrong. Apart from the difficulty of ascertaining what the will of God is (for it is nowhere definitely stated), the value of that will would consist in its nature. We should ask, Is it just or reasonable to think that obedience to that will would secure the happiness of the community? Is it not a fact that all that can be known of the supposed will of the Christian God is to be learnt from the Bible? But then it should be remembered that the many representations given of the Divine will in that book are not only contradictory, but they would, if acted upon, prove most dangerous to the well-being of society. For instance, it is there stated that it is God's will that we should take no thought for our lives (Matt. vi. 25); that we should not lay up for ourselves treasures on earth (Matt. vi. 19); that we should resist not evil (Matt. v. 39); that we should set our affections on things above, not on things on the earth (Col. iii. 2); that we should love not the world (1 John ii. 15); that if we offend in one point of the law, we are guilty of all (James ii. 10); that we are to obey not only good, but bad, masters (1 Peter ii. 18); and that it is good morality to say, "What, therefore, God hath joined together, let no man put asunder" (Matt. xix. 6); that we should swear not at all (Matt. v. 34); that we

cannot go to Christ except the Father draw us (John vi. 44); that we are to labor not for the meat which perisheth (John vi. 27); that we are to hate our own flesh and blood (Luke xiv. 26); that those who leave their families for the "Gospel's sake" shall be rewarded here and hereafter (Mark x. 29, 30); that men should believe a lie, that they all might be damned (2 Thess. ii. 11, 12); that the world cannot be saved by any name except that of Christ (Acts iv. 12); that salvation should be obtained through faith, and *not of works* (Ephes. ii. 8, 9); that the sick are to rely upon the "prayer of faith" to save them (James v. 15); that if any two Christians agree upon something, and send a supplication to heaven for that something, it shall be granted them (Matt. xviii. 19). Now, according to general experience, if we complied with the will of God, as here stated, society would not pronounce our actions as right, but they would be condemned as being hurtful to the commonwealth.

Now, Secularism is opposed to the idea that we should do right through fear of hell. This is the lowest and most selfish reason for doing good that can be given. According to the Secular idea, the desire to do right should not be prompted by merely personal considerations, but with the object of enhancing the best interests of others, as well as our own. Besides, the fear of hell has proved inoperative, either as an incentive to right action, or as a deterrent to wrong doing. Even those who profess to be influenced by this motive have a greater dread of a policeman than of a devil, and a more vivid conception of a jail than of a hell. Penalties remote from life do not, by any means, exercise the same powerful influence upon human conduct as do those of the present time. The Secular idea of right and wrong is, that neither is the mere accident of the time, and that these terms do not represent a condition which is the result of "chance"; on the contrary, they denote actions which are the outcome of a law based upon the fitness of things. The primary truths in morals are as axiomatic as those in mathematics. Moreover, there is, in the mind of every properly constituted person, an appreciation of right and a detestation of wrong. We urge that vice should be shunned because it is wrong to individuals, and also to society, to indulge in it; and that virtue should be practised because it is the duty of all to assist, both by precept and example, to elevate the human family. A writer in the *London Echo* of August 22 last answers the question why we should do good apart from theological considerations in the following pertinent language: Because "certain actions are followed by more happiness to the actor than other actions, and because those actions which give him the most happiness are such as are helpful to others. The most highly-developed men have discovered this to be true, and the 'average' man will ultimately discover it and act on it. Just in proportion as we become helpful to others we find our own happiness increasing. And as all our actions inevitably spring from the desire of our own happiness, it follows that we must go on becoming more helpful to each other as we develop. Even those foolish persons who now injure others know this to a certain extent. Ask a burglar which gives him the more happiness, to steal or to spend the money he steals with the woman he lives with? He will tell you that his highest happiness is in giving pleasure to his Kate. Ask Andrew Carnegie which gives him the more pleasure, to cut his workmen's wages down or to spend the money in building a public library? He will tell you he finds more pleasure in spending the money for others than in wrenching it from his workmen."

The word "right" originally meant straightened; hence the common saying, "putting things to rights," is understood as being equivalent to putting them straight or in order. A writ of right is a legal method of recovering land that has been wrongfully withheld from its owner, and to right a ship is to restore it to an upright position. A man whose acts are deemed good and useful is described as being "upright" and "straightforward." The notion that legal enactments determine what is morally right and wrong is as fallacious as the idea that the Bible decides the question. Many of the laws of our country are based upon principles the very opposite of what we regard as morality; while the conflicting teachings of the Bible disqualify it from being a correct guide in ethical conduct. It appears to us that, if there are no other standards of right and wrong but those of the Bible and the law of the land,

then such standards by themselves must be arbitrary, having no universal application to mankind. Possibly some legal and scriptural commands may be right, but when they are so it is not because they have the sanction of Parliament or the Bible, but in consequence of their being in harmony with the taste and requirements of the public. That many of the decrees and teachings emanating from these two sources have been considered wrong is evident from the fact that men have persistently refused to obey the one or to accept the other. Take the case of those Free-thinkers, philosophers, and scientists who have so often been at variance with the Church, and who have refused to obey certain laws of their country which they deemed wrong. These men have not only been censured, but sometimes they have been punished as wrong-doers; and yet, ultimately, it was proved that they were in the right, and that the Church and the law were in the wrong. The standard of the Church and of the law was tradition, custom, or common belief; the standard of those who were censured was knowledge. As this knowledge increased the number of offenders against the stereotyped forms of law, both human and divine, increased also, until the old foundations had to yield in favor of those more in harmony with freedom and justice, and more in accordance with the intellect of the nation.

By the Secular idea of right we mean that conduct which is beneficial both to the individual and to the community—conduct that is in agreement with an enlightened conception of human duty. It may be admitted that the usefulness of an act is not always present in the mind of the actor, but it seems to us impossible to estimate the value of an action the purpose or result of which is not useful. The real worth of all actions depends upon the manner in which they affect our judgment, our feelings, and our general well-being. When we assert that the sense of right-doing exists in nature, it must not be supposed that we mean it can be found in a mountain or in the sea; but our meaning is that it is in that part of nature called human. It is this belief in the natural basis of right-doing that inspires us with the endeavor to improve that nature which is the source of all that is noble. The Secular idea of right and wrong is based upon reason and experience, which are the surest guides known to man.

CHARLES WATTS.

(To be concluded.)

A WASTED OPPORTUNITY.

THE present School Board elections are, it seems, to be fought on the religious question at issue between the two parties on the Board. Now, we have not the least desire to unduly minimise the importance of this contest; on the contrary, it will be the duty of every citizen now, as at all other elections where the citizen's voice has to decide, to record his vote for that candidate who, he considers, represents his views. That is, of course, merely a civic duty—a duty he owes to himself and his fellows. But it will be an inconsequent election for all that. The issue between the contending parties is a false issue. The question whether "Compromise Christianity" or "Diggloite Christianity" shall be taught in the schools is trivial, and does not touch any real principle. It is a mere question of degree—the extent or size of the circle of privilege. In the one case the Diggloites fight for a small circle—so small that only the High Church party, *plus*, it seems, the Catholics, can stand inside it. On the other hand, the "Progressives" are fighting for a circle large enough to hold all "Christians." But both circles are circles of privilege. Outside both these stands a large number to whom either circle is an injustice, who object to any Christianity—whether Compromise brand or Diggloite brand—or any religion—being taught with public money and by public officials. Yet their protests are practically ignored, and the contending parties are engaged in fighting each for its own hand, regardless of the rights of others; the only difference in character between the parties observable being that, while the Diggloites do not seem to pretend that they are fighting for liberty, the Progressives make believe that to support them is an essential of intellectual freedom.

One marvels, indeed, at the shifts and subterfuges to which the puny Progressives are put in order to defend

their ridiculous position. They want "religion" taught in the schools; but, ask not, lest evil befall you, what religion. The Progressives are loftily above definitions; they will not, forsooth, "make creeds." The fact of the matter, of course, is that the sleek Progressives—composed for the most part of Nonconformists and evangelical Churchmen—find that the "Compromise" works well enough for them. And hence anything or anybody who ventures to question it or disturb it is condemned to the nethermost hell. Let sleeping dogs lie. The Compromise is sacred; it must not be discussed or attacked; and it is profanity to question its logic. It is a kind of new Holy Ghost, whose nebulousness had better not be examined too closely. And so the Nonconformist Progressive alternates between a repudiation of sectarian teaching and a claim for a larger sectarian teaching; to-day he attacks the Diggleites for wishing to teach *their* creed, to-morrow he is indignant with the Secularist, who objects to him teaching *his* creed, or, at least, portion of his creed.

The Diggleites, on the other hand, are absolutely and perfectly logical—that is, within the limitations implied by the unreasonableness and injustice of their policy in its bearing as a whole. We do not, of course, say that it is logical or equitable to claim that a portion of the community shall be master of the whole—that the public shall be taxed to support a particular religious opinion. But, admitting that it is the business of the State to teach religion—and the Progressives *do* admit this—the Diggleite position is invulnerable. They say, and say logically, in effect: "If we teach religion, we must define what we mean by 'religion'; if Christianity is to be taught in the schools, we must say what we mean by 'Christianity,' since without this definition, the word 'Christianity' carries no distinct and unmistakable meaning." Thus the Diggleites, as against the Progressives, have all the reason on their side. It is obvious that the only valid demurrer to the Diggleite argument is that it is *not* the business of the State to teach speculative opinions on which the members of the State are not agreed even. And this, of course, which is the Secularist position, and the just position, disposes of Diggleite and Progressive alike.

We have called this election, then, a wasted opportunity, because a clear issue is not placed before the electors. An admirable occasion was presented of asking the people of London to decide for secular education or against it—for the removal of disputed dogmas from their schools or for their retention. If this issue had been clearly placed before the people, we believe that, if not a majority, at least a very substantial minority, would have been returned pledged to see that only real education was given in the Board schools. For there are a large number of Progressives who would have voted for the secular ticket. Yet it seems that the Nonconformists have captured the Progressive party, or, at any rate, sway its councils. And Radical organs, like the *Sun*, the *Star*, the *Chronicle*, and others, have gone with the general crowd and shouted for the holy Compromise. The real question, therefore, will have to be fought out on another occasion; and meanwhile we should be preparing and making ready for the encounter. As matters stand even, a small though determined band may be returned. Mr. Watts, we have no doubt, will win in Finsbury; Mrs. Thornton Smith, it is to be hoped, will be successful in Southwark. The Social Democratic candidates, indeed—of whom there are seven or eight standing—are all pledged to secular education. And where their views on other questions are not opposed to those of Secularists we think they should be accorded support by our friends, in preference to the official Progressives. Thus, at least, we may make the best of what opportunity we have, thereby also making the best preparation possible for the final battle which sooner or later must be fought between the friends and the foes of education.

FREDERICK RYAN.

The age is dull and mean. Men creep,
Not walk; with blood too pale and tame
To pay the debt they owe to shame;
Buy cheap, sell dear; eat, drink, and sleep
Down-pillowed, deaf to moaning wail;
Pay tithes for soul insurance; keep
Six days to Mammon, one to Cant.

—Whittier.

WINWOOD READE.

"*Vitam impendere vero.*"

I.

In the years 1861–62 I made an extensive tour in West Africa. One Sabbath evening a cannon-shot announced the arrival of the European mail steamer in the harbor of Sierra Leone. I had resided several months in the colony. It was our wont to board the steamer in search of news, company, and drink. One of the passengers, a slim, dark young man, hearing me discuss various matters in a bold manner, regardless of consequences, at once made up to me, and gave his name as Winwood Reade. I invited him on shore. We took a long stroll on the Pademba-road. He told me that he was bound for the leeward coast, his object being to study the manners and customs of the natives, and to ascertain the whereabouts of ——— gorillas. This caused me some amusement. As for the natives of Sierra Leone, I facetiously assured him they had no customs, and their manners were beastly. Of course I spoke of the Christian negroes, who have all our vices and none of our virtues. Reade at once took notes, which appeared in his first work, *Savage Africa*. The book met with a cold reception. In a letter, dated February 2, 1864, he wrote to me from 7 New Bond-street: "Your kind letter was forwarded to me to-day, and I read it with great pleasure. I have given a chapter to the *Cape de Verdes*, and have dedicated the book (among others) to Miller. As for the Sierra Leone business, I have hit them hard, and mean to do so again when opportunities occur. I need not say that I shall be delighted to receive hints or facts, especially as regards Sierra Leone or Senegal."

Our conversation chiefly turned upon African explorations, and Reade gave me to understand that it was his ambition to emulate the deeds of the noble Livingstone. What I told him of the spread of Christianity, the machinations of the clergy of different denominations, and the hypocrisy of their infamous sable converts, astonished him not a little. Of course he did not preach the gospel to the natives, nor did I; we both thought that the real regenerators of Africa must be the Mahomedans. Reade states this in his subsequent works. We were perfectly agreed on all points, and when he left for the Gold Coast, I harbored but one desire—to meet this genial, modest Englishman again. Eight months passed. I continued my journey north, stayed at Gambia, Goree, and Senegal. Among the Yoloffs, the Mahomedans, I found well-informed men and virtuous women. I began to study the language, and became quite a favorite among the young ladies, whom, after the customary salaam, I would respectfully greet with the words, "Cui fileh safficata!" (Come here, pretty girl). They modestly retorted, "Bai ma!" (Leave me!) "O, si sic omnes!" These were the Poelles, a superior tribe, who claim descent from a Roman legion, said to have been lost in the desert. Their women are remarkably handsome.

In an article, published in the *Freethinker* (January 24, 1886), I spoke of the corruption among Christian negroes. The virtuous Mahomedans treat them like unclean animals—they are no better. But the blame lies at the door of Europeans—Christians, whose abominable vices have spread with great rapidity. I do not believe that these blacks will ever mend, our vices having penetrated *in succum et sanguinem*. When I spoke of the hideous profligacy and drunkenness, the blacks pointed to the European residents, and declared that these men, superior to themselves, set the example. To argue would have been foolish. To relate how white men debauch young negro girls—mere children—would make the reader shudder. Details are quite unfit for publication. Of course, these Christian scoundrels have no respect for women, and abuse them simply to gratify their lust. Such turpitudes aroused both Reade's and my indignation.

In the first week of December, 1862, I took leave of my friends in Goree, and embarked in the steamer "Télémaque" for the Island of St. Vincent, where I spent a fortnight. This is a great Atlantic coaling station—a barren island. The English consul was Mr. Miller, of whom Reade speaks in his letter. As soon as we anchored, an Englishman came on board to make arrangements about the coaling. I asked him whether there were any visitors in the island. He replied that there was only one at the small

hostelry. "Do you know his name?" "I think he is an African traveller—Reade." My heart beat violently, and I ordered a boat to take me on shore. The hotel attendant showed me into a room. The blinds were down. There, on a couch, lay Winwood Reade, suffering from an attack of African fever. I called out. An exclamation of surprise followed. He rose, took my hand, and looked at me with those deep, dark, expressive eyes. A smile passed over his countenance. He was no longer lonely. I asked him to come on board and dine with me. At first he appeared very unwell, but by-and-by he brightened up, particularly when we drank some real, good port wine, and talked down his despondency. Reade was not strong, and the baneful African climate shortened his life. The *table d'hôte* on board the mail steamer was quite *recherché*, and the company select—Commander Pelissier (brother of the late Marshal), his *aide de camp*, and several superior officers, bound for Senegal on a tour of inspection. The conversation naturally turned on European affairs, and I began a tirade against the Napoleonic régime. Pelissier nearly let his knife and fork fall; the officers looked aghast. Reade and I laughed. The captain, M. Godillon, afterwards told me that Pelissier asked him who the foolish young man was (meaning me) who dared to call Napoleon III. *Badinquet Ma foi!* I had lived in Paris, and knew all about him, and the ignoble *coterie* that kept in power—

The fool of false dominion,
And a kind of bastard Cæsar,
Following him of old, with steps unequal.

However, I was not arrested and put in irons for high treason, as one of the "fistons" (flunkeys) of Pelissier said I ought to be. The next day Reade came again to dinner, and, all debatable topics being banished, we really did enjoy ourselves *con amore*, particularly when the popping-off of corks that held captive the glorious vintage of champagne—Möet et Chandon (then my favorite drink)—made us fancy that the gods of ancient Greece, by a turn of the magic wand, had landed us all in Arcadia. Oh, happy days, when there were many gods and no unbelievers! Even the virtuous Schiller sighed for them: "Wie ganz anders, anders war es da, Da man deine Tempel noch bekränzte, Venus Amathusia!"

CHARLES KROLL LAPORTE.

(To be concluded.)

THE VIRGIN MARY'S THIRD HUSBAND.

DR. DOLLINGER'S last work, *Essays on the Sects of the Middle Ages* (vol. i., viii.), contains an account of a singular heretic named Tanchelm, who, at Antwerp early in the twelfth century, anticipated the career of John Boccold, the Prophet of Leyden, in the sixteenth. Tanchelm was a layman, gifted by nature with a fluent tongue, and began by teaching that "the efficacy of the sacraments depends upon the character of the minister," a doctrine which would, in most cases—perhaps in all—destroy the grace of the sacraments altogether. With this theory he coupled a still more dangerous practical heresy. "He went on to argue that clergy, whose ministrations were worthless, should not be paid, and that no tithe ought to be rendered to them." This teaching had great success; the condition of the Church at that time in Flanders, where Tanchelm first broached his heresy, was not likely to refute it. In the great city of Antwerp there was "only one priest, and he was living in incest with his niece." Such a man was clearly not entitled to receive tithe for performing invalid sacraments.

Tanchelm, however, like other religious reformers, ruined his cause by imitating the vices he denounced. "He bedizened himself with gold and jewels, assumed a bodyguard of three thousand armed men, terrorised the whole neighborhood, and caused those who appeared before him without accepting his doctrines to be hewn in pieces." In this he resembled John of Leyden, of whom it is recorded that, one of his fourteen wives having denied his divine mission, he ordered her to kneel down, cut off her head, and with the other thirteen danced round the bleeding body.

But the crowning act of Tanchelm's career was when, being short of money, "he had himself publicly married to

the Virgin Mary, for whom an image stood proxy, and enriched himself with the wedding presents" which his pious followers offered to the mother of God. No doubt this union excited the jealousy of St. Joseph, not to speak of the Holy Ghost. Such a profitable ceremony would, no doubt, lead to polygamy, and the prospect of having to provide dowries for other saints and virgins (who were even then as numerous as British princesses now are) was too much for the faith of the Flemings. Tanchelm was imprisoned by the Archbishop of Cologne, and when he escaped was "knocked on the head by a certain priest" (*a quodam presbytero percussus in cerebro*) A.D. 1115. The chronicler adds that it was "not so easy to slay his heresy," perhaps because the original grievance remained; and the clergy continued to receive tithes, etc., without rendering commensurate services in return.

JAMES A. RICHARDSON.

THE DIGGLEITES; OR, MIXED EDUCATION.

The London Board schools teach our youth
The things they ought to know forsooth!
They teach them facts; they teach them truth—
But not always.

They teach the formulas and saws;
The notions known as "Nature's Laws";
And uniformity of cause—
But not always.

They teach the facts that facts must be
The "maxims of consistency";
They teach that three times one are three—
But not always.

They teach that if a jar you fill
With water only from the rill,
And pour it out, 'tis water still—
But not always.

They teach that if a crowd partake
Of any cake that man might make,
The crumbs are smaller than the cake—
But not always.

They teach that when a being dies,
No matter where on earth he lies,
His life is gone from earthly eyes—
But not always.

They teach that people, great or small,
Who try to leave this earthly ball
And jump aloft, back, downward fall—
But not always.

The London Board schools also teach
That man's peculiar pow'r of speech
Is far beyond a donkey's reach—
But not always.

G. L. MACKENZIE.

LONDON SECULAR FEDERATION.

COUNCIL MEETING held at Hall of Science, November 1, 1894; Mr. G. J. Warren in the chair. Present: Miss Vance, Messrs. G. Standing, G. Ward, W. H. Baker, J. Neate, H. Rowden, R. Dowding, F. Schaller, C. Thomas, and the Secretary. Branch Secretaries: R. Hose, A. Guest, and A. Wheeler.

A telegram was received from the President, explaining his absence.

Minutes of previous meeting read and confirmed. The Secretary reported the result of her inquiries, and it was formally moved by Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. Neate: "That the Federation's Annual Dinner take place at the Holborn Restaurant on Monday, January 7, and the price of tickets be as last year—viz., 1s." Messrs. Standing, Baker, Ward, Guest, Wheeler, and Miss Vance were then elected as a sub-committee to carry out the necessary arrangements.

Proposed by Miss Vance, seconded by Mr. Neate: "That £5 be paid off the printing account." Carried.

Other minor matters of business were dealt with, and the meeting closed.

ANNIE BROWN, Hon. Sec.

THE FINSBURY ELECTION.

The whole of the meetings held by Mr. Watts since my last report have been well attended. The inclement weather somewhat thinned the meeting at Bloomsbury Hall on Wednesday (November 7), although ours was a much larger meeting than one held by the Christian Education candidates in Kingsgate Chapel at the same time. Members of the audience here must have been, like myself, greatly shocked to find Mr. Watts's portrait and an invitation to "PLUMP FOR WATTS" carefully spread all over the book-rests. The meeting at the Buckingham-street Schools was highly successful. An open-air meeting was held in Finsbury Park on Saturday, and on Sunday morning at Prebend-street another large meeting took place.

The meetings for this week are: November 15.—Board school, Yerbury-road, Holloway. November 16.—Foresters' Hall, Clerkenwell-road.

On Sunday morning a meeting will be held at 11.30 on Newington Green, addressed by Messrs. Guest, Fagan, Ramsey, and others; and at 3 p.m. in Finsbury Park, addressed by Messrs. G. W. Foote, Rowney, Snell, Ward, and others, with Mr. R. Forder in the chair.

Next week our meetings will be: November 19, Barnsbury Hall, Barnsbury-street, N.; November 20, Hugh Myddleton Board Schools, Corporation-row, Clerkenwell; and the final meeting will be held at the Foresters' Hall on Wednesday, November 21.

I regret to announce that my appeal for help with the literature in the outlying districts has not been responded to as I had hoped. This makes the work exceedingly hard for the few, and will, I fear, leave some districts quite untouched. A few traps have been promised, but many more are required. Those who wish to have the use of them between 12 a.m. and 2 p.m., and from 7 to 9 p.m., should communicate with me at once. All applications on the polling day should be made at the Committee Rooms, where traps will return as often as possible.

Will it be believed that the questions most frequently asked by people outside our party are: "How do I fill up the voting paper?" and "What is 'plump'?" The most simple directions are the most effective. Canvassers should point out that Mr. Watts's name will be the last on the voting paper, and should be filled in with the figure 6, thus:—

WATTS, CHARLES	6
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And what we all have to do is to work so that on the 22nd at least 3,000 papers are filled up in this manner.

EDITH M. VANCE

(Election Secretary for Mr. Watts).

Central Committee Rooms, 191 St. John-street-road, N. (near the "Angel").

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ELECTION FUND.

Further Subscriptions Received:—

R. G., 2s.; Dundee Branch, 14s. 6d.; E. G. Hocking, 5s.; W. Bell, 10s. 6d.; J. Davis, 6d.; W. W., 1s.; C. R. C., £1; W. Davey, 2s. 6d.; J. W. Church, £1; C. Smith, 3s.; Collection at Hall of Science, £2 16s. 3d.; Mrs. John Glendenning, £1; F. Schafer, 2s.; G. Barnett, 5s.; W. Johnson (second subscription), 7s. 6d.; A. J. Larkin, 2s. 6d.; R. H. Side, £1; G. Harlow, 5s.; J. Chamberlain, 5s.; A Friend, 5s.; From Plymouth, 5s.; S. Cloak, 2s.; H. Heritage, £3.

GEO. WARD, Treasurer, 91 Mildmay-park, N.

FOOTE TESTIMONIAL.

Eighteenth List.

A few friends at Havelock, New Zealand (per W. Brownlee), £5; Yachtsman, 10s. 6d.; W. H. T., 10s.; W. Tipper, 2s. 6d.; H. A. Cumber, 2s. 6d.; W. Clarke, 1s. 6d.; C. Fletcher, 1s.; F. Jones, 6d.

Owing to the other funds running concurrently with this, it has been determined by the committee to keep it open a few weeks longer. Mr. Brownlee, of New Zealand, an old supporter of our cause, whose subscription with that of other friends of his on the other side of the globe is acknowledged above, says that Mr. Foote's services to progress deserve full recognition from those interested in the welfare of the people.

GEO. ANDERSON, Treasurer, 35a Great George-street, S.W.

R. FORDER, Sub-Treasurer, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

GEO. WARD, Secretary, 91 Mildmay-park, N.

JOSEPH SYMES ON THE MAHATMAS.

MRS. BESANT, in Sydney, is reported to have said that Madame Blavatsky, Colonel Olcott, and herself had positive proof of the existence of Mahatmas, and had communicated with them! Without for a moment insinuating that there is any conscious lying in this pretence, we have the best of proofs that there is not a particle of truth in it. The Mahatmas, it is pretended, have knowledge which the world's wisest do not possess. Well, now, the three persons above named were known before their pretended intercourse with Mahatmas, and were quite as clever and wise in the former state as the later. Mrs. Besant, for example, has been in Australia for several weeks, and presumably has told us the very best she knows, displayed her highest and choicest wisdom. We demand, Is there one point, item, or phenomenon upon which she has thrown so much as one ray of light? Is there anything in all her Theosophical (that is the correct word) utterances which a sober man can regard as truth? Let facts decide. Had she been in communication with extremely wise teachers, she would have shown long since that she had improved in wisdom and in other respects.

We venture to affirm that the reverse has been the case. Let any impartial critic compare her former writings with her Theosophical productions. He will find in the former a logic, perspicuity, and, let us add, a candor he will search for in vain in the latter. If manifest deterioration, philosophically and morally, be proof or evidence of intercourse with a higher order of beings, then Mrs. Besant's statement may be accepted. She most certainly has not improved under Mahatmistic training.

To preach such stuff is but to revive the most unblushing phase of priestcraft—pretended revelations from some parties superior to man. They advance no evidence except what all sober people are compelled to scout as sheer imposition. In face of the facts, it is easy to see why the Theosophical prophets repudiate God and miracle—they fear to be classed with the older prophets. But, though they deny God and miracle *in name*, they preach the same old stuff!—"We know what you don't know! We are elevated above the common herd! We have a wisdom not of this world!" etc. Do they think we don't see through the trick?—*Liberator*, Oct. 6.

ACID DROPS.

MR. GLADSTONE'S letter to a "Rev. and Dear Sir" was printed by the *Westminster Gazette* under the heading of "The Latest Puzzle." The Grand Old Man's utterance is worthy of the Delphian Oracle at the height of its reputation. His readers cannot tell whether he is a "Diggleite" or a "Progressive." After the elections he will perhaps explain himself, and show that his principles (whatever they are) have triumphed. When Mr. Gladstone is most unintelligible he is always most prophetic.

Mr. Gladstone says: "It would, as I think, be better for the State to limit itself to giving secular instruction." This is clear enough, in itself; but he adds the reservation, "than rashly to adventure upon such a system." What "such a system" means is indeed a puzzle. It is impossible to say whether Mr. Gladstone is alluding to the "system" of the Circular or the "system" of those who are clamoring for its withdrawal. We give it up.

Labor leaders are fond of short and familiar designations. Tom Mann and Ben Tillett are well known. Clem Edwards has only a London reputation. The Lancashire folk would take him to be a sort of fasting man, as "clom" in that part means to starve. Mr. Clem Edwards, however, is not a fasting man. He is a candidate for Finsbury in the School Board elections, and is running with Mr. Roston Bourke as a "Progressive," that is a "Bible-Reader." These two gentlemen held a meeting in Holborn on the same evening as Mr. Watts. It was very wet, and their meeting was very small; about a third the size of the "secular education" meeting. Apparently the assistance of the Almighty was necessary; anyhow the proceedings opened with prayer, and Mr. Clem Edwards put his head in his hands with the rest. Many who know him will have their doubts as to his sincerity in this performance. Some of them will even think a seat on the School Board dearly purchased at the price of self-stultification.

Mr. Riley is not only the translator of the Roman Catholic Manuals, to which attention was drawn in our last issue; he is a member of the Council of the Society of St. Osmund—a strange body, whose ostensible purpose is the restoration of the "Sarum ritual," the old Catholic ritual used in the diocese of Salisbury.

This ritual prescribes, among other things, that a "shrine with relics shall be made ready, in which shall hang in a pyx the host." It includes a quaint mediæval form for driving the devil out of flowers, which runs as follows: "I exorcise thee, creature of flowers or branches, in the name of God the Father Almighty, and in the name of Jesus Christ His Son, our Lord, and in the power of the Holy Ghost; and, henceforth, let all strength of the adversary, all the host of the devil, every power of the enemy, every assault of fiends, be expelled and utterly driven away from this creature of flowers or branches. [Here the flowers and leaves shall be sprinkled with holy water and censured.]"

After this follows a litany of the saints, in which St. Linus, the successor of St. Peter in the Bishopric of Rome, is prominently invoked, and, more astounding still, a prayer to the Pope, who is apparently regarded by these *soi-disant* Anglicans as the head of the English Church: "Let us pray also for our most blessed Pontiff N., that our God and Lord, who hath chosen him from the Order of the Episcopate, would preserve him in health and safety to His Holy Church, for the governance of God's holy people."

In another formula the Pope is referred to as "Our Father," and is linked with the name of the Monarch and the Bishop. The *Daily Chronicle*, in calling attention to these extracts, says of Mr. Riley: "The time has come for us to ask what he means and whither he is going."

The Service of St. Osmund, issued by this society, has some truly Catholic passages on the Cross. Thus it says: "Behold the Holy Cross on which the Savior of the world did hang for us. O come and let us worship. . . . We venerate Thy Cross, O Lord." And the hymn given reads:—

Faithful Cross, above all others,
One and only noble Tree;
None in foliage, none in blossom,
None in fruit thy peers may be.

This is a curious enough hymn to be sung in the nineteenth century, and we have heard that, in the original Latin, it is worthy of having been used by the priests of Ishtar or of Bacchus.

The Bishop of Worcester has been holding forth on the Bible, and a report of his observations appears in the *Midland Evening News*. His lordship said it was no use resisting the "higher criticism." "God," he remarked, "had not been pleased to give them what might be called a perfect Bible." Well, that is a candid admission, as far as it goes; but two or three hundred years ago the Church in this country would have burnt any man to ashes who said as much and no more.

The Bible is not "perfect." True. But who found it out? The Freethinkers. And who tried to shut their mouths? The Christians.

The Bishop of Worcester asks whether we are to give up the Bible because of its "flaws and imperfections." But the question is ambiguous. Who proposes to give up the Bible as a book? What the Sceptic says is that it must be given up as the Word of God.

His lordship described the Bible as "the creator of the literature of the world." This is a large order. The classical literature of Greece and Rome owed nothing to the Bible, and whoever says that the Bible created the plays and poems of Shakespeare doesn't know what he is talking about. As for the Bible being "the emancipator of the human mind from the tyranny of priestcraft," it is sufficient to reply that the Bible is the priest's text-book. His lordship supposes that "God in his mercy set us free from priestcraft and superstition at the Reformation." But that is itself a superstition of the Church of England. Bigotry was not the exclusive vice of Rome. The Church of England allowed no more freedom of thought than the Papacy. Every concession to the spirit of liberty was wrung from her. She only yielded when she could no longer resist.

The *True Catholic* has an article in which it advises: "Do not read infidel books. Do not attend infidel lectures." It says: "Bad as infidelity is, it is only a few that can properly expose its filthiness and fitly set forth its folly." Evidently not to have read infidel books is no reason why one should not abuse infidelity. The abuse is, indeed, all the safer with the recommendation not to hear the other side.

The following advertisement of an early work by the author of *The Pilgrim's Progress* appeared in the *Gazette* for September 9, 1658: "A Few Sighs from Hell, or the Groans of a Damned Soule, being an exposition of those words in Luke xvi., concerning the rich man and the beggar, wherein is discovered the lamentable state of the damned, their desires in their distresses with the determination of God on

them. A good warning word to sinners, both old and young, to take into consideration betimes, lest they come into the same place of torment.—By that poor servant of Jesus Christ, John Bunnyan."

The very Rev. William E. Stevens, of Moline, Ill., has changed his address to Joliet. His friends and the Lord will find him at that point for the coming year, that being the sentence of a worldly court for an assault upon a Belgian woman with reverend "intent."

At the Canadian Sunday School Convention at Belleville, the Rev. J. R. Black, of Kingston, boldly said that children are even better fitted to receive the theological ideas than are adults. He is quite right there. If you take them early enough, you can stuff any nonsense into the plastic minds of children; and this fact has been the secret of the success of priestcraft in all ages.

Mr. Coxhead says that all the squabble on the London School Board arose from the discovery that Board-school children answered "Joseph" as the reply to the difficult question, "Who was the father of Jesus Christ?" What other answer he and Mr. Riley would have is not clear; but possibly they think that children who gulp the story that a boy was born without any other father than a ghost will swallow anything.

It now appears that the most ancient gospel in Syriac, the language of the Palestinian Jews, corroborates the Board-school boys. It states in so many words that "Joseph begat Jesus." This discovery is likely to re-open the question as to whether the Unitarian or the orthodox view better represents primitive Christianity—a controversy that has been going on since the days of Athanasius without much profit to anyone concerned.

To draw public attention from the central fact that public money, public buildings, and public servants are employed in the teaching of religion in the schools, we are told the Secularists have the conscience clause. Nonconformists know how little use this clause is in places where there are only Church schools. It is, in fact, a farce. All school arrangements must be carried on with a view to common teaching in common hours, and to withdraw children from any part is to risk their being made little martyrs before they understand what they are suffering for. The conscience clause is a delusion and a snare, and is used as a red herring to draw across the scent.

The *Speaker* accuses the London clergy of deliberately representing the opposition to the clerical majority as being irreligious. It says that a very large proportion of them prostitute their pulpits and their sacred functions by using them "in order to give currency to the lie. They have, as we think, wickedly and blasphemously made use of the most solemn truths of the religions they profess in order to advance their own personal interests and the interests of the clerical clique to which they belong."

Some have proposed, as a solution of the religious difficulty in the schools, that the clergy should be allowed to teach therein for the space of one hour. The clergy themselves do not relish the proposition, and it is pointed out by Mr. Fitch, in the *Nineteenth Century*, that they utterly neglect the Church Rubric, which orders all curates to give instruction in church on the Creed to children every Sunday. As they allow their own rules to become a dead letter, it is little likely they would take up new duties. What they want is that publicly-paid teachers shall inculcate their dogmas at the public cost.

At the Central Criminal Court, a witness having taken the oath who was visibly suffering from an infectious disease, Mr. Justice Collins at once ordered the sacred volume to be destroyed. Such incidents should help to make the more sensible and decent form of affirmation come into general use.

The Pope has at last seen M. Zola, not being able to refuse the introduction of the French Ambassador at the Vatican. But it must be galling to the Holy Father to think that the Head of the Church has to submit to be made "copy" of by an unbelieving novelist.

In the *Westminster Gazette* Mr. Herbert Burrows admits that, in the matter of the Mahatma hoax, "a *prima facie* case has been shown against Mr. Judge." He says Mr. Judge may have a reply, and "that reply we must have." Mr. Burrows could not well say less. He, however, leaves out of sight that allied with the question of Mr. Judge's *bond fides* is that of Madame Blavatsky, who made him a vice-president of the society and the head of the American section.

Mr. Crockett, author of *The Stickit Minister*, tells a story of a lady to whose children he was tutor. She was of the most pronounced Evangelical stamp. When the children did anything wrong, she took a cane and prepared to chastise the offender. Before she did so, however, she took the child to the study. "We will tell the dear Lord all about it first, my little boy." Whilst she prayed the boy was making faces at his mother. Mr. Crockett on one occasion disagreed with her, and gave notice to leave: "My salary was overdue, and she seemed in no hurry to pay it. I knew if I left, no salary would be forthcoming, so I asked for it. 'Oh, I will tell the dear Lord all about it, and then I will see what I will do.' I preferred payment first, and she could do what she liked afterwards." These experiences did not make Mr. Crockett enamored of Evangelicals.

A Forfarshire man is concerned over the point that, if Parliament passes a Bill giving a half-holiday to ploughmen, it will be in direct defiance of the Decalogue, which says, "Six days shalt thou labor."

The Rev. Gardner Preston, of the Unitarian Church, South-terrace, Hastings, lecturing on the Bible, says that he prefers to regard it as man's thoughts about God, than God's thoughts about man. This is rather neat, but it is necessary to add that the thoughts about God came from man while still in a somewhat barbarous state.

A French paper has a cartoon caricaturing "the first Conservative," who is depicted as an aged and distracted being who, at the beginning of the world, rushed to and fro, crying: "O Lord, preserve chaos!"

It cannot be too widely known that at present the subscribers to "Voluntary" schools only raise at the rate of a penny to every shilling provided by Government. Moreover, the trust deeds of Church schools usually only permit a voice in their management to the men of God and a few heavy subscribers. It is time that the clerical demand for dogmas in the Board schools, and rate aid for the Church schools, was met with a counter demand for popular control of the so-called Voluntary schools.

A *Sydney Bulletin* appreciation of Talmage is that he evidently regards himself as a comic friend of God.

Eccentric Kaiser Wilhelm has not broken out in a fresh place—it is the same old place with a fresh breach in it. This lovely potentate is on the most affable terms with the Almighty, and "Me and God" is his modern substitute for Cardinal Wolsey's "Ego et rex meus," with the difference that God, unlike Henry the Eighth, can't hit back.

George Macdonald says, in answer to a spiritist: "The conclusion that spirits write on slates involves so much, and has so many corollaries, that I hesitate to jump at it. Besides, when I remember all the mean people who have lived, and are now deceased, I find much encouragement in my belief that the dead are dead for keeps."

At the funeral of a girl, who had been murdered at Listowel, Ontario, a Rev. Mr. Gunner made a scene because he was not allowed to officiate at her funeral. Her father, Mr. William Keith, was a Freethinker, and preferred a secular service. The man of God thought it consistent with his position as a minister of the religion of love to deliver a denunciation of infidels and infidelity to the crowd which assembled. What a refining and humane effect religion always has.

It is stated that an East London Episcopal clergyman has opened a shop for the sale of crucifixes and images of the Virgin.

The spiritist ladies, Miss Florence Marryat and Mrs. Bessie Russell Davies, are at it hammer and tongs. Miss Marryat says if Christ came to Mowbray House there would be less jealousy and spite there, and Mrs. Davies "absolutely contradicts most of her statements in regard to my spirits, my mediumship, and myself. Miss Marryat say: 'It is the word of Mrs. Davies against that of Florence Marryat.' She is right for once. But she is under the mistaken impression that her name is one to conjure with." If you go on like this, ladies, the unbelievers will believe you both.

The Bishop of Limerick has issued a pronouncement against Mr. T. P. O'Connor. He declares that the *Sun* and the *Weekly Sun* are "as bad and as dangerous to the faith and morals of a Catholic people as newspapers could be." As, however, the Bishop of Limerick has little influence over the buyers of those papers, Tay Pay can afford to smile. He will probably, however, not smile too broadly, lest the Cardinal of Westminster should also speak.

Professor Candlish, delivering the opening lecture on Biblical Criticism at the Free Church College at Glasgow,

guardedly said that the results of criticism "made it impossible to maintain the theory of the absolute inerrancy of Scripture in reference to what did not affect faith and life." A plain man will ask, If the Scriptures may be in error on other matters, why not also on those which affect faith and life? If God has let in any little mistakes in his divine revelation, may not some big ones have crept in also?

Mrs. M. E. Williams, a spiritist mejum of New York, has been holding *séances* in France, and a correspondent of *Light* wires the warning that she has been exposed by M. Leymarie, and her dolls and wigs, used in materialising, were seized. At the same time Mr. T. J. Murray, of Gateshead, writes to the *Two Worlds* that John Huggins, of Felling-on-Tyne, a mejum, whose exploits have been much vaunted in that journal, was convicted of fraud. When it was proposed to search him the mejum bolted, and the sitters signed a declaration that the forms which emerged from the cabinet were simply the medium himself robed in a white garment, and that he was a thorough fraud. There will, however, be no failure in the fraud crop while credulous dupes are so plentiful.

More earthquakes in South America, this time in Chili. Many people have been killed by "the act of God," whose tender mercies are over all his works.

Criminals sentenced to death are executed in New York by electricity. A man named Wilson is to be "electrocuted" next month. After he is "killed" the doctors are to attempt to resuscitate him, and if they succeed he will be pardoned. We presume the gentlemen engaged in this comi-tragedy are all Christians. It is a curious result of eighteen centuries of the "only true religion."

Mr. Herbert Burrows lectured at the London Hall of Science last Sunday morning on "Why Secularists should be Socialists," and a good report appeared in Tuesday's *Daily Chronicle*. Mr. Burrows addressed his admonitions to Secularists in blissful ignorance of their principles. His whole discourse was founded on the assumption that the National Secular Society is pledged against Socialism. As a matter of fact, it is neither for nor against. It has Socialist members, non-Socialist members, and anti-Socialist members. Mr. Burrows does not understand—unless he affects not to understand—that the N.S.S. is primarily a Freethought organisation. He might surely remember that Mr. Bradlaugh and Mrs. Besant, while working together inside the N.S.S., were for some years opposed to each other in regard to Socialism. On the whole, it appears to us that Mr. Burrows, who is a Theosophist, would be spending his time more appropriately in lecturing on "Why Theosophists should be Socialists."

Mr. Labouchere, in *Truth*, has had to apologise for a statement he made on "clerical authority." "Often have I vowed," he says, "that never again would I make a statement in *Truth* upon the authority of a clergyman. Once upon a time I published certain allegations about a village pump. They were communicated by a clergyman. The village pump cost me £100 in damages, and I forget how many hundred pounds in costs. Two or three years ago I made some remarks about the relations of a Yorkshire squire to the Church. My information that time came exclusively from clerical sources. It cost me £150 in damages and over £1,000 in costs." Mr. Labouchere concludes with this resolution: "Henceforth, if the whole Bench of Bishops send me a joint communication, counter-signed by the two Archbishops, I shall decline to look at it until the statements are verified by independent evidence."

Hugh Price Hughes need not apply to Mr. Labouchere if he ever wants to sell the copyright of the "Atheist Shoemaker."

How to Help Us.

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

Mr. Foote's Engagements.

Sunday, November 18, Hall of Science, 142 Old-street, E.C. :—
7, "Save the Children: an Appeal before the School Board Elections, with a Review of 'Diggleites' and 'Progressives,' and a Reply to Mr. John Burns."

November 25, Ipswich.

December 2, Camberwell; 9 and 16, Hall of Science.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

MR. CHARLES WATTS'S ENGAGEMENTS.—Nov. 18, Liverpool. Dec. 2, Newcastle-on-Tyne (Sunday Society); 3, West Auckland; 4, York; 9, Manchester; 10, Derby; 23 and 30, Hall of Science.—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.

W. PALMER.—We also wish you could give a thousand shillings instead of one.

CASTOR.—Useful cuttings are always very welcome.

W. H. THRESIL.—Our compliments to your Catholic friend.

T. DUNBAR.—A poor man's shilling is often a bigger one (relatively) than the rich man's pound. Glad to hear that we have counted for something in the development of your mind and character. Such reflections sweeten many a bitter cup of trouble.

YORKSHIRE.—There is a touching simplicity about some people. We are used to the argument that the N.S.S. should print a balance-sheet. As a matter of fact, it does print a balance-sheet, which is sent to all the Branches, and is in the hands of all the delegates at the Annual Conference, where it has to be formally adopted. Individual members, not attached to Branches, are always supplied with a copy on application. This solicitude about the N.S.S. balance-sheet is displayed by two classes of persons: Secularists who do not trouble to ascertain the facts, and Christians who shake their empty heads over ancient maro's nests.

J. A. RICHARDSON.—Thanks for your good wishes in the matter.

J. C. MCCORQUODALE.—We will insert with pleasure if you send us an exact statement, in the form of a paragraph.

COLNE.—We appreciate your expressions of confidence.

W. JACKSON.—Your letter would do more good if inserted in a local newspaper.

MATRIMONY.—We regret our inability to assist you. No doubt you feel the necessity of a womanly guardian for your motherless children, but we should advise you against advertising.

J. RAWLINSON.—Thanks.

A. MILLER.—Navarro y Murillo's work is in Spanish, and can be obtained from the office of *L'Irridacion*, Barcelona.

S. HALTEN.—American papers are always welcome.

D. GLANVILLE.—Beethoven is spoken of by Sir G. Macfarren in the *Imperial Dictionary of Universal Biography* as a "Freethinker"; and Sir George Grove, in his *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, says: "Formal religion he apparently had none," and "the Bible does not appear to have been one of his favorite books." At the end of his arrangement of "Fidelio," Moscheles had written: "Fine, with God's help." To this Beethoven added, "O man, help thyself."

WESLEYAN.—There is no reason in the world, that we can see, why Mr. Holyoake should not drop in and hear the Rev. Mark Guy Pearce, if he feels disposed to do so; though there does not seem any reason, except a professional one, why the whole Methodist world should be informed of the fact.

E. P. SCHOFIELD.—Mr. Bradlaugh did not deny the existence of "a god." Those who wish to know what he did deny, or affirm, can easily learn by reading his *Plea for Atheism*.

J. & J. CRABTREE.—Perhaps it is a pity.

JAMES NEATE, secretary of the Bethnal-green Branch, says he cannot vote for the Rev. S. D. Headlam, on the ground that Mr. Headlam now supports Bible-reading in the schools.

J. TOMKINS.—We quite agree with you that Church and Chapel should be left to fight their own battle in West Lambeth as elsewhere. A true Secularist can only oppose them both. If the Social Democratic candidate supports "secular education," you might give him your vote, even though you are not a Socialist. The School Board is bound by the existing law, and "free maintenance," for instance, is at present impracticable because illegal. The Paris Municipal Council has solved this "food" problem by a mixture of philanthropy and municipal control.

W. H. BAKER.—See "Sugar Plums."

MR. C. J. HUNT, one of the N.S.S. vice-presidents, we regret to hear is very seriously ill. Unfortunately a Christian relative is in charge of the house, and access to the sick man is denied to his Freethought associates. Miss Vance's letter to Mr. Hunt's daughter was apparently opened by this Christian bigot; it was returned with a curt intimation that "further communication is unnecessary."

E. H.—The Church of England is supported by the State. If Lord Rosebery asserts the contrary, he is only playing with words. You forgot the legal disabilities under which Secularism labors.

C. WRIGHT.—We agree with you in the main.

J. ROBERTS.—Thanks. See paragraph.

H. W. JONES.—Correction made. We don't know whether you could now obtain the pamphlet. Mr. Foote may give a week-night lecture at Blackburn if you cannot obtain a hall on Sunday.

W. R. MUNTON.—Your wish is precisely our intention.

PAPERS RECEIVED.—Vegetarian Messenger—Weekly Bulletin—Toronto Globe—Western Figaro—Newcastle Daily Leader—Catholic Record—Glasgow Herald—Two Worlds—Progressive Thinker—Lucifer—Irish Weekly Independent—Secular Thought—Truthseeker—Clarion—Der Lichtfreund—Boston Investigator—Twentieth Century—Blue Grass Blade—Liberator—Isle of Man Times—Froidenker—Reading Observer—Echo.

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

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

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.

The *Freethinker* will be forwarded, direct from the publishing office, post free, at the following rates, prepaid:—One Year, 10s. 6d.; Half Year, 5s. 3d.; Three Months, 2s. 8d.

ORDERS for literature should be sent to Mr. R. Forder, 28 Stonecutter-street, E.C.

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

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.

SUGAR PLUMS.

THERE was a fine meeting in the Birmingham Town Hall on Sunday evening to hear Mr. Foote's lecture on "Is Religion the Cause of Progress?" The body of the hall and the galleries were crowded, and the orchestra seats would probably have been occupied as well if the rain had not begun to fall a quarter of an hour before the proceedings opened. After some introductory remarks by the chairman (Mr. Burton, president of the N.S.S. Branch) a capital musical selection was rendered by Mr. Walter Knight. Mr. Foote then rose and met with a very hearty reception. His lecture, which lasted an hour and a quarter, was followed with the deepest interest, and was warmly applauded. After the lecture came the ceremony of naming a baby boy—Charles Bradlaugh Davis. It certainly "caught on," and the meeting broke up apparently in the best of good tempers.

A report of Mr. Foote's lecture appeared in the *Gazette*, but not a line in the *Post*, which does not consider a meeting of three thousand people of any importance when its object is an exposition of Freethought.

Birmingham is in the throes of a School Board election. The Liberal eight are running on the old lines, but there is an advanced candidate put forward by the Trades Council. Mr. Millar is in favor of Secular Education, and, judging from the applause that greeted Mr. Foote's defence of that policy, the candidate ought to poll well, even if he does not win a seat. Personally we should like to see him at the head of the poll.

The rain it raineth every day, said William Shakespeare. And how it did rain on Monday in the Midlands! It poured in Birmingham, it poured in Derby. Nevertheless, a capital audience assembled in the evening, when Mr. Foote lectured on "Why I am an Atheist." Mr. Hooper, of Nottingham, travelled over to Derby to take the chair, which his jolly broad figure filled up generously. The lecture was listened to with rapt attention, and the subsequent questions and discussion kept the meeting going till half-past ten. Mr. Hyde, the amiable and talented Swedeborgian minister, was the principal speaker on the Christian side. One pleasant feature of the gathering was the presence of a good many ladies.

We have great hopes of the Derby Branch, which comprises some very intelligent and zealous young men as well as some sturdy veterans. Derby was at one time, and not long since, so bigoted that Freethought propaganda was deemed almost impossible there; but Secularism is now more than tolerated—its advocates are heard with entire respect.

Mr. Foote lectures this evening (November 18) at the London Hall of Science. It is the last Sunday before the School Board elections, and he will deal with the burning

question of the hour. The title of his discourse is "Save the Children." He will go thoroughly into the "Diggleite" and "Progressive" policies, and especially examine the value of the Bible as a moral lesson-book for boys and girls. This should be the occasion of a rally of the Freethought forces, and it would be well for Secularists to bring as many as possible of their more orthodox friends, with a view to influencing their votes next Thursday.

A capital and enthusiastic audience assembled at the Hall of Science, London, last Sunday evening to hear Mr. Charles Watts lecture upon "Mohammed and his Religion." An interesting debate followed the lecture. To-day, Sunday, November 18, Mr. Watts speaks three times in the Odd-fellows' Hall, St. Anne-street, Liverpool.

Our London readers, at least, will be very glad to learn that Mrs. Louisa Samson, who has occasionally lectured at the Hall of Science, is slowly but surely recovering from her serious illness. She sends us a cheerful letter from her sick-room. "It seemed more than probable a short while ago," she says, "that I should soon require your offices at Woking." As it is, she sends a subscription to our Fighting Fund, and states that Mr. Samson (a member of the N.S.S. Executive) also heartily endorses our action. With respect to "Woking," we may say that we have no ambition to go there for any purpose whatever; certainly not to speak at Mrs. Samson's funeral. Women of her stamp are too precious to be spared. We hope she will soon be restored to health—which, in her case, means a restoration to usefulness.

Current Literature, of New York, says: "Such has been the growth of popular opinion in favor of the sudden disposition of the dead by heat that there are now in the country eighteen incorporated cremation societies, and during the past ten years about three thousand cremations have taken place."

Last week's *Athenaeum* contained an excellent article on "The Art of Gibbon," which occupied the place of honor. With respect to his "sneers" at the Christians, the writer remarks that no one ought to be surprised at them. "His sober intellect," it is observed, "could not reconcile with sanity that 'fever of the mind,' that 'indiscreet ardor,' which 'desired martyrdom with more eagerness' than the contemporaries of Sulpicious Severus solicited a bishopric! Had the members of the early Church been content to remain passive, Gibbon might, with a slightly contemptuous notice, have let them go by. But the Christians warred not only against the pagan religion, but against that delicate art which was so inextricably interwoven with the texture of polytheism. Gibbon details with a sneer the Christian horror of the graceful Roman festivals, and is aghast at the vandalism which could overturn and destroy so many immortal masterpieces of the chisel."

"Taken at their prime," the *Athenaeum* writer says, "the Romans were men, but he [Gibbon] looked on the early Christians as something little better than hysterical women." The conclusion of the article is that, "like the gods of old, if not infallible, Gibbon is at least immortal."

There is now an exhibition of Gibbon relics at the British Museum. There are no fewer than six drafts of his autobiography, which show that the editor selected from each, leaving out much and altering words and phrases, either in excess of modesty or with a view to removing details which in his judgment were superfluous. The deleted episodes and reflections breathe a more intense humanity than Gibbon is commonly credited with.

Someone has taken the trouble to see if the influence of Voltaire is declining in France. It appears that his works are still among the best selling, the 1878 edition of his works having had an immense sale. Of his *History of Charles XII.* Reinwald sold 83,500 copies since its first issue.

Mr. W. Gill, 27 Poland-street, W., is issuing a series of portraits of Freethinkers. Those before us, Gibbon and Voltaire, are photographed from good engravings, and are well-mounted, cabinet size.

In *The Report upon State Education*, drawn up by R. Laishly for the New Zealand Government, he states (p. 13): "Professor Huxley gives me leave to state his opinion to be 'that the principle of strict secularity in State education is sound, and must eventually prevail.'"

In 1870 the number of children in English schools was 1,500,000. It is now 5,000,000. The average number of persons in prison and undergoing penal servitude has fallen from 12,000 to 5,000. In the case of the worst crimes the yearly average of persons sentenced to penal servitude has fallen from 3,000 to 800. In juvenile crime the results have been very striking, and the number of young persons com-

mitted has fallen from 14,000 to 5,000. The number of paupers has decreased from 47 per 1,000 to 22 per 1,000 only—more than one half.

In Colonel Ingersoll's latest lecture on the Bible he goes through the old book with brief comments. Here is a characteristic piece on Ruth: "I admit that the history of Ruth is in some respects a beautiful and touching story; that it is naturally told, and that her love for Naomi was deep and pure. But in the matter of courtship we would hardly advise our daughters to follow the example of Ruth. Still," admits the Colonel—and it is here that his thoughtfulness displays itself—"we must remember that Ruth was a widow."

Mr. Watts, with the help of his colleagues, is carrying on a vigorous campaign in Finsbury, which is only hampered by lack of funds. We appeal to our readers, and especially to the London ones, to furnish the necessary sinews of war. A hundred pounds will be required, and something less than sixty has been subscribed. There is yet a week before the poll, but this is the critical week, and the result will very much depend upon the labor and expenditure of these seven days. The treasurer of Mr. Watts's election fund is Mr. George Ward, 91 Mildmay-park, London, N. Readers who prefer to do so can forward their donations to us direct.

Mr. Watts was interviewed by a representative of the London *Echo* with respect to his candidature for Finsbury. The report of the interview appeared in the issue for Saturday evening (Nov. 10). Mr. Watts's views were thus placed before a wide public, and the result should be the gain of a number of votes from those who are sick of both sides in the religious squabble on the London School Board.

Miss Vance was "lent" by the N.S.S. Executive to Mr. Watts's election committee, for whom she acts as secretary. She has been working indefatigably on behalf of his candidature. It is impossible to speak too highly of the energy and devotion with which she has thrown herself into this enterprise. Mr. Forder is also loyally supporting the Executive's candidate, and Mr. George Ward is always ready as "first utility man" to do anything that is wanted, from taking the chair and moving resolutions down to distributing circulars and showing people to seats.

North London Secularists should endeavor to make a big demonstration of the meeting in Finsbury-park this afternoon (Nov. 18) at 3 o'clock in support of Mr. Watts's candidature. Mr. Watts will be engaged in Liverpool, but his interests will be in good hands in his absence. Mr. Forder will preside, and Mr. Foote will move the resolution in Mr. Watts's favor. Messrs. Rowney, Ward and Snell will also address the meeting. This is a last opportunity in that district, and we hope the Secularists will bring a lot of their friends into the park with a view to their being induced to support the "secular" candidate at the poll.

The National Secular Society's Almanack for 1895 is in the press, and will be ready shortly. It has undergone a good deal of change in size, appearance, and character, and should command a larger circulation in consequence. This *Almanack* is issued on behalf of the Society, which receives every penny of profit. Secularists should therefore make a point of purchasing a copy. It is well worth the price of sixpence, and is a useful publication to be kept at hand during the whole year.

This copy of the *Freethinker* will be in the hands of our South London readers in time for their information of a meeting on Friday evening (November 16) in the Secular Hall, New Church-road, Camberwell. Mr. G. W. Foote is billed to take the chair, and other Secularist speakers will be present. The object of the meeting is to promote the candidature of Mr. Dobson for the School Board. This gentleman, of course, is running on the "secular" ticket, and has many promises of assistance from the local labor party. It is hoped that he will win one of the East Lambeth seats. The Secularists are working hard for his success, although some of them do not endorse every point in his program.

Mr. J. E. Dobson, the School Board candidate in question, is a member of the Camberwell Branch of the N.S.S. We earnestly invite all our friends in East Lambeth to plump for him.

Mr. C. Cohen is now settled for six months at South Shields. We observe in the *Newcastle Leader* a letter from Mr. J. G. Bartram, the secretary of the local N.S.S. Branch, inviting the Christian Evidence Society to arrange for a public debate between Mr. Cohen and Mr. George Wise, the net proceeds to go to the Newcastle Infirmary. We hope the C.E.S. will promptly respond. Mr. Wise must by this time have had much practice, and we hear excellent reports of Mr. Cohen as a debater.

Mr. Flinders Petrie, who is just setting out again for the Nile, lectured at the London Institution on Primitive Egypt. He made the statement that sculptures took us back to 4000 B.C., about the usual date assigned to Adam; but the study of hieroglyphics proved that they were far earlier.

Professor T. W. Rhys Davids, LL.D., Ph.D., is in the States, and will this season deliver a course of six lectures on the Literature and History of Buddhism before Cornell University, Lowell Institute, Boston; Brown University Lecture Association, Providence; Peabody Institute, Baltimore; University Lecture Association, Philadelphia; under the auspices of Columbia College, New York, and in the Brooklyn Institute. This is the first course of what is intended to be an annual series of lectures on the comparative history and study of religions.

Peterson's Magazine, of Philadelphia, has an illustrated article on Frederick the Great and Sans Souci. Portraits of Frederick and Voltaire and views of the palace are given.

The Rochdale Branch has taken a large room in Ackers-street, Yorkshire-street, capable of holding two hundred people, on a yearly tenancy. At present it is unfurnished; but it is hoped that local help may be forthcoming to seat and decorate it. On week-nights it will be used as a Working Men's College.

Mr. G. R. Sims, "Dagonet" of the *Referee*, declares in favor of Secular Education. It would be far better, he says, to make "the compulsory education of the children purely secular," and to "leave the religious teaching in the hands of their parents and the clergy." Mr. Sims points out that the contest of "Diggletes" and "Progressives" is a "fight between Church and Chapels for the possession of Board-school children." "The present wrangle," he concludes, "is as unseemly as it is mischievous, and opposed to the best interests of both the ratepayers and the school children."

The School Board election for Liverpool takes place on Saturday, the 17th inst.—not 18th, as erroneously stated last week. Those in favor of free, compulsory, secular education are asked to plump for Mr. Sam Reeves (15 votes). Mr. C. E. Dodd having withdrawn his candidature, Mr. Reeves remains the only exponent of those principles who has a chance of success. Two independent candidates advocate an advanced policy, but in the absence of organised support they will probably secure but few votes.

"The Doctor" in the *Clarion* puts a very straight question to John Trevor, of the Labor Church, by asking him, "What is God?" It is questions like these which unsettle all systems of theology.

Lecturers should send in their addresses for the *Almanack* immediately.

MR. FOOTE'S FIGHTING FUND.

Subscriptions Received—Fifth List.

W. Palmer, 1s.; J. Hayes, 2s.; J. Pruett, 2s. 6d.; Louisa Samson, £1; A Catholic who Hates Religious Bigotry, 2s. 6d.; John and James McGlashan, £1; T. Dunbar, 1s.; Chatham Branch, £1; J. W. Church, £1; G. Harlow, 5s.; J. Chamberlain, 5s.; R. Griffiths, 4s.; A. J. Larkin, 2s. 6d.; W. H. Putz, 2s.; W. Denham, 1s.; J. Davis, 6d.; S. Cloak, 1s. 6d.; J. B., 10s.; Colne, 10s.; J. Tomkins, 2s. 6d.; J. and J. Crabtree, 1s.; W. R. Munton, 10s.; From Plymouth, 5s.; E.P., £5.
Correction.—Blackburn Friends, per H. W. Jones, 4s. 6d., should have been 5s. 6d.

Our literature should be the clear and faithful mirror of our whole world of life; but at present there are vast realms of thought and imagination and passion and action, of which it is not allowed to give any reflex at all, or is allowed only to give a reflex so obscure and distorted as to be worse than none. But, it may be objected, suppose Satyrs come leering into your mirror, and Bacchantes whirl before it? I answer that the business of a mirror is clear reflection; if it does not faithfully image the Satyr, how can it faithfully image Hyperion? And do you fear that the Satyr will be preferred to Hyperion, when both stand imaged in clear light before us? It is only when the windows are curtained, when the mirror is a black gulf, and its portraiture is vague, dark shadows, that the beautiful and the noble can pass undistinguished from the hideous and the vile.—*James Thomson (P. V.)*.

NO DEVIL IN HIM.

THE *Chicago Sunday Inter-Ocean*, October 28, reports a curious action which throws light upon the methods of religion out West. It was brought by Rev. Mr. Johnson, a Free Methodist minister, who, until recently, preached at Montfort, against Rev. Messrs. Kamm, Webb, Hammer, and Endicott. Rev. Mr. Johnson claimed \$5,000 damages for injuries received by him at their hands September 4 last during a camp meeting at New Diggings, Lafayette County.

On that day an "altar service" was in progress, when suddenly Rev. Mr. Kamm and Rev. Mr. Webb became "burdened" for their erring brother, Johnson.

One becomes "burdened" in Free Methodist parlance when another's sins are suddenly thrown upon him. The "burdened" person must, then, if he would free himself of the weight, manage to get the one for whom he is "burdened" to repent.

BECAME SUDDENLY BURDENED.

In the midst of the "altar service" Rev. Mr. Kamm and Rev. Mr. Webb were suddenly aware of the incubus of Johnson's sins resting upon them, and to relieve themselves of the burden, and, at the same time, do Johnson a good turn, they at once proceeded to drive the devil out of him.

That is what they say.

Mr. Johnson, on the other hand, says it was all an excuse on the part of the other ministers to even up old scores. He says that they were jealous of him because he was more successful as a preacher than they were; that they objected to him as being too worldly, because he wore gold-rimmed glasses and sported a moustache and a gold watch.

At all events, the Rev. Mr. Webb approached him in a fervor of enthusiasm and threw his arms around Johnson's neck. He then either pulled him down or tripped him. Having Mr. Johnson on the ground with his nose in the straw, the work of routing the devil began.

SATAN HAD MANY ADVERSARIES.

Rev. Mr. Webb knelt on Rev. Mr. Johnson's back, and began making passes over him, the while calling vigorously on Johnson to repent his sins, and commanding the devil to come out.

Mr. Johnson, according to his own testimony, refused to admit that he had any sins calling for such heroic treatment, and the devil in Mr. Johnson (if he really possessed one) was obstinate, and seemed to prefer Johnson as a residence to anyone else. This much may be inferred from the fact that, although the two ministers labored with Johnson and the devil that was in him from 11 o'clock in the morning until 5 o'clock in the afternoon, the devil would neither come out nor would Mr. Johnson repent.

At times Rev. Mr. Kamm and Rev. Mr. Webb were assisted in their labors by Rev. Messrs. Hammer and Endicott. Johnson claims that they pounded him on the head, knocked him between the shoulders, spat upon him, and otherwise maltreated him. The defendants, on the other hand, claimed that Mr. Johnson could have gotten up whenever he so pleased, and that he made no objection to their method of dealing with the portion of the original sin that was in him, and testified that they struck him and spat upon him.

Several rescues were attempted by the women present, but they were each time driven back and warned not to interfere.

HE PAWED DIRT AT HER.

This was the plaintiff's testimony, and that of his witnesses. One of these witnesses on the stand testified that Rev. Mr. Kamm chased her down the aisle, and that he came after her galloping on his hands and feet, and pawed dirt at her. Strange noises, it is said, were also made by the ministers engaged in saving Johnson and getting the devil to vacate. One witness for the plaintiff testified that Rev. Mr. Webb varied his shouts to the devil and to Johnson by emitting noises that were mistaken by a pig for the maternal call to dinner, so that he came nosing around as an obedient young pig should do. During the session one of the burdened ministers became insensible. When the attempt to get Johnson to repent and the devil to come out was abandoned, Rev. Mr. Johnson claims he was at death's door. For the resulting injuries to his health the action was brought. He succeeded in gaining \$300 as damages.

An American beauty, while riding in an English railway carriage, was much annoyed by a parson, who was very anxious for the welfare of her soul. "My dear girl," said he, "you have three bidders for your soul—firstly, the world; secondly, the devil; and, lastly, Jesus Christ. It now remains for you to choose for life or death." "Well," said she, turning her head languidly, "I guess you can knock me down to Jesus Christ; he's the dude for this child."

BOOK CHAT.

THE sixth edition of Mr. Herbert Spencer's *Data of Ethics* in its original form having been exhausted, Mr. Spencer has decided to discontinue the dearer edition of the work, and to issue a cheap edition, which will be ready this week.

* * *

Josephus und Lucas, by Max Krenkel (Leipsic), is a large treatise, showing that the compiler of the third gospel and of Acts had the writings ascribed to Josephus before him.

* * *

From the office of the *Ironclad Age*, Indianapolis, we receive a pamphlet entitled *The Murder of Abraham Lincoln Planned and Executed by Jesuit Priests*. The evidence upon which the statement of the title is made is founded on facts recorded by Father Chiniquy, an ex-Catholic priest, who says that he warned President Lincoln that he was regarded as an apostate whom every Catholic had a right to kill. It is also asserted that affidavits prove that Catholic priests said that Lincoln was assassinated three hours before the event took place.

* * *

Theological Shams is the title of a twopenny pamphlet issued by "The Faith" Press, Malvern. It deals with Natural Immortality, Eternal Torment, Eternity of Sin and Satan, a Church Millennium, and an Immaterial Kingdom, from a Christadelphian standpoint. The title seems to us too inclusive for these minor items, for under it we should include the whole articles of the Christadelphian faith.

* * *

No. 14 of the excellent series of Humanitarian League publications is by the secretary of the League, Mr. H. S. Salt, and is entitled *Littere Humaniores: An Appeal to Teachers* (Wm. Reeves, 185 Fleet-street; 2d.). Parents as well as teachers would do well to read this appeal for humane education, which is distinguished by its good sense as well as by its good feeling. Mr. Salt is no sentimentalist. He sees the importance to the race of eradicating cruelty and cultivating the humanities in their highest sense, but laments the misdirected efforts of some of the "goody-goody tribe." He says: "Be certain that false sentiment will eventually produce either hypocrisy or contempt, and that in either case the cause of real humaneness will be retarded, not advanced, by it. Let us use poetry and anecdote by all means; but let us be most careful that we use good material only, and not only the first frothy stuff that comes to hand." Mr. Salt's appeal for the education of the heart comes from one who has well studied the question of the training of the young; and we heartily agree with him that "it is nothing short of scandalous that members of School Boards, who will attempt to force a disputable theology on children, should take no measures at all for the inculcation of the broadest and simplest precepts of humanity."

* * *

Dean Lucock, in his unsatisfactory *History of Marriage, Jewish and Christian* (Longmans), says that, by the Mosaic code, "a betrothed woman was visited with the heaviest penalty for a breach of chastity, but the husband transgressed as often as he liked, with complete impunity." Now we should like to know what Christ said to improve this.

* * *

Under the title of *The Villagers' Magna Charta*, Mr. W. Reeves issues, in his Bijou Library (6d.), an exposition of the rules and opportunities offered by the new Parish Councils Act, which, if properly taken advantage of, will render the *regime* of the parson and squire a thing of the past.

* * *

Tracks for the Times (5 Palace Chambers, Bridge-street, S.W.) is another sixpenny collection of articles dealing with the land question, landlordism, and the rules for Parish Council elections.

* * *

SUPERSTITION.

By education most have been misled;
So they believe because they were so bred.
The priest continues what the nurse began,
And thus the child imposes on the man.

—John Dryden, "The Hind and the Panther."

It is our duty to make ourselves acquainted, so far as we can, with the universe around us, and every part of it: to know what is known of sun, moon, and stars, planets, comets, and nebula; of beast, bird, and fish, tree, herb, and fungus; of human origins and human life; of institutions and laws—the right and wrong of them. It is our duty to search and probe into all these things; taking nothing for granted, accepting nothing on authority, testing all we are told by teacher or preacher, by priest or savant, by moralist or schoolmaster.—Grant Allen.

CORRESPONDENCE.

SECULAR POLICY AND THE SCHOOL BOARD.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—I find some difference of opinion as to the policy of Freethinkers on the forthcoming elections in those constituencies in which no candidate will pledge himself to support secular education. Some take it for granted they should support the so-called Progressives. Impulsive Freethinkers will even say, "Let us join hands and turn out the Diggletes." I doubt if this is good policy, for the following reasons: Let the so-called Progressives prevail, and it will be their policy to resume the *status quo ante bellum*. Compromise will rule. The Circular may be withdrawn, the teachers feel less restricted, and school accommodation may be improved. But these very improvements will defer all consideration of the secular principle. The Board school will be the recruiting ground for chapel as well as for church, and in answer to our complaint of having to pay for religious education we shall hear that we have the Conscience Clause. Let, however, the Diggletes prevail, and the fight, by which we have everything to gain, will continue. Mr. Athelstan Riley has the logic of the argument. If religion is to be taught, there is no reason it should not be defined and the teachers tested. But Mr. Riley has not the logic of the situation. The fact is, the world is becoming indifferent to dogmas, and the more definitely those dogmas are expressed, the more indifference must turn into disgust. The Church party, elated by success, will go further, perhaps introduce the Apostles' Creed; the teachers will be bound to a policy of resistance; the all-important question of the training colleges will come to the front. The Progressive minority will be more strenuous in opposition than ever, proving, like the Liberals in Parliament, more Radical when in opposition than when in power; and the Nonconformists, by the pressure of Church dominance, will be driven to follow Dr. Parker into a more consistent position. The question of religious teaching will be kept before the eyes of the people, whom the squabbling of Church and Chapel will induce to say, "A plague on both your houses." It is thus, and only thus, by the disputes of the sects, that secular education has been gained in other countries. Our battle must be fought by strategy. We must encourage the conflict of our enemies. It was their unity by the compromise that kept our principles in check, and the retention of that compromise will still restrain us. I, therefore, hold that we should support only those pledged to secular education, and oppose, as far as possible, all who merely wish the compromise.

UNCLE BENJAMIN.

THE VIVISECTION OF ANIMALS.

TO THE EDITOR OF "THE FREETHINKER."

SIR,—What is vivisection? Most people are not only unaware of vivisection, but are ignorant of the meaning of it. Vivisection is literally the cutting up of live animals; the term, however, is now applied to any painful experiment performed upon them. Mr. Colam, Secretary to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, in a work on this subject, gives a collation of vivisectional horrors, of which the following is a list:—

Making artificial fistulas and tubercles in the stomachs and lungs of dogs; giving dogs emetics, and then tying up their throats to render vomiting impossible; inflaming the spinal cord of an animal by passing a thread through it; dividing nerves of the most sensitive character; injecting various burning acids, acrid fluids, and virulent poisons into the veins of animals; cutting out part of a creature's liver, or brains, or tying up its gall duct; passing electric shocks through the exposed brain, or across the eye, etc.; scraping away the cornea of the eyes of frogs, and then burning them with nitrate of silver or acids; tying up the arteries of animals; tying up their intestines; dissecting the nerves of the spinal cord; inserting the limb of one animal into the body of another, or into its stomach, to be eaten off by the gastric juice; exciting the most violent agonies in animals by injecting various kinds of chemical or foreign substance, however deadly or caustic, into the jugular or other veins of animals; pinning them down on boards, or holding them in the gripe of iron machines, while the vivisector lays bare the heart, the liver, the brains, or other interior vitals; again setting them free, and leaving them in such mangled condition for days and weeks; piercing a spot on the brain to see a rabbit spring from a table in a violent spasm of agony; opening the chest and drawing up the heart; irritating internal wounds with cantharides; cutting away parts of the liver of dogs and cats with a galvano-caustic knife; opening the stomach of a dog and pouring into it a mass of liquid Prussian blue—into the stomach of another dog half a pint of boiling water.

Mr. Colam expressly states in his Preface to *Documentary Evidence*:—

"The extracts are made from English books, and, where the experiment was performed abroad, it will be found that an English sanction has been given to it."

Vivisections, of course, are not limited to England; they take place in all parts of the civilised globe, and, indeed, far outreach those performed in England in their atrociousness. Let me speak of some of these, which I will take almost at random, more in detail.

Professor Brachet, desirous to ascertain the limits of his dog's attachment, first "dug out the dog's eyes, then destroyed its organ of hearing, and then he tortured it in all possible ways. . . . To the end the dog still licked his hands."

"I exposed," writes Professor Bacchi, "the upper orbital nerve on the left side of another rabbit, and then poured on to it a few drops of strong solution of acetic acid." "The pain," says the vivisector, "was so violent that the animal emitted heart-rending shrieks, and writhed in the throes of a violent agony."

The *Thier-und-Menschen-Freund*, No. 2, 1894, relates the following incident of Herr Simon Stricker, Professor of Experimental Pathology at the General Hospital in Vienna: "One day the Professor was preparing to show his audience, by no means for the first time, the horrible, cruel, and barbarous experiment of destroying the spinal cord of a dog with an iron probe. The animal was half narcotised and firmly bound on a table. The Professor introduced the experiment by the following 'heart-felt' words: 'I know (!) that the experiment is cruel, but it is necessary (!) that my hearers should have its effects impressed on their minds.' After these words, evidently spoken in order to meet a possible protest from the more humane of the students, and to let the operator's 'gentle nature' appear, to some extent, he thrust the iron probe backward into the spinal column of the animal, producing fearful convulsions. The dog, however, could not cry out, as previous to the operation its laryngeal nerves had been severed."

If the experiment was "necessary," comment is not.

Space is left only for one or two other examples. The object was "to ascertain the excitability of the spinal marrow, and the convulsions and pain produced by that excitability." The studies were made almost exclusively on horses and asses; "eighty subjects were consecrated to the purpose. The animal is fixed on a table; a (long) incision is made on its back. . . . the vertebrae are opened with the help of chisel, mallet, and pincers, and the spinal marrow exposed. . . . When one pricks the marrow near the line of emergence of the sensitive nerves, the animal manifests the most violent pain. A male ass, pricked on the line of emergence, showed intense pain. At whatever point I scratched the posterior cord" of an old white horse "I provoked signs of the most violent suffering."

There is a deep pathos in the following, told by Professor Goltz, who was the operator: "A young female dog, which had learnt to shake hands with both forepaws, had the left side of the brain washed out through two holes. . . . On being asked for the left paw the dog immediately laid it on my hand. I now demanded the right, but the creature only looks at me sorrowfully, for, through the loss of the brain, it cannot move it. On my continuing to press for it the dog crosses the left paw over, and offers it to me on the right side, as if to make amends for not having been able to give the right paw."

Vivisectional experiments have been carried on for centuries, and, according to the reckoning of the vivisectors themselves, above a million of animals have been vivisected in the last few years in modern Europe. Fontana caused 4,000 to be bitten by poisonous snakes. Orfila poisoned not less than 6,000 dogs in the course of his studies and lessons on toxicology. Schiff vivisected 14,000 dogs, and altogether 70,000 animals during ten years' work at Florence. Majendie, in order to prove and disprove Bell's theory of the nerves, sacrificed 8,000. In 1884 Pasteur told the Medical Congress at Copenhagen that "the experiments which we, my fellow-workers and I, have carried out have passed beyond the possibility of numbering them." Dr. Koch has admitted that the number of guinea-pigs which he used for his now discredited cure of tuberculosis was 4,000. Between 1850 and 1852, 26,000 dogs, 25,000 animals, cats, and rabbits, and 5,000 horses, asses, and cattle, were subjected to varying degrees of torture in Vienna alone.

In the September number of the *Zoophilist* I find a leading article on "The Increase of Vivisection," in which it is pointed out that, according to the figures of the annual Parliamentary Returns, the number of licenses issued to vivisectors has increased from 23 in the year 1876 to 184 in 1893; and the total number of experiments performed in a twelvemonth has also risen from 481 in the year 1878 to 4,046. According to official returns, then, it is proven that the Restrictive Act in England, after a trial of fourteen years, is a lamentable failure. Therefore, the sixty-two societies of the world are demanding the total abolition of the practice.

Vivisection is a cruel, degrading, and barren means of

investigation; utterly indefensible either on ethical or scientific grounds. Colonel Ingersoll calls it "the hell of science," and says of the vivisector: "I do not wish to touch his hand: when the angel of pity is driven from the heart, when the fountain of tears is dry, the soul becomes a serpent crawling in the dust of a desert."

The arch-vivisector, the late Claude Bernard, while asserting that "vivisection is full of legitimate promises for the future," was obliged, when dying, to add, "Our hands are indeed empty at present." Rutherford is forced to admit that "experiments could not be taken as evidence of what the effect would be on the human being." Schiff, after the numberless experiments he has made, concludes that "the functions of the cerebellum are altogether unknown." Sir Thomas Watson says that "he should have no confidence in the results of experiments of drugs on animals, for the drug that might kill one might have no effect on the other." Mr. Lawson Tait, at one time a vivisector himself, declares that the so-called discoveries are either "useless or not due to vivisection." So far back as the time of Celsus, we have this great man, in noticing the dissection of criminals, saying: "It is unprofitable and cruel to lay open with the knife living bodies so that the art which is designed for the protection and relief of suffering is made to inflict injury, and that of the most atrocious nature." The late Lord Shaftesbury pronounced vivisection "an abominable sin." Personally, I condemn, execrate, and abominate the practice, and, with my whole heart, pity those who follow it.

JOSEPH COLLINSON.

GOOD GOD.

We praise thee and we bless thee for thy great and wondrous love,
And wonder if you're running such a show as this above,
And whether it the angels in their snowy robes can suit
Or whether they are planning now to start and revolute—
To revolute and get. Good God!

They ought to if your heavenly works are like to those on earth;
For really, to be candid, there's a very painful dearth
Of love or even common-sense in much of what you've done,
So please to listen to this plaint before they cut and run—
Before they cut and run. Good God!

Whatever could have tempted you to make a mess like this,
In which you've heaped up troubles that can only mar our bliss.
Why, here you give us cholera, and measles, and the croup;
To our stables send the farcy; to our poultry yard the roup—
The chicken-slaying roup. Good God!

The musical mosquito is another of your pests,
Along with yellow fever, and that very worst of jests,
The festive *pulex irritans*, who raises his behind
And leaves a blister on the hide of suffering humankind—
Of suffering humankind. Good God!

Then we've got the gay bacilli with their variegated hues;
They give to us the cancer and consumption—if the views
Of all the leading scientists are taken as the truth.
Why! really! you can hardly have the slightest tinge of ruth—
Not the slightest tiny tinge. Good God!

The troubles you afflict us with in number many be,
And if you rule o'er life and death it's time for you to see
That life on earth is bettered so that we may rest in peace,
And have a little safety, and from danger a release.
But until then you're not—Good God!

THE GABERLUNZIE.

Mrs. Rector—"Dear me, Mr. Orchard, what have you got those awfully savage-looking dogs for?" Mr. Orchard—"Well, yer see, mum, the fruit's ripening now, and I guess the dogs'll do more to keep folks honest than all the parson's talking can do."

A converted Western real estate agent was "called," and went to preaching. An old-time friend of his went over into the rival town, "within convenient hailing distance," to hear him preach. When asked how he liked the sermon, he said: "Sermon, nothing; he's at his old tricks again, booming an addition he calls Paradise. Says it's going to be laid out with golden streets, and all that kind of rot."

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 post-card.]

LONDON.

HALL OF SCIENCE (142 Old-street, E.C.): 11.30, W. Crooks, I.C.C., "The Administration of the Poor Laws." (Free.) 6.30, musical selections; 7, G. W. Foote, "Save the Children." (Admission free; reserved seats, 3d. and 6d.)

BATTERSEA SECULAR HALL (back of Battersea Park Station): 11.30, discussion; 7.30, Harry Snell, "If Christ Came to London." (Free.) Monday, at 8, musical and dramatic entertainment (tickets 3d. and 6d.). Tuesday, at 8, dancing. Friday, at 8, members' meeting. Saturday, at 8, social gathering for N.S.S. members (3d.).

CAMBERWELL (North Camberwell Hall, 61 New Church-road): 7.30, Dr. T. B. Allinson, L.R.C.P., "How to Keep Well." Thursdays, at 7.30, free science classes.

WEST LONDON ETHICAL SOCIETY (Princes' Hall, Piccadilly): 11.15, Leslie Stephen, "Hereditry."

WOOD GREEN (Star Coffee House, High-street): 7, C. James, "Lying for Jesus."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

WOOD GREEN (Jolly Butchers' Hill): 11.30, J. Rowney will lecture.

COUNTRY.

BIRMINGHAM (Coffee House, corner of Broad-street): Thursdays, at 8, papers, discussions, etc.

BELFAST (Crown Chambers' Hall, 64 Royal-avenue): 3.30, W. Walker, "The Union of the Churches: Its Possibility and Probability."

BOLTON (Spinners' Hall, St. George's-road): 11, Arthur B. Moss, "Christianity and Modern Thought"; 3, "Shelley, the Poet of Free-thought and Progress"; 6.30, "Absurdities of the Christian Faith."

CHATHAM SECULAR HALL (Queen's-road, New Brompton): 11, F. J. Boorman, "The Growth of Crystals"; 2.45, Sunday-school; 7, De Mattos (Fabian), "The Economic Basis of Poverty."

CHESTER (Old Chapel, Commonhall-street): 7, Mr. Roberts, "Robert Dale Owen."

DERBY (Coffee Tavern, Friar Gate): Monday, at 7.30, J. G. Briggs, "A Plea for a Rational Morality."

DUNDEE (City Assembly Rooms): 11.15, discussion class; 2.30, Mr. Johnstone, "Proofs of the Divinity of Christ"; 6.30, concert, vocal and instrumental.

GLASGOW (Ex-Mission Hall, 110 Brunswick-street): 12, discussion; 6.30, Zosimus, "Great French Freethinkers—Voltaire."

HULL (St. George's Hall, Storey-street): 7, Mr. Weedler, "Man."

IPSWICH (Co-operative Room, Cox-lane): 7, members' meeting.

JARROW: 6.30, members meet at Market-square.

LEICESTER (Secular Hall, Humberstone-gate): 6.30, Stanley Jones, "The Church and Science."

LIVERPOOL (Oddfellows' Hall, St. Anne-street): 11, Charles Watts, "Secularism: its Relation to Anarchy, Socialism, and Individualism"; 3, "If Christ Came to Liverpool—What Then?" 7, "Why Should We Lead Moral Lives?—The Christian's and Secularist's Answer."

MANCHESTER SECULAR HALL (Rusholme-road, All Saints): 6.30, Ernest Newman, "Progress, Compromise, and the Religious Spirit."

NEWCASTLE (Irish Literary Institute, Clayton-street East): 3, C. Cohen, "The Origin of Man"; 7, Carl Aarstad, "The Resurrection." (Free.)

PORTSMOUTH (Wellington Hall, Wellington-street, Southsea): 3, class on "Origin of Species"; 7, *Til Bits* magic lantern entertainment, "Modern Authors and their Works." (Free.) Wednesday, Thursday, and Saturday, at 8, dancing.

ROCHDALE (New Hall, Ackers-street): 6.30, Sam Standing, "The Cockney's Home" (limelight views).

SHEFFIELD SECULAR SOCIETY (Hall of Science, Rockingham-street): 7, W. Dyson, "Suicide, Bodily and Spiritual—a Criticism of E. W. Bailey."

SOUTH SHIELDS (Thornton's Variety Hall, Union-lane): 11, C. Cohen, "Lucretius"; 7, "Belief and Conduct."

SUNDERLAND (Lecture Room, Bridge End Vaults, Bridge-street): 7, The Secretary, "Secularism: its Relation to the Social Problems of the Day."

OPEN-AIR PROPAGANDA.

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE (Quayside—weather permitting): 11, R. Mitchell will lecture.

ROCHDALE (Town Hall Square): 11, Sam Standing, "I.L.P. Fourth Clause"; 3, "Noah's Ark."

Lecturers' Engagements.

C. COHEN, 12 Merchant-street, Bow-road, London, E.—All Sundays until April, 1895, South Shields.

STANLEY JONES, 53 Marlborough-road, Holloway, London, N.—Nov. 18, Leicester; 21, Burton. December 16, Chatham.

ARTHUR B. MOSS, 44 Credon-road, Rotherhithe, London, S.E.—Nov. 18, Bolton.

SAM STANDING, 6 Bury-road, Rochdale.—Dec. 16, Hull.

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